



*God raised us up with Christ...  
That's because we belong to Christ Jesus.  
Ephesians 2:6*

connection  
ministries

# 2025 Large Group Leaders Guide

# INTRODUCTION

## RISE UP!

Have you ever tried to create something out of nothing? I am not talking about putting together a puzzle or painting a beautiful picture. I am talking about making something that is alive out of nothing? Are you able to breath on a dead plant and bring it back to life? Of course not. Only God has that kind of power. God has shown us that kind of resurrection power in the Bible. The very first evidence of this is when God created the world. He spoke and it came to be. God breathed life into Adam's nostrils and he became alive!

**Theme Bible Verse—Ephesians 2:6**

***God raised us up with Christ...  
That's because we belong to Christ Jesus.***

This week we will be learning how God raised up His people to new life with just His word. God wants to raise us up to new life in Jesus. On Day 1 we will be looking at a story in the Old Testament about a prophet named Ezekiel and the vision God showed him. It was a huge valley of dry bones.

The next day we will study the New Testament story of Lazarus and how his friend Jesus, raised him back to life again after he had been dead for four days! Jesus wants us to know that He has power over death because He is the resurrection and the life. We will learn how we can rise up and believe Jesus when our faith is tested.

We will also learn that God doesn't want us to live all by ourselves. We need each other to walk out in the freedom of Christ Jesus.

On the last day we will look at the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We will journey with two sad disciples who walked with him on the road to Emmaus, but they didn't recognize Him. Jesus explained all about Himself in the scriptures. Their eyes were opened when Jesus broke bread with them.

Jesus wants to walk with us everyday like the two men on the road. We can tell Him anything in prayer, trust Him for everything in our life, and tell others the good news that Jesus is risen. He is alive!

## **DAY 1— RISE UP AND HOPE**

### **Daily Bible Verse:**

*Ezekiel 37:13-14 “Then you will know that I am the Lord. You are my people. I will put my Spirit in you. And you will live again.”*

God gave the prophet Ezekiel a vision of a valley of dry bones. God told him to command the bones to rise up. God made the bones come alive again to make a huge army. God tells Ezekiel that He will do the same thing for His people. He will give them new life and hope again.

## **DAY 2— RISE UP AND BELIEVE**

### **Daily Bible Verse:**

*John 11:25-26 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?”*

Jesus raised up his friend Lazarus back to life after he had been dead for four days. He showed God’s glory to all the people there including Lazarus’ sisters. Jesus proclaims that He is the resurrection and the life. He wanted them to believe He was the Messiah. He wants us to believe.

## **DAY 3 — RISE UP AND LIVE**

### **Daily Bible Verse:**

*Luke 24:34 “It’s true! The Lord has risen! ...”*

It had been three days since Jesus had been crucified and buried. Two of the disciples left the others and walked to a village called Emmaus. Jesus met them on their journey but they did not recognize Him. Jesus explained all about Himself in the scriptures. Jesus opened their eyes to their risen Lord. Jesus wants to walk with us on our road. He wants our eyes opened to our risen Savior.

# HELPFUL HINTS

## BE PREPARED

To prepare for leading the large group lesson please read through this guide, watch the Large Group Leader videos by following this link - <https://connection-ministries.org/summer-friendship-gathering-training/> and study these Biblical passages prior to the event:



### DAY 1

**RISE UP and Hope**  
(Ezekiel 37:1-14)

### DAY 2

**RISE UP and Believe**  
(John 11:1-44)

### DAY 3

**RISE UP and Live**  
(Luke 24:13-35)

## ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION

It is vital for the Bible lesson to actively engage the adult friends versus lecturing. Ask questions, invite them to read the verse of the day, or help with skits or object lessons. Discussion questions and answers are also woven throughout the lesson.

## WAIT PATIENTLY FOR A RESPONSE

Those with disabilities sometimes need more time to process the question and formulate their answer. If he/she does not respond after a minute, rephrase it, or ask another friend to help you to understand what they are trying to say.

## CONNECT THE BIBLE LESSON

By connecting the Bible lesson to real-life situations it helps our friends apply what they are learning to their everyday lives. Object lessons and skits are great tools to help our friends connect the lesson to their life.

## OBJECT LESSONS and SKITS

- ◆ The object lessons for each day have been written into the large group lesson.
- ◆ Every Gathering will be given a list of supplies for each day's object lesson.
- ◆ Skits are important for our friends to see "real life" application of the lesson.
- ◆ Skit scripts are included in this Leader's Guide. They fit best at the end of each large group lesson.
- ◆ **Practice, practice, practice** so you are familiar with the script and not just reading your lines.
- ◆ Invite friends who are comfortable to be part of the skits.

## Day 1— RISE UP and HOPE

Valley of Dry Bones  
(Ezekiel 37:1-14)

### **Day 1 Bible Verse: Ezekiel 37:13,14**

*“Then you will know that I am the Lord. You are my people. I will put my Spirit in you. And you will live again.”*

**(Leaders are encouraged to practice with the group the daily Bible verse for each lesson).**

#### **KEY POINTS**

- God is faithful to keep His promises.
  - When the Word of God is proclaimed, it brings with it the power of God.
  - God wants to raise us up to new life in Jesus. He did this by dying for our sins and rising again.
  - We can be instruments of God, like Ezekiel, to help raise up others.
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#### **TEACHING AIDS**

- DAY 1 PowerPoint slides (Refer to CM website under Large Group Leaders Guide Day 1)
  - Object Lesson (included in the lesson where they fit best)
  - Skit Script (included in this Leader’s Guide)
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#### **DAY 1 LESSON** **INTRODUCTION**

Have you ever tried to create something out of nothing? I am not talking about putting together a puzzle or painting a beautiful picture. I am talking about making something that is alive out of nothing? Are you able to breath on a dead plant and bring it back to life? Of course not. Only God has that kind of power.

