Jesus has power over death.

Bible Verse
“Jesus told her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying’” (John 11:25).

Growing Closer to Jesus
Students will
• share their feelings about death and dying,
• learn about people Jesus raised from death, and
• discover the hope they have in heaven.

Teacher Enrichment

Bible Basis
Jesus raises Lazarus.

John 11:1-44
The Bible mentions Lazarus only in John 11 and 12. In John 11:3, Lazarus is described as a dear friend, and John 11:5 notes that Jesus loved Mary and Martha as well. So we can assume that Lazarus was closer to Jesus than the scarcity of references to him would indicate.

So it seemed odd to the disciples that Jesus chose to do nothing when he heard that Lazarus was sick. But Jesus had other plans. He was going to bring glory to God through this incident. We don’t know exactly why Jesus wept when approaching Lazarus’ tomb, knowing that Lazarus was going to be raised. Some have suggested that he may have been agonizing over the unbelief of the crowd. But more likely he was hurting with his friends, feeling the pain that Lazarus’ friends and family were experiencing.

Martha, distraught over Lazarus’ death, had trouble fully understanding what Jesus was capable of doing, even though she had great faith in him. Jesus’ comment to her in John 11:25 indicates that he was trying to teach her, as well as others who were around, that he was more than a great teacher and healer. Indeed he was in control of life itself. In his last recorded earthly miracle, Jesus proved that he did indeed have the power to give life—for now and for eternity.

Other Scriptures used in this lesson are Mark 5:21-42; Luke 7:11-17; John 14:1-3; Romans 8:38-39; and Revelation 21:3-4, 21-24.

Prayer
• Read Romans 8:38-39.
• What does this verse say to you about death?
• Pray: Lord, thank you for showing us your victory over death. Help me to instill in my students a sense of awe and thankfulness at what you’ve done. Help me to teach them that…
Before the Lesson

Collect the necessary items for the activities you plan to use, referring to the Classroom Supplies and Learning Lab Supplies listed in the chart.

Make photocopies of the “Hands-On Fun at Home” handout (at the end of this lesson) to send home with your students. Pray for your students and for God’s direction as you teach the lesson.

This Lesson at a Glance

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Welcome

As kids arrive, ask them which “Fun at Home” activities they tried. Ask questions such as “What was it like to do without power in your house for a little while? What would it be like to do without God’s power in our lives?” and “What are some ways God has shown his power in your family recently?”

Explain to kids that whenever you ring the clanging bell, they are to stop talking, raise their hands, and focus on you. Explain that it’s important to respond to this signal quickly so the class can do as many fun activities as possible.

Module Review

Use the casual interaction time at the beginning of class to ask kids the following module-review questions:

- How has Jesus helped heal your hurts?
- How did the power of the Holy Spirit help you last week?
- What’s your favorite miracle we’ve learned about in the past few weeks? Why?
- How is your life different as a result of what we’ve learned in class this month?

Attention Grabber

Missing You

SUPPLIES: paper, markers

Before class, set out paper and markers. When most of your class has arrived, say:

Think of someone you know who has died. It could be a grandparent, another relative, a friend, or even a pet. If you don’t know someone, think about someone you’ve read about in the newspaper or in a book. Write or draw a picture of something you remember about that person.

As kids are working, circulate to make sure they aren’t interfering with one another’s work. This should be a fairly quiet activity. After about five minutes, ring the clanging bell. Wait for kids to respond, and then ask for volunteers to share their memories. If kids are slow to volunteer, share a memory of your own to get them started. Then draw kids out by asking questions such as “Has anyone else’s grandmother died?” or “What was your favorite thing about your relative?”

After several volunteers have shared, ask:

- How did you feel when the person you wrote about, or drew a picture of, died? (Sad; angry; upset; afraid.)

- Did you experience those same feelings as you thought about that person today? Explain. (Yes, thinking about her just made me sad all over again; no, thinking about him made me happy because I remembered all the fun times we had.)

