

**Bible Point**

# Jesus helps us believe in him.

## Bible Verse

"But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name" (John 20:31).

## Growing Closer to Jesus

Students will explore having faith in the unseen, learn about Thomas' doubt and think about their own doubt, find ways to deal with doubt, and discover that Jesus helps them believe.

## Teacher Enrichment

### Bible Basis

**Jesus appears to Thomas.**

**John  
20:24-31**



Jesus must have looked somewhat different in his new spiritual body. Mary didn't recognize him at first outside the tomb (John 20:14). And apparently Jesus' appearance to the disciples didn't immediately allay their fears because his first words were "Peace be with you!" Then he showed the disciples the wounds in his hands and side to certify his identity. It may have taken a moment, but finally the disciples' fears and confusion fell away, and they were overjoyed!

It's easy to think that those living in Jesus' day had an advantage over us in developing faith. But that's not necessarily true. In actuality, we may have the advantage—Jesus' life, death, and resurrection didn't fit the disciples' expectations of the Messiah. When he died and then rose from the dead, they had to reconsider all their preconceived notions of the Messiah. Only then could they fully have faith.

Our advantage is that the results of their struggles are recorded for us in the Bible. We have Thomas' declaration: "My Lord and my God!" We have the book of Acts that tells us of the disciples' bold proclamation about Jesus. And we have the epistles that explain details of faith. The Bible contains all the evidence one could possibly need for faith!

Other Scriptures used in this lesson are Psalm 22:16-18; Isaiah 7:14; 53:7, 9, 11; Micah 5:2; Matthew 1:21-23; 27:35; and Luke 2:4-7; 23:13-15, 32; 24:6-7.

## Prayer

- Read Luke 20:31.
- How does the Bible help you when you have doubts?
- Pray: Lord, help my faith grow stronger each day. And let my teaching help my students grow in their faith by...

## Before the Lesson

Collect the necessary items for the activities you plan to use, referring to the Classroom Supplies and Learning Lab Supplies listed on the chart.

Make photocopies of the “Hands-On Fun at Home” handout (at the end of this lesson) to send home with your students.

Pray for your students and for God’s direction as you teach the lesson.

## This Lesson at a Glance

	What Students Will Do	Classroom Supplies	Learning Lab Supplies
<b>Attention Grabber</b>	<b>The Unbelievable Story</b> —Tell a totally unbelievable story, using sound effects and costumes, to begin thinking about what it means to believe.	Face-paint brush	
<b>Bible Exploration &amp; Application</b>	<p><b>Tell It to Thomas</b>—Sing a song, and read John 20:19-31 to learn how Jesus helped Thomas believe in him.</p> <p><b>Christ Clues</b>—Hunt for clues to compare Old Testament prophecies about Jesus to Jesus’ life; then hear stories from people in the Bible who believed in Jesus.</p>	Bibles, “A Tune for Thomas” (p. 75), CD player	
	<b>Doubt-Busters</b> —Share about ways that Jesus uses the Bible to help them believe in him.	Bible	
	<b>Closing</b> <b>Tube-a-Loon Trust</b> —Try to balance life’s “doubt-prompts” with “belief-prompts,” and encourage each other’s faith.	Ribbon, tall box, tape, index cards, marker	

# Welcome



As kids arrive, ask them about ways they put last week's lesson into action. Ask questions such as "Who did you tell about Jesus' gift of eternal life?" and "How did you show Jesus how thankful you are that he set you free from sin?"

Tell kids that whenever you sound the *groan tube*, they are to stop talking, raise their hands, and focus on you. Explain that it's important to respond to this signal quickly so the class can do as many fun activities as possible.



It's important to say the Bible Point just as it's written in each activity. Repeating the Bible Point again and again will help kids remember it and apply it to their lives.

## Attention Grabber

### *The Unbelievable Story*

**SUPPLIES:** face-paint brush



As kids arrive, have them form a storytelling circle. Explain that everyone will work together to tell an unbelievable story using the props you provide. They can use the props as costumes or as sound effects. The only rule is that this story has to be silly and totally unbelievable.

