

Fifth Sunday in Lent

“The Teacher is here and is calling for you.”—John 11:28 NRSV

Explore

display items,
paper, pens

The Things We Do

Bring to class pictures of events or things that teenagers give their attention, time, and energy to or that are meaningful to them (sports, shopping, clothing, friends, cell phones, CD, computers, video games). Discuss how much time the students spend on these things in a week. How strong is the call to do these things? What do they do when the call comes to participate in them? What makes these things attractive to the students? The students might rank these things according to their importance.

Extract

Reading the Story

Today we learn about Jesus performing a miracle, bringing a person who had died back to life. The event was the prelude to Jesus’ own death and resurrection that soon followed where Jesus gave Lazarus and each of us a new life.

Bible, copies of
questions, pens

Provide enough Inspired Version Bibles for the class so all students can read the lesson through together. Copies of the following questions may be run off ahead of time so each student has a paper to write the answers on. Have the students reread or look through today’s scripture again. Write on the paper provided the Bible verses that are the answers.

John 11:1–45

1. What was the relationship between Jesus and Lazarus’s family? (v. 5)
2. Why did the disciples question Jesus when he wanted to go back to Judea? (vv. 8, 16)
3. List difference and similarities of Mary and Martha when they greeted Jesus. (vv. 20, 21, 29, 32, 33)
4. Martha’s description of Jesus. (v. 27)
5. Jesus’ reaction in arriving at Lazarus tomb. (v. 35)
6. What was Jesus’ reason for praying out loud at the tomb? (v. 42)
7. What did Jesus say to Lazarus? (v. 43)
8. What was the reaction of the crowd when Lazarus came out of the tomb? (v. 45)
9. Verses that compare death and sleep. (vv. 11–14)
10. Verses that compare walking in day or night. (vv. 9–10)
11. Verses that compares death to glory of God. (v. 4)
12. Why did Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead? (v. 40)
13. What verses show that Jesus is the Christ? (vv. 41, 42)
14. Who does Jesus say that he is?(vv. 25, 26)

New Life

Martha and Mary both cried out in despair over the loss of their brother. Each time Jesus went to Jerusalem, he had stayed with the family. They had become good friends. It was four days before Jesus could go to Mary and Martha after Lazarus died. Jewish beliefs were that the spirit of the dead hovered over the body for three days, and after that time the body would be so decomposed that the spirit would no longer recognize the body and would leave. Coming back to life would be impossible. Judaism did not have a belief in life after death. Jesus used this event to teach those around him that only God had power over death. God through Jesus calls us to new life.

Experience

Jesus Calls—Tune In

Okay, so you have been lying around trying to avoid God’s call to you. Have you been hanging up, adding headphones so you can’t hear, rewinding, turning off, erasing, resetting, yelling louder, walking away, turning up the sound, closing the door? Everything is calling you today—good and bad—wanting your time and energies. Are you too busy to hear Jesus call? On the paper provided, pretend that Jesus left you a message on your answering machine or voice mail; he may even have text messaged you calling you to new life. Write what you will say when you return the call, or will you return the call?

paper, pens

God’s call is a personal invitation. A chance to start over. Ask the students if they have thought God has ever called to them to come forth? How did they recognize the call and how did it come to them? (through scripture, prayer, student’s mind or heart, a song, etc.) What was their reaction to God’s call? Did they tune in and get the message or do nothing at all? Discuss what they might do or want to do to answer God’s call and what new life God’s call could bring to them.

Quick Answers and Fast Solutions

Demonstration Activity: Before this activity, unbend a wire coat hanger. Curve one end into a loop for a handle and file the other end into a point. Coat the pointed end and the straight section with a substance like petroleum jelly. Practice this activity before doing the demonstration.

wire coat hanger,
balloons

Many of our cultures like and expect fast answers and quick solutions. We often complain that our computer doesn’t respond quickly enough, and we demand the QuickCare or Urgent Care philosophy is for every need or want in our lives. Blow up—about 3/4 full—and tie off one balloon. Then pop it with the wire coat hanger prepared earlier to demonstrate our desire for a quick response.

Suggest to the teens that God has a different, more deliberate way of calling us and shaping us. God works carefully in us and through others in finding answers. Blow up the second balloon just as the first. Holding the balloon firmly against your body, insert the point of the wire hanger through the extra-thick top (opposite the mouth piece) with a turning motion. Slowly put the wire through the balloon and out the opposite side near the mouth piece. The balloon should remain inflated on the wire hanger. (Practice, practice, practice.) God works in us and through us and continues to support us as we search.

Expand

Listen

Take time to hear what Jesus says. Listen humbly and prepare to do what he asks. Jesus taught that God loves us and is always there for us. The Community of Christ challenges itself to be a prophetic people—to see the need and respond to the call. This is a great responsibility. We are called to use our gifts and to tell the story. We are called to hear, listen, and respond to new life. Close with prayer.

Lectionary scriptures—Ezekial 37:1–14; Psalm 130; Romans 8:6–11; John 11:1–45; Moroni 7:47–49; Doctrine and Covenants 161:6