

# Thomas the Doubter



New Testament 3  
Part 1: The Apostles

## SUNDAY MORNING

New Testament 3 [Class Attendance Sheet](#) provided in activity sheets (NOTE: The document is interactive, allowing the teacher to type in the Class, Teacher, and the children's names.)

### SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

John 11:16; 20:19-31; 21:1-2; Luke 24:36-39,46-48; Hebrews 11:1,6

### MEMORY WORK:

YOUNGER CHILDREN: "But without faith it is impossible to please [God]" (Hebrews 11:6a).

OLDER CHILDREN: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1).

### SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS (SEE END OF LESSON FOR WORDS):

A [song book](#) and [audio recordings](#) of many of the curriculum songs are available on the curriculum Web site.

- ["Believing in the Lord"](#)
- ["Thomas Would not Believe"](#)

### LESSON VISUALS AND TEACHING AIDS (NOTE ANY DISCLAIMERS):

- See [AP's Pinterest page](#) for ideas on bulletin boards, visuals, crafts, etc. [DISCLAIMER: Pins may sometimes need to be adjusted to be Scriptural.]
- [Apostles & N.T. Teams](#) Bible fact cards (provided under "N.T. 3 Bible Facts" on curriculum Web site)
- "Summary of the Bible" from ["Kids Prep"](#) CD by Jeff Miller
- Use visuals from previous lessons as appropriate.
- Betty Lukens' felt pieces

### PERSONAL APPLICATION:

I believe in Jesus and trust Him even though I cannot see Him.



## LESSON STARTS HERE

### TEACHING ALERTS:



- Nowhere in Scripture is “blind faith” endorsed. On the contrary, God demands that His disciples accept truth based on **sufficient evidence** (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:21; John 8:32; 1 John 4:1; Acts 17:11; John 10:37). Thomas was not reprimanded for requesting evidence, but rather, for not believing when he had already been given sufficient evidence (e.g., Jesus having raised others from the dead; the many miracles Jesus performed that confirmed His words; etc.).

### INTRODUCTION: (YOUNGER CHILDREN)

Last week, we talked about how Peter, James, and John were close friends of Jesus. We should be thankful for the friends that God has given us. Today, we are going to learn about another one of the apostles: Thomas.

### INTRODUCTION: (OLDER CHILDREN)

Has someone ever told you something that you weren't sure whether you believed or not? (Allow a few minutes to discuss this.) Sometimes we want to see something ourselves before we believe it. Sometimes, though, it's not possible for us to see it ourselves, and we must believe the word of someone who did actually see it. In today's lesson, we are going to learn of one of the apostles who needed to see something with his own eyes before he believed it.

### POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Jesus was crucified on Friday. Early on Sunday morning, He rose from the grave (was resurrected). That Sunday evening, some of the disciples and apparently, ten of the apostles were assembled together behind locked doors; they were afraid of what the Jews might do to them because they were followers of Jesus. And they were also uncertain about what they should do next.
2. They were talking about Jesus' resurrection when suddenly, He appeared in the room where they were. They were all frightened and very surprised, thinking maybe it was Jesus' ghost. Jesus tried to calm their fears by saying, “Peace to you!” To convince them that it was really Him, Jesus showed them where the nails had been in his hands, and where the soldier had put the spear in His side while He was hanging on the cross. Jesus then asked for something to eat, further proving to them that He was not a ghost, but was there in the flesh.
3. For whatever reason, Thomas was not with the other apostles to witness Jesus' appearance to them. The other apostles later tried to tell him that Jesus had appeared in the room and talked to them, and that He had even shown them His wounds. But Thomas would not believe them, saying, “Unless I see His hands myself and put my hand on His side, I will not believe.” There is no doubt that he believed in Jesus. Earlier in Jesus' ministry, Thomas had encouraged his fellow apostles to follow Jesus to Bethany, even in the face of possible danger, saying “Let us go that we may die with Him” (John 11:16). He had seen Jesus perform many miracles and had even seen Jesus raise people from the dead. But he had not seen the resurrected Lord for himself.



