



## TEACH IT MIDDLE SCHOOL SESSION 8

### 1. Materials

For this session each student will need—

- the Session 8 Scripture sheet
- the student journal page for Session 8
- the Setting the Stage handout
- 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)
- optional movie clip: *Bridge to Terabithia*. Chapter 13, “Stranded”—DVD counter cues, 1:13:10 to 1:16:45

### 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 Do They Call It a Funeral? (When It Sure Isn’t Fun)*

Intro the clip by saying something like this—

**Jesse Aarons was a shy 10-year-old schoolboy who befriended a new girl at his school, Leslie Burke. The two became fast friends and went on wild imaginary adventures in a forest, creating a whole new world—Terabithia—that came to life in their eyes. On a day when Jesse chose to accompany his teacher (on whom he had a crush) to a museum, Leslie tragically drowned when she fell off a log trying to cross a rain-swollen river. She had hit her head on a rock, which knocked her unconscious, drowning her in the water. The clip is a funeral visitation.**

Show the funeral-visitation scene from the movie *Bridge to Terabithia* (see counter cues in Materials). After viewing the clip, ask—

**Have you ever been to a funeral?**

**What for you is hard about attending funerals?**

Share with the group that even Jesus had a hard time attending a funeral, as they’ll see in John 11.

### 3. Pre-Dig

#### Setting the Stage

Share that the scene they're looking at today played out in front of three groups of people. To get things rolling, the students will take a quick look at the first group. After that, they'll dig for more detail about the other two groups.

Call your students' attention to the exercise on their journal pages entitled Setting the Stage, which is John 11:1-16 in drama form. Assign parts, and let the "acting" begin! (You may want to give students a minute to get familiar with their lines. While they're prepping, divide the whiteboard into two columns—WHAT JESUS WANTED and WHAT MARTHA WANTED.)

After they've acted out the passage, discuss—

#### **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 the 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 the 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:

#### **Was Lazarus dead or alive at the beginning of this passage?**

*He was dead.*

#### **Was Lazarus dead or alive 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 the students to write in the space provided 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 differ from 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—

**Was Lazarus dead or alive at the beginning of this scene?**

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

**Was Lazarus dead or alive at the close of the passage?**

*He was alive (v. 44).*

**What traits from Jesus' humanity did you see?**

*-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 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 gotten their way?**

*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 on their journal pages 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 give God’s perspective on the “Lazarus situations” in their lives.

Have students read the passages from their Bibles and 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.”*

## 8. Wrapping It Up

*If You’re Reading This, Something Went Wrong*

After a few minutes, 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.”

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 B” to help get him out of the jam.**

**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 on their journal pages the truth they want to remember before closing with prayer.