

Children's liturgy – Fifth Sunday of Lent (Year A)

Preparing the worship space

Colour: purple

Song suggestions: Praise to you, O Christ our Saviour (200, Laudate)

Welcome: Today we hear about an amazing thing that Jesus does when his friend Lazarus becomes sick and dies. Let's think a bit more about this today.

Opening prayer: God of light and power, we give thanks to you for the gift of life. Help us to do what we can so all people throughout the world can enjoy this gift. Amen.

First reading (optional): Ezekiel 37:12-14

Psalm (optional): Ps 129 r. 7

Gospel Acclamation *everyone stands and sings the acclamation together. For Lent we use an acclamation that doesn't use the word 'Alleluia'.*

Gospel: John 11:1-45 or John 11:3-7, 17, 20-27, 33-45. *Below is the shortened version.*

The sisters sent Jesus a message: "Lord, your dear friend is ill."

When Jesus heard it, he said, "The final result of this illness will not be the death of Lazarus; this has happened in order to bring glory to God, and it will be the means by which the Son of God will receive glory."

Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. Yet when he received the news that Lazarus was ill, he stayed where he was for two more days. Then he said to the disciples, "Let us go back to Judea."

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had been buried four days before.

When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed in the house. Martha said to Jesus, "If you had been here, Lord, my brother would not have died! But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask him for."

"Your brother will rise to life," Jesus told her.

"I know," she replied, "that he will rise to life on the last day."

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me will live, even though they die; and all those who live and believe in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

"Yes, Lord!" she answered. "I do believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who was to come into the world."

Jesus saw her weeping, and he saw how the people who were with her were weeping also; his heart was touched, and he was deeply moved. "Where have you buried him?" he asked them.

"Come and see, Lord," they answered.

Jesus wept. "See how much he loved him!" the people said.

But some of them said, "He gave sight to the blind man, didn't he? Could he not have kept Lazarus from dying?"

Deeply moved once more, Jesus went to the tomb, which was a cave with a stone placed at the entrance. "Take the stone away!" Jesus ordered.

Martha, the dead man's sister, answered, "There will be a bad smell, Lord. He has been buried four days!"

Jesus said to her, "Didn't I tell you that you would see God's glory if you believed?" They took the stone away. Jesus looked up and said, "I thank you, Father, that you listen to me. I know that you always listen to me, but I say this for the sake of the people here, so that they will believe that you sent me." After he had said this, he called out in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" He came out, his hands and feet wrapped in grave clothes, and with a cloth round his face. "Untie him," Jesus told them, "and let him go."

Many of the people who had come to visit Mary saw what Jesus did, and they believed in him.

(Gospel passage taken from Good News Translation® and used with permission, see details below)*

Gospel reflection: What do you remember about today's reading?

Jesus hears that his friend Lazarus who lives in Bethany is sick. By the time Jesus gets there Lazarus is dead and has been buried for four days.

Jesus goes to the tomb and asks them to roll away the stone which was blocking the entrance. He tells Lazarus to come out of the tomb. Lazarus walks out, covered in the cloths that he was buried in.

How do you think Mary, Martha and the other people there feel when they see Lazarus walking out of the tomb?

Why do you think Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead? *(So that the people believe that Jesus is the Son of God. To show that he brings life to those who believe in him.)*

Unfortunately sometimes, just like Lazarus in today's gospel, people do get sick. When this happens they go to the hospital where doctors and nurses work hard to care for them and try to make them better.

It can be very sad and worrying when someone we love is sick or dies. Jesus knows how we feel. He cried for his friend Lazarus who he loved.

For more children's liturgy resources and illustrations see cafod.org.uk/childrensliturgy

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Not everyone gets to see a doctor when they need to. It can be a long way to go to the nearest hospital or they might not be able to pay for their medicine.

Some people find it hard to stay healthy because they do not have enough food to eat. Or clean water to drink.

Before Rupali in Bangladesh had her daughter Dristy, she worried that she and her husband would not be able to afford to keep the baby strong and healthy.

But Rupali joined a group who, with the help of CAFOD, lend people money and give them training to grow lots of food, while also looking after the environment.

With the money she was given, Rupali bought some fish to farm. When she earned some money from her fish, she bought ducks and chickens, then a cow and now she has a wonderful garden where she grows food.

Her daughter Dristy is doing well at school and hopes to become a doctor.

Rupali says, "I will stay well, I will keep my environment well, and I need to fight to help the people who are around me too. When they are all in a good place, the entire village will be in a good place."

God gives life to us all. God created us and wants every single one of us to live a happy life, with all the things that we need to grow and be the best people we can be.

And Jesus came to show us how to live, how to treat others. This Lent we can look at our own lives and think about the changes that we can make so that everyone can live their lives to the full. We can help people like Rupali to make a big difference in their own communities around the world.

What change will you make this Lent?

Intercessions *You may want to ask the children to offer their own prayers or you can use the suggestions below.*

God gives life to us all and so we pray together...

We pray for world leaders: that the Holy Spirit may inspire them to do all that they can so that all people can live life to the full. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for all people who are sick throughout the world: that they may get the care and help that they need and find strength in the love of those around them. Lord, in your mercy...

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We pray for our parish, family and friends: that Jesus may bring hope to all as we try to make a change and help other members of our global family. Lord, in your mercy...

Closing prayer: Loving God, show us how to reach out with love and hope to others around the world, and to help them as they work to build a better life. Amen.

Activity suggestions

Share the accompanying activity sheet with the children. Invite them to colour the illustration and to draw around the children all the things that they need to live a happy life and be the best people they can be eg clean water, the chance to go to school, medicine, etc. One example, food, has been added to get them started. Encourage them to do the other activities on the sheet either now or at home later.

Remind them to share with their grown ups all that they have heard and thought about in the liturgy today. Encourage them to make one change to their own lives and to help others as they try to make a change to build a better life too.

To find out more about how you and the children can support CAFOD's work this Lent, go to **cafod.org.uk/primarylent**

*Gospel passage taken from:

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