

CHRIST INTERRUPTS A FUNERAL

One word from Jesus, and death lets go.

WHAT YOU NEED

- Construction paper, one sheet per child
- Crayons
- Safety scissors and a glue stick per table
- The craft page, one per child, precut if your class is mostly four-year-olds
- The picture for this week, Schnorr's "Resurrection at Nain," printed large enough for a circle of children to see
- Wet wipes

THE TEXT

11 Soon afterward he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a great crowd went with him. 12 As he drew near to the gate of the town, behold, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and a considerable crowd from the town was with her. 13 And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." 14 Then he came up and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." 15 And the dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. 16 Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and "God has visited his people!" 17 And this report about him spread through the whole of Judea and all the surrounding country.

FOR THE TEACHER

One sentence is the lesson today. Everything else in the hour serves it.

Jesus is God, and He makes dead people alive.

This is a big story for little ones and you do not need to soften the sad part to teach it well. A boy died. His mother was crying. Say that plainly. Most of these children have already met death somewhere, a grandparent, a dog, a bird on the sidewalk, and they know more about it than adults expect. Do not hurry past the sadness to get to the miracle, because Jesus does not hurry past it either. He looks at her and He is sorry for her before He does anything at all.

Two things to say out loud more than once. First, God did not make people to die. Dying came into the world when Adam and Eve disobeyed God, and it has been here ever since. Second, Jesus is not simply a kind man who did a nice thing. Only God can speak to a dead person and be obeyed.

The pitfall to avoid is turning this into "Jesus fixes sad things, so do not be sad." Some child in your room is carrying a real loss. The promise is not that sad things stop happening. The promise is that Jesus is stronger than the saddest thing there is, and that He is going to undo it.

LAW AND GOSPEL IN THIS TEXT

Read this before you teach, and say it in your own words during the hour.

The Law. We were created by God to live forever. In the Garden of Eden, there was no death, but the devil came along and tempted Adam and Eve to eat the forbidden fruit, and the punishment was severe: "In the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

The Gospel. From Adam and Eve, all the way to us, death claims us because we are sinners, but Jesus comes to free us from sin, death, and the devil. We see it beautifully when he stops this funeral: the boy in the coffin, with his grieving mother, and with a simple word, Jesus undoes death. "Arise," he says, and the boy is alive again.

That's the same voice that will speak on the last day, when Jesus returns and says to us and to all his beloved dead, "Arise." The reign of death is ended, and we will live with Jesus in the new heaven and the new earth forever.

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

This is the whole job at this level. Tell them what happened, in order, and let them tell it back.

A mother was very sad because her boy had died. People were carrying him out of town. Jesus came walking in. He saw her crying. He felt sorry for her. He said, "Do not cry." He touched the bed the boy was lying on. He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." The boy sat up. The boy started talking. Jesus gave him back to his mother.

Then ask, and let them shout the answers. Who made the boy alive? Jesus. Can a person do that? No. Only God can do that. So who is Jesus? God.

THE LESSON

1 • The Classroom Opening (5 min)

Sign of the cross: "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."

Sing stanza 1 of "Jesus Loves Me."

Then pray the Opening Prayer.

The Opening Prayer. O Lord Jesus Christ, who met a widow at the gate of Nain and would not walk past her grief, but touched the bier and called her only son out of death by Your word alone: bless our study of Your Word this day, that we who hear it may know You to be the Lord

of life, and grant us to bring our own dead and our own dying to You without fear, waiting for the day You will speak that same word over all who sleep in You; who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

2 · The story (12 min)

Sit them close and tell it. Do not read it to them.

One day Jesus was walking toward a town called Nain, and a big crowd was walking with Him. Right when He got to the gate, another crowd came out. This one was a sad crowd. They were carrying a boy who had died. His mother walked behind him, crying and crying, because he was her only boy, and her husband had already died too. She had nobody left.

Pause here. Let it be sad for a second. Do not rush. Then ask them, and wait for the answers:

- *How do you think the mother felt?*
- *Do you think the people walking with her were happy or sad?*
- *Why were they sad?*
- *Have you ever been that sad?*

When Jesus saw her, He felt so sorry for her. He walked right up and said, "Do not cry." Then He touched the bed the boy was lying on, and everybody stopped walking. And Jesus talked to the boy who was dead. He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise."

Have them say it with you, loud: "Arise!"

And the boy did. He sat up. He started talking. And Jesus gave him back to his mother.

Pause again, and ask:

- *How do you think the mother feels now?*
- *Are the people still sad?*
- *Who made the boy alive?*

Can a person do that? No. Only God can do that. That is how everybody knew. Jesus is not just a nice man. Jesus is God.

3 · Tell it back (8 min)

Now they tell it to you. Go around the circle and let each child add the next thing that happened. Prompt with a question rather than the answer: who was walking out of town, who was walking in, what did the mother do, what did Jesus say.

If a child gets stuck, ask the child next to them. If the room gets it out of order, that is fine. Put it back in order together and tell it once more, quickly, all the way through.

This is the whole work of this level. They are not deciding what it means yet. They are learning what happened.

4 • Say it and move (6 min)

Have them lie down flat on the floor. You say, "Young man, I say to you, arise," and everybody jumps up. Do it four or five times, faster and sillier each time.

Then, calmly, once: Jesus is going to say that to us too, when He comes back. And everybody who died is going to get up.

5 • Look at the picture (5 min)

Pass around the picture of Nain, or hold it where everybody can see. Give them a minute to look before you say anything.

Then ask: where is the mother? Where is the boy? Where is Jesus? What is He doing with His hand?

Do not explain the picture. Let them find things in it.

6 • The craft (16 min)

See the craft page, "Arise." While they work, go table to table and ask each child: who makes dead people alive? Every child should say "Jesus" out loud at least once before the glue is dry.

7 • The Classroom Closing (8 min)

Ask the children who or what they would like to pray for. Pray a short prayer for what they name.

Then the Closing Prayer below, then the Lord's Prayer together, then the Apostolic Benediction.

WHAT CHILDREN ASK

"Is my grandma going to get up?" Yes. Everyone who belongs to Jesus is going to get up when He comes back. Say it plainly and do not add conditions a small child cannot follow. If you know the family situation is complicated, tell Pastor Wolfmueller or Pastor Davis rather than improvising.

"Did the boy die again?" Yes, when he was old. This was a picture of something bigger. When Jesus comes back and makes us alive, we never die again.

"Why did God let him die?" Because everybody dies, and everybody dies because sin came into the world. God did not want it that way. That is why Jesus came to undo it.

"Was the boy scared?" The Bible does not tell us. It tells us he sat up and started talking, so he was all right. Do not invent details to fill a gap.

MEMORY WORK & HYMN

Memory Work. "Young man, I say to you, arise." (Luke 7:14 ESV)

Say it together at least four separate times across the hour, not four times in a row. Once in the story, once in the movement game, once during the craft, once at the close.

Hymn. Pre-K sings stanza 1 of "Jesus Loves Me" rather than the block hymn, since the room is pre-reading. The congregation's block hymn through October 11 is LSB 578, "Thy Strong Word," and your children will hear stanza 6 of it down the hall.

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, thank You for making the sad mother happy again. You are stronger than dying. Take care of us, and take care of everybody we love, and bring us all to live with You forever. Amen.

Then pray the Lord's Prayer together.

Then close with the Apostolic Benediction: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen."

CREDITS

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These Sunday School Lessons are built especially for St. Paul Lutheran Church by Pastor Bryan Wolfmueller with Claude AI on the same Sunday Gospel Lesson.

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