Set the *groan tube*, *maracas*, *face paint*, and *animal noses* in the center of the circle to use as props for the story. Make sure everyone gets a chance to contribute to the story at least once. When the story has come to a good ending (or it can't get any sillier!), return the props to the Learning Lab, and ask:

- **What types of things are hard for you to believe?** (Things I can't see or don't understand; rumors at school; people who joke around a lot.)
- **What are some things that are easy to believe?** (The Bible; God's Word; things that I see or experience for myself; my friend who always tells the truth.)

Say: **Sometimes we have a hard time believing in things we can't understand or things we can't see. We can't see Jesus the way we see one another or the way we see the furniture in this room, so some people have a hard time believing in him. But ►Jesus helps us believe in him even though we can't see him or totally understand him. Today we'll hear about one disciple in the Bible who had a hard time believing that Jesus had risen from the dead. This disciple said he had to see Jesus with his own eyes and touch Jesus with his own hands in order to believe.**

**Let's find out more.**



If you don't have brushes for face paint, consider using cotton swabs.



Encourage kids to bring their Bibles to class with them next week. Bringing their own Bibles will help kids become familiar with using and turning to the Bible.

# Bible Exploration & Application

## Tell It to Thomas

**SUPPLIES:** Bibles, “A Tune for Thomas” (p. 75), CD player



Before class, make enough photocopies of “A Tune for Thomas” for everyone in your class to have one. Cue the CD to “A Tune for Thomas” (track 16).

Have kids form a circle, distribute the “Tune for Thomas” handouts, and say: **We’re going to have some fun with this story of the disciple who had a hard time believing that Jesus had come back to life. The disciple’s name was Thomas, and because he had a hard time believing, he has been called the doubting disciple. To find out about the doubting disciple, we’ll all sing the words on the handout to the tune of “The Battle Hymn of the Republic.” These words are based on the Bible story found in John 20:14-31.**

Start the CD player, and lead the class in singing. Encourage the kids to have fun and sing with confidence. They might even playfully march in place and swing their arms. After kids have sung the last chorus, press Stop, collect the handouts, and put them away.

Distribute Bibles, and then say: **Now let’s take a closer look at the story. Form pairs, and read John 20:14-31 with your partner.**

Give pairs a few minutes to read the passage. Then ask:

- **Why do you think Thomas doubted such good news about Jesus?**

(Because it seemed impossible; because Thomas wasn’t there to see Jesus.)

- **How did Jesus help Thomas believe?** (Jesus returned when Thomas was there; Jesus showed Thomas his wounded hands and side.)

- **What things keep us from believing in Jesus?** (We can’t see Jesus either; sometimes the stories about Jesus seem so impossible.)

- **Why is it so important to believe in Jesus?** (Only Jesus can save us from our sins and give us eternal life; only Jesus can make us right with God.)

- **Have you ever had doubts about Jesus? Explain.** (Sometimes I wonder if Jesus is real; sometimes I wonder if Jesus really cares about me; no, I don’t have doubts.)

- **How can you handle those doubtful times?** (I can pray and ask Jesus to help me believe in him; I can read the Bible.)

Ask for a volunteer to read aloud **John 20:31:** ►“**But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name.**”

Ask: • **How can the story of Thomas help you believe in Jesus?** (When I read about Thomas, I know that it’s OK to have doubts; it shows me to take my doubts to Jesus so he can help me believe in him.)

Say: **Thomas doubted that Jesus had come back to life because he hadn’t seen him alive. Jesus made it easy for Thomas to believe by showing his wounded hands and side. Just as Jesus helped Thomas believe in him, Jesus helps us believe in him, too. When we’re having doubts, we can ask Jesus to help us believe in him.**



Make the handouts available after class for kids who want to share this song with their families.

