

JUNIOR CHURCH MATERIAL: JESUS & LAZARUS

Theme: Jesus understands our sadness and brings hope, light and colour.

SONGS

Why not choose a few of the songs you enjoyed last week and become really familiar with them? Here are the links:

King of the Giants: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F9zWwItpMOc>

God of Science: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uqoYaksgnc0>

Shine: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zVLG-aVKRMc>

As the World Shakes <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dcAG4PbNXaA>

Do Not Fear: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4DyocxTTV6w>

GAME (FOR 0 - 5S — CHOOSE ONE)

Go on a hunt to find objects that are different colours - how many different colours can you find? Can you put them together to make a rainbow?

Play hide and seek

Play hunt the treasure - hide a special object, eg teddy, somewhere for someone to find

VIDEO CLIP:

Watch the first 10 seconds of this film clipL 'Release your Imagination,' www.youtube.com/watch?v=uGGRIj0teDM and pause it. Ask the children to consider what the town seems like. How do the people feel? *Point out that no one seems to have any hope or joy. Then watch the rest of the clip.*

Afterwards, ask the children to explain what happened after the dragon was released. Comment how everything changed, colour was brought into the scene and people had hope. Explain that Jesus brings hope and life to our situations and understands what it is like to feel as though life is colourless and when we feel sad. However, he brings hope, light and colour.

THE STORY:

Read the story of Lazarus being resurrected in the Bible ([John 11:1-45](#)). The children could act out the story as it's happening, at certain points freeze the story and ask the children how they think the different characters would be feeling.

You could ask the children to consider how Mary and Martha would be feeling, knowing that Jesus was meant to be their friend and he had waited to come and see their brother. Or to think about how Jesus felt on seeing people so upset – how would they have felt when Lazarus had come back to life?

DISCUSSION (6 - 11s)

Read the story again (John 11:1-45), slowly, And ask the children to draw a series of pictures to make a comic book:

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|----|---|----------------|
| 1: | Lazarus is ill, Mary & Martha are worried | John 11:1-2 |
| 2: | Jesus hears the news but doesn't go | John 11: 3-6 |
| 3: | Jesus leaves with his disciples | John 11: 7-16 |
| 4: | Jesus arrives but Lazarus is already dead | John 11: 17-20 |
| 5: | Jesus meets Mary & Martha | John 11: 21-31 |
| 6: | Jesus cries | John 11: 32-36 |
| 7: | Jesus opens the tomb | John 11: 37-42 |
| 8: | Lazarus comes back to life | John 11:43-44 |

Discuss together what happens in each picture, and what we learn about Jesus from this story. It shows us just how mighty and powerful God is, and also just how he sees and is moved by the emotions of those he cares about.

JESUS UNDERSTANDS (6 - 11s)

Brainstorm on a sheet of paper all the reasons that we might feel grief – relatives dying, pets dying, parents splitting up, moving house and so on.

Say that God understands how it feels to experience grief because he has also experienced grief first hand.

Here are some of Jesus' sorrows:

- Leaving heaven to come to earth – leaving behind everything he knew, becoming poor.
- His step father died (we assume!)
- His cousin was murdered by Herod.
- His best friend betrayed him and his other friends left him.
- His family rejected him. (although they later changed their minds and some of his brothers became church leaders)
- The people he had grown up with tried to kill him.
- His best friend died of illness.
- People didn't understand what he was trying to say.
- He was arrested for something he hadn't done.
- He was killed.
- Many people hated him.
- People told lies about him.

Now ask the children to compare the two lists with each other.

Look at the reasons we might grieve and look at the grief that Jesus encountered. Cross off the grief's that are similar on both lists. For instance, "a friend dying" will

be on both lists, “losing a best friend” and “being betrayed by a friend” are also similar.

See what things are left on the Jesus list and the us list – there should be very little on the list of things that we might grieve about. Jesus cares for us and loves us and understands what we feel when we are sad or in pain. Jesus knows what it is like and so he is perfectly able to comfort us, care for us and help us when we need him.

