

Today's Readings

Ezekiel 37:12–14

Psalm 130:1–2, 5, 7bcd

John 11:3–7, 17, 20–27, 31–45

Prepare the Meeting Space

In the worship area, on a table draped with a violet cloth, place:

- a Lectionary
- a battery-operated candle
- a cactus or dried flower arrangement

For use during the Gathering:

- a recorded Gathering song and music player
- an image of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus

For use during the Gospel, have ready one of these two options:

- actors prepared to help with a dramatization

OR

- a video clip that depicts the Raising of Lazarus (such as <https://youtu.be/JR1ku3kE2IY>)

Suggested Music

See page 64 for more information.

GATHERING:

“God’s Love Is” (*Seeds VOL-2, Track #11*) or **“Come, Do This in Memory of Me”** (*Promise & Good News VOL-1, Track #20*)

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

“Glory and Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ” (*Promise & Good News VOL-2, Track #23*)

Jesus Gives Lazarus New Life

PREPARATION

Children’s Leaflet

Have on hand copies of the Children’s Leaflet for this Sunday. Distribute copies either at the start of the session or before the children return to the assembly.

PREPARE WITH PRAYER

If you kept record of our sins, no one could last long. But you forgive us, and so we will worship you.
(PSALM 130:3–4)

Scripture Background

John’s Gospel is full of richly symbolic titles for the Lord Jesus. Last week, the cure of the blind man, which inspired his subsequent confession of faith, showed that Christ is the light. Today’s raising of Lazarus shows that Christ is the Resurrection and the Life.

Another point that John develops in today’s Gospel is that Christ is a true friend who lays down his life for the sake of those he loves. When Jesus receives word in Galilee that his friend Lazarus is in danger of death, his disciples worry about returning to Judea, where they know there are people who want to stone Jesus. Yet there is no doubt in the Lord’s mind that he must travel to Bethany where Lazarus lives with his sisters, Mary and Martha.

This great love Jesus had for his friends perhaps was the inspiration for the practice in John’s faith community of calling each other “friends.” Evidence for this is found in 3 John 1:15, in which the letter closes with these words: “Your friends send their greetings. Please give a personal greeting to each of our friends.”

Jesus travels to Bethany not only out of love for his three friends in need, but also out of love for the friends who travel with him wherever he goes. It is important that they see an even greater miracle than any they have yet witnessed—raising someone who has been dead for four days.

As the clouds of doom continue to gather over Jesus’ head, his disciples’ faith in him needs strengthening. What they will see in the rais-



ing of Lazarus will not only be a preview of Jesus' Resurrection, but also an additional illustration of the close bond he has with his Father.

Jesus always does the Father's will, and the Father always answers his prayers. The Father will not abandon him to death, but raise him up when the time is right.

CHILDREN'S CONNECTIONS

The *Directory for Masses with Children* notes that it is appropriate to include in a liturgy "elements that will permit children to perceive visually the wonderful works that God performed in creation and redemption and thus support their prayer. The liturgy should never appear as something dry and merely intellectual" (35). The powerful story in today's Gospel could make an unforgettable dramatization for children to watch.

To prepare for the proclamation of the Gospel, enlist four adult or teen volunteers to play the parts of Jesus, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. Their jobs could be as simple as pantomiming the action of the Gospel as you read it aloud.

If they are a little more ambitious, they could memorize the spoken lines of Jesus, Mary, and Martha as you narrate the non-dialogue parts of the Gospel. Or, if you prefer, the actors could read their own lines from individual index cards held in their hands as they play out the action of the story.

Before beginning the reading of the Gospel, situate Mary and Martha near Lazarus' hiding place, looking sad and worried. Explain to children that they are at home in Bethany. On the opposite side of the staging area, Jesus needs to be sitting with his disciples in Galilee. Ask some, or perhaps all, of the children to sit with him and be his disciples. Tell them all they need to do for the skit is keep their eyes mostly on Jesus and to follow him when he gets up to leave for Bethany.

Of course, the dramatic peak of the skit will occur at the tomb when Jesus raises his eyes and hands to Heaven in prayer, then calls for Lazarus to come out. To make the most of this moment, the actor playing Lazarus may wish to see how this scene was done by viewing a video clip depicting the raising of Lazarus (<https://youtu.be/JR1ku3kE2lY>).

THE CHILDREN'S LEAFLET

The leaflet for this week helps children learn that Christ is the Resurrection and the life, through a prayer, a summary of the Gospel, and a creative activity.

If you distribute the leaflet now and time permits, you may wish to read with the children the summary of the Gospel in "The Word of God This Week" after you have read the Gospel. Point out the artwork and ask the children what is happening in the picture.

More About ...

Preparing Your Gospel Dramatization

An easy way to get multiple copies of today's Gospel is to go online at pflaum.com/readings and click on today's date. Print out the number of copies of the Gospel you need for the actors.

Costumes for Jesus, Mary, and Martha would be sandals and either bathrobes or sheets to represent tunics. Lazarus would be wrapped from head to toe in toilet paper and hidden behind a doorway or screen or inside a closet until Jesus calls him forth.

If a live dramatization is not feasible, proclaim the Gospel as usual, but follow up with a video clip that shows the raising of Lazarus (<https://youtu.be/JR1ku3kE2lY>).



