



Unit 28 | Session 2

JESUS APPEARED TO THOMAS

John 20

CHRIST CONNECTION:

Jesus is still alive today. We have not seen Jesus, but if we believe in Him, we will be blessed.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

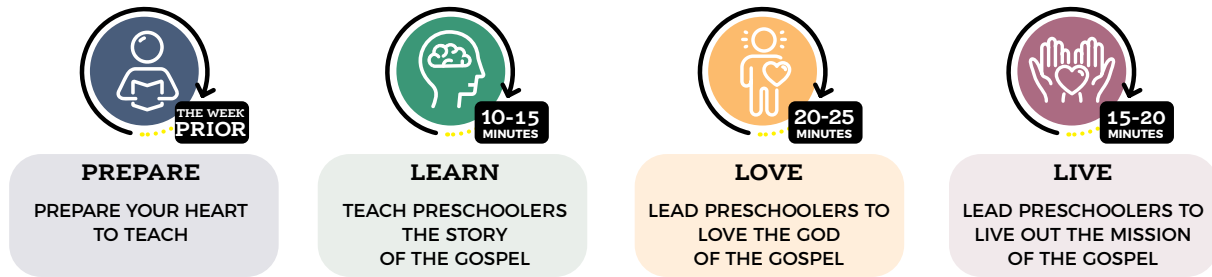
How do we know God wants us to know Him?
We know God wants us to know Him because He shows Himself through the Bible.

KEY PASSAGE:

John 17:3



IN ADVANCE TO TEACH THE SESSION



LEADER Bible Study

Toward the end of John 20, we find the disciples gathered, only a week after the discovery of the empty tomb. Word of His resurrection had already begun circulating, and Jesus even made Himself known to some followers. At this point in the story, we read of Thomas’ response when faced with the news of Jesus’ resurrected life.

What lessons can we learn from Thomas’ doubt? Why did Christ declare our faith was more blessed than our sight?

Doubt comes so naturally to us. We so often feel the need to see things for ourselves before choosing to move forward in trust. This is as true for us now as it was for Thomas. However, unlike the doubting disciple, we do not have the scar-bearing Christ standing physically in our midst. Yet, Jesus declared this reality to be our blessing and advantage.

Thomas’ encounter with Jesus offers us a significant truth about the necessity of faith. Like this disciple, we weren’t physically present to witness the stone roll away or to see the Lord’s burial clothes folded neatly where His body once lay. We weren’t there racing at breakneck speed to see the empty tomb with our own eyes. However, we can receive the greater blessing of faith that only comes with the absence of sight. How

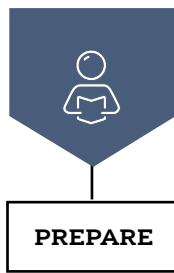
great will be our joy when our faith does become sight!

Just as Jesus’ resurrected body was able to appear to His disciples even while they hid behind a locked door, so can He break down the barriers to our faith. He welcomes doubters to enter in to His presence. Jesus stood among them despite their distress and fear. In fact, His initial greeting was one of gentleness and peace—not anger or apathy.

As you lead your preschoolers this week, help them understand that Christ offers us the same peace and compassion given to Thomas and the others. He likewise commissions us to proclaim the good news to the ends of the earth. Just as Thomas heard of the resurrection through word of mouth, people around us are also dependent upon our sharing of the gospel’s great news.

PEOPLE TO KNOW

Thomas: One of the first twelve disciples of Jesus. His desire for evidence of Jesus’ resurrection earned him the nickname “doubting Thomas.”



IN ADVANCE TO TEACH THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep these items on hand for each session: Allergy Alert, Bibles, construction paper, copy paper, washable markers, crayons, scissors (adult use), blunt-tipped scissors, glue sticks, glue, blocks, baby dolls, play dough, world map or globe, snack food, paper cups, and napkins.



Welcome and worship with song

- “Kingdom Kid” song
- Giant Timeline or Small Group Timeline

Tell the Bible story

- Bible Story Picture Poster
- “Jesus Appeared to Thomas” video (optional)
- storytelling tips props (optional)
- small tray
- small cloth or towel
- 5 small classroom items such as: toy car, block, people figure, toy dish, or play dough container

Practice the key passage

- Key Passage Marker
- Key Passage Poster
- “That They May Know You (John 17:3)” song
- “Key Passage Puzzle Printable,” 1 copy

Learn the big picture question

- Big Picture Question Poster

Respond through song and prayer

- “The Good News of Christ” song
- “Jesus Saves (Preschool Version)” song

Feel and guess

- small tote bag
- small Bible
- common classroom items (toy car, wooden block, glue stick, blunt scissors, toy hammer, rhythm instrument, etc.)

