

Liturgy of the Word with Children
Fifth Sunday of Lent, Year A
22 March 2026
John 11:3-7, 20-27, 33-45

Catechist Background

Over the past two weeks we have seen Jesus described in the Gospel as the Living Water and the Light of the World. In today's Gospel reading we reflect on Jesus as the Resurrection and the Life.

More is known about Lazarus than the blind man in last Sunday's Gospel. Lazarus, Martha and Mary were friends of Jesus, whom they often welcomed to their home in the village of Bethany, about two miles from Jerusalem. Jesus probably stayed there often, but he was not there when Lazarus died some days before the Passover. John's account describes a typical Jewish burial: wrapped in linen, Lazarus' body was buried the day he died in a cave sealed with a stone outside the village. His sisters then began the thirty days of mourning at home, receiving condolences from friends and neighbours. By the time Jesus arrived, Lazarus had been dead for four days.

Setting the Scene

For the activity below, you will need one card per child, with the words "I am the Resurrection and the Life" written on one side of card, and pencils and pens for them to use on the other side.

We Say Sorry

Leader: Lord, by water and the Spirit you give us new life, Lord have mercy,

All: **Lord, have mercy.**

Leader: Christ, by the cross you brought pardon and hope, Christ have mercy,

All: **Christ, have mercy.**

Leader: Lord, by your death you brought peace and forgiveness, Lord have mercy,

All: **Lord, have mercy.**

We Pray (1)

God, help us to listen to your word so that we may see your glory. Amen.

Gospel Intro

When Jesus was alive, if you wanted to send someone a message, you had to send a person to deliver it. There were no cars, trains, e-mail, telephones nor post! So sending a message took time because travelling took a long time, and therefore people didn't get messages straightaway.

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel: John 11:3-7, 20-27, 33-45

Reflecting on the Reading with Children

In today's Gospel reading we hear about some friends of Jesus – two sisters and their brother.

- What were their names? (Martha, Mary and Lazarus);
- What happened to Lazarus before Jesus arrived? (he got sick and died, and was buried);
- Why did Martha and Mary send a message to Jesus (because they believed he was God's chosen one and that he could heal Lazarus, so they asked him to come to them urgently);
- What did Jesus do when he got their message? (he travelled to their home);
- Did he get there in time to heal Lazarus? (No, Lazarus died four days before Jesus arrived);
- What did Martha say when she saw Jesus? (You are the Lord. If you had come sooner my brother wouldn't be dead, but I know God will give you whatever you ask).
- What was Jesus' reply? (Your brother will live. I am the Resurrection and the Life. Those who believe in me will rise again);
- What did Jesus then do? (They took him to Lazarus' tomb and Jesus wept.)

- What did Jesus say at the tomb? (He prayed to God and then said "Lazarus come out")
- What happened next? Lazarus came back to life and walked out of his tomb!

Response

- Did Jesus really care about Martha, Mary and Lazarus? (Yes, he came when they asked, wept when he saw Lazarus had died, and then brought Lazarus back to life).
- Jesus was really upset in this reading, but did he stop caring? (No – he never stops caring)

We see in this story just how powerful Jesus was.

- What other words can we use to describe Jesus in this story? (God, caring, loving, a friend...)
- Give each child a card with the words 'I am the Resurrection and the Life'.
(Those who can write could write some of the descriptions of Jesus on that side of the card)
- On the reverse of the card ask them to write or draw something they will do this week that is compassionate and caring, just as Jesus showed compassion to Martha, Mary and Lazarus.

Before moving on to the Creed section:

Tell them: We hear a lot about death and life in this reading:

- Christians believe that we will all die, but that after we die we will be with God in a new way;
- We believe that Jesus made this possible for us by dying and then coming back to life;
 - He 'beat' death, and that he will do that for us too;
- We don't understand much about this new life (we call it "heaven") but we know we will be happy because we will be with God.

We Believe

Relate the Creed to what you have shared with the children by asking these questions and inviting the children to reply, 'I do.':

- Do you believe that God is our loving Father?
- Do you believe that Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life?
- Do you believe in the Holy Spirit who helps us to understand what God is like?
- Do you believe in our holy, catholic church, where we come to learn about God?

We Pray (2)

Again, relate the Prayer of the Faithful to the Gospel reading by saying: 'You gave new life to Lazarus, and so we pray...'

Leader: We pray for Christian leaders, that they always help those in need. Lord in your mercy,
All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for the world, that we will try daily to take better care of it. Lord in your mercy
All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for those who are sick and those who have died, that they will know your love.
Lord in your mercy
All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for our loved ones, that we may treasure each other and reach out to anyone who feels alone. Lord in your mercy,
All: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader: God, we know you hear us: help us to hear you in our lives and to do what you ask. We make our prayers through Christ our Lord.

All: **Amen.**