**DAY 1 LESSON**  
**INTRODUCTION CONT.**

God has shown us that kind of resurrection power in the Bible. The very first evidence of this is when God created the world. He spoke and it came to be. God breathed life into Adam's nostrils and he became alive!

We are going to learn in this lesson how God told the prophet Ezekiel to speak His Words to a valley of dry bones. When Ezekiel spoke God's words, flesh appeared on the dry bones. God's breathed on them and they stood to make a huge army.

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**OBJECT LESSON**

**Day 1 OBJECT LESSON: "Dry Bones, Come Alive"**

**Supplies needed:**

- 2 sheets of colored construction paper **OR** A puzzle box with pieces
- Table cloth for easy cleanup (optional)

**(This object lesson can be done in a few different ways. Choose either one.)**

**Leader:** Can you think of a way to bring something back from the dead to life again? No, we don't have that kind of power, but God does.

**Invite 1-2 Friends to help you demonstrate the object lesson.**

**Rip one sheet of paper in 2 pieces and give to each friend-helper. Make sure they are able to rip the pieces of paper.**

**Leader:** I would like you tear your paper into tiny pieces.

**If you are using a puzzle have the friend-helper dump the box of pieces onto the table or floor.**

**While they are tearing the paper into tiny pieces or dumping the puzzle say:**

**Leader:** Can you imagine being Ezekiel and seeing all the dry bones scattered in the valley? Not one bone was connected to another bone. It was just a huge pile of bones; they weren't even buried.

**OBJECT LESSON**  
**CONTINUED**

**Have the first group sit down and invite 1-2 other friends to come up and help with the next part. While they are coming up say:**

**Leader:** These tiny pieces of paper (or puzzle pieces) represent the dry bones God showed Ezekiel in his vision. They were scattered all over the valley. What a mess! Why do you think God put Ezekiel in the middle of this big mess of bones? It was to show them that Israel, God's people were in a huge mess. They disobeyed God's plan for them, their nation was divided, and they were slaves in another country. They felt hopeless, and dry like these bones.

Sometimes our lives may feel like a mess. Maybe you keep waiting to feel better from an illness. Or maybe you are having a hard time with someone at work or home. Are you going through a hard situation and you think it will never end? We all have messes that make us feel hopeless like dry bones.

**Leader asks the friend-helpers:** Now, I would like you to put the pieces back together again. **(The Friends will say that it is impossible).**

Ok, try speaking to them, if that doesn't work try breathing on the pieces of paper, make it look just like this. **(Hold up. the non-torn paper, or the box with the picture of the puzzle).**

**Leader:** It's impossible right? But with God, all things are possible. We will learn that God raised up His chosen people because Ezekiel obeyed God and prophesied to the bones.

**DAY 1 LESSON**

Our lesson begins, after many years of disobeying God and worshiping other gods, God allowed His people, the Israelites, to be taken captive by the evil king of Babylon. This was a dark and hopeless time for God's people. Their land, temple, and nation had been destroyed. Now they were slaves in Babylon. They became a people who had lost all hope; they felt all alone.

**Q. Why was this a dark and hopeless time for God's people?**

**A. The Israelites disobeyed God. He allowed them to be taken captive and sent to a foreign land. Their land, temple, and nation had been destroyed. They became a people who had lost all hope that God would save them.**

## **DAY 1 LESSON CONTINUED**

Think about a time in your life that felt dark and hopeless? Maybe you kept waiting to feel better from an illness or surgery and it seemed to take forever. Or maybe you are having a hard time getting along with someone at work or home.

It was during this hopeless time that God chose to give the prophet Ezekiel a vision. A prophet is someone who God uses to give a special message to His people. He speaks the very words of God.

Our story begins in Ezekiel chapter 37. Ezekiel is telling us what happened. *“The power of the Lord came on me. His Spirit brought me away from my home. He put me down in the middle of a valley. It was full of bones. He led me back and forth among them. I saw a huge number of bones in the valley. The bones were very dry.”*

In our passage God gave Ezekiel a vision. A vision is kind of dream, only you are awake. What a strange vision God showed Ezekiel.

*God said to me, “Prophesy to these bones. Tell them, ‘Dry bones, listen to the Lord’s message. The Lord and King speaks to you. He says, I will put breath in you. Then you will come to life again. I will attach tendons to you. I will put flesh on you. I will cover you with skin... Then you will know that I am the Lord.’ ”*

God wanted Ezekiel to prophesy to the dry bones! Prophesy is a word that means speaking or preaching the Words of God. Can you imagine? Ezekiel was to speak the words that God told him to this huge pile of dry bones.

**The Leader may want to review with the group: Prophet, vision, and prophesy.**

Ezekiel obeyed God; He spoke to the bones all that God said.

