

SUMMER FRIENDSHIP GATHERINGS

2025 SUMMER FRIENDSHIP GATHERING

LARGE GROUP LESSON, DAY 2

- Summer Friendship Gathering events last three evenings and each evening is divided into three parts: fellowship meal, worship time with a large group lesson, and small group discussion. On the last evening there is a closing worship service, which replaces the Large Group Bible Lesson and Small Group Discussion time.
- As you start preparing your lesson a good place to start is to pray asking the Holy Spirit to give you insight and direction.
- You will find an illustrated sample video for this Day 2 Bible Lesson “RISE UP and Believe”, along with the other Summer Friendship Gathering training videos. You are encouraged to watch this video as you plan your lesson.
- The theme for this year’s Summer Friendship Gathering is “Rise Up.” Over these next three days we will be learning how God raised up His people to new life with just speaking His Word. God wants to raise us up to new life in Jesus when we hope, believe, and live for Him.

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2025 SUMMER FRIENDSHIP GATHERING

LARGE GROUP LESSON, DAY 2 CONTINUED

- We will be looking at a story in the Old Testament about a prophet named Ezekiel and a vision God showed him. It was a huge valley of dry bones.
- In the New Testament we will study the story of Jesus raising up Lazarus after he had been dead for four days!
- On the last day we will look at the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We will journey with the two men who walked with Jesus after He rose from the dead on the road to the village of Emmaus. Jesus wants to walk with us on our road as we rise up and live for Him.
- Our Bible verse for this week is ***Ephesians 2:6***

“God raised us up with Christ... That’s because we belong to Christ Jesus.”

Yesterday we learned about a prophet named Ezekiel and a vision God showed him. Do you remember what the vision was? It was a huge valley of dry bones. God told Ezekiel to prophesy to the bones.

When Ezekiel spoke God’s Words to the bones, 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. God loved His people and promised to give them hope again. God wanted their hearts to be alive again and not like dry bones.

What did God want us to learn from this vision? God can raise us up from our deadness by giving us new life in Christ Jesus!

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2025 SUMMER FRIENDSHIP GATHERING

LARGE GROUP LESSON, DAY CONTINUED

- Today we will be studying a story in the New Testament. It is the story of Jesus raising up 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 when our faith is tested.
- **Our Bible verse for today comes from 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?”***
- The Bible tells us that Jesus had close friend who lived in a town called 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 Jesus. Jesus was their friend, and they knew he had been healing people all over the land. Of course He could heal their brother.
- But Jesus didn’t go to heal his friend right away. The disciples wondered why. After all, Bethany was only a few miles away! It would seem that Jesus would rush to heal his friend. When they asked him why he didn’t go right away, this is what he said:
- *“This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.”*

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2025 SUMMER FRIENDSHIP GATHERING

LARGE GROUP LESSON, DAY 1 CONTINUED

- By the time Jesus arrived at the home of Lazarus, His friend had died. Because he had been dead for four days he already was buried in a tomb.
- **God would use this bad thing (the death of Jesus' friend, for His glory.) for 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."*
- 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 get to Lazarus; He had something better in mind. Sometimes God has something better in mind for us.
- *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.

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2025 SUMMER FRIENDSHIP GATHERING

LARGE GROUP LESSON, DAY 2 CONTINUED

- *“Yes, Lord,” she 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.”*
- **The leader will want to note that Martha’s 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 if anyone has made a statement like Martha.)**
- 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, and He was troubled. “Where have you put him?” He asked.*
- *“Come and see, Lord,” they replied. Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, “See how much he loved him!”*
- Jesus knew that everything would be all right because He had a perfect plan. But 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.
- 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 too.

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2025 SUMMER FRIENDSHIP GATHERING

LARGE GROUP LESSON, DAY 2 CONTINUED

- 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.
- **The Leader may want to ask, why did Jesus cry. Talk about how Jesus always knows and feels what we are going through.**
- 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 wanted to show all those around the Glory of God. He was 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.

