

Jesus Appears to His Followers

When Jesus returned to heaven, he left his disciples with a momentous challenge: “Go and make disciples of all the nations.” The disciples had lived with Jesus’ message for three years; they’d beheld his glorious resurrection. Now it was time for them to move out and spread the word. As they met together to celebrate Pentecost, they were filled with the Holy Spirit. Guided by the Spirit, the disciples began to share the news about Jesus’ death and resurrection with everyone they met.

Three- and four-year-olds in your class like to share good news with others. They love to talk about a fun day at the park, an exciting trip to the zoo, or the completion of a challenging task. Use these lessons to teach children that they can share the good news of Jesus’ resurrection, too. Preschoolers will hear how the disciples coped with Jesus’ death, witnessed his resurrection appearances, and experienced the coming of the Holy Spirit. They’ll learn that Jesus wants us to believe in him and tell the world about his wonderful love.

Three Lessons on Jesus Appears to His Followers

Lesson	Bible Point	Page	Bible Basis
7	Jesus wants us to believe in him.	91	John 20:19-20, 24-29
8	Jesus wants us to believe in him.	103	Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 1:6-11
9	Jesus wants us to believe in him.	117	Acts 2:1-12, 38-42



Bible Point ▶

Jesus wants us to believe in him.

Bible Verse

Believe in Jesus Christ, and love one another (adapted from 1 John 3:23b).

Growing Closer to Jesus

- Children will
- experience what it's like to be doubted,
 - hear how Thomas doubted that Jesus had risen,
 - convince Whiskers of some good news, and
 - discover that we can believe in Jesus without seeing him.

Teacher Enrichment

Bible Basis

- **Thomas doubts that Jesus has risen from the dead.**



**John
20:19-20,
24-29**

Hiding in a room with the doors locked “because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders”—that’s where Jesus found his disciples the evening of his resurrection day! It’s easy to be hard on them and wonder, What were they thinking? Shouldn’t they have been out celebrating?

However, we should put ourselves in their place before criticizing them. They knew Jesus had been crucified; some, no doubt, had seen him die. They had heard from the women that Jesus had risen, but they hadn’t seen him. How could it possibly be true? Confusion must have ruled their thoughts. What makes us think we’d have responded any differently?

Having faith wasn’t easy for these first-century disciples. Thomas was really no different from the others. The other disciples demonstrated by their actions that they doubted Jesus’ resurrection until they actually saw him. It’s easy to think that those living in Jesus’ day had an advantage over us in developing their faith. But we may have the advantage because the results of their struggles are recorded for us in the Bible. If one accepts that the Bible comes from God, all the evidence one could possibly need for faith is there.

Prayer

- Read Philippians 3:7-9.
- What does it mean to have faith?
- Pray: Lord, help me to trust you for everything and to seek you above everything else. I especially need to trust you with...




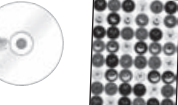




It’s important to say the Bible Point just as it’s written in each activity. Repeating the Bible Point again and again will help children remember it and apply it to their lives.

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 “Today I Learned...” handout (at the end of this lesson) to send home with your children.
- Pray for the children in your class and for God’s direction as you teach the lesson.

