

9. Thomas Believes (John 20:24-31)

“Hosanna! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord.” (Mark 11:9)



PLAN

Session Outline

1. Gather

Greeting
Thomas Believes
I Believe
Transition to Explore

2. Explore

Sacred Conversation
Hear and See the Bible Story
Interact with the Bible Story
Say the Bible Verse
Transition to Respond

3. Respond

True or False
Gravity and Wind
Loving God,
Loving Neighbor
Transition to Bless

4. Bless

Inviting
Praising
Blessing
At Home with God

Supplies

Basic Supplies: CD player | DVD player | Projector or screen | Television | Craft glue | Crayons | Markers | Offering basket | Paper | Pencils | Scissors | Tape

Gather: Bell | Carpet squares | Copies of creeds

Explore: Bell

Respond: Bell | Candle | Carpet squares | Multipurpose lighter | Paper cutter

Bless: No additional supplies

Before You Teach

In John's Gospel account, Mary Magdalene was the first person to see Jesus after his Resurrection. Jesus then appeared to the disciples in a locked room. Although that account does not mention that Thomas was not present with the other disciples, his absence becomes apparent in the retelling of Jesus' next appearance. Since Thomas had not yet seen the risen Lord, the other disciples were telling him about their experience. Thomas, who witnessed Jesus' arrest and death on the cross, was not sure he could believe what the other disciples said. Thomas wanted to see Jesus for himself.

Because of his stated desire to see the nail marks in Jesus' hands before he believed that Jesus was alive, Thomas had earned the nickname "Doubting Thomas." That nickname does a disservice to Thomas because it implies that Thomas's faith was not as strong as it should have been or as strong as the faith of the other disciples. How quickly it is forgotten that the other disciples were not willing to take Mary Magdalene's word as proof that Jesus was alive. The other disciples wanted to see the empty tomb for themselves and also wanted to see Jesus for themselves. In wanting to see Jesus for himself, Thomas behaved no differently than the other disciples.

When Jesus did appear to Thomas, he offered to let Thomas touch the wounds in his hands and side, and told Thomas to believe. Jesus did not admonish Thomas, but instead gave Thomas what he needed to be able to have faith. Jesus met Thomas where he was and gave him what he needed in order to believe. Thomas immediately recognized Jesus, without needing to touch him, and proclaimed that Jesus is Lord. Thomas showed us it is OK to have a questioning faith. Jesus will meet us where we are and will provide us with what we need so that we may believe.

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GATHER

Greeting

Before class: Display your choice of an attendance chart (Class Kit—pp. 16-17 or pp. 18 & 15).

- Play “Part of the Story” (Annual Music CD).
 - Welcome and greet each child as they enter the room.
 - Indicate the location of the offering basket.
 - Help children mark their attendance inside the building on the Community Attendance Chart (opt.).
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A—Thomas Believes (Activity Sheet)

Before class: Obtain Activity Sheets (Session 9).

- Distribute “Believe”/”Hard Questions” (pp. 19-20).
 - Encourage the children to follow the journaling prompt and complete the activities.
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OR

B—I Believe (Writing)

Before class: Find online and print creeds, such as the Apostles’ Creed, Creed of Nicaea, Nicene Creeds, The United Methodist Social Creed, etc. Other creeds can be found in the UMC Book of Worship.

- Let the children look at the creeds. Talk about what they like in the creeds or what is confusing.
- Distribute paper and pencils, and invite children to write their own creed.

ASK: What do you believe about God?

SAY: Write or draw about what you believe as a Christian.

- Let willing volunteers share.
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Transition to Explore

Before class: Obtain bell and carpet squares.

- Ring the bell to acknowledge that it is time to transition.
- Direct the children to choose carpet squares (or equivalent items), then sit in a circle on the floor.

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EXPLORE

Sacred Conversation

- Ask a few wondering questions.

ASK: I wonder:

- What made you laugh this week?
 - How did you help someone this week?
 - What are you grateful for?
 - Was there a difficult part of your week, and what made it better?
 - Where did you see God this week?
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Hear and See the Bible Story

Before class: Prepare television and DVD player.

- Read the Bible story (*CEB Deep Blue Kids Bible—John 20:24-31*).
- Watch the Deep Blue Adventure DVD Session 9.

ASK: Do you need to see something to believe it?

Interact with the Bible Story

Before class: Obtain Bible Story Sheets (Session 9).

