

## Lesson Overview

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**Biblical Passage** John 11:17-27, 41-45

**Supporting Passage** John 11:1-46

**Memory Verse** John 11:25

**Biblical Truth** Jesus wants you to come to Him when you experience emotional pain.

**Context** While in Perea on the east side of the Jordan River, Jesus received news of Lazarus' illness. He set out for Judea even though some Jews in Jerusalem had earlier planned to stone Him. When He arrived in Bethany, Lazarus had already died, but after comforting Lazarus' sisters Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead.

**Learning Goals**

- Students will understand both the power Jesus has over death and the compassion He has for our grief.
- Students will apply their understanding of Jesus' compassion in committing to turning to Him in times of grief.

**Prayer Suggestions**

As you prepare to teach this lesson, pray for your students.

- Pray that your students will discover God's love and compassion during times of sorrow and grief.
- Pray that your students will become living testimonies to God's grace during times of emotional trauma.
- Pray that your students will actively turn to God, expecting Him to comfort them through His power.

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## Biblical Commentary

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### Investigation

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The Apostle John, son of Zebedee, gave a clear reason why he wrote his Gospel near the end of the book: “Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (John 20:30-31). John achieved his purpose by recording the signs of Jesus’ power throughout the Gospel. The resurrection of Lazarus is the last of these signs.

John 10 records an encounter between Jesus and a crowd of Jews in Jerusalem. The Jews gathered around Him and began to question Him intently. They wanted Him to identify Himself as the Christ so they could charge Him with blasphemy. In response, Jesus pointed to the variety of works He performed in the name of the Father. He concluded His remarks with a bold statement: “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30). Immediately, the crowd of Jews picked up stones and prepared to kill Jesus. Jesus was able to elude the crowd, and He withdrew to the other side of the Jordan River. The miracle described in John 11:1-46 follows this dramatic confrontation.

### Importance

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This passage teaches that **Jesus is God and Savior**. This passage of Scripture is important for students because it not only demonstrates Jesus’ power over death, but it also shows His deep compassion for those who grieve and experience emotional pain or loss.

### Interpretation

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**John 11:17-19** Conventional scholarship holds that Lazarus probably died the day Jesus first heard of his illness from the messengers sent by Mary and Martha (John 11:3). Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days prior to Jesus’ arrival. John offered this detail to stress that Lazarus was dead so there would be no confusion concerning the nature of this miracle. This was a miracle of resurrection and not resuscitation.

The Jewish people took mourning very seriously. Whole communities came together to pay their respects to the departed and to offer support to the bereaved. The public mourning pictured in verse 19 was part of the seven days of deep mourning prescribed by Jewish Law. Jesus would have been intimately familiar with this custom, and upon arriving in Bethany, would have expected nothing less.

**John 11:20-22** Martha was in a house full of mourners, grieving the loss of her brother, and filled with sorrow. When someone told her that Jesus was on His way, she could not wait for Him to arrive. She rushed out to meet Him. What motivated her to go to Jesus? Maybe it was His comforting presence; maybe it was His power. Martha

replied with a hesitant faith. She acknowledged Jesus' lordship and recognized His authority over death. But in her statement to Christ there was almost a mild rebuff: "If you had been here . . ." Then she acknowledged Jesus' unique relationship with God. She may have been convinced that Jesus was the Messiah at this point.

**John 11:23-24** Jesus stated that Lazarus would ultimately live. Martha responded that she believed her brother would rise again "in the resurrection at the last day." This statement has an important context: Martha had expressed a commonly held belief among most Jews. While the Sadducees did not believe in a life after death, most Jews did (including the Pharisees). They believed that death brought one into contact with God. When Martha responded to Jesus that she knew her brother would live again, she was expressing what William Barclay calls "the highest reach of her nation's faith" (1975). She was not acknowledging that life after death was dependent upon belief in Jesus.

**John 11:25-27** In its simplest form, Jesus' response to Martha was a bold proclamation of His true identity. Jesus proclaimed Himself as the true Son of God—the Messiah whose coming was foretold by the prophets. Jesus was bridging the gap between Martha's conventional Jewish belief in the afterlife and the truth of the new covenant. Jesus was saying to Martha, "I am the resurrection. I am the life. Believe in me and death will not be an end but a beginning." If Martha had not yet identified Jesus as God's Son, the moment was coming when she would.