Leaflet Activity

Children will complete a word search based on today's Gospel. The solution is shown here for your convenience.

W U J Y L U E O G Q
 Y D E N R J A I L F
 I G S O C T V P A D
 L E U O F L K T Z H
 J Z S U M E K P A X
 Q B H H Q G W B R D
 V R T M A R Y I U S
 P N F K M A C W S R
 B M A R T H A J V C
 Y C X S N D A Z S M

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Gathering

Discuss with children the image of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. First, ask them what they see when they look at it, then point out any interesting details they have missed. Share this additional information about the siblings:

- They lived together in a large house in a village two miles away from Jerusalem.
- They were wealthy, had many wealthy friends in Jerusalem, and often hosted big dinners at their house.
- Jesus was a close friend of the family and a frequent house guest.
- At one of their big dinners, Mary anointed Jesus' feet with a bottle of perfume that was worth a whole year's pay (or, in modern terms, worth the price of one or two brand-new cars).
- It was unusual that the two sisters had no husbands, for most Jewish women were married by age twenty.
- Martha and Mary were complete opposites and they had misunderstandings. Martha was a doer and Mary a thinker.

Conclude by telling the group that in today's Gospel, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus will see for themselves that if you stay faithful to Jesus, you will see God's glory.

Collect

LEADER: Invite the children to close their eyes and bow their heads for prayer. We will keep a moment of silence as we talk to God in our hearts. Let's think about what sort of friends we have been to Jesus this week. Have we spent time with him in prayer? Have we shown love for others the way he wants us to? (Pause for silence.)

Let us pray. Lord Jesus, your friends Martha, Mary, and Lazarus often invited you to stay with them, and they treated you like a king whenever you came. Please forgive us for the times we have forgotten to spend time with you in prayer. Forgive us, too, for the times we have not shown others the kindness we should have shown. Help us grow in faith and love, so that the goodness of our lives will bring praise and glory to your name forever and ever.

CHILDREN: Amen.

Invite the children to be seated. Light the candle and begin the First Reading.

First Reading

LEADER: In today's First Reading, God gives his prophet Ezekiel an important promise to pass on to his Chosen People. They are living as prisoners hundreds of miles away from their homes when they hear these words.

Read Ezekiel 37:12-14. Then say, "The word of the Lord."

CHILDREN: Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

The psalm may be either sung or spoken. Before beginning, sing or announce the response.

LEADER: With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.

CHILDREN: With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.

LEADER: Read Psalm 130:1-2, 5, 7bcd.

Gospel Acclamation

Invite the children to stand. Sing the suggested Acclamation or another familiar one. If you choose not to sing the Acclamation, proceed to the proclamation of the Gospel.

Proclaim the Gospel

LEADER: In today's Gospel, we will see Jesus do a mighty deed for the sake of his good friends Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.

The Lord be with you.

CHILDREN: And with your Spirit.

LEADER: A reading from the Gospel of John.

CHILDREN: † Glory to you, O Lord.

LEADER: *Read John 11:3–7, 17, 20–27, 31–45. Then say, "The Gospel of the Lord."*

CHILDREN: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily

Build a homily on these ideas:

- What Jesus did for Mary and Martha was truly wonderful, but let's stop to consider what *they* did for *him*.
- At a time when some of Jerusalem's most important people were turning against Jesus, they remained faithful to him.
- At a time when they personally were upset with Jesus for not coming sooner, they remained faithful to him.
- Instead of turning Jesus away, or giving him the silent treatment when he finally came, they shared their disappointment with him openly and honestly, then listened to his explanation.
- Let's try to do the same whenever keeping faith in Jesus is hard for us. Let's keep talking and listening to him no matter how we feel.
- Today's Gospel is proof that if we stay faithful to Jesus, sooner or later we will see God's glory.

Profession of Faith

LEADER: Please stand for the Profession of Faith and respond to each question with, "I do."

Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, who has promised you freedom from death and an everlasting home in Heaven?

CHILDREN: I do.

LEADER: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, sent to be the Resurrection and the life?

CHILDREN: I do.

LEADER: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the breath of life who will make you live forever?

CHILDREN: I do.

Prayer of the Faithful

LEADER: Knowing that we will indeed see God's glory if we stay faithful to him, let us take our needs to God in prayer. Our response to each petition will be, "Hear us, O Lord."

That our Holy Father, the pope, and all Church leaders will find comfort in Jesus, we pray.

CHILDREN: Hear us, O Lord.

LEADER: That people who are far from home will find comfort in Jesus, we pray.

CHILDREN: Hear us, O Lord.

LEADER: That our loved ones who have died will find comfort in Jesus, we pray.

CHILDREN: Hear us, O Lord.

LEADER: *Invite the children to pray their own petitions. Then pray:*

Heavenly Father, how great is your love for us, and how great is your wisdom. May your Holy Spirit keep us faithful to Jesus in times of darkness and doubt, that we may live to see your glory forever and ever.

CHILDREN: Amen.

Return to Assembly

The Liturgy of the Word ends with the Prayer of the Faithful. Prepare the children to return to the assembly in a respectful manner. If you haven't already done so, distribute the leaflets. Remind the children to take the leaflets home and share them with their families. Encourage them to watch this week's Gospel Reflection video and complete the Family Corner activities as a family.