

CHILDREN'S STORY HOUR

'Your brother will rise again'

By Janaan Manternach
NC News Service

Lazarus was dead. For several days he had been very sick. His sisters, Martha and Mary, did all they could for him. The village doctor could do no more.

Mary and Martha cried at Lazarus' bedside when he died. Their prayers for their sick brother apparently were not answered. He was dead.

The next day was a terrible day for Martha and Mary. They watched their neighbors place the body of their brother inside a small cave. That was their tomb.

The body was carefully wrapped in long strips of white linen cloth. Their rabbi prayed. Everyone prayed. And sang. And cried.

Then several men rolled a huge stone in front of the tomb.

For two days Martha and Mary grieved. "If only Jesus were here," Mary said sadly, "everything would be better. I wish he would come."

That afternoon someone ran into Martha's kitchen with good news. "Jesus is coming. He's just outside Bethany now."

Martha was so excited she ran out to meet Jesus. She didn't stop to tell Mary. Mary sat at home, still crying with sorrow.

As soon as Martha saw Jesus, she ran up to him. "If you had been here, my brother would never have died," she told Jesus.

"Your brother will rise again," Jesus answered confidently.

"Where is your sister, Mary?"

Martha ran to their home to get Mary. "Jesus is here," she whispered to Mary. "He is asking for you."

Mary got up and ran out of the house. She didn't stop running until she came to Jesus just outside the town gate. She fell down at his feet crying bitterly.

Jesus was moved by her tears. He saw Martha crying, too. He saw tears in everyone's eyes. "Where have you laid his body?" Jesus asked.

"Come and see," they answered. They began to lead Jesus to the tomb. Tears began to well up in Jesus' eyes and fall down his cheeks.

"Look how much Jesus loved Lazarus," the friends said when they saw Jesus.

They came to the tomb where Lazarus was buried. All eyes were on Jesus as he stood before the tomb.

"Take away the stone!" Jesus directed several strong men.

"But he's been buried for four days!" Martha warned Jesus.

The men pushed and pulled at the heavy stone. Jesus raised his eyes in prayer. The men finally rolled the stone from the opening.

"Lazarus, come out!" Jesus called out loudly.

The dead man struggled out, bound in the long linen cloths. Everyone gasped in wonder. Martha and Mary began to shout with joy.

"Untie him," Jesus told them, "and let him go free."

Story Hour biblical quotes — this week from John 11:1-43 — are paraphrased.

(Ms. Manternach is the author of numerous catechetical books and articles for children.)



It was a terrible day when Lazarus died. His sisters, Martha and Mary, did all they could for him. They wished that he would come back. They had seen that Jesus could do things like that before. Can you?



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HOW ABOUT YOU?

How do you think you would have felt if you had seen Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead?

Children's Reading Corner

"The Butterfly Tree" is a story by Joan Lowery Nixon. In the story, Jennifer's great-grandmother comes to stay. She is dying and this saddens Jennifer because she wants her to stay. Jennifer gradually realizes that she cannot change what is happening to her great-grandmother. In watching the priest, her parents, other relatives and friends do everything they can to make her great-grandmother happy and comfortable, Jennifer wants to do something special too. She remembers that every year at a certain time Monarch butterflies land on a tree outside their home and it becomes alive with color and life. Jennifer draws and colors a butterfly and gives it to her great-grandmother. Then the butterflies arrive and Jennifer points out the butterfly tree to her great-grandmother, who says it is the most beautiful tree she has ever seen. It is a story in which the dying of a loved one is a part of a little girl's life. She is helped to bring resurrection joy both to herself and to her great-grandmother. (Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., Huntington, Ind. 46756, 1979, Hardback, \$5.95)