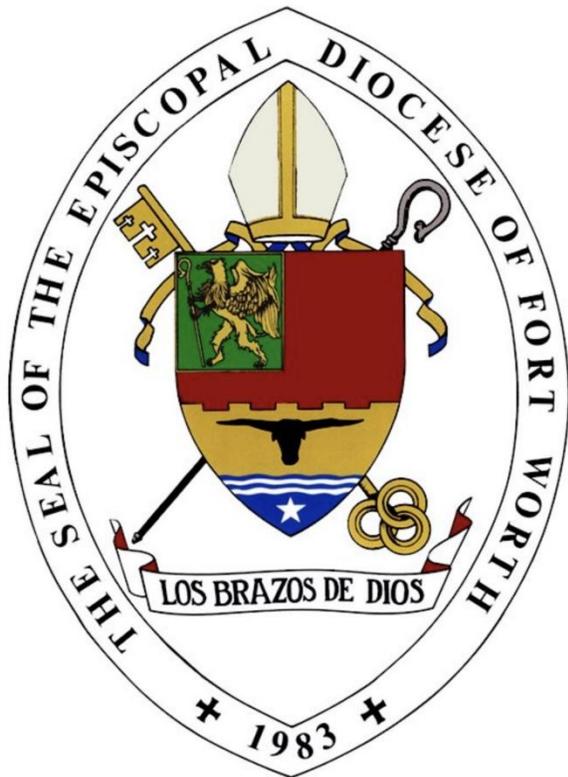


EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

A lectionary-based Sunday school curriculum for Pre-K through High School



**FIFTH
SUNDAY
IN LENT**

Year A

A free resource created by the Christian Education Commission
of the Anglican Diocese of Fort Worth

Sunday School Curriculum for the Fifth Sunday in Lent, Year A

Lectionary Texts:

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Psalm 130

Romans 6:15-23

John 11: (1-17) 18-44

Ezekiel 37:1-14

37 The LORD put his strong hand on me. His Spirit brought me away from my home. He put me down in the middle of a valley. It was full of bones. ² He led me back and forth among them. I saw a huge number of bones in the valley. The bones were very dry.

³ The LORD asked me, “Son of man, can these bones live?”

I said, “LORD and King, you are the only one who knows.”

⁴ Then he said to me, “Prophesy to these bones. Tell them, ‘Dry bones, listen to the LORD’s message. ⁵ The LORD and King speaks to you. He says, “I will put breath in you. Then you will come to life again. ⁶ I will attach tendons to you. I will put flesh on you. I will cover you with skin. So I will put breath in you. And you will come to life again. Then you will know that I am the LORD.””

⁷ So I prophesied just as the LORD commanded me to. As I was prophesying, I heard a noise. It was a rattling sound. The bones came together. One bone connected itself to another. ⁸ I saw tendons and flesh appear on them. Skin covered them. But there was no breath in them.

⁹ Then the LORD said to me, “Prophesy to the breath. Prophesy, son of man. Tell it, ‘The LORD and King says, “Breath, come from all four directions. Go into these dead bodies. Then they can live.””

¹⁰ So I prophesied just as he commanded me to. And the breath entered them. Then they came to life again. They stood up on their feet. They were like a huge army.

¹¹ Then the LORD said to me, “Son of man, these bones stand for all of the people of Israel. The people say, ‘Our bones are dried up. We’ve lost all hope. We are cut off.’

¹² “So prophesy. Tell them, ‘The LORD and King says, “My people, I am going to open up your graves. I am going to bring you out of them. I will take you back to the land of Israel. ¹³ So I will open up your graves and bring you out of them. Then you will know that I am the LORD. You are my people. ¹⁴ I will put my Spirit in you. And you will live again. I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I have spoken. I have done it,” announces the LORD.”

Psalm 130

¹ LORD, I cry out to you
because I’m suffering so deeply.

² Lord, listen to me.
Pay attention to my cry for your favor.

³ LORD, suppose you kept a record of sins.
Lord, who then wouldn’t be found guilty?

⁴ But you forgive.
So people have respect for you.

⁵ With all my heart I wait for the LORD to help me.
I put my hope in his word.

⁶ I wait for the Lord to help me.
I wait with more longing than those on guard duty wait for the morning.
I’ll say it again.
I wait with more longing than those on guard duty wait for the morning.

