

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

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April 19,
2016



Jesus Lives (John 20:19-31) Lesson for Kids

Jesus Walks Through the Walls... No Doubt About it! Tell all About it!

He's alive! So now what?? Once the eggs have been found, chocolate consumed, and bonnets put away, it may seem that Easter loses its thrill. But the empty tomb is only the beginning of the story, and there are important lessons to be gained from events immediately after the resurrection as well as further down the road. This lesson focuses on Christ's appearances after resurrection and how disciples perceived Him. Emphasis is on trusting, as well as how we are encouraged to spread the Good News with others.

Lesson focus: We can be certain that Jesus is alive and worthy of our trust; because He takes away sin, we are to spread the news of His work with other people.

Passage: John 20:19-31

Target Audience: K-6th Grade (adaptable)

Materials Needed: Dominoes; paper, glue, and yarn; crayons; reactive materials (vinegar and baking soda; Mentos and Diet Coke); lifesavers candies.

Lesson Opening: Trustworthy? Believable? How do we know if something is valid or not? Begin by inviting students to come up with three statements to share. Two of these should be true stories or facts, with one made up. As each kid shares, have the others in the group guess which statement is false (note: this can be easier with older kids. For younger ones, you may need adults to lead the sentence fabrication.). Mention how even grown-ups often say things that aren't quite true (especially relevant during election season!), but there is one thing we can now with absolute certainty beyond a doubt...Jesus rose from the dead to save us! We are just finishing the Easter celebrations, in which we learned of Christ's death on the cross and coming back to life. How amazing! But what happened after He came back to life? What did His disciples and other people around believe?

Bible Lesson:

Re-cap the Easter events and what took place after the tomb was found empty. Explain that there were still many in town (Jews, soldiers, etc.) who were trying to arrest the followers of Jesus. Imagine how the disciples may have felt...nervous, terrified, still sad and uncertain of the future. They were huddled in hiding when suddenly a change swept into the room:

19 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" 20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. -John 20:19-20

Look at that glorious contrast: from fear to faith, from locked doors to the Messiah's unlimited power. The disciples are plunged into joy. And Jesus doesn't stop there...

Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." 22 And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." -John 20:21-23

What does it mean to receive the Holy Spirit? It means we are given power through God's being; and because of that, we are entrusted with the special task of telling others about what Jesus did.

Hold up the dominoes. Have students help to line them up in a long row, and field for predictions of what might happen if one were to fall over...then invite a child to start the chain reaction and watch the dominoes topple in a row...explain how when we accept Christ and share His love, that can start a reaction with others catching on and spreading the Good News. *Note, if feeling extra adventurous, use a more exciting and reactive element to

illustrate this: make a baking soda/vinegar spout, or pour a tube of Mentos into a Diet Coke bottle. Explain how we can get so excited about Jesus that we can't help bubbling over to share!

Continue the Bible story by explaining that not all of the disciples encountered Jesus. One of them was not present for some reason...

Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

But he said to them, "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." -John 20:24-25

We don't know why Thomas missed the meeting, but his absence led to historical infamy. We now associate Thomas with doubt, as he stubbornly refuses to believe what the disciples share in spite of their evident joy. However, Christ comes bounding in again:

A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

28 Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

29 Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." -John 20:26-29

Jesus comes back to make His presence and life absolutely and undeniably evident. He confronts the skeptical twin face to face and allows his doubts to be laid to rest. The most striking detail in this encounter, though, at least for our sake as modern believers, is in verse 29. Jesus says "blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." Who might that be? Us! We have not physically seen Jesus, but we know in whom we believe, and are blessed for it.

Craft: Bookmarks and Good News spreading...Have students create the bookmarks; help them cut and hole punch (glue to cardstock if necessary) and attach string. Then provide paper and note caption. Have students create encouraging Good News cards to pass along to friends, reminding them that Christ is their "life saver"! Attach candy (and maybe eat one, as well...).

Close with prayer and reminder of God's work in our lives. Thank God for the resurrection of Jesus. Thank Him for loving us and ask for help in sharing that love with others.

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