

TEXT John 20:24-31

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to explain that when Thomas saw Jesus he believed, but Jesus said we would be blessed if we believed even though we have not seen Him.

MEMORY VERSE Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. — John 20:29

Doubting Thomas

MEMORY VERSE IN ACTION

BLESSED — With thumbs of fists touching lips, move hands down and away from body, opening fingers.

ARE THEY — Point to others.

THAT HAVE NOT SEEN — Place hand over eyebrows, close eyes, shake head no.

AND YET HAVE BELIEVED — At eye level, hold fists on top of each other as though holding to an imaginary rope.

MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

Our memory verse for this week focuses on believing without seeing. It portrays a small boy covering his eyes. (See pattern at end of lesson.) Cut apart the sections as indicated by the heavy black lines, and put the pieces up one at a time as your students learn the verse.

BIBLE LESSON OUTLINE

Introduction: Open your class by showing your students the set of flashcards described under In-Class Activities. Talk to them about which things they believe in, and which they do not believe in. Explain that the most important thing to believe in is Jesus. The Bible story today is about one of Jesus' helpers who learned a lesson about that.

1. Thomas, one of the twelve disciples, was not with them when Jesus appeared to them the first time, so they told him, "We have seen the Lord."

2. Doubting Thomas said that he would not believe except he could see the prints of the nails and put his hand into Christ's side.

3. Christ appeared again to the disciples, Thomas being present. He told Thomas to behold His hands, and put his hand into His side. Thomas answered, "My Lord and my God."

Climax: Thomas believed in Christ's resurrection after the Lord revealed His wounds to him.

Conclusion: When Thomas saw Jesus he believed, but we are blessed for believing even though we have not seen Him.

Response: The students will be able to tell how Thomas learned to believe, and will be able to explain why it is important for us to believe even though we have not seen Him.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Quite often when we speak of Thomas we call him "Doubting Thomas." Of course many people know the story of his failing to believe the report that Jesus had risen from the dead. But we must remember that the others didn't believe the women who told them that Jesus had arisen. In fact, they were terrified when Jesus appeared in their midst and Jesus had some trouble convincing them He was not a spirit (Luke 24:36-45).

We do not wish in any way to minimize the gravity of doubt and unbelief. In Revelation 21:8 we find that the fearful and unbelieving head the list of those who will be cast into the lake of fire. Our only hope of finding God is to believe that He is, and our only hope of receiving from God is to believe His promises.

Unbelief was among the first sins introduced to mankind. Satan persuaded Eve to disbelieve God, and then it was easy for him to get her to disobey God. From that time on mankind has been filled with unbelief. With the exception of Noah and his family, the entire antediluvian world perished because of unbelief.

IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

Bring a box of cereal to class — also some napkins. Show the class the cereal box (Kix, Cheerios, etc.). Tell them that they can see the box and that it says it has a certain cereal in it. We have to believe the message on the box even though we can't see inside until we open the box. Open the box and put the cereal on each napkin for the children. Now you can see the cereal and you can feel them and you can taste them, and now you really know that the cereal was truly in the box. Then show your Bible to the class. In the Bible are all

kinds of things Jesus wants us to know. We can see the printed words and read them and believe them. It tells that Thomas, Jesus' disciple, did not believe that Jesus had risen from the grave until he actually saw with his own eyes the nail prints in Jesus' hands and feet. When Jesus showed him the nail prints then Thomas believed. Jesus wants us to believe Him all the time, even if we can't see Him.

Talk to your class about things they believe or don't believe in. Show them a series of Do You Believe flashcards and let them tell you whether or not they believe in those things (see Patterns). Bring out that the most important thing to believe in is the Bible, God's Word.

Ask your class if they believe in things they haven't seen. Ask how many have been to Disneyland. If possible have some pictures, posters, and souvenirs of Disneyland (or any other place the children would know about). Ask the children who have been to Disneyland to tell the others about their favorite thing there. Bring out that even though we haven't been to Disneyland, we can believe in it because others have told us about it. In our Bible story today, Thomas didn't believe because he hadn't seen Jesus, even though others told him about Jesus' being alive. Ask your class to imagine that someone offered to give you tickets to Disneyland. You wouldn't even be interested in them if you didn't believe that Disneyland exists. In the same way, we could miss Heaven if we refuse to accept the offer Jesus made. We must believe in Him, to be ready for Heaven.