## BIBLE VERSE

Ask for a volunteer to read aloud **John 20:31:** ►“**But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name.**”

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## Christ Clues

**SUPPLIES:** Bibles, newsprint, marker, tape, CD player, slips of paper, pen



Before class, tape a sheet of newsprint to a wall, and draw a line down the middle of the newsprint. Label one column “Old Testament Clues” and the other column “Jesus’ Life.” In the “Jesus’ Life” column, make rows in this order: **“Matthew 1:21-23”; “Luke 2:4-7”; “Matthew 27:35”; “Luke 23:13-15, 32”; and “Luke 24:6-7.”** Cue the CD to the “Jesus Did It” segment (track 17). Also prepare and hide these clues:

- Write **“Isaiah 7:14”** on a slip of paper, and put it in the *basket*.
- Write **“Micah 5:2”** on a slip of paper, and tape it on the *telescope*.
- Write **“Psalm 22:16-18”** on a slip of paper, and tape it to the *glitter tie*.
- Write **“Isaiah 53:7, 9”** on a slip of paper, and attach it to the *heart lock*.
- Write **“Isaiah 53:11”** on a slip of paper, and tape it on the *big eraser*.

Say: **Even Thomas had God’s Word—at that time, he only had the Old Testament—to help him believe in Jesus. Let’s play a game to show Thomas how to discover the truth about Jesus in God’s Word.**

Explain that five clues are hidden in the room and that the clues will help Thomas believe in Jesus. Ask kids to look for the clues.

After a couple of minutes, or when kids have found the clues, have everyone gather together. Say: **The Old Testament was written before Jesus was born, and it gave the Jews clues about the Christ who was coming. Thomas would have been familiar with the Old Testament. Thomas was also with Jesus during his life on earth, so Thomas knew about events in Jesus’ life.**

**Let’s look at Jesus’ life and compare it to the Old Testament clues, which predict events in the life of the Messiah. If Jesus’ life matches the Old Testament clues, Thomas can believe that Jesus really was the Messiah the Jews were waiting for.**

Have a volunteer look up the first Scripture in the “Jesus’ Life” column and read it aloud. Say: **OK, that’s what Thomas knew about Jesus’ life. Who found a clue that may show Thomas where to look in the Old Testament to see if Jesus’ life matches?**

Have kids find the Scriptures, read them, and then match clues until they’ve matched the prophecies about Jesus with the events in his life. Write the proper matches on the newsprint.

Ask: • **How do you think this kind of comparison could have helped Thomas believe in Jesus?** (The Bible prophecies predicted the things that happened in Jesus’ life; Jesus fulfilled exactly what the prophets said about the Messiah.)

• **How can this comparison help you believe in Jesus?** (Only Jesus fulfilled those prophecies, so he must be the Messiah; it seems like good proof.)

Have a volunteer read aloud **John 20:30-31**.

Ask: • **According to these verses, what else did Jesus do to help us believe in him?** (Jesus made sure that certain stories were written down and kept in the Bible to help us to believe in him; Jesus made sure that the Bible lasted so that we would know about him.)

## Bible Insight

Thomas, who appears throughout the book of John, asked questions when he didn’t understand Jesus. In John 14:5, Thomas admitted that the disciples didn’t know where Jesus was going; in John 20:25, Thomas confessed his doubt about Jesus’ resurrection. In both instances, Jesus responded to Thomas’ lack of understanding with love, teaching and revealing more truths about himself.

Say: **The Bible helps us believe in Jesus because it tells us about his life. Let's listen to some real situations from the Bible in which people had to have faith in Jesus.**

Start the CD player, and listen to the three sections of the “Jesus Did It” segment (track 17). After the third section, turn off the CD player, and ask:

- **How can these stories help you to believe in Jesus?** (They were from real people who Jesus helped; these people believed in Jesus, so I can, too.)

Ask for volunteers to share their personal stories about times they had to believe in Jesus. After a few people have shared, say: **It's not always easy to have faith in all Jesus can do, but ►Jesus helps us believe in him.**

Have a few volunteers pray, thanking Jesus for helping us believe in him even though we can't see him.

### HANDS-ON BIBLE



Give each student a pencil or pen. Make sure children have their *Hands-On Bibles*.