⁷ Israel, put your hope in the LORD,
because the LORD’s love never fails.
He sets his people completely free.

⁸ He himself will set Israel
free from all of their sins.

Romans 6:15-23

¹⁵ What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! ¹⁶ Don’t you know that when you give yourselves to obey someone you become that person’s slave? You can be slaves of sin. Then you will die. Or you can be slaves who obey God. Then you will live a godly life. ¹⁷ You used to be slaves of sin. But thank God that with your whole heart you obeyed the teachings you were given! ¹⁸ You have been set free from sin. You have become slaves to right living.

¹⁹ Because you are human, you find this hard to understand. So I have said it in a way that will help you understand it. You used to give the parts of your body to be slaves to unclean living. You were becoming more and more evil. Now give your bodies to be slaves to right living. Then you will become holy.

²⁰ Once you were slaves of sin. At that time right living did not control you. ²¹ What benefit did you gain from doing the things you are now ashamed of? Those things lead to death!

²² You have been set free from sin. God has made you his slaves. The benefit you gain leads to holy living. And the end result is eternal life. ²³ When you sin, the pay you get is death. But God gives you the gift of eternal life because of what Christ Jesus our Lord has done.

John 11:1-44

11 (A man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village where Mary and her sister Martha lived. ² Mary would later pour perfume on the Lord. She would also wipe his feet with her hair. Her brother Lazarus was sick in bed. ³ So the sisters sent a message to Jesus. "Lord," they told him, "the one you love is sick." ⁴ When Jesus heard this, he said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory. God's Son will receive glory because of it."

⁵ Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶ But after he heard Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was for two more days. ⁷ Then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea." ⁸ "But Rabbi," they said, "a short time ago the Jews tried to kill you with stones. Are you still going back there?" ⁹ Jesus answered, "Aren't there 12 hours of daylight? A person who walks during the day won't trip and fall. He can see because of this world's light. ¹⁰ But when he walks at night, he'll trip and fall. He has no light." ¹¹ After he said this, Jesus went on speaking to them. "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep," he said. "But I am going there to wake him up." ¹² His disciples replied, "Lord, if he's sleeping, he will get better." ¹³ Jesus had been speaking about the death of Lazarus. But his disciples thought he meant natural sleep. ¹⁴ So then he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵ For your benefit, I am glad I was not there. Now you will believe. But let us go to him." ¹⁶ Then Thomas, who was called Didymus, spoke to the rest of the disciples. "Let us go also," he said. "Then we can die with Jesus."

¹⁷ When Jesus arrived, he found out that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days.) ¹⁸ Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁹ Many Jews had come to Martha and Mary. They had come to comfort them because their brother was dead.

²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him. But Mary

stayed at home. ²¹ “Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “I wish you had been here! Then my brother would not have died. ²² But I know that even now God will give you anything you ask for.” ²³ Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” ²⁴ Martha answered, “I know he will rise again. This will happen when people are raised from the dead on the last day.” ²⁵ Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even if he dies. ²⁶ And those who live and believe in me will never die. Do you believe this?” ²⁷ “Yes, Lord,” she told him. “I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God. I believe that you are the One who was supposed to come into the world.”

²⁸ After she said this, she went back home. She called her sister Mary to one side to talk to her. “The Teacher is here,” Martha said. “He is asking for you.” ²⁹ When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. ³⁰ Jesus had not yet entered the village. He was still at the place where Martha had met him. ³¹ Some Jews had been comforting Mary in the house. They noticed how quickly she got up and went out. So they followed her. They thought she was going to the tomb to cry there.

³² Mary reached the place where Jesus was. When she saw him, she fell at his feet. She said, “Lord, I wish you had been here! Then my brother would not have died.”

