

LARGE GROUP: Story (25 minutes) • Worship (10 minutes)

Engage kids' hearts through a dynamic and interactive Bible story, worship, and prayer experience in a Large Group setting.

Today's Bible Story: You Raise Me Up (Lazarus Raised) • *John 11:1-45*

Today's Bottom Line: Whatever happens, remember how powerful God is.

Monthly Memory Verse: *In this world you will have trouble. But be encouraged! I have won the battle over the world.* John 16:33b (NIRV)

Monthly Life App: Hope—Believing that something good can come out of something bad

Basic Truth: I can trust God no matter what.

Video (Media Package): Countdown (30- or 60-second version)

Leader enters, jogging in as though he/she is late.

Video (Media Package): Theme

OPENER

KARA: “Hey, everyone! (*Put your hands on your knees as though out of breath.*) Whew—I’m glad I made it! We’ve got these puzzles everywhere at kid zone, and it’s easy to get distracted and lose track of time.

“Who here likes to do puzzles? (*Pause to let kids respond.*) Me, too! There are lots of types of puzzles—jigsaw puzzles, word puzzles, brain puzzles, and more! My favorite part of a classic jigsaw puzzle is the reveal. Even if you’ve seen the picture on the lid, there’s something about seeing that picture take shape!

“It kind of reminds me of hope.

Video (Media Package): Theme Transition to Life App

“Hope is believing that something good can come out of something bad.

Video (Media Package): Life App Transition to Theme

“Hope means that you believe there’s a BIGGER picture—even though you can only see one small piece. It means that you trust God and you believe that God can bring GOOD things even in the toughest situations.

(*Reference the large puzzle pieces on the wall.*) “As you can see, we’ve got a puzzle to solve here today, so we can practice looking for the bigger picture. This is called a slide puzzle. The pieces are all jumbled up, and we have to rearrange them to make the picture look right. But we can only move one piece at a time—by sliding it into the empty space, like this.

Demonstrate moving a piece into the empty space.

“Technically, you’re not ‘sliding’ it since you have to take the piece off the wall to move it; but you get the idea. We’ll take turns and work together. If we keep sliding the pieces and making the right moves, eventually we’ll get the pieces where they should be—and we’ll solve the puzzle!

“Here’s the good news, though: you don’t have to work alone. If you’re standing at the back of the line and you see a move that will get us closer to solving the puzzle, shout it out so we can hear. Do you think we can solve the puzzle in two minutes? Let’s give it try.

“Everyone line up, and let’s solve this puzzle!

AUDIO: Fun instrumental music

Have the kids line up in front of the puzzle. When the first kid is ready to go, start a two minute timer on your phone.

Let each kid move one piece, one time. Encourage them to keep the game moving and not spend too long thinking. Encourage the kids to help each other by calling out which pieces to move. (This can be especially helpful for the younger kids.) Kids can go the back of the line after they move a piece, then wait until their turn comes around again.

If time is running out, you can also step in and suggest some moves. If you run out of time, you can take a short-cut by lifting the pieces and putting them in place to finish—acknowledging that sometimes it’s hard for us to see the bigger picture!

When all the sliding pieces are in place, add the final piece.

“That was a tricky puzzle! I’m glad we had each other to help figure it out, because sometimes it’s tough to see the bigger picture. And yes, this picture is Easter-themed, because we’ll celebrate Easter later this month. I can’t wait!

“Everyone, stay on your feet, because now it’s time for us to sing, dance, and worship God together!”

WORSHIP

KERRI: “It’s so great to know that we’re never alone as we go through this life. God is always with us, through the good times and the tough times, and that’s why we can have hope! God has a good plan for each of us. Let’s sing this song to celebrate God’s faithfulness.

Video: “You Are Faithful”

“Before we keep singing, let’s watch this video together.

Video (Media Package): Live Loud Video from Get Reel

“We can live with hope when we remember what Jesus once said to His friends, the disciples. Jesus said this not long before He went to die on the cross for our sins. Here it is from John 16:33.