**Q. What was the message God told Ezekiel to speak to the bones?**

**A. “I will put breath in you. Then you will come to life again. I will attach tendons to you. I will put flesh on you. I will cover you with skin... Then you will know that I am the LORD.”**

*So I prophesied just as the Lord commanded me to. As I was prophesying, I heard a noise. It was a rattling sound. The bones came together. One bone connected itself to another. I saw tendons and flesh appear on them. Skin covered them...Then they came to life again. They stood up on their feet. They were like a huge army.*

**DAY 1 LESSON  
CONTINUED**

**Q. How did God make the dry bones come to life again?**

**A. He put His breath in them and caused them to RISE UP like a huge army.**

*Then the Lord said to me, "Son of man, these bones stand for all the people of Israel. The people say, 'Our bones are dried up. We've lost all hope. We are destroyed.' So prophesy. Tell them, 'The Lord and King says, "My people, I am going to open up your graves. I am going to raise you out of them. I will take you back to the land of Israel.... Then you will know that I am the Lord. You are my people. I will put my Spirit in you. And you will live again.' "*

God explained to Ezekiel that this vision was God's promise to His people. He would one day bring them out of captivity and back to the land he had promised. He promised to give them hope again. God wanted their hearts to be alive and not like dry bones.

**Q. What did God tell Ezekiel He would do for His people?**

**A. He would one day bring them out of captivity and back to the land He had promised. He promised to give them hope again. God wanted their hearts to be alive again and not like dry bones. This wouldn't be accomplished in their lifetime though. God love His people and wanted them to know that He was with them. God wanted His people to know and worship Him alone, even in their captivity.**

Wow! Do you see God's perfect plan? Do you see that God kept His promise? Just like the Israelites, we can rise up and hope again!

God's Word is powerful and He speaks to us today through the Bible. We can rise up again and live because of His promise to us.

*Romans 8:11 says "The Spirit of the God who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you. So, the God who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your bodies. He will do this because of His Spirit who lives in you."*

God's perfect plan to bring us out of our dead, dry bones was sending Jesus to take our place on the cross for our sins. Because God raised Jesus from the dead, we can be made alive with Him. When we put our hope and trust in Jesus, He breaths His Holy Spirit into our hearts. God makes us a new creation so **we** can know Him and worship Him alone.

**DAY 1 LESSON**  
**CONTINUED**

**Q. How does God give us new life?**

**A. God brought us out of our deadness and raised us up with Him by giving us new life in Christ Jesus and breathes His Holy Spirit into our hearts. God makes us a new creation.**

**2 Corinthians 5:17 “When anyone lives in Christ, the new creation has come. The old is gone! The new is here!”**

This story shows us how God wanted to revive His people and give them hope and new life. God wants the same for us, He wants to raise us up to new life through Jesus Christ. He has promised us eternal life in Him, and God always keeps his promises.

**Q. How can He revive us right now? (Give the group time to call out some answers.)**

**God revives us right now as we trust Jesus as our life giver. He died for our sins and lives in us through the Holy Spirit.**

**Through the fellowship of other Christians, Bible study, and prayer. We can remember His Word and promises to us.**

**Ezekiel was an instrument God used to revive the people of Isreal. How can we be instruments to revive others?**

**Q. How can we be instruments to revive others? (Give the group time to call out some answers.)**

**A. Share His Word. Encourage others with a smile, hug, or friendly words. Pray with them.**

Are you ready to Rise Up and Hope again? Or, maybe God is calling you, like He did with Ezekiel, to speak His words of hope to others.

## **DAY 1 SKIT – DEM BONES**

**Patrick: (Singing Loudly and badly as he dances in a silly way)** Dem bones, dem bones, gonna walk around. Dem Bones, dem bones, gonna walk arou.....

**Will: (Laughing with him)** Wow, you sure have the moves, Patrick!

**Melody: (Flatly)** Yeah, you look ridiculous.

**Patrick:** Ridiculous? I guess I do; but, Melody, it's fun! Dem bones, Dem bones gonna walk around...

**Melody: (frowns and crosses her arms, looking sad/mad)**

**Will:** Uh, Patrick... she's not amused.

**Patrick:** Oh, Melody, what's wrong? You usually love my dancing.

**Will:** Yeah, Melody, usually you would be singing right along with him.

**Melody:** Well, I don't know if I should tell you this. I am afraid you won't like to hear it.

**Patrick:** Yes we would, we're your friends, Melody.

**Will:** Yeah, We are here to listen. If something is bothering you, we want to know so we can help.

**Melody:** Ok, well, lately, ever since I heard about a friend of mine who has a really bad broken ankle. I just haven't felt like praising God. It feels like He's not even there. And those silly songs with all that joy just make me feel worse. I feel kind of like those dry bones in the story.

**Patrick:** I'm sorry, Melody. I know it hurts to worry about a friend.

**Will:** Yes, that's kind of how I felt when my mom was in the hospital. We all feel sadness and doubt at times. Sometimes I felt like God had just moved away.

**Patrick:** But you know what? Here's something I've heard. "If you feel like God is far away, guess who moved?"

**Melody:** What's that supposed to mean?

**Will:** Yeah, Patrick, what does that mean?

**DAY 1 SKIT—DEM BONES**  
**CONTINUED**

**Patrick:** Well, it means that God is always with us, in good times and bad times. He never leaves us. It's us that steps away from Him. In the Bible Jesus says, "I am with you always, even to the very end."

**Will:** My pastor last week told us when we feel God is far away we need to come near to God and He will come near to us. He said that's a promise from God!

