
Blessed to Believe

Sunday School Lesson on Doubting Thomas (John 20:19-31)



Children are often trusting, but they sometimes have difficulty understanding what it means to believe things without seeing them. They don't have a solid handle on abstract concepts and need to see and experience to fully comprehend. It's important for faith teachers to

communicate to kids that God is very real and loves us, even though we cannot see Him with our eyes or touch Him with our hands. This lesson explains to kids that we sometimes have to trust in God to fill in the gaps of what we don't see or fully understand. We can believe in Christ and have faith in His promises, based on the Bible.

Lesson focus: This lesson explores the story of Thomas, which features events that took place after Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to His disciples. Thomas was reluctant to believe in the truth of the resurrection without seeing Jesus himself, until he saw him with his own eyes. Jesus said that those who believe without sight are truly blessed, and that includes us today! We don't see the Lord physically, but trust that He is with us always.

Passage: John 20:19-31

Target Audience: Kindergarten-6th grade (adaptable, but some concepts might be best for older students)

Materials Needed: Construction paper, markers, stickers, scissors, tape or glue, paper bags, yarn, pipe cleaners, Bible (optional, depending on crafts and activities of choice).

More Teaching Ideas:

- Watch our video demonstration of this [children's sermon](#) or the suggested [craft ideas](#)
- Compare our full [Doubting Thomas Sunday School Lesson](#)
- See more [John 20:19-31 ideas on Sunday School Works](#)

Group Game Activities and Lesson Opening

Lesson Opening: The story in this lesson involves doubt, belief, and sight. Open it up with activities that invite students to think about trust and believing things without seeing them.

Here are some activities to get kids thinking... (select the best ones for your audience and age group):

- Believe without sight...Have students reach into bags blindfolded, and identify various items based only on touch, sound, or smell. Explain that sometimes we figure things out without seeing them visually.
- What's the true story? Have kids take turns describing three facts about themselves, one of which is true, while the others are made-up. Have other students guess which fact is the real one.
- Can you believe that? Describe several hard to believe world records or events, and back them with pictures or descriptions.
- Would you believe it if... Provide children with seemingly challenging riddles, and explain them. Describe how sometimes we can't understand things right away, and have to have some sort of proof or assistance to develop belief.

Explain that the story to be explored today has to do with a time when Jesus appeared to His disciples after He rose from the dead. Jesus actually came to many people who were amazed to see Him again. However, in this story, one of the disciples missed seeing Jesus at first, and had a hard time believing that He was truly alive.

Ask: Have you ever heard a story that was hard to believe? How can you be convinced that something is true?

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This story is potentially a good one to act out with kids in a mini-skit format, especially if you have a large group and want to assign each kid with a disciple to re-enact. You could also talk through the story and have students mime or act it out with puppets. Additionally, you might have older kids take turns reading, or you could read the passage and pause along the way for clarifying questions.

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews,^[c] Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.”²⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. -John 20:19-20

Make sure that students know what has just happened. The grand and wonderful event directly proceeding this was the discovery that Jesus had risen from the dead. He was alive, and appeared to Mary Magdalene. The disciples, however, had not yet seen Him, and they never fully understood when He tried to explain to them that He would come back to life from the dead. They were hiding because they didn't want to be arrested and crucified as Christ had been. And then He showed up! The disciples realized this was truly Jesus, come back from the dead. Of course they were glad when they saw Him; who wouldn't be?

Ask: How do you think you'd feel if Jesus showed up right here, right now? Of course, we don't see Jesus in person, but we do know that He promised to be present with us through the Holy Spirit, so He is here...we just can't see Him with our eyes.

Explain that Jesus comforted His friends, much in the same way He had before He died. He promised them peace and the forgiving power of the Spirit.

Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.” -John 20:21-23

What a wonderful scene this must have been for the disciples! Imagine how sad and devastated they must have been, knowing that Jesus had died, and their hopes seemed lost. Then they saw Him live and in person! He was not dead, but risen and with them! However, one of the disciples wasn't around for this amazing appearance, and it made him skeptical...

Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin,^[d] was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.” -John 20:24-25

Thomas wouldn't buy it. He was someone who was inclined to be doubting and uncertain about things, and sometimes that can be a positive attribute. This time, though, you kind of have to wonder: if all of the other disciples insisted on the truth of seeing Jesus, wouldn't that be a clue to Thomas? Did he think he was the victim of a practical joke or something? However it happened, he refused to believe unless he had the opportunity to see and touch the savior for himself.

Ask: What are some things you would want to experience before you believed them? Is it sometimes difficult to believe in God when we don't see Him with our eyes?

It can be hard for us to trust and have faith when we don't get to see Jesus like the disciples did. But there's good news for those of us that believe without first seeing...

So a week after the first appearance, Jesus came again to the disciples. This time, Thomas was there to witness, and he had quite the meeting coming to him...

Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” ²⁷Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.” ²⁸Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” ²⁹Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

-John 20:26-29

Ask: Who are people that have not seen and still believed? (US!)

Thomas might have felt a little sheepish when Jesus came directly to him like that. He got the proof he demanded, but Jesus said something significant and reassuring for us. He told Thomas “blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” Well, that would include people like us. We haven't seen God in the flesh, but we trust and believe, even if it's difficult at times. Because of that, Christ said we are “blessed.” We know that we will see Him one day, and meanwhile we take heart in knowing

God is real and in our midst, and that He cares for us and counts our faith a beautiful and blessed thing. We have God's Word, the Bible, to remind us of those precious truths.

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. -John 20:30-31

And that is how we know that what we believe is true. The Bible was written with the important purpose of describing to us the events that took place in the life of Jesus. In fact, there were more things that happened, too, because there were too many wonderful events to fully document. But John (the author of this text) was an eyewitness to the life of Jesus, and gave us his accounts so that we could trust and believe that those things are really true. Thank God for the truth of that promise!

Close with a prayer thanking God for Jesus, and for blessing our faith even though we don't see Him with our eyes. Ask God for help trusting in Him and seeking to follow Him always.

Sunday School Craft Suggestions

Crafts: Consider crafts that coincide with the story details or the concept of belief and sight:

- “Faith without sight” glasses
- “Hang your Hope on Him Door Hanger”
- “Evidence Bag” of proof for the Gospel
- Bible Bookmark
- Homemade jigsaw puzzle
- “Faith Kaleidoscope”

Thomas is notorious for insisting that he see Jesus before believing he truly rose from the grave. He got his wish and was permitted to thrust his hands in the wounds of Christ...however, Jesus promised that those who have not seen and still believe are considered “blessed.” These crafts celebrate the fact that we “walk by faith, not by sight” and our hope is in the word of God. An “evidence bag” can be used for Bible bookmarks, crosses, or other trinkets. A door hanger reminds children to always hang their faith on Jesus. And “faith glasses” serve to commemorate the importance of trusting without seeing.

Bible Verses or Captions to Consider...

Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

- John 20:29

So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, ⁷for we walk by faith, not by sight. -2 Corinthians 5:6-7

Saved by the wounds of Jesus...grace through faith!

Blessed are those who believe without seeing!

Seeing is not always believing!

Craft one: “Evidence Bag” of Faith

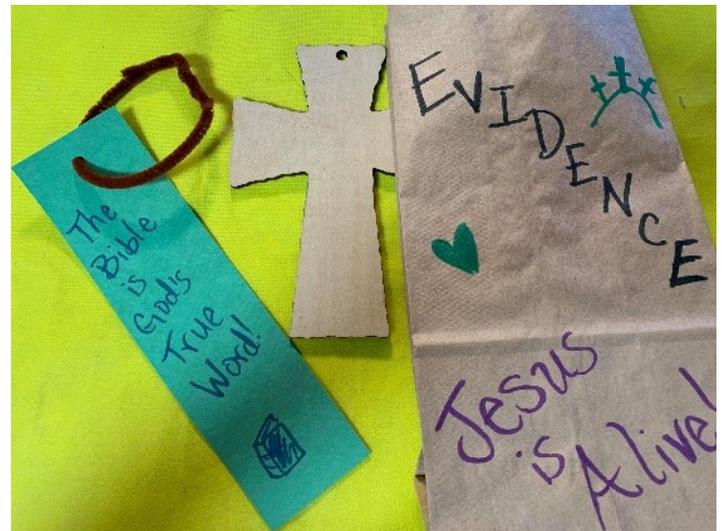
You will need:

- Scissors
- Construction paper (any color)
- Markers or decorating materials
- Glue or tape
- Paper bags
- Cross
- Stickers, decorations, etc.



Procedure:

1. Decorate the “evidence bag” with captions, titles, verses, stickers, and more.
2. Decide which items to put inside the evidence bag...
3. Decorate bookmarks, crosses, or other items that will go inside evidence bag.
4. Use the bag to hold items that will serve as reminders of the truth of the Resurrection. Carry or hang in a prominent place!



Craft Two: “Eyes of Faith Glasses”