Jesus asked Martha if she believed His claim. Her response confirmed her faith in Jesus. Martha confronted the same question faced by the incalculable number of believers who have followed in her footsteps. Faced with the decision to believe or not, she stood before Jesus and proclaimed Him the Son of God.

**John 11:41-45** As the **stone** was removed, Jesus offered a prayer. In His prayer, He demonstrated His strict obedience to and reliance upon the Father. Jesus' prayer underscored His desire that through Lazarus' resurrection both the Father and the Son might receive glory. Following His prayer, Jesus called for Lazarus to come forth, and Lazarus came out of the tomb. As part of the burial custom, Lazarus' hands and feet were bound and his face was covered. Jesus ordered the removal of these restraints. Many of the Jews in attendance saw this miracle and believed Jesus was the Messiah.

## Implications

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Martha believed Jesus was an amazing teacher and healer. She knew He had a supernatural relationship with God. She took the next faith step, confessing Jesus as the Son of God and verbalizing the stirring feelings in her heart. She trusted Jesus' words. She believed He was who He said He was. If you are teaching this lesson, surely you have taken this step and laid claim to the eternal life Jesus promises to all believers. What are you doing to show others the life that awaits them in Christ? Are you doing your part to enlarge the Kingdom?

Jesus' prayer in John 11:41-42 demonstrated His total reliance upon the Father. Though Jesus, as a member of the divine Trinity, is equal to the Father, He subjected His earthly ministry to the Father's control. God expects no less from His children. Followers of Christ should subject their lives to the Father's control. How difficult is it for you to set aside your personal agenda in order to be obedient to God?

Genuine faith does not require a constant flow of divine miracles. The Jews had seen Jesus perform a number of miracles, yet their faith in Him depended upon His continued performance. Have you lived through times when you longed for God to act but didn't see Him move? How can you help students develop a faith in God that goes

beyond their “big” experiences with Him?

## Teaching Plan

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### Connect

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#### Review Questions

*(5-8 minutes, easy set-up)*

*Students will answer five review questions from the previous lesson.*

*Download the “Review Questions” activity sheet. Print one copy for your own use.*

After greeting students, use the review questions to test what they can recall from the previous lesson as well as to provide context for today’s lesson.

#### Master Teacher Option: Grief Scenarios

*(10 minutes, easy set-up)*

*Students will decide how they would react to different types of loss.*

*Download the “Seven Responses Posters” activity sheet. Hang posters on the walls around the classroom.*

*Download the “Grief Scenarios” activity sheet.*

Read the first scenario from the “Grief Scenarios” sheet. Then ask students to move to identify the poster that best describes what they think their initial responses would be to the situation. Ask students why they chose their responses. Repeat for the remaining three scenarios. Say: **Today’s lesson is about Jesus’ power over death and the compassion He has for our grief.**

### Explore

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#### Master Teacher Key Study: He is the Resurrection and the Life

*(15-20 minutes, easy set-up)*

*Students will consider Jesus’ healing power and His desire to help others by examining His miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead.*

*Print one copy of the Master Teacher Key Study for your use. Provide a copy of the Student Worksheet and a pen for each student.*

**Learning Goal:** Students will understand both the power Jesus has over death and the compassion He has for our grief.

Pass out pens and copies of the Student Worksheet. Then, use the Master Teacher Key Study to teach John 11:17-27, 41-45

## Transform

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### Deeper Discussion

*(10 minutes, easy set-up)*

*Students will discuss the role their faith in Jesus plays in times of loss and grief.*

**Learning Goal:** Students will apply their understanding of Jesus' compassion in committing to turning to Him in times of grief.

Ask a student to read John 11:17-27 and 41-45. Discuss these questions:

- **What are you doing to show others the life that awaits them in Christ?**
- **Have you lived through times when you longed for God to act but didn't see Him move? Describe these times.**
- **How can you help others develop a faith in God that goes beyond their "big" experiences with Him?**

Encourage your students to begin to pray about ways that God wants to use them in His work to reach the world for Christ.

### Master Teacher Option: Do You Believe?

*(10 minutes, easy set-up)*

*Students will consider the number of people they know who do not believe in Jesus and commit to sharing Christ with them during the week.*

**Learning Goal:** Students will apply their understanding of Jesus' compassion in committing to turning to Him in times of grief.