**Patrick:** That's right Will, and we know God always keeps His promises.

**Melody:** You mean, I can get back to feeling close to God again?

**Patrick:** Sure.

**Melody:** But how do I do it?

**Patrick:** First, pray. Ask God to bring you comfort and peace. Ask Him to show you He is there. God can raise you up again just like He did with Dem Bones Dem Bones in Ezekiel. We can have hope again.

**Will:** Yeah, and you can hang out with other Christians who can encourage you...like us!

**Melody: (smiles and laughs)**

**Patrick:** Hey let's pray with Melody and for her friend right now. (They hold hands. Patrick walks forward and talks to the congregation). You can pray with us too.

"Dear God, Thank you for your promise to always be with us. Give Melody Your peace and joy. And let Melody's friend know you are near. Amen.

**Melody:** Thanks everyone. I feel a little better already. Now I am ready to sing that silly song...**(The three dance as they sing: Dem bones, dem bones gonna walk around (3X) Now hear the Word of the Lord..."**

**(You may want to have the words up on a screen for all to see.)**

**"Dem Bones" YouTube link with music and lyrics.**

**<https://youtu.be/oRisIj0Scuc>**

## Day 2 — RISE UP and BELIEVE

Jesus call Lazarus out of the grave

(John 11:1-44)

### **Day 2 Bible Verse: John 11:25-26**

*Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?"*

#### **KEY POINTS**

- Because friends are important to Jesus, friends are important to us.
- Because God is perfect, we need to trust that God's timing is always perfect.
- Jesus has power to raise the dead and give new life because He is God.
- Jesus wants us to help one another to freedom in Him

#### **TEACHING AIDS**

- DAY 2 PowerPoint slides (Refer to CM website under Large Group Leaders Guide Day 2)
- Object Lessons (included in the lesson where they fit best)
- Skit Scripts (included in this Leader's Guide)

### **DAY 2**

#### **REVIEW & INTRODUCTION**

On Day 1 we learned about an Old Testament prophet named Ezekiel and the vision of hope God had for His people Israel. Do you remember what the vision was? Yes, raising up a huge mess of dry bones back to life again.

What did God want us to learn from this vision? God can raise us out of our deadness by giving us new life in Christ Jesus! He breathes His Holy Spirit into our hearts.

**DAY 2**  
**REVIEW & INTRODUCTION**  
**CONTINUED**

Today, we will be looking at a New Testament story. Jesus raised his friend Lazarus after he had been dead for four days! Jesus wants us to know that He has that power because He is the resurrection and the life. We will learn how we can rise up and believe Jesus even when our faith is tested.

**DAY 2 LESSON**

Jesus is so good to give us close friends who we can hang out with. We can also pray for our friends and our friends can pray for us. God uses friends to help each other when going through a hard time.

Jesus had a close friend who lived in Bethany. His name was Lazarus. Lazarus had two sisters, Mary and Martha. Jesus liked to go to Bethany and visit His friends. One day Lazarus got very sick. His sisters sent for their friend Jesus. They knew He had been healing people all over the land. Of course He could heal their brother.

But, Jesus didn't go right away to heal his friend. The disciples wondered why. Bethany was only a few miles away! It would seem that Jesus would rush to heal his friend. When the disciples asked him why he didn't go right away, Jesus answered, *"This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it."*

Jesus waited several days before going to Bethany. By the time Jesus arrived at the home of Lazarus, His friend had died. He had been dead for four days and was already buried in a tomb.

**Q. What was the reason Jesus gave his disciples for not going to Lazarus right away?**

**A. Jesus told them, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." God would use this bad thing (the death of Jesus' friend) for His glory. God's glory means, He wants to make God look big. God wanted to His Son Jesus to receive the glory.**

Many Jews had come to be with Martha and Mary. They had come to comfort the sisters because their brother was dead. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him.

*"Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "I wish you had been here! Then my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you anything you ask for."*

**DAY 2 LESSON**  
**CONTINUED**

Have you ever felt like Martha? Have you ever prayed for someone who was sick? Have you ever waited and waited for God to heal someone?

We, like Martha, can feel hopeless too. Sometimes we just can't understand why God waits to answer our prayers. The Bible says, God's ways are not our ways, and God's thoughts are not ours. God is perfect so His timing is perfect.

God has a purpose for WHEN He does something. Jesus was not in a hurry to go and heal Lazarus; He had something better in mind. Sometimes God has something better in mind for us. He wants us to believe and trust Him and His ways.

*Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."*

*Martha answered, "I know he will rise again. This will happen when people are raised from the dead on the last day."*

*Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even if they die. And whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?"*

Jesus wanted Martha to believe that He had power over death because He is the Son of God. Jesus has the power to raise back to life those who have died. By believing in Jesus, she will never die. And her brother, even though he died would live.

**Q. What did Jesus tell Martha?**

**A. Jesus told Martha that He was the resurrection and the life. Jesus wanted Martha to believe that He had power over death because He is the Son of God. Jesus has the power to raise back to life those who have died.**

*"Yes, Lord," Martha replied. "I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God. I believe that you are the one who is supposed to come into the world."*

**Martha's bold statement was a big deal!** When Martha boldly announced that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God, she was publicly showing her faith in Jesus.

**(The leader may want to ask, "Has anyone made a statement like Martha did?")**

After Martha said this, she went back home. She told her sister, Mary, that Jesus was here and wanted to see her. Mary got up quickly and went to Him.

