



Here We Come!

Ask teens or adults to help with this opening activity. Place chairs some distance apart in a large room. Each person will have one kind of sticker representing something in nature, such as birds, flowers, clouds, or animals. Give each child a sheet of construction paper with a simple scene such as green grass, blue sky, a tree, and a pond. The adults take turns calling to the children with the name of their sticker. "Come over here. I have the sun." "Come over here. I have fish." Children can go anywhere, but the idea is to pay attention to the one who calls out, "Come over here!"

Scripture Words and Worship

Jesus enjoyed being with families. One of the families we hear about lived in the town of Bethany, a couple of miles from Jerusalem. Introduce the children to the family of siblings, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. Create a figure for each one with their name on it, and one for Jesus. Hide the figures in the Bible and let the children take turns finding one and naming the person.

Jesus Calls

When Jesus calls, go see what he wants.

Scripture Words

Jesus loved Martha and [Mary] and Lazarus.
—John 11:5 NRSV

Up and at 'Em

Imagine Jesus and the disciples are coming for a visit. Prepare a snack to serve. Set the table with paper plates and napkins. Serve grapes or cheese and crackers.

Moving Music

- "I Hear Jesus Calling Me" (page 40)
- "Takwaba Uwabanga Yesu!" (There's no one, there's no one like Jesus!) *NS* 49
- "Jesus Loves the Little Children" (page 40)
- "Jesus Loves Even Me" (page 19)

Sense-ations

Use a mirror to observe expressions on the face when different emotions are felt. What does the face look like when one is angry, happy, sad, scared, hurt, wondering, singing, praying?

Use the dolls to retell the story. A box can be the tomb for Lazarus. Lay him in the box when he is dead and stand him up when he is alive. Water can be sprinkled on the faces of Mary and Martha when they are crying. Have tissue available to wipe off the tears.

Live and Learn

The scripture story comes from John 11:1–45. Children will not understand death and resurrection, but they can identify with some of the emotions expressed. Focus on the unity of the family and the faith they had in their friend, Jesus. Start the story in one corner of the room, where Jesus and the disciples were gathered. Use dolls to represent the family in the Bethany corner of the room. An assistant can move the dolls as the story is told.

- Jesus and the disciples were close to the Sea of Galilee. Jesus was teaching and telling stories to all the people who came to listen.
- A runner came up to him with a message. It was from Jesus' friend, Martha. She was worried about her brother, Lazarus, because he was sick. She wanted Jesus to come to where they lived and make him well.
- It was a long way to Bethany. It would take several days to get there. Jesus finished his stories before he headed out.
- Jesus and the disciples walked and walked to get to Martha's house. But as they got close, Martha came to meet them. She looked very sad.
- "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "you've come too late. Lazarus died. If you had only been here, he would still be alive."
- "He will live again," Jesus told Martha. "Do you believe what I am telling you?"
- Martha didn't really understand, but she knew Jesus loved her and her brother and her sister. Martha went back to the house to tell her sister, Mary, that Jesus was outside.
- Mary got up quickly. The friends who had come to be with her during this sad time got up too. "She must be going out to the tomb where Lazarus was buried," they decided.
- But Mary headed straight for Jesus. "Jesus, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died." And Mary started crying.
- Jesus knew how sad she felt. He asked to be taken to the place where Lazarus was buried.
- The friends showed Jesus a cave on the hillside, blocked by a large stone. People were buried in places like this when they died. It was called a tomb.
- Jesus told them to roll the stone away. Then he prayed, talking to God about what was happening.
- "Thank you, God, for hearing my prayer. I know you always hear me, but some of these people don't know that. So I'm saying my prayer aloud so they can hear what I am talking to you about. I know you love us. I know you want the best for us."
- When Jesus finished talking to God, he looked toward the tomb and called in a loud voice. "Lazarus! Come out!"
- And suddenly, there was Lazarus coming out of the entrance to the cave! He was alive! He heard the voice of Jesus and came when he was called. Everyone was happy. Mary and Martha still had tears on their faces, but they were tears of joy.

Story Talking

- How do you know when someone's calling you?
- How do you know the call's for you?
- How do you respond when someone calls? Why?
- What are some of the different ways someone calls you?
- Make some pretend calls using toy phones. Tell the child who's calling (mother, grandfather, friend) and listen to how the conversation goes.
- Imagine the phone rings and it's Jesus calling for you. What would Jesus say to you? What would you say to Jesus?

There We Go

Give each child a copy of the phone message in the pattern section, page 51. They can add color, stickers, or glitter.