³³ Jesus saw her crying. He saw that the Jews who had come along with her were crying also. His spirit became very sad, and he was troubled. ³⁴ “Where have you put him?” he asked. “Come and see, Lord,” they replied. ³⁵ Jesus sobbed. ³⁶ Then the Jews said, “See how much he loved him!” ³⁷ But some of them said, “He opened the eyes of the blind man. Couldn’t he have kept this man from dying?” ³⁸ Once more Jesus felt very sad. He came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone in front of the entrance. ³⁹ “Take away the stone,” he said. “But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad smell. Lazarus has been in the tomb for four days.” ⁴⁰ Then Jesus said, “Didn’t I tell you that if you believed, you would see God’s glory?” ⁴¹ So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up. He said, “Father, I thank you for hearing me. ⁴² I know that you always hear me. But I said this for the benefit of the people standing here. I said it so they will believe that you sent me.” ⁴³ Then Jesus called in a loud voice. He said, “Lazarus, come out!” ⁴⁴ The dead man came out. His hands and feet were wrapped with strips of linen. A cloth was around his face. Jesus said to them, “Take off the clothes he was buried in and let him go.”

Overview of the Texts:

It should be apparent from the pairing of the texts for today’s lectionary that the dominant theme is the Resurrection. Fleshing this out a little, we should say that the theme is along the lines of “anticipating the Resurrection.” Within the context of the liturgical year, it makes a great deal of sense to include the passage from the Gospel today: next week is Palm Sunday, wherein we recount the entrance of our Lord into

Jerusalem, and Jesus' raising of Lazarus, in the narrative, provides the set up for that entrance. It's kind of His last stop on the road, as well as the precursor to the Jews' desire to kill Jesus. That said, we also find a deeper spiritual meaning in the inclusion with the raising of Lazarus of the prophetic vision of Ezekiel, who foresaw the revivification of the dry bones of the House of Israel. So, we have the prophetic vision in the Old Testament passage, combined with the longing cry of the Psalmist to be raised from the depths of the earth, completed in the action of Jesus in raising a man four days dead. Rounding this out, we hear from St Paul that the fruit of that resurrection from the slavery of sin and death is sanctification to eternal life.

PreK-Kinder Lesson Plan:

Opening Prayer: Lord's Prayer

Supplies & Preparation:

Supplies: One copy for each child of the black-and-white icon found at the bottom, one copy in color of the colored icon found at the bottom (you will need to have this close by to show the children as they work on the craft), crayons, markers, etc.

Preparation: If you have time during the week and want to color in a copy of the black-and-white icon using the colored icon as a guide, you may do this as well. It may be less confusing to the children - but only do this if you have time.

Lesson:

- Read John 11:38-44 from the passage above.
- Tell the children a little bit about the story:
 - This story happens right before Jesus goes into Jerusalem the last time.
 - The reason why Jesus brought Lazarus back to life is because Jesus loved him very much.
 - Jesus also wanted to show people that He and His Father have the power to raise people from the dead.
 - Jesus reveals the glory of His Father when Jesus exercises His power as an act of love.

Activity:

- Tell the children that they will be coloring in an icon of what Jesus did for Lazarus.
- An icon, or any holy picture, is a way that we see the wonderful things that God does for us, and for others.

- What are some other holy pictures? *Stained glass windows, paintings, etc.*
- Because these are holy pictures, we need to pray while we color them in. The act of coloring them in is a way that we can come to know better what Jesus did, and love Him more.
- So, before beginning, say this prayer:
 - “Lord, teach me to pray with my hands, my arms, and all my strength. Remind me that the work of my hands belongs to You and that it is fitting to return this gift to You. Yet, if I work for the pleasure of others, like a flowering plant in the evening I will wither. But if I work for the love of goodness, I will remain in goodness. And the time to work for goodness and for Your Glory is now. *Amen.*”
- Then, let them start coloring in the icon. They should use the already colored icon as a guide.
- Once the children are finished, you should give them to your priest to bless. If the children don't finish, they can still take them home to finish them, but they should bring them back to the church for the priest to bless later.

Closing Prayer: Lord's Prayer

Elementary Lesson Plan:

Opening Prayer: Lord's Prayer

Supplies & Preparation:

Supplies: One copy for each child of the black-and-white icon found at the bottom, one copy in color of the colored icon found at the bottom (you will need to have this close by to show the children as they work on the craft), crayons, markers, etc.

Preparation: If you have time during the week and want to color in a copy of the black-and-white icon using the colored icon as a guide, you may do this as well. It may be less confusing to the children - but only do this if you have time.

Lesson:

- Read the Gospel lesson.
- Point out the part at the beginning of the story where Jesus heard that Lazarus was sick but chose to stay where he was for two more days.
 - Jesus knew Lazarus was going to die.
 - Jesus stayed behind so that when he got to Lazarus there would be no question that he was really dead.