Read John 11:25-26. Ask: **Who can tell me what the final four words of these verses are?** (*Do you believe this?*) Write this question on the board. Say: **This is a crucial question: do you believe?** Tell students to think about the question. Say: **Christ tells us we have eternal life if we believe. What a wonderful gift! But chances are, there are people in your life who do not believe.** Direct students to think of people in their lives who have not trusted Christ as their Savior. Ask: **How do you think these people cope with loss and grief?** Admit that grieving without Christ must be very difficult because they do not have the power of Christ inside them nor the hope of Christ for their future.

Say: **One of the best ways to share Christ is to tell your story of belief.** Encourage students to think of examples in which they have experienced new life, similar to the way that Lazarus experienced new

life or of comfort in the face of grief, similar to the way Martha received comfort from Christ. Tell students to look for ways to tell of their stories this week with others. Encourage them to tell of their commitment to believe in Christ and to hope in Him during all of life and especially during times of loss and grief.

## Take Home Activity

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### Family Devotion

*(10-15 minutes at home, easy set-up)*

*Distribute copies of the Family Devotion to students and encourage them to share the devotion with their family.*

A copy of the Family Devotion will be included in your lesson PDF download.

## REVIEW QUESTIONS

(5-8 minutes, easy set-up)

*Use these questions to review the content from Lesson 31: The Parable of the Vineyard Workers.  
The correct answer for each question is printed in bold, italic font.*

1. In the Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard, what did the owner offer to pay his workers? (*Lesson 31*)
  - a. ***A denarius***
  - b. 5 pieces of silver
  - c. 10 pieces of gold
  - d. A brass farthing
  
2. In the Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard, how many times did the owner hire workers? (*Lesson 31*)
  - a. 100 times
  - b. 1 time
  - c. ***5 times***
  - d. No times
  
3. In the Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard, how much did the owner pay each of his workers in the end? (*Lesson 31*)
  - a. Various amounts
  - b. ***A denarius***
  - c. Nothing
  - d. Five pieces of silver
  
4. In the Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard, how did those who had worked the longest respond to their pay? (*Lesson 31*)
  - a. They felt it was fair.
  - b. They felt that they had not received enough.
  - c. ***They felt that the others should not have received as much as them.***
  - d. They wanted to work longer.
  
5. Jesus made a famous statement at the end of his Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard. What was it? (*Lesson 31*)
  - a. "Or are you envious because I am generous?"
  - b. "I am the vine, you are the branches."
  - c. ***"So the last will be first, and the first will be last."***
  - d. "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow you die."

# LESSON 32

**CHRISTOS**  
STUDENT EDITION

## HE IS THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

**Biblical Passage:** John 11:17–27, 41–45

**Memory Verse:** John 11:25

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live even though he dies . . .”

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### GRIEF SCENARIOS

#### SCENARIO ONE

You return home from school to find your grandmother has suffered a stroke. The two of you are very close and always enjoy spending time with one another. Now she will be permanently confined to a hospital. She has trouble speaking and can hardly communicate with family. Try to put yourself in this situation. How do you think you might feel?

#### SCENARIO TWO

Your dad picks you up from practice, which is a little unusual—usually you ride home with a friend. You ask him why he picked you up, and he tells you he wanted to talk to you about something important. He informs you that he and your mother are getting a divorce. He says the two of you will still be close and that he still loves you. Maybe this has happened to you. If not, can you imagine how you might feel?

#### SCENARIO THREE

Your best friend doesn't show up at school. About halfway through first period, your teacher receives a message from the principal. He stops class and announces that your friend was involved in a terrible accident and has passed away. People in the class begin to cry. Try to put yourself in this situation. How do you think you might feel?

#### SCENARIO FOUR

This week your parents came to you and told you that your father has taken a job overseas. Your family will be moving away in a few weeks. It is the middle of the school year and soccer season has just started. You are a team captain, and your team is picked to win the State Championship. Can you imagine how it might feel?

## SEVEN RESPONSES POSTERS

Hang these posters on the walls in different areas of your meeting area.



# Denial/ Shock

It is hard to accept the situation.



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# ANGER

I'm mad that the situation has happened at all.





# L O N E L I N E S S

I feel lonely or scared.





# Bargaining

I may say to God, “Let me trade places with that person,” or  
“If You will make it better, I will be a better person.”





# Acceptance

Things might not be great, but I have accepted the situation.





# Guilt

I feel guilty about things I did or didn't do.





