

Jesus Appears to His Disciples (Doubting Thomas)

Teacher Pep Talk: It is easy, perhaps, to think less of the Disciple named Thomas. When we hear of him, we often think of the well-known phrase “Doubting Thomas.” We remember the story of how he doubted the other disciples, when they told him that Jesus was alive!

We wonder what kind of man would doubt the Resurrection of Christ, even after his friends had told him they had actually seen Jesus alive again. We hear him stubbornly saying *“Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”*

We forget that just a few chapters earlier in the Gospel of John, it had been Thomas who showed great courage by insisting that all the disciples go with Jesus to Bethany, although it was dangerous for them to do so. John credits Thomas with having said *“Let us also go, that we may die with him.”* This is a far cry from the more familiar *“Unless I see the nail marks... I will not believe.”*

Perhaps it is not wise for us to look back at Thomas with contempt. It is probably much more prudent for us to look back and wonder quietly what we would have said, if faced with the same situation.

You will Need: For the Bookmark Activity:
Copies of the Activity Sheet for each child
A 6 inch piece of yarn for each child (*optional*)
Tape, glue, scissors, and crayons

Major Points: On Easter Sunday morning Jesus was raised from the dead
That evening Jesus appeared to His disciples
Thomas was not with them at the time
Thomas would not believe that Jesus was alive
A week later, Jesus appeared to all of the disciples
Thomas believed!
We can believe too!

Reference Verses: John 20:19-20 and John 20:26-29

Memory Verse: *“Stop doubting, and believe.”* John 20:27

Lesson: **Jesus Appears to His Disciples (Doubting Thomas)**

On Easter Sunday morning Jesus was raised from the dead

- What holiday have we just celebrated? (*Easter!*)
- (*Quickly review the Easter story with the children*)
- Jesus had died on the cross and been buried in the tomb
- That Sunday morning the women found His Tomb was empty!
- Then Mary Magdalene saw Jesus!
- Jesus was alive again!

That evening Jesus appeared to His disciples

- So far the Disciples had not seen Jesus yet. (*And even though some of the women had told them they had seen Jesus, the disciples didn't believe them because "their words seemed to them like nonsense." Luke 24:11*)
- What does the word nonsense mean? (*Right! Something that doesn't make sense! It didn't seem to make sense to the disciples that Jesus could be alive after He had been dead.*)
- After the women told them, some of the disciples ran to the tomb and also found it empty, but they didn't know yet what it meant. They had not seen Jesus for themselves.
- But that night (Sunday night) when all the disciples (except one) were in a locked room together, Jesus appeared to them
- Jesus said "Peace be with you."
- After this He showed them His hands and His side? Why do you think He showed His disciples His hands and His side? (*They had been injured during the Crucifixion. He had evidently retained these particular scars on His body.*)
- The Disciples were overjoyed when they saw Him.

Thomas was not with them at the time

- Unfortunately one of the Disciples, Thomas, was not with them
- Thomas missed seeing Jesus

Thomas would not believe that Jesus was alive

- The Disciples tried to tell Thomas about it later.
- Thomas doubted what they said. What does "to doubt" mean? (*It means that you don't believe it, or you wonder about it maybe, but you don't really think it could have happened.*)
- He would not believe them. He said, "*Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.*"
- Those were pretty big words! What do you think you would you have said? (*Wait for answers.*)

A week later, Jesus appeared to all of the disciples

- The next Sunday Jesus appeared to His Disciples again
- This time Thomas was there too!
- Jesus showed Thomas His hands and His side
- And Jesus told Thomas, *“Stop doubting, and believe.”*

Thomas believed!

- Thomas said to Jesus, *“My Lord and my God!”*
- Thomas finally believed!
- He didn't doubt anymore. Why? *(Because he had seen with his own eyes that Jesus was alive. He had seen Jesus' hands and His side that had been pierced during the Crucifixion.)*

We can believe too!

- Jesus said *“Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”*
- We can believe Jesus is alive!
- Jesus said we are blessed if we believe, even though we have not seen Him with our own eyes
- We can know that these things are true because God says so!
- Jesus is Alive! (No doubt!)

Let's pray and thank God that Jesus is Alive, and ask Him to help us always believe it!

Prayer: Dear God,
Thank you that you sent Jesus to die for us on the cross.
Thank you that He was raised from the dead.
Thank you that Jesus is alive again!
Help us to always believe that Jesus is Alive!
Amen

Suggested Activities:

I Doubt It (No, not the old card game! ☺)

In this game the children all sit in a circle. The teacher stands in the middle of the circle, makes up outrageous claims, and says them out loud. The children say “**I doubt it!**” each time. But, whenever the teacher says “Jesus is Alive!” and all the children say “**No Doubt!**” NOTE... This can get pretty loud! ☺ Choose someone else to stand in the middle and play again!

Outrageous Claims (examples)

Outside it is raining lollipops!
I have a purple dog!
Trains fly through the air!
Jelly Beans grow on trees!

Learn the Memory Verse

“*Stop doubting, and believe.*” John 20:27

Jesus said this to Thomas. We can think about it too. Are we doubting Jesus? If so, we can stop doubting and believe!

Technique: Have the children break into two groups stand on opposite sides of the room. One side says “Stop Doubting...” The other side responds “...And Believe.” Do this several times. Now switch sides and repeat. Ask for volunteers to say the entire Bible verse. Have them stand in the middle as they say it. Once they have said it, they get to stand to the side and enjoy watching the others, or get to do other things... etc.

No Doubt – Bookmark

Make a “No Doubt!” Bookmark with your class. (Two styles of bookmarks are provided.)

- Make a copy of one of the No Doubt! Bookmark Activity Sheets for each child.
- Also cut a 6 inch piece of yarn for each child. (optional)
- Allow the children to color the letters in the words: “Jesus is Alive!” and “No Doubt!”
 - These words will be on opposite sides of the bookmark when you are finished
- Using scissors cut out carefully around the entire bookmark.
 - **(BUT... Do NOT cut down the center line between the two sides!)**
- **Fold** on the center line.
- If you like, make a loop of yarn and tape both ends on the back of one of the sides
- Put glue on the back of one of the sides and press the two sides together.
 - OR tape the two sides together by taping the edges or using two-sided tape
- Now you have a bookmark... **No Doubt!**

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*"...blessed are those
who have not seen
and yet have believed."
John 20:29*

Jesus is Alive!

No Doubt!

*“...blessed are those
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