- Explain the reasons why Jesus chose to raise Lazarus from the dead.
 - First, he loved Lazarus; he wept even though he knew that he was going to raise him.
 - He used this opportunity to display his power over death itself.
 - He used this as a way to publicly and powerfully proclaim the access to eternal life for all who believe in him.

Activity:

- Next, tell the children that they will be coloring in an icon of what Jesus did for Lazarus.
- Tell them that an icon, or any holy picture, is a way that we see the wonderful things that God does for us, and for others.
- What are some other kinds of holy pictures? *Stained glass windows, paintings, etc.*
- Can you name any famous holy pictures?
- Where do you see holy pictures in your church?
- Do these holy pictures help you in your worship, knowing about God's work, or inspire you in some way?
- How might you use a holy picture in your private worship at home? *A holy picture can be used to help you focus on God as you pray, serve as a reminder or inspiration of holy behavior (especially if the image is of a Saint or Bible hero), or simply a reminder to pray.*
- Because these are holy pictures, we need to pray while we color them in. The act of coloring them in is a way that we can come to know what Jesus did better, and love Him more.
- So, before beginning, say this prayer:
 - "Lord, teach me to pray with my hands, my arms, and all my strength. Remind me that the work of my hands belongs to You and that it is fitting to return this gift to You. Yet, if I work for the pleasure of others, like a flowering plant in the evening I will wither. But if I work for the love of goodness, I will remain in goodness. And the time to work for goodness and for Your Glory is now. *Amen.*"
- Then, let them start coloring in the icon. They should use the already colored icon as a guide.
- Once the children are finished, you should give them to your priest to bless. If the children don't finish, they can still take them home to finish them, but they should bring them back to the church for the priest to bless later.

Closing Prayer: The Collect of the Day

Junior/Senior High Lesson Plan:

Opening Prayer: Lord's Prayer, Apostles' Creed, Hail Mary

Supplies & Preparation: Bibles

Discussion:

- Today's lesson focuses on the three things Jesus did in connection with the actual Raising of Lazarus. They are:
 - Jesus Wept
 - Jesus Prayed
 - Jesus Acted
- Before we jump into these, the children need a little context on the Reading, and why it's read now:
 - As in the *Overview* above, the raising of Lazarus is the "last stop" on Jesus' final journey to Jerusalem.
 - Since we're celebrating Palm Sunday and the Triumphal Entry next week, we need this as a kind of set-up to what will happen as we begin Holy Week.
 - But there's more. Within the story of the Gospel (particularly of John), Jesus' raising of Lazarus is the catalyst that causes the Sanhedrin to actively seek Jesus' death.
 - We note (again, especially in John) that this group had ample opportunity over the previous three years to arrest and execute Jesus, but, "His time had not yet come."
 - This event - the raising of Lazarus - was not like the other events, however. Before, Jesus taught uncomfortable things; this time, He does something so astounding that it cannot be left unanswered.
 - So, in closing (with regard to context), the Raising of Lazarus is the spark that causes both the Triumphal Entry, and the Crucifixion:
 - It causes the Triumphal Entry because people suddenly start very seriously believing that Jesus is the Promised Messiah.
 - It causes the Crucifixion because the Sanhedrin starts actively persecuting Jesus in response to what He does in Bethany.
- Jesus Wept:
 - What is the nature of Jesus' response to the death of Lazarus?
 - Why do we cry?
 - What kinds of emotions cause us this kind of pain?
 - What kind of relationship do we have to have with someone to feel this way?

- Is Lazarus special or unique?
 - Does Jesus weep for us?
- Jesus Prayed:
 - What are the characteristics of Jesus' Prayer to His Father?
 - What is His stated purpose in praying?
 - Does He need?
 - If not, why does He?
 - What example do we take from this?
- Jesus Acted:
 - What does Jesus do?
 - What does this reveal about the relationship between prayer and action?
- Closing:
 - Of what is the Raising of Lazarus symbolic?
 - From the preceding discussion, what symbolic content can we take away with us from this event?
 - What does it do to impact your life?

Closing Prayer: The Collect of the Day



RAISING OF LAZARUS

