



UNIT 28 | SESSION 2

## JESUS APPEARED TO THOMAS

### JOHN 20

#### KEY PASSAGE:

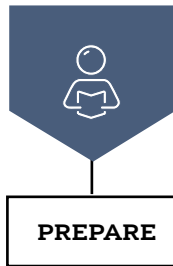
John 17:3

#### BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

How do we know that God wants us to know Him? We can know that God wants us to know Him because He has revealed Himself through His Word.

#### CHRIST CONNECTION:

Jesus is still alive today. We have not seen Jesus, but if we believe in Him, we will be blessed. Jesus sends out believers to tell others about Him and gives us the Holy Spirit to help us.



## PRIOR TO TEACHING 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

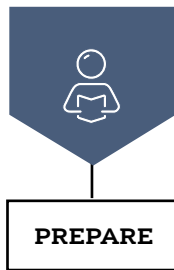
will be our joy when our faith does become sight!

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 kids 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."**



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

## GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



### WELCOME

#### Activity Page

- ☐ “Decode the Message” activity page



### LEARN

#### Introduce the Session

- ☐ countdown video

#### Big Picture Question

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster

#### Review the Timeline

- ☐ Giant Timeline

#### Tell the Bible Story

- ☐ “Jesus Appeared to Thomas” video
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster

#### Questions from Kids

- ☐ “Unit 28, Session 2” questions from kids video

#### Missions Moment

- ☐ “Cook Family Photo” printable

#### Key Passage Activity

- ☐ Key Passage Poster
- ☐ “This Is Eternal Life (John 17:3)” song
- ☐ worship song of your choice (optional)
- ☐ sticky notes



### LOVE

#### Review & Bible Skills

- ☐ Small Group Timeline and Map Set (optional)



### LIVE

#### Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ dry erase board
- ☐ dry erase marker

#### Activity Choice (Option 2)

- ☐ blindfolds, 1 per pair

#### Reflection and Prayer

- ☐ Bible Story Coloring Page (optional)



## \* splash Logo **WELCOME** Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

| **SAY** 🗨️ What is something you have never seen but would love to see one day? Why? 🗨️

### 1 **ACTIVITY PAGE** (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Decode the Message” on the activity page.

| **SAY** 🗨️ Great job finding the words to complete the message! Today, we will learn that Jesus appeared to Thomas and told Thomas to believe. 🗨️

### 2 **SESSION STARTER** (10 minutes)

#### ☐ **OPTION 1: DO YOU BELIEVE?**



Ask kids to listen to the descriptions you share. Direct kids to hold a thumbs-up if they believe the event really happened or hold up a thumbs-down if they don't believe it happened. Consider using the following examples or create your own:

- A giant was defeated by getting hit with a small stone.
- A man was swallowed by a great fish and stayed in its belly for three days.
- A woman saw an angel who told her she would have a special baby.
- A man survived a den full of lions.
- A well of water suddenly appeared to a woman in the desert.
- A man was taken in a chariot of fire to heaven.

| **SAY** 🗨️ Each of these events really happened! They are all stories from the Bible. The Bible has many amazing stories because we have a powerful and amazing God. Today, we will learn that Thomas doubted God's amazing miracle of raising Jesus to life. 🗨️

#### ☐ **OPTION 2: WHAT HAVE YOU SEEN?**

Form kids into pairs. Prompt kids to think about something amazing they have seen. Discuss how it can be something like a beautiful view such as the Grand Canyon or a really cool animal. Allow pairs a few minutes to each describe what amazing thing they saw and why it was so amazing. If time allows, lead kids to share what their partners described to the group.

| **SAY** 🗨️ When Jesus rose from the dead, He began to appear to His followers. They were amazed when they saw Jesus alive! It was an incredible sight! At first, all of Jesus' disciples saw Him, except Thomas. Just as you described your amazing sights to your friends, the disciples told Thomas they had seen Jesus. Let's get ready to learn how Thomas doubted their words. 🗨️

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

### INTRODUCE the Bible Story

#### 1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

✕ Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

**SAY** “Hi! I’m [your name], and I’m so excited you are here! Who brought their Bible to church today? Hold up your Bible and show me! [**Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.**] The Bible shares the truth of what Jesus did for us a long time ago. And today, we will learn more about what happened after Jesus’ death and resurrection.

Our story today can be found in the Gospel of John. Does anyone know who wrote John? [**Allow responses.**] The apostle John wrote this Gospel. In John 20, we learn that John wrote all the words of his Gospel so that people would believe in Jesus and have life in His name. Today, we will learn more about how Thomas believed in Jesus.”

worship → \* Praise → \* TRUST → \* offering

#### 2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

✕ **SAY** “Last week, we learned our new big picture question. Repeat it after me: How do we know that God wants us to know Him? Does anyone remember the answer? [**Allow responses.**] We can know that God wants us to know Him because He has revealed Himself through His Word.”