This Lesson at a Glance

	What Children Will Do	Classroom Supplies	Learning Lab Supplies
Welcome Time	Welcome! —Receive name tags, and be greeted by the teacher.	“Easter Lily Name Tags” (p. 10), scissors, marker, safety pins or tape	
Let’s Get Started Direct children to one or more of the optional activities until everyone arrives.	Option 1: What’s Inside? —Try to guess the contents of a box by touching them.	Box, scissors, sandpaper, cotton balls, ice, soft fabric, a large eraser	
	Option 2: Lock and Key —Try to unlock a padlock, and hear how Jesus appeared in a locked room.	Padlock, keys	
	Option 3: Believing Hands —Make a handprint poster, and hear how Thomas wanted to touch Jesus’ hands.	Newsprint, marker, liquid tempera paint, pie pan, paper towels	
	Pick-Up Time —Sing a song as they pick up toys and gather for Bible Story Time.	CD player	
Bible Story Time	Setting the Stage —Demonstrate actions for a doubtful teacher, and hear how Thomas didn’t believe Jesus was alive.		
	Bible Song and Prayer Time —Sing a song, bring out the Bible, and pray together.	Bible, CD player	
	Hear and Tell the Bible Story —Hear how Thomas believed in Jesus after seeing and touching him.	Bible, CD player	
	Do the Bible Story —Make puppets with expressive faces to show how Jesus’ friends felt.	Bible, wide craft sticks, glue sticks, CD player	
Closing 	Too Good to Be True? —Try to convince Whiskers that they have a special treat to share with him.	Snacks, baby wipes	
	Not by Sight —See an orange inside an orange peel, and talk about believing in Jesus without seeing him.	Unpeeled orange, baby wipes	

*See the end of this lesson for extra-time ideas and supplies.

Welcome Time

SUPPLIES: “Easter Lily Name Tags” (p. 10), scissors, marker, safety pins or tape

- Kneel down and make eye contact with children as they arrive.
- Greet each child individually with an enthusiastic smile.
- Thank each child for coming to class today.
- As children arrive, ask them about last week’s lesson. Use questions such as “What did you tell your friends about how Jesus died and came back to life again?” and “What did your family do to celebrate Easter?”
- Say: **Today we’re going to learn that ► *Jesus wants us to believe in him.***
- Hand out the Easter lily name tags children made during Lesson 1, and help them attach the name tags to their clothing. If some of the name tags were damaged or if children weren’t in class that week, have them make new name tags using the photocopyable handout.
- Direct children to the Let’s Get Started activities you’ve set up.



◀ **BIBLE POINT**

Let’s Get Started

Set up one or more of the following activities for children to do as they arrive. After you greet each child, invite him or her to choose an activity.

Circulate between the activities to offer help as needed and direct children’s conversation toward the point of today’s lesson. Ask questions such as “How can you tell what’s in the box without seeing inside it?” or “Tell me about a time when someone didn’t believe you.”

■ **Option 1: What’s Inside?**

SUPPLIES: box, scissors, sandpaper, cotton balls, ice, soft fabric, a large eraser

Before class, make a “touch box.” Fill a medium-sized box with items such as sandpaper; cotton balls; ice (in a resealable bag); a large eraser; and pieces of soft fabric such as satin, velvet, or flannel. Cut a hole in the top of the box so children can reach inside.

Have children take turns touching the items inside the box and guessing what they are. Have them tell you what it’s like to identify items without seeing them. Explain that even though we can’t see Jesus, we can still believe in him.



■ **Option 2: Lock and Key**

SUPPLIES: padlock, keys

Set out a padlock and several keys, including the key to the padlock. Encourage each child to try the keys until he or she finds the one that opens the lock. As children try the keys, explain that today’s Bible story is about a time Jesus appeared inside a locked room.


teacher tips

Add a few drops of liquid soap to the tempera paint for easier cleanup of hands and clothing.

■ Option 3: Believing Hands

SUPPLIES: newsprint, marker, liquid tempera paint, pie pan, paper towels

Before class, write, “Jesus wants us to believe in him” in the center of a large sheet of newsprint.

Set out liquid tempera paint in a pie pan. Help children make paint handprints around the words. As children are making their handprints, tell them that today’s Bible story is about a man who wouldn’t believe in Jesus until he saw Jesus’ hands.

Have children wash and dry their hands before moving on to the next activity. Hang the newsprint up to dry.

When everyone has arrived and you’re ready to move on to Bible Story Time, encourage the children to finish what they’re doing and get ready to clean up.

■ Pick-Up Time

SUPPLIES: CD player



Lead children in singing “Come Along With Me” (track 2) with the CD to the tune of “Come and Go With Me.” Encourage children to sing along as they help clean up the room.