Poke holes in a plate

- foam plates, 1 per child
- plastic golf tees
- permanent marker
- thick beach towel or blanket

Look at and make Bible

storybooks

- Key Passage Marker, 1 per child
- stapler
- several Bible storybooks

Scoop cotton balls

- blindfold or bandanna
- large serving spoon
- large bowl
- bag of cotton balls

Review

- Giant Timeline
- “That They May Know You (John 17:3)” song

Missions Moment

- “Cook Family Photo” printable



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LEARN the Bible Story

1 WELCOME AND WORSHIP WITH SONG

Greet preschoolers with a smile. As preschoolers arrive, sing an action song such as “Kingdom Kid” to engage them and help them feel welcomed.

2 TELL THE BIBLE STORY

Place five classroom items on a tray and cover the items with a cloth or towel. Invite children to be seated in the group time area. Tell the children that you are going to remove the cloth so they can see the items under it, but they are only going to have 10 seconds to see what is there. Remove the cloth, and count to 10 slowly and loudly. Then, re-cover the items on the tray. Prompt children to tell you the items they remember seeing.

SAY “You were really good at telling me what you saw. When I put the cover back over the tray, were the items still there? [Allow responses.] Yes, they were. You did not have to see them to know that they were still there. In today’s Bible story, one of Jesus’ disciples had a little trouble believing something because he had not seen it with his own eyes. Our Bible story comes from the book of John. It is true because all the stories in our Bible are true.”

Open your Bible to John 20. Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling tips. Use the bold version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

JESUS APPEARED TO THOMAS

“Jesus had visited some of His disciples. At that time, one of Jesus’ disciples, Thomas, was not there. “We have seen the Lord!” the disciples said. But **Thomas did not believe it. “I want to see and touch the holes in His hands and His side, or I will never believe!”** Thomas said.

One week later, the disciples were together again. This time, Thomas was with them. **Jesus came in and stood with them. “Peace to you!”** Jesus said.

Then Jesus told Thomas, “Touch the marks on My hands and My side. I am alive! Believe it!”

Thomas did believe. “My Lord and my God!” he said.

Jesus said, “You believed because you saw Me. Those who believe in Me without seeing Me are blessed.””

Christ Connection: Jesus is still alive today. We have not seen Jesus, but if we believe in Him, we will be blessed.

STORYTELLING TIPS

Cover your eyes: Show children how to cover their eyes with their hands. Direct the children to cover their eyes with their hands every time you say the name “Thomas” while telling the Bible story. Prompt children as needed.

Talk in different voices: As you read the story, use different voices for the disciples, Thomas, and Jesus. You might use a happy voice for the disciple’s dialogue, a stern voice for Thomas, and a kind voice for when Jesus speaks. Practice the different voices ahead of time so that you are comfortable with them.



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

3 PRACTICE THE KEY PASSAGE

Before the session, print one copy of “Key Passage Puzzle” printable. Cut out the pieces and hide them around the room. Place the key passage marker in your Bible at John 17:3. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage and to remove the marker. Read the verse aloud to the children. Invite children to find the key passage puzzle pieces that you hid in the classroom. When they have found the pieces, guide the children to work together to assemble the puzzle by matching the icons in the corner of each piece. Read the verse again to the children and guide them to say it with you as they do the motions they learned from last week.

SAY “ Our key passage verse says that eternal life, which means to live forever with God, is found through knowing God and His Son, Jesus. Thomas knew Jesus, but he had trouble believing that Jesus was alive. It was not until Thomas saw Jesus and could touch His hands and side that he believed that God had brought Jesus back from the dead. Jesus told Thomas that those who know and believe in Him without seeing Him will be blessed. ”

Sing the key passage song “That They May Know You (John 17:3).”

