



seeking:

*Can these
bones live?*

children's curriculum

JOHN 11:1-45

by Rev. Anna Strickland

MAIN IDEA: *It's okay to feel big feelings.*

engaging the story

storytelling materials

- **Bethany:** A tan piece of felt, fabric, or paper.
- **Jesus, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus:** Clothespin people, Godly Play® people of God figures, or felt figures (you might distinguish Lazarus by wrapping him in strips of thin gauze or toilet tissue).
- **tomb:** An aquarium cave, Godly Play® tomb, or papier-mâché tomb.



scripture retelling

(Stage directions are in italics. Words to speak aloud are in **bold** text.)

Jesus was on his way to the town of Bethany where his friends lived. *Spread out the Bethany backdrop and place the Jesus figure on it near the edge.*

He was traveling to Bethany because he heard that his friend Lazarus had died after being sick. *Hold the Lazarus figure.*

scripture retelling *(continued)*

Lazarus's sisters, Mary and Martha, had buried Lazarus in a tomb four days ago. *Place the tomb on the Bethany backdrop. Place the Lazarus figure inside the tomb.*

When they heard that Jesus was on his way to see them, Mary and Martha went to meet Jesus. *Place the Mary and Martha figures near Jesus.*

They were very sad because their brother had died. They told Jesus, "If you had been here, Lazarus would not have died. You could have saved him! We know you are the Messiah, and you can work miracles."

Jesus told them, "Your brother will live again." But they did not understand what he meant. They thought he was talking about life in heaven.

Jesus was very sad and began to cry. He asked Mary and Martha to take him to the tomb where they had buried their brother.

Mary and Martha took Jesus to the tomb to see Lazarus. *Move the Mary, Martha, and Jesus figures to the tomb.*

When they got to the tomb, Jesus called to his friend who had died, "Lazarus, come out!" And Lazarus came out of the tomb. *Move the Lazarus figure outside the tomb.*

Since he was still wrapped in burial linens, Jesus told them to take the linens off so he could be free.

This is one of our sacred stories.

wonder wall

Ask the children what questions they have about the story. Add these questions to your "Wonder Wall." To model, you might ask some of the following questions:

- I wonder... Why didn't Jesus come sooner if he knew Lazarus was sick?
- I wonder... What happened to Lazarus after this story?
- I wonder... Is Lazarus the only person Jesus raised from the dead?

discussion

- What emotions did you notice in this story? What were Mary and Martha feeling when Jesus arrived? What was Jesus feeling? What do you think Lazarus felt when he was raised back to life?
- Even though Jesus knew he was going to bring Lazarus back to life, he was still very sad, sad enough to cry. Are there ever times when you just need to let your emotions out?
- What do you do when you have big feelings like Jesus and Mary and Martha had?

prayer

Dear God, you know what we're feeling even when it's hard to use our words. Remind us that you are with us even in our big feelings. Amen.

extension activities

Depending on time, you might add one or more of the following activities. We also recommend making storytelling materials available to children to retell the story, either as an option for independent play during the Sunday School hour, as a take-home kit, in worship bags, or any combination of these. Instructions and templates to create felt storytelling kits for children are included separately with this resource.

Activity A) Play a Game: Emotional Charades

Materials:

- One set of emotions cards (*included*) or index cards.
- Pens, pencils, or markers.
- A basket.

Instructions:

Print the included emotions cards and put them in a basket. You can also create additional cards on index cards. One by one, invite children (or adult leaders if children are too young to read) to draw a card and act out that emotion without using words for the other children to guess.

Activity B) Read a Book: *When Sadness is at Your Door*

When Sadness is at Your Door. Written and illustrated by Eva Eland. Random House Books for Young Readers, 2019.

Even Jesus was sad sometimes, so what do we do with our sadness? Read the book together or make it available for older children to read independently. You might also choose to read this book as a children's moment in worship or send a video read-aloud to parents during the week.

Activity C) Creative Expression: Emotions Chart

Materials:

- An emotions chart for each child (*included*).
- Pencils, crayons, and/or markers.

Instructions:

Print a copy of the emotions chart for each child and invite them to draw what each emotion looks like for them in the box. Encourage them to use the chart to talk to their trusted grown ups whenever they're feeling big feelings.



about the creator

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Anna Strickland (*she/her*) looks for the Divine in the everyday like treasure in clay jars and first encountered God in the integration of her spiritual self and artistic self. She is a native Austinite and graduated from the University of Texas where she now works as a college minister, especially serving LGBTQ students.

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