

## **Bible Study at Home**—Week of April 17, 2020

**Lesson:** Doubting Thomas

**Scripture:** John 20: 19-31

**Lesson Focus for younger kids:** Say "Yes!" to Jesus.

Invite kids to do the Activity Page (below—Can You Believe It?).

### **Opening Activity/Conversation:**

Supplies: two card size pieces of paper and colouring supplies

We're going to practice saying "yes" and "no" today. Ask kids an assortment of yes and no questions. You may add silly questions, too. Here are some examples: Did you drink orange juice for breakfast today? Do you have a pet? Can you drive a car? Do you have eleven toes? Is your tongue green? Do you live on the planet Earth? Do you have two ears?

How can we say "yes" and "no" without using our voices? Affirm responses.

- Nod and shake head
- Write "yes" and "no" on two note cards. Then, we can hold up our cards to show "yes" and "no." Give each kid two cards to decorate. Write the word YES on one of your cards and the word NO on the other card. Then make a fancy border. Give kids time to complete their cards.

Let's count to 50 together. We counted to 50 because we're in the "50" time of the church year. There are 50 days between Easter and the next big day in the church, Pentecost.

- Why is Easter such a big day for Christians?
  - Jesus rose from the dead.
- I wonder if you know why Pentecost is such a big day in the church.
  - The Holy Spirit arrived on Pentecost. It's the birthday of the church.

In early church times, people spent the 50 days between Easter and Pentecost learning as much as they could about following Jesus. They spent 50 days saying "yes" to Jesus! Pentecost means "50 days".

We're going to use our "yes" and "no" cards in a little game. I'll ask a question and you can answer by holding up your "yes" card or your "no" card. *Be prepared for different responses.*

Are you at LOGOS today?

Do we go to LOGOS on Tuesdays?

Are you going to learn how to play soccer today?

Are we going to learn how to follow Jesus today?

Did you put on shoes this morning?

Did you have spaghetti for breakfast this morning?

Did you skateboard to Sunday school this morning?

Did you wear your swimming suit to Sunday school this morning?

Does God love us when we do things that are wrong?

Does God want us to be kind and help others?

## Opening Prayer Time

Let's pray a Say-Yes-to-Jesus prayer. Give each other a high five whenever you hear me say "Yes!"

Loving Jesus,  
You rose from the dead on Easter. Yes!  
You came to your disciples and shared your peace. Yes!  
You gave them a job to do. Yes!  
You wanted your disciples to say . . . Yes!  
To tell the rest of the world about you. Yes!  
And you want us to say . . . Yes!  
To share your story and your love. Yes!  
Amen.

### Open the Bible: Doubting Thomas

Supplies

- "Yes" and "No" cards

Our story is called Doubting Thomas. Before we read the story, let's make sure we know what "doubt" means.

- Please tell me what it means to doubt something?
  - You think it's not true or you don't believe that it is true.
  - So, if I said there's going to be a rocket landing in the church parking lot today, would you doubt it? Pause for responses. What if I said we're going to read the story now? Would you doubt that? Pause.

Read Doubting Thomas on pages 492–495 in the Spark Story Bible or the scripture from your family Bible.

Let's use our "yes" and "no" cards to help tell the story. Hold up the "yes" card when the disciples welcome Jesus, the "no" card when Thomas gets stubborn, and the "yes" card when Thomas believes in Jesus. *Hold up the wrong card (the "no" card) at the end of the story, so kids will correct you. They are saying "yes" to Jesus when they do so.*

Have a brief conversation about the story. Ask the kids these questions?

- Did Jesus give Thomas a second chance to believe he was alive?
  - Yes!
- When did Thomas believe that Jesus was alive?
  - when he touched Jesus' wounds
- What would you say to Jesus if you were one of the disciples? Affirm all responses.

Further Discussion: Saying "Yes" to Jesus with our actions

Jesus breathed on his disciples in a very special way. He said, "With this breath, I will always be in your hearts, even when I am in heaven. You now have the power to do the things I've asked you to do." We can say "yes" to Jesus by helping others and by caring for creation.

Talk about the different way they can say Yes to Jesus with their actions:

Examples:

- What are some ways you take care of your pet? (feed, bathe, brush, love, play with, take for a walk)
- Have you ever helped someone with homework or read a story to a younger friend? Helping with homework or reading Bible stories to others are ways to say "yes" to Jesus.
- Have any of you planted seeds or helped to plant a garden? What did you plant? God created a beautiful world. One way we can say "yes" to Jesus is by caring for creation. Planting flowers,

vegetables, and trees is one way to do this.