Blindfold one student. Tell him that you have a treat in your hand. Ask if he believes you. If he says yes, give him the treat. Explain that in our lesson today, Thomas did not see Jesus so he felt he could not believe.

QUESTIONS

What proof did Thomas want?

When Jesus saw Thomas what did He have Thomas do?

What did Jesus say about people who could believe even if they did not see Him?

Do you believe Jesus can be with you each day? How do you know?

Why didn't Thomas believe the other disciples when they told him they had seen Jesus?

Why did Thomas believe when he saw Jesus?

Do we always have to see things before we believe?

How do you feel when you tell your friends about Jesus and they don't believe in Him too?

PRESCHOOL SUGGESTIONS

Tell each child you have a penny in your hand for them. Ask them to hold out their hand and you will give it to them. When they hold out their hand, explain that this means they believe you. Repeat this several times, using stickers, animal cookies, etc., to reinforce the meaning of the word "believe." Tell them we believe in Jesus. Show a picture of Him. We believe He loves us and He takes care of us.

The thrust of this lesson for preschoolers should be "Jesus makes us happy." Even little ones can understand that Jesus does many good things for us. Talk about the word "blessed" and show objects representing things that make them happy. Some suggestions: a cuddly blanket, a soft puppy, a picture of a mommy or daddy, a doll bed, a favorite food to eat.

Make a set of the Thomas Story pictures (see Patterns). Show the pictures in the correct order as you teach your lesson. After you have completed your story time, mix up the pictures on your table and ask the children if they can tell you which picture was first, second, etc. They might enjoy having a little set of their own with which to "teach" their parents.

REVIEW IDEAS

Adapt the In-Class activity regarding Disneyland as a review, stressing the importance of believing.

Begin your review by summarizing Thomas's doubts, and focusing on the memory verse which tells us that those who believe even though they haven't seen Christ will be blessed. Tell your group that you have invited some people to share with them proof that this statement is true. Ask several volunteers to come to the front and relate a portion of their testimony, emphasizing some special blessings the Lord has given them, even though they have not seen Him. To make the review more visual, you might wish to have each volunteer carry a colorful one-word sign naming the blessing, or a picture representing this.

Attach a large piece of butcher paper to a board in front of your classroom. Divide it into six equal sections. Explain to your group that what we believe is very important. Thomas missed a blessing because he did not believe, and we can miss Heaven if we do not believe certain things. Discuss things Christians should believe and have a symbol prepared for each: God is Creator, Jesus is God's Son, all have sinned, Jesus died and rose again, we can be forgiven by Jesus, Heaven is prepared for those who believe. Display the symbols for each belief as you discuss them, and then mount them on the butcher paper.

COORDINATING SONGS

"Why Worry When You Can Pray?"

"I Do Believe, I Now Believe" — Salvation Songs for Children No. 3

"He That Believeth"

"Only Believe"

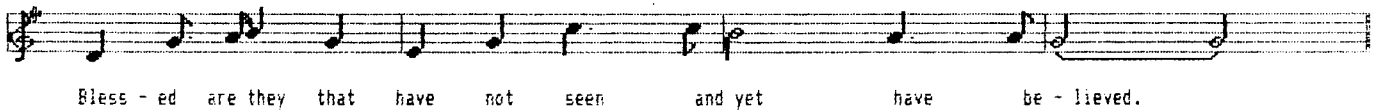
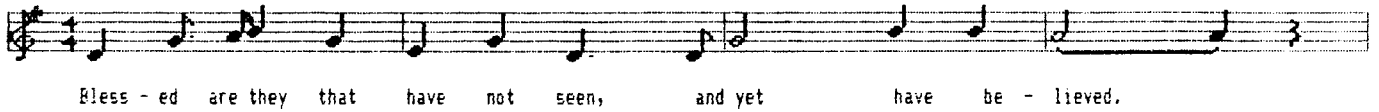
"Lord, I Want to be a Christian"

"Into My Heart"

SUPPORT MATERIAL

Doubting Thomas — Arch Book

MEMORY VERSE SONG



MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

