

YEAR A

The Season of Lent is a period of 40 days, begins on Ash Wednesday, and is a period of introspection and reflection on the life, ministry, and teachings of Jesus. Episcopal author and theologian Barbara Brown Taylor says that Lent is a "springtime for the soul...Forty days to cleanse the system and open the eyes to what remains when all comfort is gone. Forty days to remember what it is like to live by the grace of God alone and not by what we can supply for ourselves."



## Scripture

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Rabbi, he whom you love is ill." But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This illness does not lead to death; rather, it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

(7-16 omitted)

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many people had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, "If you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

(24-32 omitted)

When Jesus saw her weeping and the other mourners as well, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus began to weep.

(36-37 omitted)

Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me." When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

Many of those who had come to console Martha and Mary had seen what Jesus did and believed in him.



## Questions

- Today is the fifth Sunday of Lent, the season when we move closer and closer to Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. What parts of this story make you think about what will happen to Jesus later?
- How do Mary and Martha each respond to Jesus when he arrives after Lazarus has died? What feelings were they expressing to Jesus when he finally arrived?
- What feelings might Jesus have felt when he cried even though he knew Lazarus would be okay?
- In the Gospel of John, miracles are used to show Jesus is the Son of God. How does this story show that Jesus is the Son of God? What else does this story show us about Jesus?
- This story is full of people expressing strong emotions. Share a story of when you've had strong feelings and shared them with someone you love. How did they respond to you?

### Look it Up!

Did you know there are plants and animals that almost seem to die and come back to life? Look up wood frogs and resurrection ferns. What other items in nature remind you of resurrection?



mini  
REVOLUTIONS





## Activity

### Materials:

Cones

Cards (or adhesive name tags/stickers)

In today's story, we learn Mary and Martha are upset with Jesus for not coming when they asked him to. They express their need and disappointment clearly to Jesus, and he responds to their sadness and request for help. Asking for what we need clearly and concisely is an important way we can build community and trust each other. We will practice our communication skills with a fun game: the human obstacle course.

The goal of this game is to beat the clock together. In an open space, set a starting and ending point for your course by using cones. Then, assign each participant a number by writing chronological numbers on cards or adhesive name tags/stickers for the number of participants attending. Have them attach it to their shirt/body, so each group member has a unique number. Spread out along the course, beginning with person 1 at the starting line.

Person 1 will walk, run, skip, or hop up to person 2. Person 2 will act as a human obstacle! They can shuffle side-to-side, do jumping jacks, etc., as long as they're in the way of the approaching person. Person 1 asks person 2 in a clear, kind way, "I need to move past you. Would you be willing to [insert action here], so I can pass?" Person 2 responds, "Yes, I will!" and does the action requested.

Person 1 will now stand in person 2's original spot and do their action. Person 2 will adopt person 1's action, turn around, and then go to person 3. When person 2 approaches person 3 and asks to pass, person 3 will respond, "No, I won't! But, I will do [different action], so you can pass." Person 2 will stand in person 3's spot, adopting their new action. Person 3 will move on to person 4, and so on. The people assigned even numbers will agree to do what the approaching person asks, and those assigned odd numbers will respond with an alternative action.

The game's goal is to get to the endpoint as quickly as possible by communicating clearly and without skipping any steps. Complete the course multiple times to beat your first time. If you have extra time, discuss what was challenging about the game and why.

### Alternate Activity

#### Materials:

Whiteboard (or large paper) Paper plates  
Drawing utensils

Sometimes when we're disappointed or hurt, it can be difficult to express how we feel, like Mary and Martha did with Jesus. First, think about a time when you were disappointed or upset about something. As a group, brainstorm a list of words that describe how you felt during that time, and write them on your whiteboard.

Then, using one side of a paper plate, draw a face with an expression that represents one of the words on the list (like angry, hurt, overwhelmed, etc.). On the other side, draw a face with an expression that represents how you felt when someone cared for you during that time (joyful, thankful, comforted, etc.). Tape your plates in your space, or take them home to show others.



## Micropractice

It's difficult to communicate clearly if we cannot identify our feelings. Check in with yourself and ask, "How am I feeling?" Use a feelings chart to help find the words to express your feelings to someone else.