*Mary reached the place where Jesus was. When she saw him, she fell at his feet. She said, "Lord, I wish you had been here! Then my brother would not have died."*

*Jesus saw her crying. He saw that the Jews who had come along with her were crying also. His spirit became very sad. He was troubled and said, "Where have you put him?"*

**DAY 2 LESSON**  
**CONTINUED**

*They answered, "Come and see, Lord." Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, "See how much he loved him!"*

Because He had a perfect plan, Jesus knew that everything would be all right . But Lazarus death made Him sad. When Jesus saw how sad the sisters were it made Him sad too. He showed his sadness by crying. He loved Lazarus and his sisters. Jesus knows what it is like to feel very sad.

We know that Jesus is fully God, but He is also only fully man. Because He is one hundred percent man, He has emotions just like us. When we cry, He cries with us. When we are hurting, He hurts with us. Isn't it comforting to know that no matter what we are going through Jesus goes through it with us?

**Q. Why did Jesus cry?**

**A. Lazarus death made Him sad. He showed his sadness by crying. When Jesus saw how sad the sisters were, it made Him sad too. He loved Lazarus and his sisters. Jesus knows what it is like to feel very sad.**

They took Jesus to the place where Lazarus was buried. It was a cave with a stone in front of the entrance. In those days, the family had to take care of the body. They wrapped the body in long strips of cloth until the person was bound in cloths like a mummy. Sometimes, they put sweet-smelling perfumes in the clothes so that the body would not have an odor.

*When Jesus got to the tomb He said, "Take away the stone." Martha said, "But, Lord, by this time there is a bad smell. Lazarus has been in the tomb for four days."*

*Then Jesus said, "Didn't I tell you that if you believe, you will see God's glory?"*

*So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up. He said, "Father, I thank you for hearing me. I know that you always hear me. But I said this for the benefit of the people standing here. I said it so they will believe that you sent me."*

Jesus not only wanted to raise up Lazarus, He also wanted to show all those around the Glory of God. He is the true Messiah, the Christ.

Jesus knew He could raise up Lazarus and He thanked God ahead of time. He wanted the people to believe. He wanted Martha and Mary to believe. He wants us to believe that He is the Son of God.

**Jesus called out in a loud voice, "Lazarus come out!" (The leader may want to invite everyone to call out together, "Lazarus come out!")**

**DAY 2 LESSON**  
**CONTINUED**

What do you think will happen? **(Give time for the friends to respond.)**

Yes, Lazarus rose up from the grave! Jesus called the dead back to life!

***(At this point in the lesson the object lesson can be demonstrated. The object lesson is placed within the lesson. It is important for the leader and volunteers to do the object lesson here.)***

**DAY 2 OBJECT LESSON**

**Day 2 OBJECT LESSON: “All Wrapped Up”**

**Supplies Needed:**

- 2-3 rolls of toilet paper
- 1 person to be Lazarus all wrapped up in toilet paper (make sure his feet, nose and eyes are not wrapped) **DO THIS AHEAD OF TIME**
- 8x11” papers that say; **FEAR, ANGER, WORRY, SINFUL HABITS, UNFORGIVNESS** on each one.
- Transparent or double stick tape
- 2-3 people to unwrap Lazarus

**HAVE LAZARUS WRAPPED UP BEFORE THE DAY 2 LESSON BEGINS**

**Wrap up a friend or volunteer in toilet paper to be Lazarus. Hide the sheets of paper with words, FEAR, ANGER, WORRY, SINFUL HABITS, UNFORGIVNESS within the wrapping.**

**Lazarus will be standing hidden behind a door until he hears “Lazarus Come out”**

**Leader: “Oh look! Here comes Lazarus now. Jesus raised him from the grave.” (Have the Lazarus walk out) But see, he is still all wrapped up. He is not free.**

Everyone was so happy! There was only one problem. Lazarus could not move. He was still all wrapped up in his grave clothes!

In our story, Jesus said to the people there, *“Take off the clothes he was buried in and let him go.”*

So, we are going to help Lazarus take off his grave clothes.

**DAY 2 OBJECT LESSON**  
**CONTINUED**

**Invite 2 friends to help Lazarus take off his grave clothes.**

Jesus wanted everyone to participate in this miracle by helping Lazarus shed his grave clothes. He needed the help of others to be free and live again.

God doesn't want us to live all by ourselves. Many times, we are helpless to take off our own grave clothes ourselves. We need each other!

You and I may not be wrapped like Lazarus in cloths but we can be wrapped up in fear, worry, anxiety, sinful habits, unforgiveness, or anger. This can keep us bound and unable to break free to live the life God wants for us.

**The leader can start by giving examples then ask friends for some ideas. As the mummy, Lazarus is being unwrapped hold the pieces of paper up so the class can see them.**

**The leader says the word on the paper then have the friends repeat the word. After you have talked a little how that word, i.e. FEAR, can keep us from being free to live the way Jesus intended us to...we say "NO" to fear!**

**(Wad up paper and throw it on the ground. Do this with each word that is revealed as Lazarus is being unwrapped.)**

**Q. What are some ways we can help others walk out of their grave clothes and into new life when Jesus calls their name? (Give the friends time to respond.)**

**A. Some other ways we can help our friends is, we can pray for them, encourage them, show them love and compassion, show them God's word, call or visit them.**

Earlier in the book of John Jesus says, *"So if the Son (Jesus) sets you free, you will be free indeed."*

This story shows us that even when things don't work out the way we think they should, and our faith is tested, like Martha's and Mary's, we know God's way is always perfect. We can trust Him because we know he loves us, even when we have to go through hard circumstances.