4 LEARN THE BIG PICTURE QUESTION AND ANSWER

SAY “ The big picture question and answer says, **How do we know God wants us to know Him? We know God wants us to know Him because He shows Himself through the Bible.** In the Bible story, Thomas would not believe that Jesus was alive until he saw Jesus for himself. Unlike Thomas, we cannot see Jesus. We cannot see His face, or touch His hands and side, but we can hear about Jesus and learn about Him by reading Bible stories about Him. What is your favorite Bible story about Jesus? ”

5 RESPOND THROUGH SONG AND PRAYER

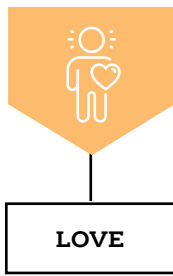
SAY “ Jesus is still alive today. We have not seen Jesus, but if we believe in Him, we will be blessed. We can learn more about Jesus by reading stories about Him from the Bible. ”

Sing “The Good News of Christ” as preschoolers move with the music. Prepare for prayer by singing “Jesus Saves (Preschool Version).” You may also collect an offering.

SAY “ Dear God, thank You for sending Jesus to save us. Please help us to believe in You and to know You, even though we cannot see You with our own eyes. In Jesus’ name, amen. ”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God because of what we learned

1 TRACE A HAND



Demonstrate for children how to draw a hand by pressing your own hand flat onto a piece of construction paper, spreading apart your fingers, and then tracing around it with a crayon. Distribute crayons and construction paper to children. Prompt them to trace their own hands. Help as needed. When children have finished, suggest they draw “holes” in their hand pictures. Help children write Jesus is alive on their pages.

SAY “ Show me your hand pictures. In the Bible story, Thomas did not believe that the disciples had seen Jesus. He said, ‘I want to see and touch the holes in His hands and His side, or I will never believe!’ A week later, Jesus came and stood among the disciples, including Thomas. Jesus told Thomas to touch the marks in His hands. Thomas then believed that Jesus was alive. Jesus is still alive today. We have not seen Jesus, but if we believe in Him, Jesus says that we will be blessed. ”

2 FEEL AND GUESS

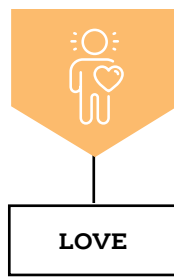
Place a small Bible and other classroom items into a bag. Hold the top of the bag closed so that children cannot see what is inside. Invite a child to reach inside the bag, to feel for an item, and to guess what it is. Then, prompt the child to lift the item from the bag to see if he guessed correctly. Repeat the process of a child reaching into the bag. Continue the game until the bag is empty.

SAY “ We had to feel with our hands and see with our eyes in order to know what items were in our bag. In the Bible story, Thomas said that he would not believe that Jesus was alive until he saw Jesus with his eyes and felt the holes in Jesus’ hands and side. Jesus appeared to Thomas and Thomas believed. Jesus said to Thomas, ‘You believed because you saw Me. Those who believe in Me without seeing me are blessed.’ ”

3 POKE HOLES IN A PLATE

Using a permanent marker, write a capital letter J on a foam plate for each child. Cover a preschool height table with a thick beach towel or blanket. Lay a plate in front of a child on the table and instruct him to be seated in a chair. Show the child the letter on the plate and demonstrate how to poke holes using the end of the golf tee along the lines of the letter. Watch children carefully and take up the golf tee as soon as they are finished.

SAY “ Do you know what letter your name begins with? [Allow responses.] Jesus’ name begins with the letter J. Thomas believed that Jesus was alive when he saw Jesus and touched the holes in Jesus’ hands and side. Jesus is still alive today. We have not seen Jesus, but if we believe in Him, Jesus says we will be blessed. ”



THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

4 LOOK AT AND MAKE BIBLE STORYBOOKS

Fold two sheets of paper together creating a booklet. Staple the booklet on the center seam. Provide booklets, key passage markers, Bible storybooks, glue sticks, and crayons for children. Invite children to select a storybook. As the child looks at the book, talk to her about some of the Bible stories and pictures she sees. When she is finished looking at the book, give her a booklet and a key passage marker. Help her glue the marker into her booklet and then invite her to draw pictures of some of her favorite Bible stories.