**Come along with me and pick up all our things,
Pick up all our things,
Pick up all our things.
Come along with me and pick up all our things
So our room will be clean.**

(Repeat 2x.)

Bible Story Time

■ Setting the Stage

SUPPLIES: none

Tell the children you’ll turn the lights off and on to get their attention. Explain that when you flash the lights, the children are to stop what they’re doing and be quiet. Encourage children to respond quickly so you’ll have time for all the fun activities you’ve planned.

Ask: • **What did you make or do when you came to class today?** (Felt things in a box; tried to unlock a lock; made handprints.)

Say: **Some of you tried to guess what was inside a “touch box,” some of you used keys to try to unlock a lock, and some of you made a handprint poster. Let’s read the words in the middle of our poster.**

Read the Bible Point: ► **Jesus wants us to believe in him.** Then have children repeat it with you.



► ***Jesus wants us to believe in him.*** Our Bible story today is about one of Jesus' friends who wouldn't believe in Jesus until he saw him. Let's play a game to see what that might have been like.

Form a large circle. Make sure children have plenty of room to move around. Say: **I've heard you can do some pretty amazing things. But I'm not so sure. I'd better see this with my own eyes. Raise your hand if you can stand on one foot.**

Have children raise their hands, and then continue: **You can? I don't believe it! You can't really stand on one foot, can you? OK, go ahead and show me.**

Have children stand on one foot. Act surprised and happy as you watch them. After children have stood on one foot, read the following actions one at a time. Pause after you read each action to allow time for children to complete it. Say:

- **Touch your toes.**
- **Touch your knee with your nose.**
- **Act like a monkey.**

Each time, act doubtful until you see the children demonstrate their abilities. Then react with great delight. Say things such as "You can really do it!" or "I've never seen so many monkeys in one classroom!" After children have completed all the activities, have them sit down.

Ask: • **What was it like when I didn't believe you?** (I wanted to show you I could do it; it made me do it better.)

• **What was it like when I did believe you?** (It was fun; you were surprised; I was happy.)

Say: ► ***Jesus wants us to believe in him.*** He wants us to see all the great things he can do and be excited! Today we're going to hear a Bible story about a man who didn't believe that Jesus was alive. He was in for a real surprise! Let's find out how he started believing in Jesus.



■ Bible Song and Prayer Time

SUPPLIES: Bible, CD player



tracks 3, 4

Say: **Now it's time to choose a Bible person to bring me the Bible marked with today's Bible story. As we sing our Bible song, we'll pass around our special Bible. The person who's holding the Bible when the music stops will be our Bible person today.**

Lead children in singing "I'm So Glad for the Bible" (track 3) with the CD to the tune of "Give Me Oil in My Lamp." As you sing, pass around the special Bible.



**I'm so glad for the Bible,
Keep me learnin', learnin', learnin'.
I'm so glad for God's book today.
I'm so glad for the Bible,
Keep me learnin', learnin', learnin'—
Keep me learnin' all about his way.**

**Let me hear 'bout God's love—
Keep me learnin', learnin', learnin'.
Let me hear 'bout God's love for me.
Let me hear 'bout God's love—
Keep me learnin', learnin', learnin'.
Let's shine the light for all to see.**

(Repeat first verse.)

When the music stops, invite the child who's holding the Bible to bring it to you. Stamp the child's hand with the *cloud stamp*, and thank the child for bringing you the Bible. Then stamp the other children's hands. Return the *cloud stamp* and *ink pad* to the Learning Lab.

Say: **I'm thankful for [name of child who brought the Bible], and I'm thankful for everyone in our class today. Let's thank God together for all our friends in this class.**

Lead children in singing "I'm So Glad We're Together" (track 4) with the *CD* to the tune of "Give Me Oil in My Lamp."



**I'm so glad we're together.
Keep us prayin', prayin', prayin'.
I'm so glad we're all here today.
I'm so glad we're together.
Keep us prayin', prayin', prayin'—
Prayin' for each other every day.**

Lead children in folding their hands and bowing their heads as you continue to sing.