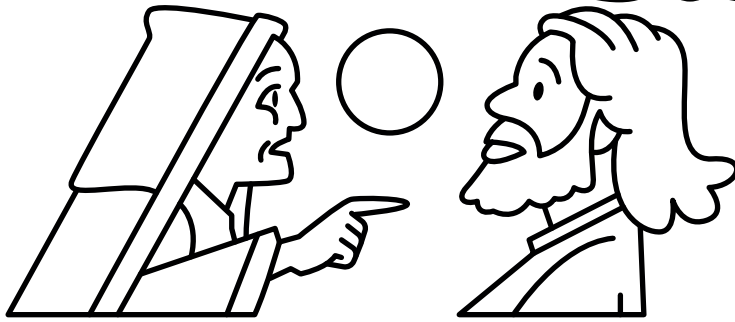
Download a graphic to share with your community and on social media. You can download it here: [illustratedministry.com/minirevA Lent5](https://illustratedministry.com/minirevA Lent5)



## Prayer

Dear God, thank you for being with us in both our sadness and our joy. Help us communicate our needs clearly so that we can build trust and community with one another. Amen.

MARY SAID TO JESUS,



"IF YOU HAD BEEN HERE, MY BROTHER A

WOULD NOT HAVE DIED.

JESUS SAW HER WEeping

and the COMMUNITY



WEEPING

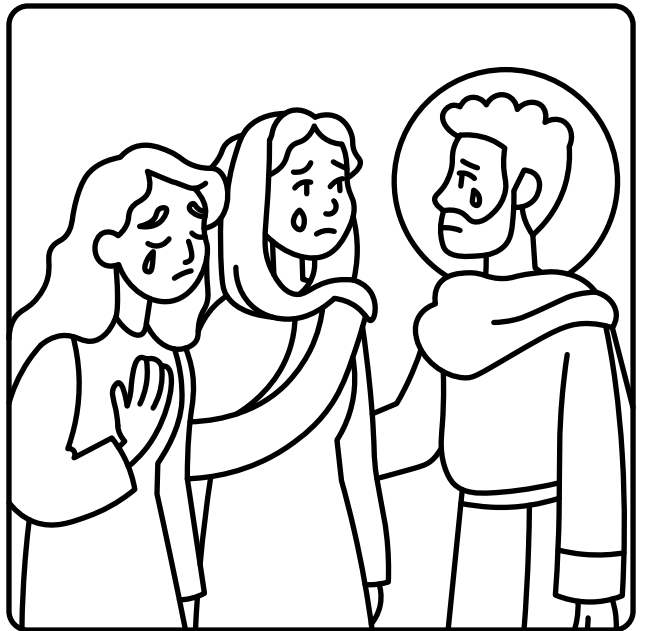
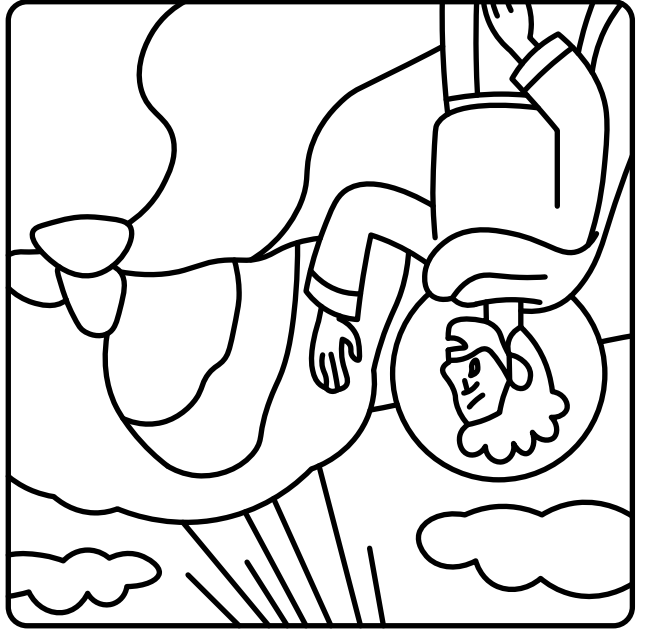
He was GREATLY DISTURBED IN SPIRIT

AND DEEPLY MOVED.

JESUS BEGAN TO WEEP.



4. Jesus went to Lazarus' tomb. He thanked God for this opportunity to show people God had sent him. Then Jesus said, "Lazarus, come out!" And Lazarus came out of the tomb, alive! Many saw this miracle and then believed.



3. Though Martha and Mary trusted Jesus, they were upset and said their brother would not have died if Jesus had been there. Their grief made Jesus sad too, and he cried, even though he knew Lazarus wouldn't stay dead.

1. Jesus learned the brother of Mary and Martha, Lazarus, was sick. But Jesus knew God would make more days before going to see his sick friend in Judea.



John 11:1-45



2. The disciples didn't want to go to Judea because it was dangerous, but Jesus told them he had to wake Lazarus up. When they didn't understand, he explained that Lazarus had died, but Jesus would bring him back to life.