

LESSON 40

Doubting Thomas

JOHN 20:19-29



BIBLE TRUTH

JESUS CALLS TO FAITH ALL WHO ARE HIS

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION 5 MIN

2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

SUPPLIES: *The Gospel Story Bible* (story 118)

3. BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION 5 MIN

Where Is the Gospel?

SUPPLIES: Bible (ESV preferred); Review “Where Is the Gospel?” to prepare

4. SNACK QUESTIONS 10 MIN

SUPPLIES: snack food and beverage

5. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5–10 MIN

6. ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS (CHOOSE ONE OR MORE) 20–30 MIN

Coloring Activity

SUPPLIES: coloring page for NT Lesson 40—one for each child; markers or crayons

I Doubt It

SUPPLIES: a bag of marshmallows; a scarf; a plastic fork

You Can’t Convince Me

7. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

TOTAL 60–75 MIN

THE LESSON

OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION 5 MIN

In today's lesson the children will learn how Thomas doubted Jesus rose from the dead.

Use an event from your own life that children will find hard to believe. If nothing comes to mind, maybe one of your helpers has a story. It shouldn't be too hard to impress children this young.

Tell the class the story and, without embellishing the details, use wild and exciting inflection in your voice. Use words such as "You'll never believe this," or "It was incredible," or "Can you believe it?"

After finishing the story, ask the children to raise a hand if they think you're telling the truth. Then ask those who don't believe the story is true to raise a hand.

Finally, tell the class that the whole story is true. Identify the group of people who thought you were telling the truth as "believers." Identify the group that thought you were making it up as "doubters."

Define "doubters" as people who do not think something is true. Tell the class that it is OK to doubt whether something a person says is true, but we can always trust God and his Word because the Bible tells us that God cannot lie (Titus 1:2).

Take time to pray and thank God for the truth of his amazing plan of salvation. Pray for the remainder of the class time before moving forward with the lesson.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read story 118, "Doubting Thomas," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION 5 MIN

After reading the story, use the following questions to involve the children in a discussion:

- **What happened in this story?**
(Jesus appeared to the disciples after he rose from the dead.)

- **What is amazing about Jesus appearing to the disciples?**
(First, he had been dead. On top of that, the door to the room was locked and Jesus simply appeared.)

- **What did Jesus show his disciples and why?**
(Jesus showed them his nail-scarred hands and pierced side. This was to show the disciples two things. First, he was the same man who had been crucified. Second, by his blood, as the Lamb of God, we can believe and be forgiven.)

SNACK QUESTIONS 10 MIN

While the children are eating the snack, engage them by asking the following questions:

Where Is the Gospel? _____

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

After his resurrection, Jesus opened the minds of his disciples to understand the Scriptures (Luke 24:45). Jesus explained that he himself was the central theme of Scripture. Yet, Thomas, who was absent, did not believe. He was in need of gospel truth. Jesus knew what Thomas needed and reappearing in his presence, showed him his nail-scarred hands. Jesus called Thomas to faith and opened his mind. Thomas immediately responded by addressing Jesus as God. Thomas doubted, but when confronted with the risen Lord who was slain for his sins, Thomas believed. For us, although we have not seen, we have heard the Word and when God opens our minds, we too can believe.

- **Have you ever doubted something was true? If so, what?**
(Be ready to manage their inappropriate answers.)
- **What about doubting God? Is it ever hard for you to believe?**
(Don't try to convince them. Simply direct the doubters to pray to God and ask him to reveal himself just like Jesus revealed himself to Thomas.)
- **If you were Thomas, do you think it would have been hard to believe?**
(If most of the children say no, that they would have believed, steer them down a more humble road. Reminding them that apart from God's grace none of us would believe and choose to follow Christ. You can also remind them of the story you told earlier and how some of them did not believe you.)

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5-10 MIN

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult.

ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS. 20-30 MIN

Coloring Activity

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 40—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

- **What do the nail prints in Jesus hands remind us of?**
(The nail prints remind us that he died on the cross. It is important to remember his death because it was through his death that Jesus brought us new life.)
- **Why didn't Thomas believe?**
(Thomas did not believe because he did not see Jesus.)
- **Once Thomas saw Jesus did he change?**
(Yes, once Thomas saw Jesus he believed.)

I Doubt It

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a bag of marshmallows
- ✓ a scarf
- ✓ a plastic fork

Lay the scarf flat on the table and place one marshmallow in the center of the scarf. Pick up a fork and tell the class it is a magic fork. Ask the class, by a show of hands, how many doubt that the fork is magic. Use the word “doubt” because this exercise is meant to help them understand what the word “doubt” means.

Tell them you can use the fork to make the marshmallow disappear. Again, ask them who believes and who doubts. Play the exercise up a bit by pretending you forget how to perform the trick or that the words you are using are wrong.

Finally, utter a few words of gibberish, stab the marshmallow with the fork, and pop it into your mouth, chew it up, and swallow it. Announce to the class with a loud “ta da” that the marshmallow has disappeared!

The class will, of course, object. Use the exercise to teach them what it means to doubt. Another word for doubt is disbelief. Connect the exercise to the lesson and remind them of Jesus’ words in John 20:29, “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

You Can’t Convince Me

Act out the scene from John 20:25. Recruit a volunteer to be Thomas and quietly tell him not to agree no matter what the class says.

Reread John 20:19–25 to the class. The disciples have seen Jesus and are trying to convince Thomas that Jesus is alive. All we have is one line—“We have seen the Lord”—but the disciples must have tried to convince him strenuously. Tell the children that when they see Thomas they need to tell him what happened and what Jesus said, to try and convince him that he is risen.

At the end of the exercise ask the children “Why do some people not believe in Jesus today?” Help them to see that we believe by faith since we can’t see Jesus who is in heaven. Tell them we believe because of the Bible, which is written by God through men.

Teach the children and rehearse 2 Corinthians 5:7, “For we walk by faith, not by sight.” Explain this verse and relate it to our story. This is not a part of the Sword Memory program, but it is an easy verse to learn and goes well with the story.

PRAY **5 MIN**

Take time at the end of class to thank God for what you learned today. Include parts of your Bible lesson in your prayer as a way for the children to remember today’s lesson.

LESSON 40 - DOUBTING THOMAS