We can believe that Jesus is the resurrection and the life. By believing, we will rise up and walk with Him in freedom. Is Jesus calling your name to rise up and shed your old grave clothes?

Is there someone who you can help take off their grave cloths and walk out in the freedom of Jesus Christ?

## DAY 2 SKIT: WHAT A FRIEND

**Patrick and Will** are passing a ball back and forth to each other. **Melody** comes up pushing her friend **Sheila** in a wheelchair.

**Melody:** Hi guys! I want you to meet my friend Sheila. She's the one I was telling you about. She broke her ankle and has to be in a wheelchair for a while.

**Patrick & Will:** Nice to meet you...Sorry about your ankle.

**Sheila:** Nice to meet you, too. I had to have surgery, and the doctor won't let me walk for a really long time.

**Melody:** Yeah, so I get to push her around!

**Will:** Cool.

**Patrick:** Yeah, that's cool. You've got a swweeeet ride, Sheila.

**Sheila: (Looking very sad)** Well, I don't think so. It really stinks to have to depend on everyone to help me. I can't walk for 6 weeks! I may even have to miss Special Olympics!

**Will:** I get it. I had to have surgery a while back, and I couldn't play basketball for a for a long time.

**Patrick:** Well, we love to help our friends. It's a way to show them Jesus' love.

**Sheila:** Really?

**Melody:** Yeah Shiela. Like I told you, friends take care of friends.

**Patrick:** Yes, like in the story today, Jesus cared for his friend, Lazarus. When he died, Jesus cried. He saw how sad Mary and Martha felt. He felt the same way.

**Melody:** Isn't it comforting to know that Jesus cares for us the same way. No matter what we are going through Jesus is there. When we are sad He is sad. When we hurt it hurts Jesus.

**Will:** And remember how Jesus waited to go to them when He heard Lazarus was sick. I don't get it. Why would he wait so long?

**Melody:** His disciples did not understand either, but Jesus' timing was perfect. He had bigger plans...plans to raise Lazarus from the dead and show His glory.

**Sheila:** And Lazarus walked out of the grave. I get to walk again in time, too I guess. ....In His time.

**Will:** I am glad you eventually get to walk again, Shiela. And maybe even make it to Special Olympics, who knows?

**DAY 2 SKIT: WHAT A FRIEND  
CONTINUED**

**Patrick:** But here's the really good news for all of us: one day we will all rise up again, like Lazarus, and we will have perfectly healed bodies. God's timing is perfect, even when we don't understand it.

**Melody:** And until then, we have the Holy Spirit with us. He gives us faith to believe that Jesus is the resurrection and the life. Just knowing that gives me joy.

**Patrick:** That's right Melody, and knowing He's always with us, like a close friend.

**Will:** That reminds me of a song!

**Melody:** Oh, Will, not Dem Bones again!

**Will:** No, "What a friend we have in Jesus!" Jesus is our forever friend. He's with us now, and He always will be.

**Patrick:** And one day, we get to be with Him in Heaven.

**Melody and Sheila:** That is good news!

**Will:** (invites congregation to sing along)

**Everyone sings:** "What a friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear,  
What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer, Can we find a friend so  
faithful, Who all our sorrows share, Jesus knows our every weakness, take it to  
the Lord in prayer...."

(You may want to have the words up on a screen for all to see.)

"What a Friend We Have in Jesus" YouTube Link with music and lyrics:

<https://youtu.be/TAyaXdvzbGU>

**Day 3 — RISE UP and LIVE**  
The risen Jesus walks with two men  
on the road to Emmaus  
(Luke 24:13-35)

**Day 3 Bible Verse: Luke 24:34**

*"It's true! The Lord has risen..."*

**KEY POINTS**

- Jesus walks with us when we are sad. He patiently listens to everything we want to say to Him.
- All through the Bible God shows us that Jesus had to suffer, die, and rise again. (We can learn about Jesus when we read and study the Bible).
- Jesus wants to walk and talk with us every day.
- When our eyes are opened to the risen Lord, we want to tell others that He is alive.

**TEACHING AIDS**

- 
- DAY 3 PowerPoint slides (Refer to CM website under Large Group Leaders Guide Day 3)
  - Object Lessons (included in the lesson where fit best)
  - Skit Scripts (included in this Leader's Guide)

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**DAY 3**  
**REVIEW & INTRODUCTION**

**Do you remember the vision God gave Ezekiel on Day 1? (Give time for friends to respond to the questions)** He saw a huge valley of dry bones that represented God's people because they were slaves and felt hopeless. **What happened to the bones when Ezekiel spoke God's Word?** Yes, God breathed new life in them and they became a huge army.

## **DAY 3**

### **REVIEW & INTRODUCTION**

On Day 2 we learned how Jesus wanted Martha and Mary to believe that He is resurrection and the life. By believing they saw the glory of God through Jesus raising their brother Lazarus back to life. **What had to happen before Lazarus could walk in freedom?** Yes, Jesus asked the people there to help take away his grave cloths.