As we continue to learn that Jesus is alive, we will also learn about all the people Jesus visited before His return to heaven. Jesus wanted His disciples and followers to know Him and trust in Him just like He wants us to know Him. While we don’t yet see His risen body like the disciples, we can know Jesus through His Word. When we read the Bible, we get to see who Jesus is and what He has done. We learn that all the Bible points us to Jesus and teaches us how we can live with Him forever.”

#### 3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

**SAY** “When God sent His Son, Jesus, to be born as a baby, He made the way for anyone who believes in Jesus to be forgiven of sin. Jesus lived a perfect life for us and died on the cross for our sin. After Jesus died, He was dead for three days. Then God raised Him from the dead. Jesus lives forever and reigns as King.”

Jesus appeared to over 500 people after He rose again. We learned last week how Jesus appeared to ten of His disciples. Today, we will learn how Jesus appeared to Thomas.”

Coming soon...





## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

### LEARN the Bible Story



#### 1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to John 20. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Jesus Appeared to Thomas.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

#### JESUS APPEARED TO THOMAS

“When Jesus appeared to His disciples in a house in Jerusalem, one of Jesus’ disciples, Thomas, was not there. Thomas heard the news. “We’ve seen the Lord!” his friends said. **But Thomas did not believe that Jesus was alive.**

Thomas said, “I want to see and touch the holes in His hands and His side, or I will never believe!”

**One week later, Thomas was inside with the disciples when Jesus appeared again.** “Peace be with you,” He said.

Then **Jesus said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and look at My hands. Reach out and touch My side. Don’t be an unbeliever; believe!”**

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

**Jesus said, “You believed because you have seen 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. Jesus sends out believers to tell others about Him and gives us the Holy Spirit to help us. ”

#### STORYTELLING TIPS

**Active listening:** Lead kids to listen for the word “believe” in the story. Direct kids to clap once every time they hear the word “believe.”

**Act it out:** Perform the actions of Thomas as you tell the story.



## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

### 2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

**SAY** 🗣️ When Jesus first appeared to His disciples, Thomas was not there. When Thomas heard that the disciples had seen Jesus, what did he say? **[Allow responses.]** Thomas said he wanted to see and touch the wounds on Jesus' body before he would believe. Thomas had seen Jesus die on the cross, and he doubted that Jesus could be made alive again.

One week after Jesus was raised, He appeared to Thomas. Jesus already knew of Thomas' doubt, but Jesus was kind and patient toward Thomas. While Thomas' unbelief was the wrong response, Jesus invited Thomas to touch His hands and His side. Then Jesus told Thomas to believe!

What did Thomas say to Jesus? **[Allow responses.]** Thomas believed and called Jesus his Lord and his God. Jesus becomes our Lord and our God when we believe in Him too. We have not yet seen Jesus, but we can still choose to believe. God's Word teaches us all about Jesus so that we can know Him and trust in Him. What did Jesus call anyone who believes in Him without first seeing Him? **[Allow responses.]** Jesus said they are blessed. Knowing and trusting in Jesus is the only way to truly be blessed. 🙏

### 3 CHRIST CONNECTION

**SAY** 🗣️ Jesus is still alive today. We have not seen Jesus, but if we believe in Him, we will be blessed. Jesus sends out believers to tell others about Him and gives us the Holy Spirit to help us. 🙏

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.)

### 4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the "Unit 28, Session 2" questions from kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. What should we do if we have a friend who does not believe in God?
2. Why is it important to believe in Jesus without seeing Him?

### 5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Print the photo and display it as you talk about the missionaries.

**SAY** 🗣️ Josh Cook is a lead church planter in Denver, Colorado. Josh began to love big cities and wanted the many people who live in large cities to know Jesus. In October 2016, Josh, his wife, Sarah, and their daughter 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. 🙏

Explain that in 2018, Dwell Church was started and held its first gathering in a neighborhood of Denver called West Colfax. Tell kids the church first met in an elementary school and now meets at a middle school. Share how the church gathers together at the school for worship on Sunday mornings and meets in homes throughout the week in community groups. Pray for Josh as he leads Dwell Church and pray for more people to help start new churches in Denver, Colorado.



## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

### 6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead kids in reading aloud John 17:3 together.

**SAY** “Our key passage teaches us that only faith in Jesus leads us to eternal life. God wants us to know Him through His Son, Jesus, so that we can live with Him forever.”

Before the session, cover up five words of the key passage using sticky notes. Challenge kids to recall the missing words as you say the key passage aloud. Remove the sticky notes as kids say the missing words aloud. Repeat the activity, covering up five different words.