**Thank you, Lord, for each one.
Keep me thankful, thankful, thankful.
Thank you for everyone who's here.
Thank you, Lord, for each one.
Keep me thankful, thankful, thankful—
Thankful for our friends both far and near.**

■ Hear and Tell the Bible Story

SUPPLIES: Bible, CD Player

This Bible story is featured in *My First Hands-On Bible™*. Order several now for your ministry at group.com.



Open the Bible to **John 20**, and show it to the children. Say: **Our Bible story comes from the book of John in the Bible. Our Bible Big Book shows us pictures of our Bible story.**

Bring out the *Bible Big Book: Jesus Appears to His Followers*. Show children the pictures as you read the text on pages 1-3.

Then ask: • **Do you think you would recognize Jesus if he started walking with you?** (Yes, because I know what he looks

like; no, I've never seen him.)

• **How do you think Jesus' friends felt when they recognized him?** (Surprised; happy; they couldn't believe their eyes.)

Say: **Jesus' friends didn't recognize him at first. But then they realized it was Jesus, and they were surprised and happy. Before they could say anything, Jesus was gone! They ran back to Jerusalem to tell their friends. Let's listen to our story and find out what happened when they got there.**

Show children pages 4-5 as you play "Thomas Believes" (track 14) from the *CD*. After the story, stop the *CD*, and point to the picture of Thomas on page 4.

Ask: • **Look at Thomas' face. How do you think he's feeling in this picture?** (Mad that he didn't get to see Jesus; sad; confused; he looks like he doesn't believe them.)

Point to the picture of Thomas on page 5.

Ask: • **Now look at Thomas' face. How do you think he's feeling in this picture?** (Glad to see Jesus; sorry he didn't believe; happy.)

• **Why didn't Thomas believe that Jesus was alive?** (He didn't see Jesus; he thought Jesus was dead.)

• **What helped Thomas believe in Jesus?** (When Jesus came back; touching Jesus; talking to Jesus.)



Say: **Thomas didn't believe Jesus was alive until he saw Jesus for himself. It's hard to believe in things we can't see or touch, but ► *Jesus wants us to believe in him.* When we don't believe in Jesus, we feel sad like Thomas in the first picture. But when we believe in Jesus and know him as our friend, we can be happy like Thomas and all the disciples in the second picture. Let's think of some things we can do to help**

us believe in Jesus.

Encourage children to share their ideas. If they need help getting started, suggest ideas such as talking about Jesus, hearing stories, and going to church.

Say: **Those are all great ideas! It's fun to believe in Jesus and know him as our friend. Let's remember to do those things this week.**



■ Do the Bible Story

SUPPLIES: Bible, wide craft sticks, glue sticks, CD player



Say: **At first, Jesus' friends didn't really understand what was going on. They might have been afraid, they might have been confused, they might have been sad. Let's look at faces that show some of these feelings.**

Show children the *funny face stickers*. Let each child look through the faces and pick out one that he or she thinks shows what Jesus' friends must have felt. Help the children stick these faces to the ends of craft sticks. Ask them to describe the faces they've chosen and what feelings those faces represent.

Say: **Let's show how sad and scared Jesus' friends were when Jesus was gone by using these puppets. Find a partner, and pretend you are one of Jesus' friends. Use a puppet to tell your partner how it feels to have Jesus gone.** Demonstrate this with a puppet by saying, "I'm so sad Jesus is gone. I miss him so much. Now I'll never see him again."

Have children take turns sharing how Jesus' friends felt using their puppets. After everyone's had a turn, say: **You all did a great job of showing how Jesus' friends must have felt when Jesus was gone. But the Bible tell us that Jesus came back! How did Jesus' friends feel when they saw him again?** (Excited; surprised; happy!)

Let children look through the remaining *funny face stickers* to find ones that express these new emotions. Help the children create new puppets using these faces and craft sticks. Then ask children to find new partners.