If you have space in your classroom, have kids spread out for this activity. Kids may feel self-conscious about sharing their memories if other kids are looking over their shoulders.

Death is a sensitive and even scary subject for many third- and fourth-graders. As you teach this lesson, be sensitive to kids’ feelings. Don’t force them to share their feelings if it makes them uncomfortable. Be especially sensitive to children who have come in contact with death recently.
Say: When someone we know dies, we have lots of strong feelings. Sometimes we’re sad and miss that person. If someone dies after being sick for a long time, we may be happy that person doesn’t have any more pain. We may even feel angry at the person for dying and leaving us. But, as Christians, we know we haven’t lost that person forever if he or she believed in Jesus because Jesus has power over death. We’re going to learn more about what that means today.

Bible Exploration & Application

Come Forth!

SUPPLIES: Bibles

Say: Jesus had a good friend who died, too. Back in Jesus’ time, they wrapped people who had died in pieces of cloth before they buried them. We’ll pretend to wrap someone using our paper streamer roll. Who’d like to volunteer to be wrapped up today? Choose a child to be wrapped up, and then continue: We’re going to pretend that [name of volunteer] is Jesus’ friend Lazarus. As we take turns reading parts of this story, we’ll wrap the paper streamer roll around our volunteer. We’ll need to be careful not to wrap our volunteer too tightly.

Distribute Bibles, and help kids look up John 11:1-40. Assign each student two to four verses. After each student reads, help him or her loosely wrap the paper streamer roll around “Lazarus” once. Make sure all the kids get a turn to read verses and to wrap Lazarus. (Be sure to save some of the paper streamer roll for the next lesson.)

After someone reads verse 40, tear the paper from the roll. Darken your classroom as much as possible. Ring the clanging bell, and wait for kids to respond. Help your wrapped-up Lazarus lie down in the center of the room. Say: Lazarus was buried in a cavelike tomb. Let’s imagine how dark and quiet it must have been by lying down, closing our eyes, and not talking at all for 30 seconds.

After about 30 seconds, have kids sit up. Whisper to Lazarus that when you say, “Lazarus, come out!” you want him or her to rip through the paper streamer roll, stand up, and walk. Have the rest of the kids stand in a circle around Lazarus. Say: The next part of the story gets pretty exciting, so listen carefully.

Read verses 41-43 aloud to the kids. Pause after you say, “Lazarus, come out!” to allow your volunteer to break through the paper streamer roll. Read verse 44, and then pick up the ripped paper wrapping.

Say: I’ll ask some questions. Raise your hand when you’ve thought of an answer to each question I ask. I’d like to hear lots of different, interesting answers. When someone gives an answer you’ve thought of and you don’t have anything more to add, you may sit down. When everyone is seated, I’ll ask you to stand again for the next question.

Ask: • What do you think Mary and Martha thought when Jesus didn’t come right away? (That he didn’t care; that he was too busy.)

• Why do you think Jesus cried when he saw Lazarus’ tomb? (Because Lazarus was his friend; because the tomb reminded him that Lazarus was really dead.)
• How do you think Mary and Martha felt about opening Lazarus’ tomb? (Scared; worried about the smell; curious about why Jesus wanted them to open it.)

• How do you think Lazarus felt when he opened his eyes and discovered he was all wrapped up in a dark cave? (Scared; confused; he probably wondered how he got there.)

• What do you think the people watching thought when they saw Lazarus coming out of the tomb? (They thought he was a ghost; they thought they were seeing things; they were amazed.)

Say: The people who gathered around Lazarus’ tomb were sure that Lazarus was dead. But Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life,” and he was able to bring Lazarus back to life. That’s because Jesus has power over death.

**HANDS-ON BIBLE**

Give each student a paper cup, a pen, a 12-inch length of string, a piece of paper, and a piece of tape. Make sure kids have their Hands-On Bibles.

