Dear Parents,

This week, our story is about Doubting Thomas. Today, begin with the ice-breaker idea (you can make up your own “Did you know…” questions if you like.) Then use one of the Bible story options to tell today’s story. Our story today is from John 20:19-31*. {Spark Storybook Bible, pgs. 492-495}

* Note: if you have younger children, we suggest reading the story from a Children’s storybook Bible. Here are a couple that we use in Children’s Ministry:

The Spark Storybook Bible
(This one is finally back in stock on Amazon. Looks like earliest delivery is end of April. For now, I’ll keep scanning & attaching the pages from this Bible)

The Jesus Storybook Bible

Doubting Thomas Ice-breaker/opening idea:

Say: “This morning I am going to tell you some things and if you believe what I am saying, raise your hand. If you doubt what I am saying, leave your hand down. Ready?

1. Did you know...
   a. Penguins can smell toothpaste from several miles away?
   b. Do you believe it? Or do you doubt it?
   c. (false)

2. Did you know...
   a. A violin contains about 70 pieces of wood?
   b. Do you believe it? Or do you doubt it?
   c. (true)

3. Did you know...
   a. The Irish like Thomas the Tank Engine so much that they have put faces on all of their trains?
   b. Do you believe it? Or do you doubt it?
   c. (false)
4. Did you know...
   a. They have square watermelons in Japan because they stack better?
   b. Do you believe it? Or do you doubt it?
   c. (true)

5. Did you know...
   a. A handy household tip: The elastic in your underwear will last twice as long if you freeze it after washing it?
   b. Do you believe it? Or do you doubt it?
   c. (false)

* Option #1 for reading the Bible story (younger children):

**DOUBTING THOMAS STORYTELLING**

*Parents: your part to read is in bold.*

Open your Spark Story Bible to the Doubting Thomas story on page 492 (or used the scanned Bible story pages attached to this lesson.) As you read the first two pages of the story, don't show the illustrations to kids. Describe the pictures to them instead. You should see this picture! Squiggles (Squiggles is the little worm hidden in all of the Bible stories) looks really happy! The disciples are all talking at once. But Thomas has grumpy eyebrows. When kids ask or move to see the pictures, begin a discussion. How do you feel when you don't get to see the pictures? (curious, left out, sad, angry) You are feeling the way Thomas felt when he didn't get to see Jesus like the other disciples. Thomas had a hard time believing what his friends saw.

Turn to the next pages of the story. Let's read on. Try to imagine the pictures in your mind from the words you hear. Read the rest of the story aloud without showing kids the pictures.

What do you think is in the picture? Accept all responses, and then describe what is in the picture. Jesus comes to see Thomas to help him believe. Thomas' eyes are bulging and his mouth is open in surprise. Jesus is reaching out to Thomas, offering his hand for Thomas to touch. Have your kids recreate/act out the picture. Show the illustrations on pages 494–495. When I told you about the picture, and you acted it out, it was easier for us to believe what the picture looked like without seeing it.

Now show your Spark Story Bible to kids. You can see the pictures we talked about. Let's read the story again. This time, follow along and look at the pictures.
Listen carefully for the word believe in the story this time. When you hear believe, point to your brain with one hand, and your heart with the other. When we believe, we know God in our minds and hearts. Jesus wants us to believe, even when we can't see.

Read aloud the Doubting Thomas story, pages 492–495, a second time. This time, talk with kids about the illustrations as you read. After you read, ask some review questions, allowing time for kids to answer. Why did Thomas have a hard time believing that Jesus was alive? (didn't see Jesus) When did Thomas believe? (when he saw Jesus) Jesus tells Thomas and us that we can believe, even when we can't see. Jesus helps us believe.

* Option #2 for reading the Bible story (older children):

DOUBTING THOMAS STORYTELLING
*Parents: your part to read is in bold.

Our story is called Doubting Thomas. Before we read the story, let's make sure we know what "doubt" means. Who can tell me what it means to doubt something? (You think it's not true or you don't believe that it is true.) So if I said there's going to be a rocket landing in our backyard today, would you doubt it? Pause for responses. What if I said we're going to read the story now? Would you doubt that? Pause.

Open the Spark Story Bible to find Doubting Thomas on pages 492–495 or use the attached scanned pages of the story, or use your own Bible. Encourage your kids to follow along as you read or ask for a volunteer to read aloud.

Q & A for older children:

Have a brief conversation about the story. Ask the kids these questions:

1. What would you have done if you were in the room when Jesus appeared to the disciples? Affirm all responses.

2. Did Jesus give Thomas a second chance to believe he was alive? (yes)

3. When did Thomas believe that Jesus was alive? (when he touched Jesus' wounds)

4. What would you say to Jesus if you were one of the disciples? Affirm all responses.

Optional Activity #1: Mystery Bag
Supplies: small tote bag, teddy bear or other stuffed animal
*you could add other items in another bag to extend the activity – add items with different shapes and textures. Have them feel the item, without looking, and guess what items are in the bag.

**Let's play a game called Mystery Bag.** Hold up a tote bag with your mystery item inside. **I have something in the Mystery Bag.** It is small, fuzzy, and brown. **Do you believe I have something in my bag?** Allow time for kids to respond. **Can you guess what is in my bag?** Give more clues until kids guess correctly. Pull the bear from your bag. **Even though you couldn't see it, you BELIEVED that I had something in the bag. Why? (trust what you say)** **How did you KNOW what I had in the Mystery Bag?**

This is similar to our faith in God. Thomas wanted to see and feel Jesus before he believed. We can’t see or touch Jesus, but we can feel him in our hearts. This helps our faith grow.

**Optional Activity #2: Bible Verse activity**

Supplies: Pencils; Sticky notes

Before you begin your lesson, write one word from John 20:27 on a sticky note until there are 10 sticky notes: “Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe. John 20:27” Hide the sticky notes around the room.

**We have a bit of a hunt this morning. In this room there are 10 sticky notes hidden. Each sticky note has one word from today’s Bible verse. We need to find the notes and see if we can unscramble the verse.**

Help your kids find and unscramble the sticky notes. Help kids find John 20:27 in the Bible.

**Closing Prayer/Blessing:**

Dear God, thank you for Jesus who helps us to believe, even without seeing. Help us pass your love on to others.

Amen.
Doubting Thomas

The disciples were hiding in a house the night Jesus rose from the dead. They were afraid. Bam! They locked all the doors. Jesus came and stood by them.

“Peace be with you,” he said. The disciples looked up in surprise! Jesus showed them his hands and his side so that they would know it was him. The disciples were very happy! Again, Jesus said to them, “Peace be with you. God has sent me to you. Now it’s your turn to go tell the rest of the world about me.”
Jesus breathed on them in a very special way. He said, “With this breath, I will always be in your hearts, even when I am in heaven. You now have the power to do the things I’ve asked you to do.”

Thomas was the only disciple not there that night. When he got back, the others excitedly told him about Jesus’ visit.
“I don’t believe you!” Thomas said. “I’ll believe when I can touch Jesus’ wounds.”

A week later, Thomas and the other disciples were in the same house. Jesus came again and stood with them. “Peace be with you,” he said to them.


Do not doubt anymore. It’s time for you to believe.”
Thomas’ eyes popped. “My Lord and my God!” he exclaimed.

Jesus answered him, “You believe because I’m here with you and you’ve seen me. Think of those who have not seen me, but believe in me anyway. You should believe, even when you cannot see it for yourself.”

Act out the story of a time when you were afraid, but you felt Jesus was with you.
Doubting Thomas

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