# Depression

I experience a sense of great loss followed by mood fluctuations and feelings of isolation and withdrawal.



## HE IS THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

(15–20 minutes, easy set-up)

Students will consider Jesus' healing power and His desire to help others by examining His miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead.

Use this outline and the Biblical Commentary to prepare to share the truths of this passage with students. Download the Master Teacher Worksheet. Print a copy for each student. Encourage students to take notes on their worksheets as you teach. Use the worksheet to guide students into response and conversation and to deepen their understanding of the text.

**Introduction:** John wrote: "Jesus did many other miraculous signs . . . which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:30–31). Lazarus' resurrection is the last of these signs.

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### 1. Jesus did not procrastinate in responding to the needs of His friends.

- Jesus knew that Lazarus had already died. He told His disciples that for their sakes He was glad; they would see a miracle that would help grow their faith.
  - Both Martha and Mary believed Jesus' presence would have prevented their brother's death. Martha expressed a deeper level of faith: she proclaimed Jesus as Christ.
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### 2. Jesus publicly thanked God for always hearing His prayers.

- Jesus' prayer in John 11:41–42 demonstrated His total reliance upon His Father.
- Jesus thanked His Father for hearing Him, but He especially thanked God that the people watching would have the opportunity to see this miracle and believe.

**Illustration:** People are not always very quick to acknowledge that God will answer prayer. In Acts 12, a servant girl named Rhoda was in a house with a close-knit group praying for the release of their dear friend, Peter, from prison. When Rhoda answered the door to find Peter standing in front of her—released from prison—the group determined that it could not be Peter because they were still praying for his quick release.

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### 3. Jesus has the power to overcome death and grief on His terms.

- Martha confessed to Jesus, "But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask" (John 11:22).
  - The miracle hadn't happened when they had asked or expected; they wondered if it would happen at all—but it did!
  - This miracle was a kind of "dress rehearsal" for Jesus' own resurrection after the cross!
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**Conclusion:** Genuine faith does not require a constant procession of divine miracles. Our faith should not rest upon God's performance, but God's power to do what He has promised.

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### POWER OVER LIFE AND DEATH

1. Do you think that God ought to always work on your time schedule?

**SOMETIMES**

**NEVER**

**ALWAYS**

2. Do you ever wonder whether God really hears you talking to Him?

**SOMETIMES**

**NEVER**

**ALWAYS**

3. Do you ever question whether God is able to do what you really need Him to do?

**SOMETIMES**

**NEVER**

**ALWAYS**

### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What are you doing to show others the life that awaits them in Christ?
- Have you lived through times when you longed for God to act, but you didn't see Him move? Describe these times.
- How can you help others develop a faith in God that goes beyond their “big” experiences with Him?

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### SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT . . .

“We will not awaken spiritually unless Christ calls. But when he calls we do awaken.” — *James Montgomery Boice*

# LESSON 32

**CHRISTOS**  
STUDENT EDITION

## HE IS THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

**Biblical Passage:** John 11:17–27, 11:41–45

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A missionary was in Tirana, Albania, at the height of the Bosnia-Kosovo conflict in 1999 as part of the relief efforts extended to fleeing refugees from Kosovar. When one woman shared about seeing Kosovan children hanging from trees by their necks, the missionary was immediately gripped with sorrow and compassion and began to cry with the woman. As the missionary and his translator left the family, the translator told the missionary, “What you did was good. You wept with that woman, and she knew of your great sorrow for our people.” The missionary, through more tears, responded, “What else could I do? I had no words to speak.”

Read John 11:17–46. In verse 35 (the shortest verse in the Bible), it simply says, “Jesus wept.” After asking where Lazarus had been laid to rest, what else could Jesus do? The Bible identifies the Messiah as “a man of sorrows . . . familiar with grief” (Isa. 53:3). When Jesus did not know what to do, He did the most appropriate thing—He wept—and thus identified with the grief and sorrow of His beloved friends. He identifies with our grief and pain today, too.

Pray that your teenager will have the willingness to show his or her grief to others as well as a desire to turn to Jesus in times of sorrow.

### CONNECTION QUESTIONS:

- How did Jesus show His concern and compassion toward Mary and Martha and the loss of Lazarus?
- To whom can we turn in times of grief?
- Why should Jesus be the one we turn to?
- How can we encourage others when they are experiencing grief and sorrow?