Have students turn to John 11 in their Bibles and complete the “Roll Away That Stone!” activity found near there. When kids have finished, ask:

• Imagine that you had been there when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. What would you have been thinking? (I would have felt scared; confused; happy; amazed; I would have been thinking, “This is really wild!” and “Jesus must be God!”)

• What does it mean to you that Jesus has power over death? (After I die I’ll go to heaven; my grandparents are in heaven, and I’ll see them again when I get there; death isn’t really the end.)

**Panicking Parents**

**SUPPLIES:** Bibles, chalkboard and chalk or newsprint and marker

Write on the board or a sheet of newsprint “Mark 5:21-42” and “Luke 7:11-17.”

Say: Lazarus wasn’t the only person Jesus raised from the dead. Jesus also raised others from the dead. Let’s find out more.

Have kids form two groups by numbering off by twos. Say: If you’re a One, go to the right side of the room and look up Mark 5:21-42. Then find a partner on your side of the room, and take turns reading the verses in the passage. If you’re a Two, go to the left side of the room and look up Luke 7:11-17. Then find a partner on your side of the room, and take turns reading the verses in the passage.

After kids have had time to read their passages, call for their attention by ringing the clanging bell. Wait for kids to respond, and then say: Now find a new partner from the opposite side of the room. Tell that new partner what happened in your passage, and discuss the following questions.
Pause after you ask each question to give kids time for discussion.

Ask: • **What would you have thought if you’d seen Jesus raise a boy or girl from the dead?** (I would have wondered if the girl was really dead or just sleeping; I would have been amazed; I would have believed in Jesus right away.)

• **If you were a friend of the girl or boy Jesus raised, what’s the first thing you’d say to your friend?** (I’d ask her what it felt like to be dead; I’d tell him I was glad he was alive again.)

• **How do you think the parents felt when Jesus raised their children from the dead?** (Excited; surprised; grateful.)

• **What do you think the parents told other people about Jesus afterward?** (That he was great; that he was powerful; that he could do miracles.)

After two or three minutes, ring the clanging bell. Invite kids to share the responses they discussed with their partners.

Say: **The parents in these stories believed that Jesus could raise their children, and he did. We know that ▶ Jesus has power over death. If our friends and family believe in Jesus, we’ll see them again in heaven. Let’s talk more about heaven now.**

### Hope of Heaven

**Supplies:** Bibles, chalkboard and chalk or newsprint and marker; CD player

Write the following Scripture references on a chalkboard or newsprint: **John 14:1-3; Romans 8:35-39; Revelation 21:3-4; Revelation 21:21-24.** Say: **We’re going to listen to a story about one man’s idea of heaven. Then we’ll see what the Bible has to say.**

Play “The Unlit Candle” (track 13) on the CD. This story about death and heaven is adapted from Jewish folklore. It’s a touching story of a father who dreams of his only daughter in heaven with an unlit candle because his tears and sadness about her death put out the candle.

Pause the CD after the break in the story.

Ask: • **What would you do for this father who was sad because his daughter had died?** (Tell him about heaven; pray for him; try to cheer him up.)

Continue playing “The Unlit Candle” on the CD.

Say: **This story tells us how one person imagined heaven. With a partner, look up one of the passages I’ve written on the newsprint.** Then have pairs answer the following questions and take turns reporting their thoughts to the class.

Ask: • **What does the Bible tell us heaven will be like?** (Jesus will be there with us; we’ll never be separated from God’s love there; the streets will be made of gold.)

• **In our story, Hannah was sad; do you think people are really sad in heaven? Explain.** (No, because everyone’s happy in heaven; yes, because they know people miss them.)

Say: **The Bible tells us that there is no sadness in heaven. So Hannah would never be sad there. Like Hannah’s father, we may miss people who have died, but if those people loved Jesus, we know they’re happy in heaven.**

Ask: • **Who are you most looking forward to seeing in heaven?** (My grandmother: Jesus; my aunt.)