Today we will celebrate the ultimate resurrection. Jesus is risen from the dead! The story of the resurrection of Jesus is full of hope and new life. But it didn't start out that way. Before there could be a resurrection, Jesus had to die.

Several times Jesus told his disciple that he would die and be raised again on the third day. But they didn't understand.

The Bible tells us in *1 Corinthians 15:3* "Christ died for our sins, just as Scripture said He would."

## **DAY 3 LESSON**

It had been three days since Jesus had died and was buried. His disciples hid in an upper room. They were afraid the Jewish leaders would arrest them like they had Jesus. That morning, some of the women went to the tomb with spices to care for His body.

Two of Jesus disciples left the group. They decided to make a seven-mile walk to the village of Emmaus. As they walked, they talked about everything that had happened with Jesus over the last few days.

**Q. What were the two men talking about on their journey?**

**A. They talked about everything that had happened the last three days concerning Jesus.**

*As they talked about those things, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them. But God kept them from recognizing him.*

Jesus wanted to know what they were talking about also, so He asked them, "What are you talking about as you walk along?"

*They stood still, and their faces were sad. "Are you the only person visiting Jerusalem who doesn't know? Don't you know about the things that have happened there in the last few days?"*

*"What things?" Jesus asked.*

*The men stopped and with sadness they said. "About Jesus of Nazareth. He was a prophet. He was powerful in what he said and did in the sight of God and all the people.*

**DAY 3 LESSON**  
**CONTINUED**

*The chief priests and our rulers handed Jesus over to be sentenced to death. They nailed him to a cross. But we had hoped that he was the one who was going to set Israel free. Also, it is the third day since all this happened.*

*Some of the women amazed us too. Early this morning they went to the tomb. But they didn't find his body. So, they came back and told us that they saw angels, who said Jesus was alive. Then some of our friends went to the tomb. They saw it was empty, just as the women had said. They didn't see Jesus' body there."*

**Q. Can you name some of the things the men told Jesus?**

**A. Jesus was a powerful prophet. He was crucified and buried. They hoped Jesus was going to set Israel free. It's been three days. Some women said an angel told them Jesus was alive. The disciples found the tomb empty.**

The two disciples were sad about what happened to Jesus. But Jesus walked alongside them and patiently listened as they explained the last three days.

Jesus walks with us when we are sad. No matter what we're going through, Jesus is there, patiently listening to us. We can tell Him anything and everything.

Think of a time when you felt sad or hopeless. Jesus listened to you; He heard you. When we pray, Jesus listens to us. We can tell Him anything.

*Psalm 62:8 says, Trust in him at all times; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge. a place we can hide.*

Jesus didn't want them to stay sad. He wanted to open their eyes so they could see that He has risen.

Jesus explained to them what the Bible said about the Messiah having to suffer and then be raised up again. Starting with Moses and the prophets, Jesus told them what was said about Himself in all the Scriptures.

Jesus wanted them to believe. He showed these two men that God had a perfect plan from the very beginning. Everything happened just as it was supposed to according to the scriptures.

*Isaiah 53:4 "He (Jesus) suffered the things we should have suffered. He took on himself the pain that should have been ours."*

**Q. How did Jesus respond to the men?**

**A. Jesus explained to them what was said about himself in all the Scriptures. He began with Moses and then all the prophets.**

When the men approached their village, they asked Jesus if he would stay with them because the day was almost over. So, agreed and joined them for dinner.

**DAY 3 LESSON**  
**CONTINUED**

Jesus sat with them at the table. He took bread and gave thanks. He broke it and began to give it to them. Then something amazing happened. Their eyes were opened, and they recognized that it was Jesus. But then He disappeared from their sight.

The men said to each other, "He explained to us what the Scriptures meant. Weren't we excited as he talked with us on the road?" Immediately their sadness was gone. They were filled with joy and hope again! Their eyes were opened. Their Savior had risen! Jesus is alive!

**Q. What does it mean that Jesus is alive? Can we see Him?**

**A. The Bible tells us that Jesus rose again. Later He went up (ascended) into heaven where He lives. Today, we can't see Him but we know He lives in our hearts through the power of the Holy Spirit.**

**Just like those disciples, our hearts can feel a strong love for Jesus too. We are excited when we read the Bible or listen to our Bible teachers. Or when we listen to praise and worship music; our heart feel a strong love for Jesus.**

**The Bible says in Romans 5:5 *God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.***

*The two men got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the 11 disciples and those with them. They were saying, "It's true! The Lord has risen! ..."*

The two men were so filled with joy that they hurried all the way back to Jerusalem to tell the rest of the disciples the good news. Jesus is alive, they had seen Him with their own eyes.

The men shared how Jesus met them on the road. We can do the same thing. We can share when we met Jesus and what a difference He is making in our lives. Now that is amazing, wonderful, and spectacular, good news.

You and I can walk with the risen Jesus everyday like the disciples on the road. We can tell Him anything in prayer, trust Him for everything in our life, and tell others the amazing, wonderful, and spectacular, good news. Jesus has risen. He is alive!

**Q. How can we rise up and live for Jesus? How can we walk with Him everyday?**

**A. We can talk to him every day when we pray and know He listens to us. We can read or listen to the Bible and go to church. We can help others with encouraging words, by showing kindness, giving a hug or a smile. And, like the two men, we can share the amazing, wonderful, and spectacular, good news that Jesus is alive!**

## **DAY 3 OBJECT LESSON**

### **Day 2 OBJECT LESSON: "A Good Mystery Book"**

**The supplies needed:**

- **3-5 mystery books like Nancy Drew, Nate the Grate, etc.**
- **A Bible**

Do you like a good mystery book? (**hold up a few of the books**) Or maybe watching a mystery show on TV? Like Columbo or Hawaii 5 0.