- Recycling is another great way to say "yes" to Jesus.
- Cooking is one way to help at home. What are some other ways? (picking up toys, unloading groceries, setting the table, caring for a younger brother or sister) Helping around home, being a friend, and giving a hug are all great ways to say "yes" to Jesus.
- Share other ways we/they say "Yes" to Jesus
- Invite the kids to draw a picture depicting a "yes" activity.

## **Activate Faith**

### **Just Say, "Yes!"**

Supplies

- "Yes" and "no" cards
- Chenille stems
- Single hole punches
- Markers

We're going to make "yes" door hangers from our "yes" cards. Now use markers to decorate your card. You may even decorate both sides. When you're ready to make the hanger part of your door hanger, punch a hole in the two upper corners of the card, making sure that the holes aren't too close to the edges. Thread one end of a chenille stem through one hole, make a hook, and twist the end of the wire around the main wire. Repeat this for the other top end of the card. Hang on the door of your room. It will remind you to say "yes" to Jesus.

Look! We have our "no" cards left. What should we do with our "no" cards? Affirm responses. When are some times we should say "no?" Affirm responses. For our relationship with Jesus, we don't need the "no" cards. If you have a recycling box, place the cards in the paper-recycling box or throw them in the garbage.

### **Closing Conversation and Prayer:**

We learned about Thomas, who said "no" and then said "yes!" Was Thomas excited to see Jesus? (Yes!) Does Jesus want us to say "yes"? (Yes!) When we say "yes" to Jesus, we are saying that we believe that Jesus loves us and that we will follow the teachings of Jesus.

Prayer

People all over the world say "yes" to Jesus. Repeat each line after me:

Dear Jesus,

We can say "yes" to you in Spanish— Si.

We can say "yes" to you in French— Oui.

We can say "yes" to you in Korean— Yeh.

Help us to say "yes" to you

In all that we say and all that we do.

Amen.

# Can You Believe It?

Sometimes we have a hard time believing the things that people tell us. Solve this code to figure out what Thomas didn't believe.



**SECRET CODE**

A	E	I	J	L	S	U	V



**Lesson Focus for older kids:** Not seeing is believing.

Moment of silence to prepare ourselves to hear God's word.

### **Opening Conversation:**

At the beginning of today's story, Jesus' followers were in great danger, so they hid away in a locked room.

- What do you do when you want to get away from a bad situation? Where do you go?
- Is it ever okay to hide? (when there is real danger)
- Can we hide our hearts from God? (no)
- Why is that good news? (God would never hurt or betray us.)

When we hide, bad news has trouble finding us. But because the disciples are on the run in today's story, it takes a little longer for them to hear good news, too.

- Talk about a time that you were the last to know about something. How did it make you feel?
- Is the last person to know less important than everyone else? (not really) How can we support those people who hear good news last?

### **Opening Prayer**

Ask kids to come up with a sentence they use when they welcome someone to their house, like "I'm glad you're here," or "Come on in." Then, pray the following prayer, leaving room at the end for kids to add their own invitations to God.

God,

Come into the locked rooms of our hearts and bring us good news. We say, [add kids' invitations].

Amen.

### **Open the Bible: Doubting Thomas Story**

Supplies

- Pencils and paper

As we listen to today's story, be on the lookout for a situation where someone would use one of the five senses: sight, hearing, taste, smell, or touch. When you hear about a time when someone might use these senses, draw a picture of what sense might be used (eye for sight, ear for hearing, tongue for tasting, nose for smell and hand for touch).

Find the story: Spark Bibles John 20:19–31 on pages 1199–1200 or scripture verse in family Bible. Read the story slowly, allowing time for kids to point out places where the senses are referenced. Get ready to pause frequently to record (through drawing) the many senses used in today's story.

After the reading, ask the following questions.

- If Thomas hadn't seen Jesus, would that put Jesus back in his tomb? (no, of course not)
- For people who have special needs such as visual impairment, hearing loss, and so on, is Jesus any less real? (nope)
- Why was it important, then, for Thomas to actually see, touch, hear, and smell Jesus?

Other Questions to consider:

- Why do you think John was the only gospel writer to include the story of Thomas? (Each gospel writer selected stories about Jesus to make different points; this story was important to the writer of John.)
- Read the story aloud again. Invite kids to close their eyes and imagine themselves in the room with Thomas and Jesus.
  - Who would you side with: Thomas or Jesus? Why?
  - How might you have responded if you were Thomas?
  - Why do you think Thomas had to see in order to believe that Jesus was alive? Answers will vary. Encourage discussion.

- Why do you think Jesus gave the disciples the power to forgive sins?
  - After everyone has shared, offer a reminder that, because of Jesus' death and resurrection, God forgives them their sins.