MAKE A “LAZARUS COME OUT” CUP GAME (0 - 5S)



What you will need:

- Wooden clothes peg or plain white, beige or light coloured card - eg back of a cereal box. If using cereal box cut two pieces and glue them together as you will need both sides
- Strips of paper towels
- Glue
- Felt pens
- Paper or plastic Cups
- Wool (optional)
- Scrap paper

How to make the game:

1. Wrap strips of tissue or paper towels around the pegs to make Lazarus. Draw a sad face on one side and a happy face on the other. Optional: they can glue pieces of wool on the head for hair.
2. Turn the 3 cups upside down and place one of the cups over the clothespin doll. You can also add a biscuit or treat if you are inclined!

How to play

1. Mix up all the cups without showing which one Lazarus is in

2. One person points to the cup that they think Lazarus might be in. And says "Lazarus, come out!" Lift the cup to find out if you were right. If not, have them try again. Let everyone have a turn.

Talk about the two faces and how they are different. Which face was when Lazarus was dead and which face was when he came to life? What things make you sad and happy? How can Jesus help when you are sad?

RESPONSE:

Notes for parents and carers:

We are living in a very strange time, everything feels unsteady and unpredictable. We don't have the same security that we felt even a few weeks ago. The children will be experiencing a similar feeling - they know that this time is not normal and they will pick up on their parents' emotions too. They will also be feeling a sense of loss for their friends or school or clubs, they may be grieving for things that they will no longer get to do - like holidays or school trips or other special events.

Three things we can do to help them deal with their loss:

- 1: **Name what has been Lost** - The children know that things have changed; they will be aware that this is not a normal time and we should encourage them to express how that makes them feel. We are all allowed to feel sad or scared, it's better to talk about those feelings than bottle them all up and pretend everything is ok.
- 2: **Don't Minimise Loss** - To you it might be 'just a disco' or 'another game of football' but the children may need to grieve for things they aren't doing. Don't jump straight to finding the silver-lining - acknowledge that they are missing friends, talk to them about missing out on the party or the game, give them space to express their emotions. It might seem like small things to you but they can feel like really big things to a child. *Indeed, we as adults may need to talk and process the things that we are losing during this period too!*
- 3: **Be Grateful** - We can be honest about the hard stuff without getting stuck. This is a big challenge for us over the next few weeks (or months!). Research has shown that being thankful is a vital component of our mental well-being, Thankfulness will help you and your children to get through the days ahead - especially the days when it is hard to find much to say thank you for!

Practising gratitude can increase positive emotions, sleep quality and overall well-being. Naming a positive thing about our day can help us to deal with a sense of loss. It's not about cancelling out the sadness with fake happiness it's about recognising the good in our lives even in the midst of the darkness.

You can read the research here: (<https://positivepsychology.com/benefits-of-gratitude/>)

Response Activity:

(6 - 11s)

Get a big bit of paper and divide into two columns label them "Loss" and "Gratitude". Put it up somewhere central where everyone can find it and then this week, whenever you miss someone or feel sad about something write it in the Loss column. And whenever you feel thankful or something good happens, write it in the Gratitude column. Use it to guide your prayers and conversations as you work through this challenging time as a family.

(0 - 5s)

Do the above activity but write name the columns "Happy" and "Sad" and draw pictures of a happy and a sad face. Younger children could cut out or print pictures which describe the things that fo in each column. OR use two jars and put a marble (or equivalent) in each jar when you feel happy or sad.

PRAYER

Finish with a prayer. These ideas are just suggestions!:

- Thank God for bringing Lazarus back from the dead and understanding all our fears
- Say sorry to God for when we are not grateful or when we don't make other people happy
- Ask God to help you know how you are feeling and talk to someone about it
- Ask God to help other people who are finding life hard
- Tell God that you love and trust him