



TEACH IT COFFEEHOUSE SESSION 8

1. Materials

For this session each student will need—

- his or her own Bible
- optional: the student journal page for Session 8 (Using the student journal page is optional in the coffeehouse setting since table space will be limited.)

You'll also need—

- a pack of pencils with erasers
- optional: a few spare Bibles for students who've forgotten theirs

2. Session Intro

GOALS OF SESSION 8

As students experience this session, they will—

- see the miracle of Lazarus' resurrection through the eyes of those who witnessed it.
- compare their feelings about difficult or unfair situations with Martha's feelings about her brother's death.
- seek God's perspective on the challenging circumstances they're facing now—or will face in life.

PRAYER

Remind the group that God has something he wants to say specifically to each of them. Pray that their ears will be open to hearing his voice.

OPEN

Why Did He Weep?

Ask whether anyone in the group can quote the shortest verse in the Bible. There's a good chance someone can: "Jesus wept" (John 11:35).

Then ask—

Does anybody know why Jesus wept? What kind of thing would Jesus weep over?

Let them chew on this for a minute. They may answer "the condition of the world" or "the fact that people rejected him." Explain that in this session, they'll find out for themselves what made Jesus weep.

3. Pre-Dig

Setting the Stage

Share that the drama of Jesus crying played out in front of three groups of people. To get things rolling, they'll take a quick look at the first group. After that, they'll dig for more detail about the other two groups. Have students read John 11:1-16 from their Bibles and then discuss these questions:

What was Lazarus' health condition at the beginning of this scene?

He was sick (v. 1).

What was his condition at the end of the scene?

He was dead (v. 14).

Based on what Jesus said, why was Lazarus sick, and why did he die?

(If you're using the optional student journal pages, ask students to record this info in the space provided under Digging In, "What Jesus Wanted.")




-He died for God's glory, that God's Son might be glorified through it (v. 4).

-He died so that the disciples might believe (v. 15).

4. Digging In

Front-Row Seat at the Resurrection

Now that the stage is set, have the students read John 11:17-30 from their Bibles. Have them—

1. Read John 11:31-48 and mark every mention of the Jews and Jewish leaders with a Star of David  .
2. Mark every mention of Jesus with a cross  .
3. Mark the words *believe* and *know* with a light bulb  .
4. If you are hesitant about marking in your Bibles, write lightly so you can erase the markings later. If you're still not comfortable with it, that's okay. Just eyeball the passage and remember what Martha was pushing for versus what Jesus had in mind.

When most have finished (it's okay if some haven't), discuss the following questions:

What was Lazarus' condition at the beginning of this passage?

He was dead.

What was his condition at the end of the passage?

He was still dead (obviously, terminally dead!).

What were the first words out of Martha's mouth when she saw Jesus?

"If you had been here, my brother would not have died" (v. 21).

If you're using the optional student journal pages, ask students to write down their responses to the first question below before discussing it as a group. Then discuss the second question.

What did Martha want?

She wanted her own desires fulfilled—that her brother be healed and live.




How did what Martha wanted compare or conflict with what Jesus wanted?

Martha was operating from a limited perspective; Jesus had bigger things in mind. Martha wanted something in the immediate; Jesus saw a long-term goal. Martha wanted temporary relief from her hurt; Jesus knew that a resurrection would bring lasting relief from hurt.

5. Digging Deeper

Curious Crowd

As usual, some curious onlookers were observing the action between Jesus and his friends. Share that next, the group will look at how these people reacted to what Jesus did. Have them—

1. Read **John 11:31-48** and mark every mention of the Jews and Jewish leaders with a Star of David  .
2. Mark every mention of Jesus with a cross  .
3. Mark the words believe and know with a light bulb  .

When most have finished, discuss as a group:

What was Lazarus' condition at the beginning of this scene?

He was dead, now with a bad odor (v. 39).

What was his condition at the close of the passage?

He was alive (v. 44).

What human traits did you see in Jesus?

-Grief: He wept; he was deeply moved and troubled when he saw his friends weeping.

-Intimacy: He loved his friend.

How did the Jews witnessing these events respond to Lazarus' resurrection?

-Many believed in Jesus (v. 45).

-Some went to the Pharisees to tell them what Jesus did (v. 46).

How did the Jewish leaders take the news of Lazarus' resurrection?

-They acknowledged that Jesus' actions would cause many to follow him (v. 48).

-They were afraid of losing their power and influence (v. 48).

6. Taking It Inward

"Lord, If You Would Just..."

Draw the students' attention to the difference between Martha's desires and Jesus' desires. Then ask—

What good came from the tragedy of Lazarus' death?

-Many Jews believed.

-The disciples' faith (including the faith of Lazarus and his family members) was probably strengthened.

-Centuries later, we have this account to strengthen our faith!

Would this have happened had Martha and Mary received their short-term wish?

No. Mary and Martha didn't want Lazarus to die. Had Jesus granted their desire (the healing of a sick man), he couldn't have resurrected a dead man.

Ask your students to think about the "Lazarus situations" in their lives. Explain that these are situations that make them desperate for God to *do something!* Have them write down a few that come to mind, either on a napkin or on their journal pages if you're using them. Then ask them to share their "Lazarus situations" with the group. Allow time for them to listen to and encourage one another.

7. Cross-Checking

Perspective Is Everything

Remind the group that God has our best interests in mind—all the time and in every situation. Because of God's unchanging character, this is always true, even when it doesn't seem like it. Explain that the Cross-Checking verses give God's perspective on the "Lazarus situations" in their lives.

As students read the passages, have them look for anything that tells them how to handle their "Lazarus situations" or what help they can expect from God. We've noted possible observations below for your reference.

Genesis 50:18-20

(The action picks up just after Joseph revealed his identity to his brothers in Egypt.)

What man intends for evil, God can use for good to accomplish his will.

Romans 8:24-39

-God's Spirit helps us in our weakness.

-God's Spirit intercedes for us when we can't pray.

-God causes all things to work for the good of those who love him and have been called according to his purpose.

-God is for us!

-Nothing can separate us from his love, not even a "Lazarus situation."

After a few minutes, discuss these questions in light of the information in Genesis and Romans:

What is God saying to you about your "Lazarus situation(s)"?

How can you use the challenges you face as an opportunity for the work of God to be displayed?

What might your challenging situations be preparing you for?

8. Wrapping It Up

If You're Reading This, Something Went Wrong

Ask any volunteers to share how the events of John 11 (along with the cross-references they just read) can help them this week as they deal with their "Lazarus situations."

Close by asking—

Have you ever seen an action movie where the hero got into a tight spot and popped in a tape or CD that said, "Well, if you're hearing these words, something must have gone wrong!"? Then the voice on the tape gives the guy a plan to help get him out of the jam.

Take a moment to write down—either on napkins or on your journal pages—a truth from this session that can help you whenever something in your life goes wrong. Right now, you may be sailing along with no problems. But a day will come when you'll need the encouragement of this session.

Give the group members an opportunity to jot down the truth they want to remember before closing with prayer. Ask students to think of a specific way to apply their truth—either in their personal Lazarus situations or in their friends' Lazarus situations. Then ask them to brainstorm creative ways they can keep each other accountable to applying their truth this week. Ideas might include:

- setting up a text "phone tree" to launch at a particular time in the week, asking students how they're doing with their truth.
- pairing up and checking in with a partner every day.