

Lazarus, Martha, and Mary

Storyteller: Lazarus and his sisters Martha and Mary were friends of Jesus. *As you name them, set each doll down, in a stand, to your right.* They lived in Bethany, which is near Jerusalem in the south part of Israel, called Judea. Lazarus became very sick.

John 11:1-44

A man by the name of Lazarus was sick in the village of Bethany. He had two sisters, Mary and Martha. This was the same Mary who later poured perfume on the Lord's head and wiped his feet with her hair. The sisters sent a message to the Lord and told him that his good friend Lazarus was sick.

When Jesus heard this, he said, "His sickness won't end in death. It will bring glory to God and his Son."

Jesus loved Martha and her sister and brother. But he stayed where he was for two more days. Then he said to his disciples, "Now we will go back to Judea."

"Teacher," they said, "the people there want to stone you to death! Why do you want to go back?"

Jesus answered, "Aren't there twelve hours in each day? If you walk during the day, you will have light from the sun, and you won't stumble. But if you walk during the night, you will stumble, because you don't have any light." Then he told them, "Our friend Lazarus is asleep, and I am going there to wake him up."

They replied, "Lord, if he is asleep, he will get better." Jesus really meant that Lazarus was dead, but they thought he was talking only about sleep.

Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead! I am glad that I wasn't there, because now you will have a chance to put your faith in me. Let's go to him."

Thomas, whose nickname was "Twin," said to the other disciples, "Come on. Let's go, so we can die with him."

When Jesus got to Bethany, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Bethany was only about two miles from Jerusalem, and many

Lay Lazarus down. So Martha and Mary sent a message to Jesus and told him that his good friend Lazarus was sick.

Now, in those days there were no phones or even mailboxes. The person taking the message had to walk until he found Jesus in a different part of the country! *Set Jesus down in a stand over to your left along with two disciples.* It took days for Jesus to get the message. And when Jesus got the message, he did not hurry to go to Bethany. He stayed where he was for two more days, and then he told his disciples "Now we will go back to Judea. Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep." *Quietly wrap Lazarus in the shroud and cover his face, and place him behind the tombstone.*

The last time Jesus had been in Judea, some people had angrily tried to kill him. The disciples thought that if Jesus went back, people might try to kill him again. But the disciple Thomas said to the other disciples. "Come on. Let's go with Jesus, so that we can die with him."

Move Jesus and the Disciples along the road to Bethany.

When Martha heard that Jesus had come to Bethany, she went out to meet him -- *move Martha toward Jesus* -- but Mary stayed behind in the house. Martha said to Jesus "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. Even now, I know that God will do whatever you ask."

Jesus told her "your brother will live again."

Story Materials

- Dolls
 - Lazarus
 - Mary
 - Martha
 - Jesus
 - Thomas
 - two other disciples
- Shroud and face-cloth
- Large Stone
- Road

Tray, basket or shallow open box to hold the story

people had come from the city to comfort Martha and Mary because their brother had died.

When Martha heard that Jesus had arrived, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed in the house. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. Yet even now I know that God will do anything you ask."

Jesus told her, "Your brother will live again!"

Martha answered, "I know that he will be raised to life on the last day, when all the dead are raised."

Jesus then said, "I am the one who raises the dead to life! Everyone who has faith in me will live, even if they die. And everyone who lives because of faith in me will never really die. Do you believe this?"

"Yes, Lord!" she replied. "I believe that you are Christ, the Son of God. You are the one we hoped would come into the world."

After Martha said this, she went and privately said to her sister Mary, "The Teacher is here, and he wants to see you." As soon as Mary heard this, she got up and went out to Jesus. He was still outside the village where Martha had gone to meet him. Many people had come to comfort Mary, and when they saw her quickly leave the house, they thought she was going out to the tomb to cry. So they followed her.

Mary went to where Jesus was. Then as soon as she saw him, she knelt at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

When Jesus saw that Mary and the people with her were crying, he was terribly upset and asked, "Where have you put his body?"

They replied, "Lord, come and you will see."

Jesus started crying, and the people said, "See how much he loved Lazarus."

Some of them said, "He gives sight to the blind. Why couldn't he have kept Lazarus from dying?"

Martha answered "I know that he will be raised to life on the last day, when all the dead are raised."

Jesus said, "I am the one who raises the dead to life. Everyone who has faith in me will live, even if they die. And everyone who lives because of faith in me will never really die. Do you believe this?"

Martha answered "Yes Lord! I have come to believe that you are the Saviour, the Son of God."

Move Martha back to your right, near Mary. Martha went into the house and told Mary "the Teacher has come, and he wants to see you." *Move Martha and Mary back over to Jesus, and kneel Mary at His feet.* Mary went to where Jesus was. She knelt at his feet and said "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

Mary was crying. Jesus started to cry too. He was terribly upset. So he went to the tomb, which was a cave with a stone in front of the entrance. *Move Mary, Martha and Jesus back to where you put the tombstone.* He told people to move the stone away. But Martha said, "Lord, you know that Lazarus has been dead for four days. There will be a terrible stink."

Jesus replied, "Didn't I tell you that if you had faith, you would see the glory of God?"

Move the stone a few inches to the side. After the stone was moved, Jesus prayed. Then he called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" Lazarus, who had been dead, came out, tied in burial cloth with a cloth covering his face. Jesus said "Untie him and let him go!"

Jesus was still terribly upset. So he went to the tomb, which was a cave with a stone rolled against the entrance. Then he told the people to roll the stone away. But Martha said, "Lord, you know that Lazarus has been dead four days, and there will be a bad smell."

Jesus replied, "Didn't I tell you that if you had faith, you would see the glory of God?"

After the stone had been rolled aside, Jesus looked up toward heaven and prayed, "Father, I thank you for answering my

prayer. I know that you always answer my prayers. But I said this, so that the people here would believe that you sent me."

When Jesus had finished praying, he shouted, "Lazarus, come out!" 44 The man who had been dead came out. His hands and feet were wrapped with strips of burial cloth, and a cloth covered his face

Jesus then told the people, "Untie him and let him go." Many of the people who had come to visit Mary saw the things that Jesus did, and they put their faith in him.