

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

Those in front of him and those following were shouting, “Hosanna! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord!” (Mark 11:9)



PLAN

Session Outline

1. Gather

Greeting
Can You Feel It?
White Crayon Art
Transition to Explore

2. Explore

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

3. Respond

Loving God,
Loving Neighbor
How Do I Know?
Thomas Believes
Transition to Bless

4. Bless

Inviting
Praising
Blessing
At Home with God

Supplies

Basic Supplies: Tape | Stickers |
Fine-line markers | Crayons | Pencils |
Ink pens | Glue | Scissors

Gather: Small paper bags | Small
objects that are safe for children to touch
| Black construction paper | White paper |
White crayons

Explore: No additional supplies needed

Respond: *Deep Blue Kids Bibles* |
Deep Blue Kids Bible Dictionary

Bless: No additional supplies needed

Before You Teach

In the Gospel of John, Mary Magdalene is described as the first person to see Jesus after his resurrection. In the Bible story today, we read that Thomas had not yet seen the risen Lord so the other disciples told him about their experience of when Jesus appeared to them in a locked room. Thomas, who witnessed Jesus' arrest and death on the cross, was not sure he could believe what the other disciples were saying. Thomas wanted to see Jesus for himself.

Thomas has since earned the nickname “Doubting Thomas” because of his desire to see the nail marks in Jesus' hands before believing that Jesus was alive. But perhaps the nickname does a disservice to Thomas. It implies that Thomas's faith was not as strong as it should be, or as strong as the faith of the other disciples. How quickly we forget 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 wanted to see Jesus for themselves. In wanting to see Jesus for himself, Thomas was no different 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 offered him what he needed in order to believe. Thomas immediately recognized Jesus and without needing to touch him, proclaimed Jesus was Lord. The story of Thomas reminds us that it is okay to have a questioning faith. Jesus will meet us where we are and provide us with what we need so that we may believe.

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GATHER

Greeting

Before class: Display the Attendance Chart (Class Kit—pp. 15-18) at eye level. Put together the model of the zoo and the figures of Benjie, Cinnamon, and the baby elephant (Class Kit—p. 9).

- Play, “Part of the Story” (Annual Music CD or Adventure DVD) as you welcome each child.
 - Show the children where to place their offerings, and help each child mark the Attendance Chart with a sticker or permanent marker.
 - Place the Deep Blue Shores Map (Class Kit—p. 11) and the zoo, Benjie, Cinnamon, and the baby elephant figures (Class Kit—p. 9) on a table or on the floor for the children to play with and explore. If available, add the Deep Blue Shores Maps, buildings, and figures from previous quarters.
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A—Can You Feel It? (Sensory)

Before class: Prepare several small paper bags, each containing a small object that is safe for the children to touch such as an orange, a stuffed animal, or a key. Write a number on each bag.

- Place the paper bags containing the objects on a table.
 - Give each child a piece of paper and a pencil.
 - Invite the children to investigate the contents of the bags without looking inside.
 - Encourage each child to guess what is in each bag and then write or draw the guesses on his or her piece of paper.
 - When everyone has had a chance to make guesses, sit down together and reveal the objects.
 - Discuss how the children made their guesses. Did anyone guess correctly?
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OR

B—White Crayon Art (Art)

- Give each child a piece of white paper, a piece of black (or other dark color) paper, and a white crayon.
- Invite the children to draw with the white crayon on both the white and black papers.

ASK: How are your two pieces of artwork the same? How are they different? How do you know what you drew on your white paper, even though you can’t see it?

Transition to Explore

- Have the children help you clean up and then move to the Bible story circle. Encourage them to move slowly.

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EXPLORE

Sacred Conversations

SAY: Like last week, our Bible story today was about the time right after Easter. I wonder what we can learn about Jesus and his faith community. I wonder what we can learn from them.

ASK: I wonder:

- How many friends are here with us today? Who is missing?
 - How do you feel today?
 - What's one thing that happened in your community this week that you really liked?
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Hear and See the Bible Story

SAY: Today our Bible story is about a disciple named Thomas. He wanted to know for sure that Jesus was alive.

- Tell the children the story, “Thomas Believes” (*Deep Blue Bible Storybook*—p. 435).
- Watch the Deep Blue Adventure for Session 9 (Adventure DVD) with the children.

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

Interact with the Bible Story

- Give each child a copy of “Thomas Believes” (Bible Story Sheets—Session 9).
 - Read the story with the children, encouraging them to read the words in blue.
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Say the Bible Verse

Before class: Post the Bible Verse Poster—Unit 2 (Class Kit—p. 5) on a wall or bulletin board.