- Distribute the Bible Story Sheets and draw attention to Bible Story Retelling (p. 1).
 - Assign the four roles, then present “Thomas Believes.”
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Say the Bible Verse

Before class: Display Poster: Unit 2 Bible Verse (Class Kit—pp. 12 & 21). Review Unit 2 sign language (Leader Guide—p. 95).

- Recite the Bible verse: “Hosanna! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord!” (Mark 11:9).
 - Invite the children to say and sign the Bible verse with you.
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Transition to Respond

Before class: Obtain bell.

- Ring the bell, then invite the children to put away their carpet squares.

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RESPOND

A—True or False (Game)

Before class: Obtain “True or False” (Leader Guide—p. 60).

- Direct the children to stand in the room’s center.

SAY: Listen to my statements. If you think it is True, move to the left side of the room. False, go right.

- Read the statements and let children decide if each is true or false. Reveal the answers after children offer their choices.

SAY: Sometimes we do not know all the answers, but even when we doubt, Jesus helps us to believe.

OR

B—Gravity and Wind (Science)

Before class: Obtain paper cutter and cut 1” x 8¹/₂” paper strips (two per child).

- Distribute two paper strips to each child. Direct children to place the strips with the long edges at the top and bottom. They are to slide the top strip about 1” left and tape it to secure the two pieces at the short edge of the top strip. Turn the strips over and tape to secure together.
- Invite each child to hold the paper strips by the center of one of the strips of paper and toss it upward into the air. The paper strips should open up and spin as the paper floats to the ground.

ASK: What is separating the two strips of paper and making them spin? Why do the paper strips eventually fall to the ground instead of floating up to the ceiling? (gravity)

SAY: We cannot see air or gravity, but we know they exist because we see their effects.

Loving God, Loving Neighbor

Before class: Obtain Map 7: Deep Blue Shores (Class Kit—p. 8) and the cut out Figures/Pieces: Deep Blue Shores Map 7 (Class Kit—p. 25).

- Display the Deep Blue Shores Map 7 on the floor or table. While the children interact with the map and figures, talk about testimonies.

ASK: What is a testimony?

SAY: A testimony is the sharing of what we believe.

- Invite a church member to come to share their testimony with the children.
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Transition to Bless

Before class: Obtain bell, candle, multipurpose lighter (or battery-operated candle), carpet squares.

- Ring the bell to signal transition.
- Direct the children to choose carpet squares, then sit in a circle on the floor.
- Light a candle to symbolize that this is a special time together (*optional*).

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BLESS

Inviting

Before class: Continue to display Poster: Unit 2 Bible Verse (Class Kit—pp. 12 & 21) where it is easily accessible for children. Obtain envelope of cut out Poster Pieces: Unit 2 Bible Verse Poster (Class Kit—p. 29).

- Gather the children around the Bible-verse poster.
- Display the final poster piece.
- Invite a child to attach to the poster the “Thomas” poster piece.

PRAY: Dear God, help us to know you are always with us even we can't see you. Amen.

Praising

Before class: Obtain CD player and Deep Blue Song Sheets.

- Distribute the song sheets for “Part of the Story” (Annual Music CD).
 - Sing the song “Part of the Story” (Annual Music CD).
 - Collect the song sheets and store.
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Blessing

SAY: Let's say an affirmation of our faith. This is a reminder of who we are called to be as Christians.

- Invite the children to repeat each phrase after you.

I believe in God, who loves me and wants me to love others.

God is the Creator of all things.

I believe in Jesus, who shows me God's love.

He hoped for a world where everyone could live in peace.

I believe in the Holy Spirit—a Spirit that we cannot see but feel.

The Holy Spirit helps me know God is everywhere.

God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit teach me that I can be the Church,
reminding everyone of God's power and grace. Amen.

At Home with God

Before class: Obtain Bible Story Sheets leaflets.

ASK: What is one thing that you learned today? Can you share with your family what you learned?

- Send home with each child Bible Story Sheets—Session 9 leaflet.

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Truth and Lies

1. When Thomas called the disciples, two were missing. (False. It was one.)
2. The disciples told Thomas they did not believe in Jesus. (False. They saw the Lord.)
3. Thomas believed the disciples. (False. He did not believe them.)
4. The disciples were gathered in a house when Jesus appeared. (True)
5. Thomas could not see Jesus. (False. Jesus spoke to Thomas.)
6. Thomas believed because he saw. (True)
7. Jesus said, "Happy are those who don't see and yet believe." (True)
8. Jesus then jumped for joy. (False)