Say: ►**Jesus helps us believe in him.** Open your *Hands-On Bible* and turn to the “Don’t Doubt” activity found near **John 20**. Kids will fill in a doubt-stopper chart. After they’re finished, ask them to share what they wrote.

Say: ►**Jesus helps us believe in him, and one big way he does that is through the Bible.** Encourage kids to refer back to their charts the next time they or someone they know are dealing with doubts.



Say: ►**Jesus helps us believe in him. Because Jesus doesn't live or walk here on earth anymore, he mostly uses the Bible.**

Ask:

- **How could reading the Bible help you grow closer to Jesus?** (I could read the Bible to find out more about Jesus’ life on earth; the Bible could help me get to know Jesus better; it tells me more about what Jesus taught.)
- **How does Jesus feel about your doubts?** (Jesus doesn’t get mad; Jesus helps me believe in him.)

Encourage kids to take their doubts straight to Jesus and ask for his help to believe in him.

## Doubt-Busters

**SUPPLIES:** Bible



Ask for a volunteer to read aloud **John 20:31**. Then say:

►**Jesus helps us believe in him, especially through the Bible.** The Bible tells us all kinds of great things to help us believe in Jesus and deal with, or erase, our doubts. What are some things in the Bible that Jesus has used to help you believe in him? You might think about favorite verses or stories, or think about things you absolutely know are true, such as God loves me, Jesus forgives me, or Jesus is always with me. Let's call these things our **Bible doubt-busters**.

Have kids stand in a circle, and give them a minute to think. Then begin yourself by sharing one of your own doubt-busters from the Bible. Then toss the *big eraser* to someone else. That person should then share one of his or her doubt-busters and then toss the *big eraser* to someone else. Continue until everyone has had at least one turn.

After everyone has had at least one turn, put away the *big eraser*.

Ask: • **What was it like to say your doubt-buster aloud?** (It felt good; it gave me confidence; it made me feel brave.)

• **What was it like to hear other people say their doubt-busters aloud?** (I got good ideas; hearing what they said helped to erase my doubts.)

• **How could Jesus use these doubt-busters to help you believe in him?**

(When I'm having doubts, I could remember these things, and they could help me stop doubting; I could remember to pray to Jesus and ask him to help me believe in him.)

Encourage kids to remember these doubt-busters when they face doubts in the future.



## Closing

### Tube-a-Loon Trust

**SUPPLIES:** ribbon, index cards, box, marker, tape

Before class, blow up the *Tube-a-loon* until it's very full, and tie off the end with ribbon.

Say: Even though Jesus doesn't appear to us physically as he did to Thomas, ►**Jesus helps us believe in him.**



Ask: • **What helps you believe in Jesus?** (Reading the Bible; going to church; worshipping God; hearing other believers tell about their faith; when my prayers are answered.)

Set the *Tube-a-loon* on a tall box or block so the *Tube-a-loon* is balancing at least two feet off the ground. Have kids call out some things that cause doubt in their lives—a sick friend, tornadoes, or a doubting parent, for example. Write each “doubt-promter” on an index card.

Read the doubt-promter from one index card, and place the index card on top of the *Tube-a-loon*, toward one side, so it tilts to one side. Explain that doubt causes our lives to be off balance just as the *Tube-a-loon* is off balance.

Say: Because ►**Jesus helps us believe in him, we can find ways to get our balance back when we doubt.** Have kids think of ways that Jesus helps them





As you begin the activity, you'll probably need to tighten the *Tube-a-loon* again. A good way to do this is to roll up one end and tape it down.

Because the *Tube-a-loon* is made of such lightweight material, you'll want to place the index cards near the middle, just on either side of the box.

If the *Tube-a-loon* falls or sags, use it as a learning experience. Ask:

- **What happens in our lives when we're struggling with doubt?** (We feel low; our energy level sags.)
- **How is our *Tube-a-loon* showing the effects of this struggle?** (It's drooping and sagging.)
- **How do we show similar effects when we struggle with doubt?** (We feel droopy and sad.)

believe in him—a parent who believes, answered prayers, or Christian friends, for example. As you place doubt-prompters on the *Tube-a-loon*, have students take turns writing “belief-prompters” and placing them on the opposite end of the *Tube-a-loon*.