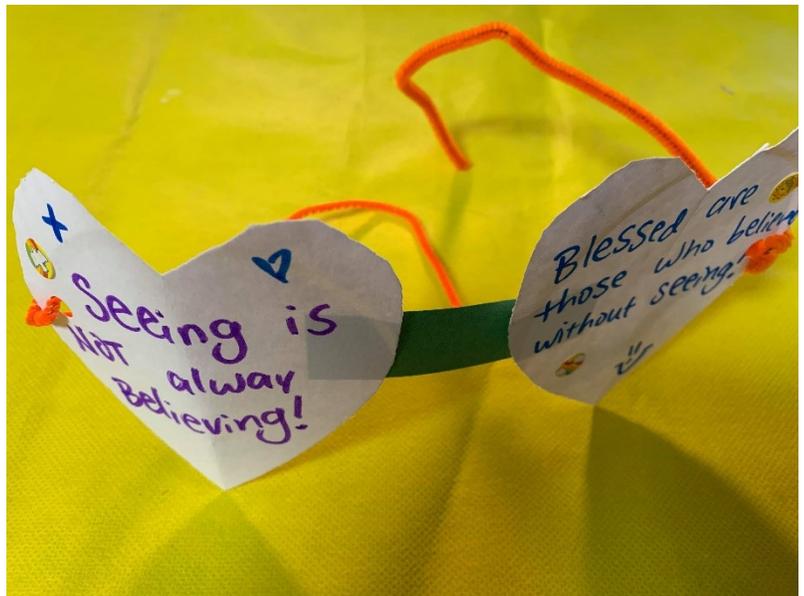
You will need:

- Construction Paper or cardstock
- Paper plates (optional)
- Glue, tape, or staples
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils
- Scissors
- Pipe cleaners or string
- Stickers or extra decorations
- Crosses



Procedure:

1. Use paper, cardstock, or paper plates as the base of your “glasses.” Cut two heart shapes out of the paper or plates.
2. Decorate the “lens” of your glasses with pictures, captions, or verses.
3. Use a small piece of paper to attach the two lenses together.
4. Attach pipe cleaners (or more papers) to the sides of the heart papers to complete the glasses.
5. Use the glasses as decoration, costume, or simple reminder of the story.



Craft Three: “Hang your Hope on Him” Door Hanger

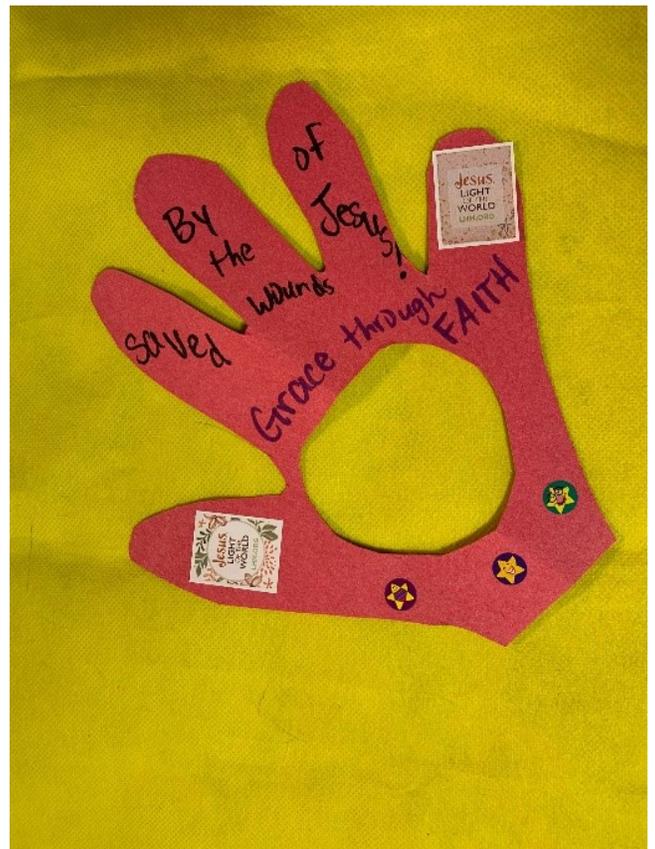
You will need:

- Construction Paper or cardstock
- Stickers, stencils, or other decoration
- Markers or crayons
- Scissors
- Pipe cleaners or string



Procedure:

1. Trace a hand on the paper or cardstock. Draw a large circle in the center.
2. Decorate the hand with stickers and markers, adding stickers and verses or captions.
3. Cut out the hand, leaving an extra border around the space if needed.
4. Cut a circle out of the hand, reminding kids of the nails in the hands of Jesus, and also allowing space to slip over a door knob.
5. Use your door hanger as a fun reminder of faith and trusting God!





Thank you for downloading these free materials. Our team is grateful for your trust and pray that God will bless your ministry.

This resource was prepared by [Kristin Schmidt](#) (pictured right). She serves at the Epiphany Lutheran Church in Castle Rock, CO. She has shared her teaching gifts through *Ministry-To-Children* since 2014 and now serves as our lead curriculum writer.

Kristin has a professional background in elementary and pre-school education. A graduate of Biola University, she holds a Master of Education and will receive the Master of Theology degree from Concordia University, Irvine, California, in May 2020. Kristin grew up in southern California and lived the past 10 years in Georgia. She is a long-distance runner and voracious reader.

My name is Tony Kummer (pictured below). I started Ministry-To-Children.com in 2007 as a free resource for anyone sharing Jesus with kids. It is my personal honor to share these resources with churches around the world.



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May God continue to bless your ministry!

Tony Kummer