- Point to the Bible Verse Poster. Say the Bible verse for the children, and then repeat it together.
 - Teach the children signs from American Sign Language for some of the words in the Bible verse (Leader Guide—p. 95 and www.deepbluekids.com/This-Sunday).
 - Watch the Unit 2 Bible Verse video (Adventure DVD) with the children.
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Transition to Respond

- Have the children move to the next activity. Encourage them to move quickly.

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RESPOND

Loving God, Loving Neighbor

Before class: Post “All Are Welcome” (Class Kit—p. 27) on a wall or bulletin board. Create two signs to post on opposite sides of the room: “Believe it!” and “Not!”

- Play, “All Are Welcome” (Annual Music CD or Adventure DVD). Sing along and dance to the music.

SAY: In our Deep Blue Adventure video today, Sophia had a hard time believing Kat about Cinnamon’s trick. Let’s play a game. I wonder how well you know me. Let’s play “Believe It or Not!”

- Mark one side of the room as “Believe it!” Mark the other side of the room as “Not!”
 - Tell the children a statement about yourself. Have the children show if they believe it or not by going to the corresponding side of the room.
 - Do this several times. Make some statements easy, some more difficult, and some silly.
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A—How Do I Know? (Activity Sheets)

Before class: Post the “How do I know?” poster (Class Kit—p. 21) on a wall or bulletin board.

SAY: Thomas had heard that Jesus was alive, but he had not been there to see Jesus in person the way that the other disciples had. He wanted to see and touch Jesus for himself. How do you know when something is true? (*Give the children some time to respond.*) Sometimes it’s hard to know what is true, and sometimes it is pretty easy to know. Here are some steps that help me when I am unsure.

- Show the children the poster, “How do I know?” (Class Kit—p. 21). Read each step aloud.
 - Give each child a copy of Activity Sheets—Session 9. Work through the question on the front of the page with the children by helping them to answer each of the six steps.
 - Show the children the back side of the Activity Sheet. Invite each child to come up with a question that he or she would like to answer at home.
 - If there is time, help the children begin to find a Bible verse to help answer Step 2, using the “Exploration Tools” in the back of the *Deep Blue Kids Bible* or the *Deep Blue Kids Bible Dictionary*.
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OR

B—Thomas Believes (Art)

Before class: Make a copy of “Thomas Believes” coloring page (p. 60) for each child.

- Give each child a copy of “Thomas Believes” (p. 60) and invite him or her to color the picture.
 - Discuss the Bible story as the children color.
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Transition to Bless

- Have the children help you clean up and then move to the Bible story circle. Encourage them to move with excitement.

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BLESS

Inviting

Before class: Cut out the Walking with Jesus Mural Pieces (Class Kit—p. 19) and place them in an envelope or zip-top bag. Post the Walking with Jesus Mural (Class Kit—pp. 2 & 31) on a wall or bulletin board. Find and prepare one or two pictures of people in your church, family, or community to add to the mural.

- Gather the children around the mural. Invite a child to tape the image of Thomas reaching out to Jesus (**J**) somewhere on the mural.

ASK: What do you remember about the Bible story we heard today? What do you think we can learn about community from this story?

SAY: We’ve been adding pictures of people from the Bible who knew Jesus. Some of them knew Jesus before Easter, and some didn’t know Jesus until after Easter. We know Jesus too! I wonder who you can think of who is “Walking with Jesus” like the people in our Bible stories.

- Tell the children about the pictures you prepared before class, and then tape the pictures to the mural. Invite the children who brought in their own pictures to tell about them and add their pictures to the mural.
 - If time allows, count and name all of the followers of Jesus that have been added to the mural.
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Praising

Before class: Display “Singing Together” (Class Kit—p. 25) on a wall or bulletin board.

- Sing together, “Jesus Is Alive!” (Class Kit—p. 25).

TIP: *If time permits, invite the children to choose more songs to sing.*

Blessing

- Invite the children to sit in a circle. Encourage them to sing with you the song, “Jesus Loves Me.”

PRAY: Thank you, Jesus, for loving us! Amen.

At Home with God

ASK: What’s one thing about our time today that you can tell your family?

- Give each child a copy of Bible Story Sheets—Session 9. Look at “Family Faith Activities” together.

ASK: Which of these activities are you most excited to try this week?

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

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Coloring Page