After a couple of minutes, have kids sit down. Set aside the *Tube-a-loon* to use in a future lesson. Then ask:

- **How have you experienced Jesus helping you to believe in him?** (Jesus gives me people in my family who are Christians; Jesus helps me with Christian friends; Jesus helps me in church and Sunday school; Jesus answers my prayers; I have a Bible to read.)
- **How can you help others believe in Jesus?** (I can help others read the Bible; I can pray with others; I can invite them to church and Sunday school.)

Say: ►**Jesus helps us believe in him. We can read the Bible to know more about Jesus, and we can talk to other Christians to help us believe in Jesus when we doubt. And we can recognize that Jesus helps us in our lives. Jesus already died for us and saved us from our sin. That's a great thing to believe in!**

Close class in prayer, thanking Jesus that he helps us believe in him. Encourage kids to remember their doubt-busters and to turn to the Bible, to other Christians, and to Jesus when they have doubts.



### **Growing closer to Jesus extends beyond the classroom.**

Photocopy the “Hands-On Fun at Home” handout (at the end of this lesson) for this week, and send it home with your kids. Encourage kids and parents to use the handout to spark meaningful discussion on this week’s topic.

# A Tune for Thomas

(Sing to the tune of “The Battle Hymn of the Republic.”)

**Jesus had been crucified a week ago that day.  
The disciples came together then to think of him and pray.  
They locked the door so tightly for they really were afraid  
The guards would come for them.**

*(Chorus)*

**Yes, I do believe in Jesus;  
Yes, I do believe in Jesus;  
Yes, I do believe in Jesus  
'Cause he's my Lord and God.**

**Well, the tomb it couldn't hold him, and the door was weaker still.  
The disciples were surprised to see him; they were even thrilled.  
“Peace be with you,” Jesus said. “I give the Spirit to  
My followers today.”**

*(Sing chorus.)*

**The disciple they called Thomas wasn't there when Jesus came.  
He was doubtful of the stories though they sounded all the same.  
He wanted to see Jesus—touch the marks the nails had made—  
Before he would believe.**

*(Sing chorus.)*

**So to satisfy the doubter, Jesus came to them again.  
He let Thomas touch the places where the nails had pierced his hands.  
Thomas stopped his doubting and believed in Jesus 'til the end,  
Saying, “You're my Lord and God.”**

*(Sing chorus.)*

# Hands-On Fun at Home

LESSON 6



## Jesus helps us believe in him.



### Bible Verse:

"But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name"  
(John 20:31).

### Talk It Over

In Bible times, Jesus would sometimes help one person at a time believe in him, and sometimes he would help groups of people believe in him.

- Has Jesus done anything to help your whole family believe in him? What?
- How could you use your family's testimony to help others believe in Jesus?

### Faith Walk

- In Matthew 21:21-22, Jesus says we can move mountains if we have enough faith. Make a small mountain to put in your bedroom.

### Mountain-Mover Recipe

- 1 cup flour
- 1/3 cup salt
- 1/3 cup water
- 1. Mix ingredients in a bowl until they form a sticky dough, adding more flour or water if necessary.
- 2. Cut a 12-inch cardboard square for the base.
- 3. Put the mixture on the cardboard, and shape it like a mountain. Put a small stick in the top of it.
- 4. Let your "mountain" dry overnight, and then paint it.
- 5. Write Matthew 21:21-22 on an index card, and tape it to the stick.
- 6. Put the mountain beside your bed.
- When your faith seems shaky, ask Jesus to help you with your problem. Move your mountain to a different part of the room to show how you believe he will help you.

### Notables

In this coupon, write something that you promise to do this coming week. Give it to someone you believe in.

### Bee-lieve in me!

You can have faith that I'll \_\_\_\_\_



Signed, \_\_\_\_\_