**NOTE:** Thomas was not the only one struggling with doubts. Most of the apostles did not believe the women who reported seeing the angels at the empty tomb. Jesus' numerous appearances (1 Corinthians 15:3-7) convinced many of His resurrection, just as His miracles had convinced many of His deity.

4. Eight days later, all the apostles—including Thomas—were together in the same upper room when Jesus suddenly appeared again. Jesus went directly to Thomas and showed him His hands and side, saying “Do not be unbelieving, but believing.” Then Thomas believed. Jesus was glad that Thomas believed but told him that those who would believe without touching and seeing Him in person would be blessed as well.
5. Jesus was not angry with Thomas or other believers for needing to see Him after His resurrection. He loved them and wanted to give them the strength and encouragement He knew they would need to face violent opposition to their teaching and preaching. From that day forward, Thomas obeyed Jesus' command to go and preach to all people, just as the other apostles did.
6. **OLDER CHILDREN:** Many people remember only this episode in Thomas' life and call him “doubting Thomas.” To doubt means to be unsure about something; to not be satisfied with information, sometimes demanding more proof (evidence). [If you are explaining this to younger children, tell them doubting is to not really believe something unless you see it.] Doubt is not having confidence in, or not believing wholeheartedly in, what the Bible says. Hebrews 11:1 tells us that “faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (NKJV). [NASB reads, “Now faith is the **assurance** of things hoped for, the **conviction** of things not seen.”]
7. We believe in many things that we can't see. We believe in the wind and in electricity, for example, but we can't see them. We can only see their effects (what they can do). We believe in Jesus, even though we can't see Him, because of what the Bible tells us about Him. We believe in heaven, and we believe that we will live there some day with God because of what we read in the Bible—not because we have seen it.
8. **OLDER CHILDREN:** We **know** that God exists, that Jesus is His Son and our Savior, that heaven and hell are real places, and that the Bible is God's Word, because we have **evidence** for those beliefs. We do not have to believe it blindly. [Read 1 Thessalonians 5:21; Romans 1:20; Acts 14:17. See [How do You Know God is Real?](#) and [How do You Know the Bible is from God?](#) by Apologetics Press.] The writer of Hebrews went on to say in 11:6 that it is **impossible** to be pleasing to God if we do not have faith, i.e., if we do not overcome any doubts we may have and believe the evidence for His and His Son's existence.



**NOTE:** Kids will probably be familiar with the word “evidence” from the many police and courtroom dramas on TV. Remind them that evidence is presented to a jury to try to prove something that jurors have not seen themselves and of which they have no firsthand knowledge.



**RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS:** See the articles “[Faith, Evidence, and Credible Testimony](#)” and “[A Leap Into the Dark?](#)” by Eric Lyons and “[Blind Faith](#)” by Dave Miller on the Apologetics Press Web site for responses to the idea that Jesus was endorsing blind faith in the case of Thomas.

**PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—BEFORE CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):**

- Click here for complete [Activity Book](#) and [Answer Key](#).

**Ages 2-5:**

- “[Thomas the Doubter Coloring Sheet](#)” (provided in activity sheets)
- Up the Ladder (or Staircase) Game: Divide the class into two teams. On a magnetic board, draw a ladder or staircase for each team. Have a colored magnet or magnetic cartoon figure for each team. Make up yes/no questions about the apostles from this and previous lessons. For every correct answer, move the magnet up the ladder. The first team to reach the top of the ladder wins.

**1st-2nd Graders:**

- Up the Ladder (or Staircase) Game: Play the game described above, but use true/false statements about the apostles from this and previous lessons. For every correct answer, move the magnet up the ladder. For every incorrect answer, move the magnet down one rung or step. The first team to reach the top of the ladder wins.
- Write each word of the memory verse on separate index cards. Divide the class into small groups of two or three students. Make as many sets of the memory verse cards as you have small groups. Give them a certain amount of time to put the cards in order (using an egg timer, for example).
- “[Thomas the Doubter Word Search](#)” with names of Bible characters that showed great faith (provided in activity sheets)
- “[Faith is the Key](#)” puzzle (provided in activity sheets)
- “[What about Thomas? Code Activity](#)” (provided in activity sheets)