Say: **Let's show how excited Thomas and all of Jesus' friends were once he was back. Pretend you are one of Jesus' friends. Use a puppet to tell your partner how it feels to have Jesus back.** Demonstrate this with a puppet by saying, "I'm so excited! Jesus is back! He makes me so happy. I'll never be lonely again."

BIBLE VERSE

Open your Bible to **1 John 3:23** and say: **Our Bible verse today tell us to believe in Jesus Christ, and love one another. Let's use our puppets and sing a song about believing in Jesus.**

Lead children in singing "Believe" (1 John 3:23) with the CD (track 13) to the tune of "A-Tisket, A-Tasket." Let them use the puppets to sing along.



SING

Believe, believe, believe in Jesus Christ.

Believe, believe in Jesus Christ

And love one another.

(Repeat.)



Closing

■ Too Good to Be True?

SUPPLIES: snacks, baby wipes

Say: **I have some good news. Today we're going to have a special treat! Why don't we quietly call our friend Whiskers and see if he'd like to share our treat with us. Let's whisper "Whiskers" until he hears us and comes out.**

Lead children in calling "Whiskers" several times; then bring him out and go through the following puppet script. When you finish the script, put Whiskers away and out of sight.



- **Whiskers:** *(Rubbing eyes and yawning as if he just woke up)* Yes? Is someone calling me?
- **Teacher:** Yes, Whiskers. Your friends have something exciting to tell you. Who'd like to share our good news with Whiskers?
- *(Invite children to tell Whiskers about the snacks you've brought.)*
- **Whiskers:** *(Sounding doubtful)* Treats? In our class? We never have special treats in here. You must be fooling me! I'm going back to sleep. *(Turns to leave.)*
- **Teacher:** Wait, Whiskers! Your friends aren't fooling you! They mean it. Don't you, children?
- **Whiskers:** *(Shaking head)* Nope. It's just too good to be true. I won't believe we're having special treats until I see them with my own two eyes!
- **Teacher:** Whiskers, you sound just like someone in our Bible story today. His name was Thomas. Who can tell Whiskers a little bit about Thomas?

(Help children tell Whiskers how Thomas wanted to see and touch Jesus before he'd believe.)

Whiskers: You mean he didn't believe Jesus came back to life?

Teacher: No, he didn't. Even though his friends told him they'd seen Jesus, he thought it was too good to be true. Just like you, Whiskers! But when Thomas saw Jesus, he was convinced. Children, what can we do to convince Whiskers about our special treat?

(Let children respond. They'll probably offer suggestions such as showing Whiskers the treat or sharing the treat with Whiskers.) Whiskers, will you believe us if I show you the special snacks that I brought today?

Whiskers: Yes, then I'll believe!

(Bring out the snacks you've brought.) Wow! You really did mean it! Those are great treats! I'm sorry I doubted you. (To children) Will you forgive me for not believing you?

(Encourage children to forgive Whiskers. Then continue.)

Teacher: You are just like Thomas, Whiskers. Thomas was very happy to see Jesus, but very sorry he hadn't believed. ► **Jesus wants us to believe in him.** He wants us to read about him in the Bible and believe all the wonderful things he's done. As we enjoy our special treat, let's remember how important it is to believe in Jesus.

(Pretend to give Whiskers a snack, and then distribute the snacks to the children.)

Whiskers: I know I'll remember. Thanks for telling me about Thomas and for sharing your special treat! Goodbye.

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■ **Not by Sight**

SUPPLIES: unpeeled orange, baby wipes

Help children clean their hands at a nearby sink or with baby wipes. Pass an unpeeled orange around, and let children handle it. If you have a large class, you may want to bring two oranges. As children are passing the orange around, ask:

• **What's inside that orange peel? Can you see it?** (An orange; no, not unless I peel it.)

• **How do you know there's an orange inside the peel if you can't see it?** (I've eaten oranges before; all oranges have peels; I just know.)

