

All Age Address

Year: A

Week: Lent 5

Passage: John 11:1-45

Materials Required

Mary/Martha Costume - a loose fitting dress and a head dress

Lazarus Costume

The following YouTube clip provides a full animated version of the Bible story.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dca8SSxXCmM>

The clip lasts for 5 minutes and 6 seconds and is suitable for all ages.

<The following script has been written to be used in a role play scenario. The character could be Martha or Mary who sets the scene. You also need a second person, preferably male to play the role of Lazarus. Both people could have a costume, but ideally should not be reading the story from the script. >

Martha/Mary:- The house had never had so many visitors. The front door never stopped opening and closing to let in a constant stream of people who had heard the amazing news; the incredible news; the impossible news that Lazarus was alive! Alive! A walking, talking, breathing, laughing man who had been... dead! Now that was news!

Lazarus had never been so popular; a local celebrity; more famous than...*< add in the name of a famous contemporary celebrity>* ever since that amazing day when Jesus came to Bethany. Lazarus could still hear the voice that drew him back from what seemed now like a deep, deep sleep. He needed no encouragement to tell his story to anyone who would listen. And he always ended his story in the same way. His eyes would open wide, his face would become full of life and joy and he would say, with a big smile, 'Don't you realize? Death is not the end!'

Lazarus:- 'The voice that brought me back,'

Martha/Mary:- he used to say,

Lazarus:- 'was like a flash of lightning that broke into the darkness and made my whole body jump. It had special power, so great it seemed to lift me up from the very uncomfortable bed I was on. I just had to do what it said. "Come out!" it shouted. "Lazarus, come out!"

'Now I expect you know what it feels like when you wake up in the middle of the night in a strange bed when you're on holiday. For a few moments you get all confused. Your mind races to try and work out what's happening. You're all disorientated - just for a second. But then slowly it dawns on you where you are. Well, it was a bit like

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that for me,' said Lazarus to his friends, 'except in my case, I couldn't see a thing. It was pitch dark and cold. I didn't know which way was up! All I could hear was that powerful voice.

'Oh, and there was one other thing. I was completely tied up! Strips of cloth around me from head to toe. Have you ever tried walking without being able to move your arms and legs? Well I did... and I fell over!

'Then, at last, there was another noise. Like stones grinding together. And through a chink, light came in, getting brighter and brighter. It was like the dawning of a new day in my bedroom.

'Did I say bedroom? It wasn't a bedroom! It was a cave. And not just a cave but a grave! They all thought that I was dead - well, actually I was... But Jesus brought me back to life.

'Well, I've never seen people more shocked in my life. They looked as if they'd seen a ghost and I suppose they had! But I was a living ghost... a living dead man... and all because of Jesus. He is God on earth; God come to rescue us from what is bad; to rescue us even from death. Don't you realize? Death is not the end!'

Martha/Mary:- Well, Lazarus went on telling his visitors this, all day long. As each new person came, he'd start all over again and each time he would end with the same words: 'Don't you realize? Death is not the end!'

Many of Lazarus's visitors became followers of Jesus, because of what Lazarus told them. They wanted Jesus to rescue them, too, from the grave and from the bad things they had done wrong that deserved death. And he did. They wanted to feel clean on the inside. And they did. They wanted to become friends with God's promised rescuer. And they did.

Have you ever wondered why there was such a large crowd on the streets to greet Jesus on that day when he came into Jerusalem on a donkey? Well, it had a lot to do with what had happened to Lazarus. All the visitors who had heard his story were there and they were crying out, 'Rescue us now, Jesus. Rescue us now.' Or in their own words: 'Hosanna! Hosanna!'

And Jesus did rescue... not just Lazarus, not just his visitors, but everyone in the whole world; yet it turned out to be in a different way than they expected. God is always taking us by surprise.

God rescued everyone when Jesus chose to go to the cross. He made possible a way in which all the bad that spoils our lives can be taken away if we come to Jesus. That's how a friendship with God starts.