The fact is, all of us in this room believe in Jesus' resurrection even though we have not seen Jesus. We are among many Christians who are blessed. Find out why we are blessed by looking up John 20:29. The verse is on page 1200 in the Spark Bible. Ask kids to read and memorize the verse individually. Ask a volunteer to start reciting the verse

### **Activate Faith:**

**Choose One or all of the following extra activities:**

#### **ART Activity: "I've Never Seen" Collages**

Kids create collages of things they've never seen as they remember that not seeing is believing.

Supplies:

- Kid-friendly magazines and newspapers
- Scissors
- Glue
- Crayons or markers
- Chart paper or poster board

Instructions:

Jesus knew that many people would come to believe in him without ever seeing him. Sometimes, it's hard to believe in something you haven't seen, but we believe in things all the time that we haven't seen with our own eyes.

1. Look through magazines and newspapers and cut out things that you've never seen in person – things that you've only seen in pictures or on TV or in books. Use them to make a collage. You may also draw things you've never seen on your collage.
2. As kids create collages by mounting their pictures on chart paper or poster board, talk about how we don't always have to see to believe, and how we can believe in Jesus without seeing him.

Thomas had to see Jesus to believe, but we know better. Not seeing is believing!

#### **ART Activity: A Sensory Message**

Supplies

- Paper, Sensory art supplies (see below), Glue, Tape

Even if we didn't have our senses, Jesus would still be Jesus. But we can use whatever senses, gifts, or community we have to celebrate Jesus. Let's create something that engages our senses.

To create a "Jesus is risen TODAY!" sign for your worship space, try to use crafty items that engage or reference senses in a creative way. Collect a variety of these objects before class so kids have something to choose from. Here are some examples of sense-related supplies that you could add to your creation in any way you want, but feel free to add your own ideas, as well?

*Taste:*

Dried macaroni

Sugar/Salt

*Smell:*

Scratch 'n sniff stickers

Perfume/Body spray

Flowers

*Sight:*

Markers, colored pencils

Fluorescent stickers

Small mirrors

*Hearing:*

Bubble wrap

Bells

Party noisemakers

*Touch:*

Sandpaper

Feathers

### **Game: What You Can't See**

Kids try to identify objects while blindfolded as they remember that not seeing is believing.

Supplies:

- Large grocery bag or box filled with everyday, familiar items (examples: apple, stapler, pencil, crayon, toy car, football)
- Mask or strip of fabric to use as blindfold

Set Up:

Place all items in a bag or box and close it so kids cannot see inside.

Instructions: *(adapt to your household)*

In our story today, Thomas had to see and touch Jesus to believe, but Jesus said that many will believe without seeing, and those people are blessed. We are some of those people! We know that some things are real, even if we can't see them. Let's play a game that's all about the things we can't see. Let's all sit around this box. Who would like to volunteer to go first to show how we can know things without seeing them?

1. Gather the kids around the box.
2. Ask for a volunteer to go first, then gently wrap a blindfold around his or her eyes.
3. Tell the rest of the kids not to give the volunteer any information about what he or she can't see.
4. Reach into the box/bag and pull out an item, then hand it to the blindfolded volunteer and if he or she can identify what it is.
5. Give the volunteer a chance to touch, shake, and smell the item, then take a guess at what it is. Let the other kids provide clues as needed.
6. Once the object is identified, ask the volunteer to take off the blindfold and choose the next volunteer.
7. Continue until each kid has had a turn.

You did a great job identifying things you couldn't see. Remember, we can't see Jesus, but we can believe. Not seeing is believing!

### **Closing conversation and prayer:**

A lot of things happened in today's story.

- Jesus came back from the dead.
- Jesus gave the disciples the power to forgive sins.
- Thomas doubted. Jesus appeared to Thomas.
- Thomas believed.

Jesus calls us to believe in him, even though we can't see him. Remember that even if you go through periods of doubt, God promises to be present in your life.

For your closing conversation, revisit the idea of faith coming as a gift.

Ask:

- In today's story, what did Thomas do to earn his faith? Did he go looking for Jesus?
  - No, he did nothing!
- When did his faith become a reality to him?
  - when Jesus came to him, and he experienced Jesus with his senses
- If you had to do something to earn your faith, would you do it?

- Why did Jesus even bother coming to see Thomas?
  - Thomas was important to Jesus—Jesus loved him!
- Do you think Jesus still comes to us?
- Even when we can't see Jesus, when we're sad or lonely, is it still possible to trust Jesus?
  - Yes! This is what it means to be blessed.

### **Closing Prayer**

God of surprises,  
Thank you for your Son, Jesus.  
Help us to believe in him,  
And to tell others  
About your love and forgiveness.

Amen.