SAY “ Let’s say our key passage together: ‘This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and the one you have sent—Jesus Christ. John 17:3.’ We get to know who the one true God is by reading about Him in the Bible. **How do we know God wants us to know Him? We know God wants us to know Him because He shows Himself through the Bible.** In today’s Bible story, we learned about Thomas and how he did not believe that Jesus was alive until he saw Him for himself. We also learned God blesses those who believe in Him even though they have not seen Him with their own eyes. ”

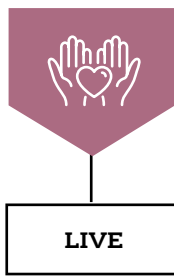
5 SCOOP COTTON BALLS

Pour the cotton balls into a bowl and lay a large serving spoon on top. Help a child put on a blindfold. Place the spoon in the child’s hand and guide his hand toward the bowl. Prompt the child to scoop as many balls out of the bowl in ten seconds as he can while remaining blindfolded. Allow children to use both hands, if needed. Slowly count aloud to ten. When time is up, remove the blindfold and let him see how many balls he scooped. Give each child a chance to have a turn.

SAY “ It’s hard to do something when you cannot see what you are doing, isn’t it? It’s also hard to believe in something that you cannot see. Thomas could not believe that Jesus was alive until he saw Jesus for himself. Jesus told Thomas that those who believe in Him without seeing are blessed. ”

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE for God out of love

1 REVIEW

Point to the giant timeline as you review today's Bible story. Ask the following review questions.

1. What did you like about the Bible story? (Preschoolers' answers will vary.)
2. Which disciple did not believe that Jesus is alive? (Thomas)
3. What did Thomas say would make him believe that Jesus is alive? (if he sees and touches the holes in Jesus' hands and side)
4. Why did Thomas finally believe that Jesus had risen from the dead? (He saw Jesus, spoke to Jesus, and touched Jesus' hands and side.)
5. We cannot see Jesus, but how can we believe in Him? (read the Bible, hear Bible stories from our teachers, pray)
6. **How do we know God wants us to know Him? We know God wants us to know Him because He shows Himself through the Bible.**

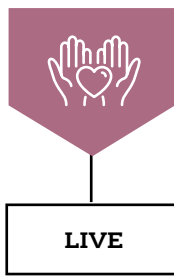
SAY “ Thomas had trouble believing that Jesus was alive. He knew that Jesus had died on a cross and that some of his friends said that they had seen Jesus alive. But he could not believe that Jesus was alive until he saw Jesus for himself. Once he saw that Jesus was alive, he believed. Jesus is still alive today. We have not seen Jesus, but if we believe in Him, we will be blessed, just as Jesus told Thomas. ”

Sing the key passage song “That They May Know You (John 17:3).”

2 PRAY

Invite preschoolers to tell you any prayer requests they have. Pray for them.

SAY “ Dear God, thank You for giving us the Bible so that we can read about You and know more about Your love for us. Thank You for blessing those who believe in You even though they cannot see You. Amen. ”



THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

3 MISSIONS MOMENT

Print the “Cook Family Photo” printable and display it as you talk about the missionaries.

SAY “ Josh Cook is a missionary in Denver, Colorado. Josh, his wife, Sarah, and their baby girl moved to Denver to learn more about the city. Josh began meeting with a small team to consider where they might start a new church. In 2018, Dwell Church held its first gathering in a neighborhood of Denver. The church meets at a middle school on Sunday mornings to worship and meets in people’s homes throughout the week for community groups. ”

Pray for Josh as he leads Dwell Church. Pray for more people to help start new churches in Denver, Colorado.

4 PLAY “I SPY”



Invite preschoolers to be seated in the group time area. Identify an object in the room but do not tell the children what it is. Say the phrase, “I spy with my little eye, something _____ [name a color of an object that you spy in the room].” Invite children to look around the room from where they are seated and to try to guess what item in the room that you are spying. When the item has been guessed, choose another item in the room to spy or select a child to choose an item. Continue play as time allows.

SAY “ What are some of the things that we spied, or saw in the room during our game of “I Spy?” [Allow responses.] It’s easy to believe that something exists when we can see it with our own eyes. When the disciples told Thomas that they had seen Jesus, Thomas did not believe them because he had not seen Jesus for himself. It was only after Jesus appeared to Thomas, and Thomas saw Him and touched Him, that Thomas believed Jesus was alive. Is Jesus still alive today? Yes, Jesus is alive! We have not seen Jesus, but if we believe in Him, we will be blessed. ”