SLIDE: Memory Verse

“In this world you will have trouble. But be encouraged! I have won the battle over the world. (John 16:33b, NIV)”

“Jesus is more powerful than ANY trouble we face in life. That’s what this next song is about. Our hope in Jesus means that we don’t have to be afraid of what tomorrow brings. Jesus is alive, which means that HOPE is alive. Let’s sing this together!

Video (Media Package): “Hope Is Alive” Dance Moves Music Video

SLIDE: Theme Background

“What an awesome truth to celebrate together! You can have a seat.”

BIBLE STORY

Move behind the table where the rocks and supplies are laid out.

SETTING UP THE STORY

KARA: “When Jesus was living on Earth, traveling and teaching, He had no home of His own. But there were a few places He frequently stayed. One of these was the house of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. The brother and sisters lived in Bethany, two miles outside of Jerusalem.

“The last time Jesus had been in Jerusalem, it hadn’t ended well with the religious leaders. They were angry because they didn’t believe Jesus was the Son of God. In fact, they picked up stones . . .

Pick up one of the rocks from the plastic container.

“ . . . and threatened to kill Jesus. But Jesus and His friends left and crossed the Jordan River.”

Return the rock to the container, then pour the water over the rocks in the container. There should be enough water that the container resembles a river, with the water level visible above the rocks.

LAZARUS DIES

KARA: “While Jesus and the disciples were gone, Lazarus got sick—really, really sick. And as time passed, Lazarus didn’t get better. He grew more feverish and restless. Mary and Martha became so worried about their brother that they sent a messenger to Jesus.”

Move down to the medium-sized rock and the sheet of paper. Hold up the sheet of paper with the message on it, then wrap it around a rock. Gently toss it to one of the older kids and prompt them to read it.

KID: *(Reading the message.)* “Lord, the one you love is sick.” (John 11:3, Nlrv)

Take the rock and paper back from the kid, and set them back on the table.

KARA: “But instead of sending a message back, or leaving right away, Jesus turned and spoke to His disciples. He said . . .

Open the Bible to John 11:4 (Nlrv) and read.

“This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory. God’s Son will receive glory because of it.

“Then . . . Jesus stayed where He was, for two more days! Perhaps Jesus’ friends thought He would just make Lazarus better from a distance. But two days later, Jesus told His friends that they should go back.

“The disciples wondered if that was such a good idea. After all, they had LEFT Jerusalem because the

Pharisees had tried to hurt Jesus.

Pick up one of the original rocks from the “river.” Then set it back.

“Jesus told them . . .

Open the Bible to John 11:11 (NirV) and read.

“Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep. . . . But I am going there to wake him up.

“The disciples said . . .

Open the Bible to John 11:12 (NirV) and read.

“Lord, if he’s sleeping, he will get better.

“But Jesus said this.

Open the Bible to John 11:14-15 (NirV) and read.

“Lazarus is dead. For your benefit, I am glad I was not there. Now you will believe. But let us go to him.”

JESUS RETURNS

KERRI: “Wow. THAT was unexpected. And so sad! But Jesus had a plan.

“Jesus and the disciples returned to Bethany. They crossed the river again on their way.

Swish your hand through the water in the “river.”

“When they arrived in Bethany, they were spotted quickly by the men and women who had come to comfort Lazarus’ sisters. Mary and Martha heard that Jesus was approaching, and Martha ran out to meet Him. Would someone like to read what Martha said to Jesus?”

Choose an older girl with her hand raised. Open the Bible to John 11:21-22 (NirV) and hand it to her to read.

GIRL: “Lord . . . I wish you had been here! Then my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you anything you ask for.”

KERRI: “Jesus then told Martha that Lazarus would rise again. He said . . .

Open the Bible to John 11:25-26 (NirV) and read.

“I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even if they die. And whoever lives by believing in me will never die.

“Jesus asked Martha if she believed this. She said . . .”

Open the Bible to John 11:27 (NirV) and hand it to the girl to read.

GIRL: *"I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God. I believe that you are the one who is supposed to come into the world."*

KERRI: "Martha ran back to the house and told her sister, Mary, that Jesus was asking for her. So Mary went to see Jesus. She fell down at His feet. Who would like to read what Mary said to Jesus?"

