

A NOTE TO PARENTS

When C. S. Lewis was nine years old, his mother died. In his autobiography, *Surprised by Joy*, he writes,

When her case was pronounced hopeless I remembered what I had been taught, that prayers offered in faith would be granted. I accordingly set myself to produce by will-power a firm belief that my prayers for her recovery would be successful; and, as I thought, I achieved it. When nevertheless she died I shifted my ground and worked myself into a belief that there was to be a miracle. The interesting thing is that my disappointment produced no results beyond itself. The thing hadn't worked, but I was used to things not working, and I thought no more about it. ... I had approached God, or my idea of God, without love, without awe, even without fear. He was ... to appear neither as Saviour nor as Judge, but merely as a magician; and when He had done what was required of Him I supposed He would simply—well, go away. It never crossed my mind that the tremendous contact which I solicited should have any consequences beyond restoring the *status quo*. ...

The story in today's Gospel is not a fairy tale or myth, to be offered to children only to nourish their imaginations and implant hope. We Christians claim it really happened. Yet we must not offer it to children as a realistic model for what may occur when death or loss enter their own lives. So how are we to tell this story? And why? Perhaps the key is in Lewis's words about "tremendous contact," and "awe, love and fear." We tell this story not to promote a God who is a magician, but to show how enormous must be the effects on our world when God himself enters it.

Look at your child's drawing on the back of this page. Talk about the memory, or the hope or wish, that it represents. How does your child imagine God's action—as "magic," or as "tremendous contact"? Help your child to trust in a God who sometimes acts mightily, and sometimes asks us to wait in hope, or to let go ... but who always loves us with an overwhelming, awesome love.

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The people were all crying, and the dead man's mother was the saddest of all.

She was a widow, and the dead man had been her only child. Now she had no one.



Jesus felt sad too. He went and touched the dead man, and said, "Get up!"

The dead man sat up, and talked to his mother. He was alive!



When the people saw what Jesus had done, they said, "It's the power of God!" Jesus showed God's power and love for the people of Nain, by giving new life to the young man.

God shows his power and love in our lives too—sometimes with amazing wonders, sometimes with quiet hope.

Close your eyes and remember. Can you think of a time when God showed his power and love in your life? Draw that time. Tell someone about it. Or draw a way that God might show his power and love in your life.