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2025 SUMMER FRIENDSHIP GATHERING

LARGE GROUP LESSON, DAY 2 CONTINUED

- Jesus called out in a loud voice, *“Lazarus come out!”* (You may want to invite everyone to call out together, *“Lazarus come out!”*)
- What do you think happened when Jesus called for Lazarus? Yes, Lazarus is alive again! Jesus called the dead man to rise up out of the grave!
- Jesus has the power over death! He **is** the resurrection and the life. He gave life again to Lazarus. He can give us new life. This shows the glory of God through Jesus His Son.
- *“The dead man came out. His hands and feet were wrapped with strips of linen. A cloth was around his face.”*
- Everyone looked at the entrance of the tomb, they saw Lazarus was coming out of the tomb, and he was alive! Everyone was so happy! There was only one problem. Lazarus could not move. He was still all wrapped up in his grave clothes!
- Jesus said to the people there, *“Take off the clothes he was buried in and let him go.”*
- 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 cloths ourselves. We need each other!

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2025 SUMMER FRIENDSHIP GATHERING

LARGE GROUP LESSON, DAY 2 CONTINUED

The leader may want to ask, what are some things in our lives that keeps us from walking out in freedom when Jesus calls our name?

(Give time for a response, if a response isn't offered, have an example ready. Maybe fear, worry, anger, sin patterns...)

Now the leader may ask what are some ways we can help others walk out of their grave clothes and into new life when Jesus calls their name?

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

When we believe that Jesus is the Son of God, the resurrection, and the life, He has made us free from the power of sin and death.

Do you believe that Jesus is the resurrection and the life? Is Jesus calling your name to rise up and walk with Him in freedom?

There are four key points to be made in this lesson. It is important that each of these points are covered in your lesson because they will be part of the discussion questions.

1. The first point is because friends are important to Jesus, they are important to us.

Friends are a gift from God. God gave us friends to be part of our Christian community. Friends are important because we can pray for each other, help each other when they need extra help. We can be happy with our friends when they are happy and we can show compassion when they are sad. There are so many important reasons why God gives us friends.

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2025 SUMMER FRIENDSHIP GATHERING

LARGE GROUP LESSON, DAY 2 CONTINUED

- 2. The second point is, because God is perfect, we need to trust that God's timing is always perfect.**

We, like Martha, can sometimes feel hopeless too. 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. It is our job to trust Him and His timing.

- 3. The third point to remember is, Jesus has the power to raise the dead and give new life because He is God.**

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

- 4. The last point is, Jesus wants us to help one another to freedom in Him.**

God doesn't want us to live all by ourselves. But sometimes, we are helpless to take off our own grave cloths. We need each other! In Christian community we can help each other to walk out in the freedom of Christ by praying for one another, encouraging, helping, lead them to what the Bible says, or maybe just by giving someone a smile or holding their hand.

- As you plan out the flow of your lesson, we encourage you to use the skit and object lesson. The Day 2 skit fits best after telling the story. The object lesson can be used near the end of the lesson.

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2025 SUMMER FRIENDSHIP GATHERING

LARGE GROUP LESSON, DAY 2 CONTINUED

- It is important to find more than one way to tell the story of how we can rise up and hope in dark times. Because God loves His people and always keeps His promises.
- Visuals and illustrations will help with learning. Most people learn best if the lesson combines different modes of learning. Remember, you have access to the PowerPoint slides of the story provided on our website.
- You should also review the Small Group Leader's Guide Booklet. The Discussion Booklet has questions after the story. These discussion questions are incorporated in this Day 2 lesson.
- It is good to reinforce the key points of the lesson by asking questions and having our friends participate in the large group.
- This helps them with a smoother transition into the small group discussion time which follows the large group lesson.
- Thank you for your willingness to lead the Day 2 lesson. You are encouraged to review the Large Group Leaders Guide and the notes for this presentation. The links can be found on the Connection Ministries website next to this training video.
- If you have any questions or need information you can email us at connect@connection-ministries.org or call our office 317-646-5067.