Choose another older girl with her hand raised. Open the Bible to John 11:32 (NirV) and hand it to her to read.

GIRL: *"Lord . . . I wish you had been here! Then my brother would not have died."*

Thank the two girls and dismiss them back to their seats.

KERRI: "Jesus saw Mary's tears, and He saw the deep grief of the others around her. He asked where they had put Lazarus. As Jesus followed the crowd to the tomb where they had buried Lazarus, His deep sadness overflowed in tears. Everyone noticed.

"Some people saw Jesus crying and marveled at how much He had loved Lazarus. But others questioned: couldn't Jesus have saved His friend?"

LAZARUS IS ALIVE!

Move down to the biggest rock.

KARA: "Soon, the group reached the cave where Lazarus' body had been laid. A large rock blocked the entrance. Jesus told them to take away the stone.

Put your hands on the large rock.

"But Martha said that Lazarus had been dead for four days. If they moved the stone, there would be a terrible smell. Jesus said to her . . .

Open the Bible to John 11:40 (NirV) and read.

"Didn't I tell you that if you believe, you will see God's glory?"

"So . . . they pushed away the stone.

Slide or roll the rock a few inches down the table, with visible effort.

"Then Jesus looked up and prayed.

Open the Bible to John 11:41-42 (NirV) and read.

"Father, I thank you for hearing me. 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."

"Then Jesus called, *'Lazarus, come out!'* (John 11:43, NirV) Amazingly, Lazarus came out of the tomb! He was still wrapped up with strips of linen and a cloth around his face, but he was very much alive. Jesus told Lazarus' family and friends to take off the burial clothes and let Lazarus go. It was a miracle.

Jesus had brought Lazarus back to life!"

Move in front of the table as you wrap up.

WRAPPING UP THE STORY

KERRI: "Many of the people who had come to comfort Mary and Martha saw the incredible thing Jesus had done. And they believed in Jesus, too. Jesus demonstrated God's power in a BIG way that day.

"If we can remember how powerful God is, that can give us hope whenever we go through something difficult. We can choose to trust God and believe that God can bring something good out of something bad.

SLIDE: Bottom Line

[Bottom Line] "Whatever happens, remember how powerful God is.

"Let's pray and talk to our powerful God now!"

VIDEO: Bible Story

SLIDE: Theme Background

PRAY

KARA: "Dear God, You are ALL powerful. Jesus showed Your power in an amazing way when He raised Lazarus from the dead! Sometimes in our everyday lives, we can forget just how powerful You are. We can forget that You're always working in our lives because we forget to look at the bigger picture. Whatever happens in our lives, please help us remember that You are strong and powerful. Help us remember that You're with us through anything we might face. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

CLOSER

KARA: “When Jesus found out that His friend Lazarus was dying, He said, *‘This sickness will not end in death.’* (John 11:4, NIV) And He was right, wasn’t He? When Lazarus died, it wasn’t the end. After four days, God brought Lazarus back from the dead!

“We can have hope when we remember that God is more powerful than ANYTHING. We know that’s true because of what Jesus did for Lazarus, through God’s power. God can make something good come out of something bad. And you know what? God can still do that today!

SLIDE: Bottom Line

[Bottom Line] “Whatever happens, remember how powerful God is. Say that with me.”

LEADER and KIDS: **[Bottom Line]** “Whatever happens, remember how powerful God is.”

LEADER: “You might have a hard time with a subject in school or maybe you’re having problems at home, or with a friend. In times like that, you might feel like you’re stuck in a puzzle (*point to the puzzle on the wall*), trying to figure out what to do. But remember that our very powerful God is with you, whatever you’re going through.

“We may not be able to see or understand exactly how God is working, but we can believe there’s a bigger picture. We’ve seen how God has worked in the past, so we know **[Basic Truth]** we can trust God no matter what.

“Let’s head to Small Group now and talk some more about God’s power and how it can give us HOPE!”

Dismiss kids to their small groups.

Video (Media Package): Theme Loop