Lead kids to sing “This Is Eternal Life (John 17:3).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

### 7 PRAY (2 minutes)

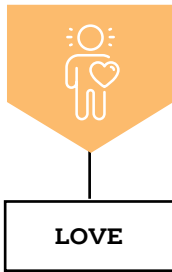
Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

**SAY** “God, thank You for sending Jesus so that we can know You and have life with You forever. Help us read Your Word and know Jesus more and more through it. Amen.”

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







## THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

### **LOVE** God by Applying the Story

#### **1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)**

Distribute Bibles. Guide kids to open their Bibles to John 20. Tell kids that Thomas was a twin and also an apostle—one of Jesus' closest friends. Explain that while Thomas is not mentioned by name very often in the Gospels, he was a witness to Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Tell kids that Acts 1 recorded Thomas gathering with the other disciples as they all waited for the Holy Spirit to come after Jesus went back to heaven.

Choose a volunteer to read aloud John 20:29, or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verses aloud. Consider pointing out the location of Jerusalem (H4) on the New Testament Israel Map.

**SAY** “ We weren’t there when Jesus appeared to Thomas or the other disciples. We have to believe in Him without seeing His resurrected body. This is faith. While faith requires us to trust in things not seen, we can still be confident that what we believe is true. Jesus appeared to over 500 people after He rose from the dead, and the Bible teaches us that Jesus is alive. John wrote his Gospel so we would trust in Jesus and have life in Him. ”

#### **2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)**

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

**SAY** “ Is Jesus alive today? How do we know? ”

Remind kids that Jesus is alive! Tell kids that we have proof He rose from the dead because He appeared to over 500 people and the Gospel writers recorded these events. Encourage kids to remember that just because we cannot see Jesus does not mean He is not alive. Tell kids that Jesus is the King who is ruling from heaven and will come back to earth one day.

**SAY** “ Why did Thomas eventually believe Jesus is alive? ”

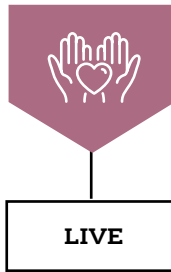
Discuss how Thomas believed Jesus is alive after he saw Him and was able to touch Him. Remind kids that Thomas called Jesus his Lord and his God. Encourage kids to remember that we can know Jesus like Thomas and believe that He is Lord and God.

**SAY** “ What do you believe to be true about God even though you have not seen Him? ”

Answers will vary. Discuss how we can know many truths about God through His Word. Tell kids that when we read Bible stories we learn how God keeps His promises, is faithful, trustworthy, and patient. Encourage kids to remember that God loves us and offers us forgiveness through His Son, Jesus. Tell kids that anyone who trusts in Jesus will one day see Him and live with Him forever.

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





## THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

### **LIVE** the Mission

#### **1 ACTIVITY CHOICE** (10 minutes)

##### ☐ **OPTION 1: CHURCH PLANT**



Prompt kids to imagine they are part of a new church plant. Tell kids that a church plant is a brand new church that has just started, kind of like a new plant that has grown from a seed. Lead kids to consider what the Kids Ministry at the church plant might look like. Ask questions such as “What Bible stories could the Kids Ministry learn?” “What are some activities kids could do when they gather on Sundays?” “What songs could they sing?” etc.

Use a dry erase board to record the kids’ ideas. Discuss how these items are just a few of the considerations church planters have to make when starting a new church.

**SAY** “ Starting a new church can be challenging! Church planters have to think through and plan for many steps. We can pray for church planters and ask God to give them wisdom and strength as they start new churches in different communities. ”

##### ☐ **OPTION 2: TRUST WALK**



Place chairs around the room. Pair kids with a partner and provide each pair with a blindfold. Tell kids to decide who will be blindfolded in each pair. Challenge each blindfolded kid to walk across the room while his partner guides him with her words to help him avoid running into a chair. If any kid touches a chair, he is out. Allow partners to switch roles and play again.

**SAY** “ In today’s story, Thomas heard from others that Jesus is alive, but he didn’t believe. It wasn’t until he saw Jesus and was invited to touch Him that he believed. Jesus told His disciples that those who believe in Him and do not see Him are blessed. During this activity, you could not see where you were walking but needed to trust your partner’s words. In a similar way, we trust the words of Jesus in the Bible and believe in Him. The more we seek Jesus in the Bible, the more we know Him and grow our faith in Him. ”

#### **2 REFLECTION AND PRAYER** (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper and pencil to each kid. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Who can I tell about this story?

Be sure to send the sheets home with the kids along with the activity pages so parents can continue to discuss the Bible story with their kids.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page. Pray for your group.