**Q. What types of things make good mystery stories? (Wait for some answers)**

The author will weave clues throughout the story, sometimes you can figure out what the clues mean, but sometimes you can't.

Even though you may know something is a clue when you are reading the book or watching the show, you may not know how it all going to fit together.

**Q. When do ALL of the clues in the story make sense? Do they make sense at the beginning of the story, in the middle, or at the end?**

That's right, at the end of the story. At the end of the story there is an "Ah-ha!" moment when everything comes together and makes sense.

God has a mystery book for us to read called the Bible. (**Hold up the Bible**) And all throughout the Bible, God tells us clues about Who He is and about His plan. We need to study those clues so we can know more about the mystery of God.

**Q. When Jesus met the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, did they know how all the clues fit together?**

No, it wasn't until Jesus explained to them about himself starting from the writings of Moses at the beginning of the Bible, to all the prophets in the middle of the Bible, and then to the events that had just happened three days ago.

**Q. When was the Ah-ha! Moment for the two disciples? When did all the clues Jesus told them make sense?**

Yes, when Jesus broke the bread and gave it to them. The Bible says, "their eyes were opened" and they recognized that it was Jesus sitting before them. That's when they understood the mystery of God through the Bible. That's when they understood Jesus had to die then rise up again so they could rise up and rejoice that the Messiah had truly come into the world.

Because we know the end of the mystery story of the Bible, we can rise up and rejoice in our risen Savior. But this isn't really the end of the story is it? We can rise up and live for Him now and with Him forever and ever.

## **DAY 3 SKIT: WALKING WITH JESUS**

**Sheila:** (Crying in wheelchair or with crutches)

**Melody:** (Walks up) Oh, no, Sheila, what's wrong?

**Sheila:** Oh, Melody, I just found out I have to have another surgery for my ankle. I am going to be in this chair for another 6 weeks! (puts her head in her hands)

**Melody:** Oh, I'm sorry, Sheila. I can't imagine how discouraged you must feel.

**Sheila:** I know, and I wanted to WALK with Jesus today!

**Melody:** Walk with Jesus?

**Patrick:** (Walking up to join the girls, he waves) Hi Melody. Hey Sheila, I thought you would be walking by now.

**Sheila:** (Covers her face and makes a frustrating sound)

**Melody:** Sheila just found out she has to have another surgery and is going to be in the wheelchair for 6 more weeks.

**Patrick:** Oh wow! I am so sorry. Well, you do have a pretty sweet ride.

**Sheila:** Yeah, and I just can't wait that long to start walking with Jesus.

**Patrick:** What do you mean?

**Sheila:** You know, like they talked about in the Bible story today. The disciples were walking with Jesus and they didn't even know it was him.

**Melody:** Oh, yeah, and then when Jesus ate with them, they realized the man they were walking with was actually Jesus, risen from the dead! He is alive!

**Sheila:** YES! WALKING with JESUS! How can I WALK with Jesus if I am still in this wheelchair?

**Melody:** Well, Sheila, you CAN! First, did you notice in the story how sad the disciples were? They were sad, like you. They had lost their friend, and they didn't know how they would ever walk with Him again.

**Sheila:** But then they did!

**Patrick:** That's right they did. We don't necessarily physically walk with Jesus, like with our legs and feet. Walking with Jesus is a way of showing that we followers of Him.

**Sheila:** Followers of Jesus? But how do we do that?

**DAY 3 SKIT: WALKING WITH JESUS**  
**CONTINUED**

**Melody:** First, we believe that He is the Son of God, and died for our sins, and is risen. When we put our faith in Him, He gives us the Holy Spirit to help us walk with Him every day. We can talk to Him about anything, and He will listen. We love Him when we worship Him and love others.

**Patrick:** That's right. We can read the Bible, go to Friendship Class and learn more about Jesus. We can hang out with our friends and encourage and pray with them. We can share God's love with everyone we meet. That's walking with Jesus!

**Sheila:** I do believe Jesus is the Son of God and that He died for my sins and rose again! And I do trust Him with my whole life, even my broken ankle. I get it, I can do all those things through the Holy Spirit right here in my wheelchair!

**Melody:** Oh Sheila! I am so happy you are a follower of Jesus now! And we all can do those things with God's help.

**Sheila:** Me too. **(Turning and looks at Patrick)** I guess I do have a pretty sweet ride.

**Patrick:** You sure do. Now let's go find Will and tell him the good news. Maybe he has a song for us to sing!

**Sheila:** Yes, I am so happy, now that I have learned what it means to walk with Jesus.

**Will: (Singing the song)** I have decided to follow Jesus, I have decided to....

**Melody, Sheila, Patrick, and Will: (Walking toward and joining Will)**

I have decided to follow Jesus. I have decided to follow Jesus. I have decided to follow Jesus, not turning back, no turning back.

**Will invites the congregation to sing a long.**

**(You may want to have the words up on a screen for all to see.)**

**"I Have Decided" YouTube Link with music and lyrics:**

**<https://youtu.be/L7XHeCZB5KU?list=RDL7XHeCZB5KU>**