**3rd-4th Graders:**

- “[Thomas the Doubter Word Search](#)” with names of Bible characters that showed great faith (provided in activity sheets)
- Write each word of the memory verse on separate index cards. Divide the class into small groups of two or three students. Make as many sets of the memory verse cards as you have small groups. Give them a certain amount of time to put the cards in order (using an egg timer, for example).
- Divide the class into small groups, and give each group a concordance. Ask them to find at least five scriptures with the word “faith” or “believe.”
- “[Faith is the Key](#)” puzzle (provided in activity sheets)
- “[What about Thomas? Code Activity](#)” (provided in activity sheets)
- Have the children read the following:
  - John 20; Luke 24
  - *What Is Faith?*, by Virginia Mueller, Tyndale House, Happy Day Books
  - [How do You Know God is Real?](#) by Kyle Butt (Apologetics Press)

## SONGS:

### “BELIEVING IN THE LORD” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Unknown\*  
(Tune: “Farmer in the Dell”)

Believing in the Lord, believing in the Lord,  
Believe what God has shown to us,  
Believing in the Lord.

### “THOMAS WOULD NOT BELIEVE” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Lora Laycook  
(Tune: chorus of “In the Morning of Joy”)

Thomas would not believe, Thomas would not believe,  
Until he saw the nail prints, he would not believe;  
Thomas would not believe, Thomas would not believe,  
Until he saw the nail prints, he would not believe.

We’re glad we believe! We’re glad we believe!  
Though we didn’t see the nail prints, but we still believe.  
We are glad we believe! We are glad we believe!  
Though we didn’t see the nail prints, but we still believe.

\*Author Unknown: Please contact us through the feedback button for this lesson if you are aware of any copyright information for this song.

\*\*\* IF YOU HAVE SUGGESTIONS PERTAINING TO THIS LESSON, PLEASE CLICK THE  
“SUGGESTION” BUTTON BESIDE THE BUTTON FOR THIS LESSON ON THE  
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## WEDNESDAY EVENING

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### PERSONAL APPLICATION:

I believe in Jesus and trust Him even though I cannot see Him.

### INTRODUCTION:

[N.T. 3 Bible Facts Flashcards](#) (provided under "N.T. 3 Bible Facts" on curriculum web site)



## POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Briefly review Sunday morning's lesson (see [N.T. 3 Review Questions](#) for example questions)
2. Some people want to say there is no God because we can't see God with our eyes. But, as the Bible says, we can and should be able to believe that God exists. We may not be able to see God, Himself, but we can see evidence of Him every day.
3. Discuss "things" we believe based on evidence, even though we may not have ever seen them (e.g., one million dollars; love; Mars; the Titanic; the Civil War). Talk about what kind of evidences allow us to believe in those types of things.
4. Talk about the faith/trust we have in parents or a friend. Is that faith "blind"? Or is it based on evidence? What evidence?
5. Discuss how we see the existence of God in nature, using the following *Discovery* articles: [September, 2001](#) ("How Do We Prove There is a God?"); [January, 2003](#) ("Copying God's Design"); [May, 2007](#) ("How Do You Know that We Are Learning about the Real God?"); [November, 2007](#) ("How Did God Come About?").

**OLDER CHILDREN:** Who were other people of great faith in the Bible?

6. Have a "Faith Scavenger Hunt." Divide the class into small groups and give each group a list of scriptures that mention Bible characters with great faith. Students must find the characters with great faith. The group that finishes first is the winner of the scavenger hunt.

## PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—BEFORE CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):

- See Sunday morning's lesson.
- Play "Who Am I?": After doing the "Great Faith Scavenger Hunt" (later in the lesson), begin giving clues (one at a time) about each Bible character that had great faith. The student/team that guesses first, wins a point. Then go on to the next Bible character that had great faith.
- Make a "Wall of Faith" bulletin board/display. On a bulletin board or wall, have children list Bible characters of great faith and briefly describe why they had great faith.

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