



TEACH IT COLLEGE AGE SESSION 8

1. Materials

For this session each student will need—

- the Session 8 Scripture sheet
- the student journal page for Session 8
- his or her own Bible, a pen, and a notebook

You'll also need—

- a whiteboard and markers
- a pack of colored pencils (at least three colors per student)

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

Divide the whiteboard into two columns—WHAT JESUS WANTED and WHAT MARTHA WANTED. Ask a volunteer to read John 11:1-16 aloud for the group. Then ask the questions below. You may want to point out that the questions ask for obvious answers, but it's relevant info that you'll process as a group.

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?

(Write this info on the whiteboard under WHAT JESUS WANTED. Ask students to record the same info in the chart on their journal pages.)




-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 students read John 11:17-30 using their Scripture sheets. As they read, ask them to mark the following, using a different colored pencil for each. Have them—

1. Mark every mention of Martha (including what she said and did) with a female stick figure .
2. Mark every mention of Jesus with a cross .
3. Mark the words *know* and *believe* with a light bulb .

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).

Ask students to write on their journal pages their responses to the first question below before discussing it as a group. Then discuss the second question.

What did Martha want?

(Record students' thoughts under WHAT MARTHA WANTED on the whiteboard.)

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 students' attention back to the whiteboard. Point out 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.

Can you blame Martha and Mary? Why is it so difficult to see situations from God's perspective?

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. Then ask them to share their "Lazarus situations" with the group or with a partner. 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 verses under Cross-Checking on their journal pages give God's perspective on the "Lazarus situations" in their lives.

Have students read the passages under Cross-Checking and respond to the questions that follow. Explain that as they read the passages, they should 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.*

John 9:3

Challenging circumstances can be an opportunity for the work of God to be displayed.

John 11:4, 14-15

Challenging circumstances can be awesome opportunities for God and Jesus to be glorified.

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.”*

James 1:2-4

Life’s struggles prepare us for bigger, greater things.

8. Wrapping It Up

If You’re Reading This, Something Went Wrong

After a few minutes, call for your group’s attention. Ask any volunteers to share how the events of John 11 (along with the cross-references they just studied) can help them this week as they deal with their “Lazarus situations.”

Then discuss these questions—

As a result of Lazarus’ resurrection, many Jews believed in Jesus, and many others had their faith in Jesus strengthened. But suppose Lazarus hadn’t been raised from the dead. Suppose Jesus walked up to Martha and Mary and simply said, “I know it hurts. I hurt with you. I’ll be with you, and I will see you through this.” This is basically what he says to us today.

How would this have changed Martha and Mary’s take on things?

How would this have impacted the Jews and disciples?

Suppose many would still have believed and been strengthened in their faith. Would Martha and Mary have thought it was worth the heartache?

Is it worth it to have to endure hardship and heartache in order for you and people around you to be strengthened?

Where could a miracle happen in the midst of loss and heartache that would have the same impact as someone being resurrected from the dead?

Close with this exercise—

Take a moment to write down 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.

