

MARCH 26, 2023

Large Group Opening



GRIEF • LENT 5 • YEAR A

TODAY'S READINGS

Ezekiel 37:1-14 • Psalm 130 • Romans 8:6-11 • John 11:1-45

WELCOME

Sing the “Whirl Welcome Song” together. Sit around the purple cloth in Lent Buddies groups. **Today is the fifth Sunday of our Lenten journey, and our story is filled with sadness and grief. Since we’ve traveled on this journey with our Lent Buddies, take a minute and make sure you know the name of everyone in your group. After that, talk about what you do when you feel sad.** After a minute or two, invite a few kids to tell the large group what they do when they feel sad.

HEAR

Our story today is about Jesus, two sisters, and a brother. It is from John’s gospel. How many gospels are there? (four) **What are the names of all the gospels?** (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) Ask an older kid to find John 11:1-45 on page 1254 of the Whirl NRSV Bible. Invite four kids to join you, and give each of them a paper with the name of one of the story characters they will act out: Mary, Martha, Lazarus, and Jesus.

At the start of this story Mary and Martha are sad and grieving because their brother, Lazarus, has died. They ask Jesus to come, and he does. He cries with them, and then the most surprising thing happens!

RESPOND

Give each group of Lent Buddies some rocks (at least two per kid) and a few permanent markers. Help each kid draw a heart or cross on one or more rocks. **Take one rock home, and leave at least one rock here. The rocks you leave here will be given to people who are grieving as a reminder that we, their church family, love and support them. The rocks are also a reminder that Jesus is our rock all the time, including when we are sad and grieving.**

SUPPLY CHECKLIST

- Whirl NRSV Bible
- Purple cloth
- Tabletop cross
- Purple yarn
- Scissors
- White paper (4 sheets)
- Permanent markers
- Rocks (at least 2 per kid)

BEFORE KIDS ARRIVE

Put the cloth on the floor or a table and set the cross on it. Cut yarn into 12-inch pieces, one per kid. Write “Mary,” “Martha,” “Lazarus,” and “Jesus,” one on each sheet of paper. Find small rocks (sized as to not be a choking hazard).

LAUNCH

Give everyone a piece of purple yarn to tie around a wrist or ankle. Ask older kids to help younger ones. **Your yarn can remind you that God is with us when we are sad and grieving.** Invite Lent Buddies to engage in a group hug as you pray.

**God of love,
There are sad and grieving people everywhere.
Be with them, and help us provide comfort
And love to them when we can.
Amen.**

Send kids to their classrooms.

MUSIC RECOMMENDATIONS

SONG 1: IT'S ME, O LORD (STANDING IN THE NEED OF PRAYER)

(tracks 9 and 29, page 38 in Songbook)

When we are sad and grieving, we can pray. Sometimes singing a prayer feels good. Sing this song quietly, and remind kids that they can sing their prayers when they are sad and grieving.

SONG 2: JESUS, REMEMBER ME

Dim lights and invite everyone to close eyes and be very quiet. Introduce this simple song, and then sing it a few times. Get softer and softer each time. Then sit in silence for 20-30 seconds and say "Amen."

SONG 3: SONGS OF HOPE

When someone dies, people come together to offer hope to those who are grieving. Invite church musicians to perform some of the songs your congregation uses to give hope, assurance, and support.



Tear Here