Have children pass the orange back to you. Peel the orange, and pull off a section for each child. Hand out the orange sections as you pull them off. As you're handing out the sections, ask:

• **How can we believe in Jesus if we can't see him?** (We know he loves us; my mom says that he's real; we hear Bible stories about him.)

Say: ► **Jesus wants us to believe in him.** Even though we can't see Jesus or touch him, Jesus wants us to know he's right here beside us, being our friend. Let's pray and thank Jesus for being with us and being our friend.



See page 5.



Invite children to pray if they want to. Then close with a prayer similar to this one:
**Jesus, we believe in you. Thank you for being with us today and every day.
We're glad you're our friend. In your name, amen.**



Growing closer to Jesus extends beyond the classroom.

Photocopy the "Today I Learned..." handout (at the end of this lesson) for this week, and send it home with the children. Encourage parents to use the handout to plan meaningful family activities to reinforce this week's topic.



For Extra Time

If you have a long class time or want to add additional elements to your lesson, try one of the following activities.

■ **Lively Learning: Can You Believe Your Ears?**



track 15

Form a circle, and play the “Sound Effects” segment from the *CD* (track 15). In this segment, you’ll hear a dog barking, a lion roaring, birds singing, and a horn honking. Each sound effect is recorded three times.

The first time you hear each sound effect, pause the *CD* and ask children what they heard. Then let them listen to the sound effect a second time and confirm their guesses. Then play the sound effect a third time as children act out the sound they heard.

After you’ve played all the sound effects, say: **We can believe the noises we heard are dogs, lions, birds, and horns because they are things that we know about.** ► *Jesus wants us to believe in him. Knowing about Jesus will help us do that.*

■ **Make to Take: Wind Streamers**



Before class, cut different-colored crepe paper streamers into 18-inch lengths. Show children the different colors, and let them each choose six streamers. Have children bring you their streamers so you can staple or tape them together.

After you’ve stapled all the streamers, go outside, and let children hold their streamers in the wind. If you don’t think you’ll have much wind outside, bring in an electric fan. Monitor the children as they let the streamers blow in front of the fan. Then return to your classroom and talk about how we can’t see the wind, but we know that it’s there. Tell children that ► *Jesus wants us to believe in him.* Remind them that we can believe in Jesus even though we can’t see him.

■ **Treat to Eat: Banana Believers**

Help children clean their hands at a nearby sink or with baby wipes. Set out a bowl of mini chocolate chips. Form pairs, and give each pair an unpeeled banana. Have partners help each other peel their banana, and then break it in half. Set a trash can nearby for children to throw the banana peels in.

Show children how to gently press mini chocolate chips into the bananas. Talk about how they can believe a banana is inside its peel even though they can’t see it. Remind them that ► *Jesus wants us to believe in him,* even though we can’t see him.



■ **Story Picture: Thomas Believes in Jesus**

Set out glue sticks and a box of white facial tissues. Give each child a copy of the “Today I Learned...” handout. Help children tear pieces of tissue and glue them on to Jesus’ robe to make it soft and white. As children work, ask them how Thomas might have felt when he saw that Jesus really was alive.

Today I learned... Jesus wants us to believe in him.

Help me learn this:

Believe in Jesus Christ, and love one another
(adapted from 1 John 3:23b).

Ask me:

- Why didn't Thomas believe that Jesus had really risen?
- When is it hard for you to believe in Jesus?
- How can our family help others believe in Jesus?

Lesson 7
Today your child learned that **JESUS**
WANTS US TO BELIEVE IN HIM.
Children heard how Thomas
doubted that Jesus was really alive.
They discovered that we can believe in
Jesus, even though we can't see him.

Family Fun

- Purchase or make a simple kite, and take your whole family out kite flying on a windy day. Talk about how we can't see the wind, but we know it's there. Then talk about how we can believe in Jesus, even though we can't see him. As you take turns flying your kite, have each person share one reason he or she believes in Jesus.



Thomas Believes in Jesus
(John 20:19-20, 24-29)