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**Bible Insight**

God’s presence with his people (Revelation 21:3) is a fulfillment of the promise in Leviticus 26:11-13. Thus, heaven is not only humankind’s eternal residence but also the place where God’s name will remain forever.
Does knowing you’ll see someone again in heaven make it easier to say goodbye when that person dies? Explain. (Yes, because I’m happy that they get to go to heaven; no, even though I know they’ll be in heaven, I’ll still miss them.)

Say: It’s OK to be sad when someone dies, especially if that person was a family member or close friend. Jesus was sad when Lazarus died. But as Christians, we don’t have to keep crying and being sad forever.

Say: Because Jesus died and came back to life again, we know that if we believe in Jesus, we’ll live again, too. We can look forward to heaven because we believe in Jesus. [Jesus has power over death, and he’s promised to prepare a place for us to live with him in heaven forever.]

**Closing**

**Living Hope**

**SUPPLIES:** Bibles, CD player

Have students turn in their Bibles to John 11:25, and ask a volunteer to read the verse aloud while others follow along in their Bibles: “Jesus told her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying.’ ”

Then ask: • What hope does this verse give people who believe in Jesus? (Even after we die, we will live again with Jesus.)

Say: Let’s celebrate the hope that we have in Jesus. Because [Jesus has power over death], we know that we will live again even after we die. We know that we will go to heaven and that we’ll live with God forever. We know that we’ll see the people we love again, if they also believed in Jesus. Those are all wonderful things worth celebrating!

Have students stand in a circle, and give each student two or three metallic ribbons. Play the song “Nothing Is Impossible” (Luke 1:37) (track 2) or “For the Son” (Luke 19:10) (track 10) on the CD. Have kids sing along if they’ve learned the songs and wave the metallic ribbons in the air. Lyrics are at the back of this book. When the song is finished, lead kids in shouting, [Jesus has power over death!]

Close by praying: Dear God, we thank you that [Jesus has power over death]. We look forward to the hope of heaven, where we’ll see our friends who love you and we’ll celebrate new life together. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Collect the metallic ribbons for use in future lessons.
Lesson 9

Growing closer to Jesus extends beyond the classroom.

Photocopy the “Hands-On Fun at Home” handout (at the end of this lesson) for this week, and send it home with your kids. Encourage kids and parents to use the handout to spark meaningful discussion on this week’s topic.
Lesson 9

Jesus has power over death.

Bible Basis: Jesus raises Lazarus.

"Jesus told her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying’ “ (John 11:25).

Packed With Power

Before dinner one night, try this experiment with your family. Place a potato on the kitchen counter. Hold a plastic drinking straw near the top, leaving the top opening uncovered. Raise the straw about 5 inches above the potato, and then quickly try to stick the end of the straw into the potato. The straw will crumple.

Now try the experiment again with a different straw, but this time hold your thumb over the top of the straw. The second straw will easily pierce the potato, proving more powerful than the first.

Just as the first straw lacked power, without Jesus we lack power over death. But just as the second straw was packed with power, Jesus has power over death.

Fun Food

Ask a parent to help you make an angel food cake from a mix. Cut the cake into bite-size pieces, and put them in a bowl. Pass the bowl around the table, and have family members tell about one thing they’re looking forward to in heaven as they take a piece of cake.

Check It Out

• Read Job 19:25-27. What’s the first thing you want to ask God when you see him in heaven?
• Read 2 Corinthians 5:1. What do you think your heavenly body will be like?
• Read Revelation 21:19-21. What do you think heaven will look like?

Faith Walk

Declare a “Heavenly Friends” night. After dinner, gather your family, and talk about people you’ll look forward to seeing in heaven. You could talk about friends, relatives, famous people, or Bible characters you’d like to meet. Share fun things you remember about them and things you’d like to ask or tell them when you see them in heaven.