

ADULT STUDY GUIDE

This is the adult component of the Enduring Faith Bible Curriculum. This piece follows the **same scope and sequence** as the other levels: **Early Childhood, Elementary, and Youth**. This alignment presents some amazing opportunities.

- First of all, it helps all ages speak a **common theological language**.
- Second, it helps God's people build an understanding of the **lifelong nature of learning God's Word**—that we don't just learn the narratives once or twice before moving on to other matters.
- Third, and critical to this curriculum, it helps **equip households** to teach the faith at home.

If parents and other adults spend time meditating on and discussing the narratives of the Bible while the younger generations in the congregation study the same narratives, then there will be greater opportunity throughout the week to **reflect together** on what the narrative says and what it means. In other words, studying the narratives of the Bible as adults is a blessing in and of itself, but it also helps **equip parents and faith leaders** to be more confident and feel empowered to extend those conversations into the household.

FEATURES OF THIS STUDY

This study guide is meant to provide some guidelines and springboards for discussion in your Bible study groups.

- The **first page** of each lesson provides the central focus statements, not only for the Adult level, but also for the other levels. Use this as a way to orient yourself to the **main themes and goals** of the lessons across all levels. You'll also find helpful **tips for preparation**.
- The **middle two pages** begin with an introductory **"Launch"** section, which provides prompts for beginning the study and an open-ended reflection question to kick off group discussion. The following **"Learn & Live"** section breaks down the text into three to five narrative sections. Each one of these sections has some additional commentary, a reflection question, and some helps to better understand possible answers to the reflection question. The **"Leave"** section provides prompts for a final reflection question and some other considerations to close the lesson. The **sidebars** include leader tips and bonus activities to help you think through options for extending the lesson.
- The **final page** of each lesson is the student piece. Copy one lesson handout per learner, and distribute this at the beginning of class.

TIPS FOR USE

This study guide is designed primarily to help give you, the leader, some thoughts and prompts to help guide and assist facilitation of the class. Below are some tips for how to use it.

- This is meant to be a Bible study, so each learner will need access to a Bible. Encourage your learners to bring their own to class.
- Don't neglect the lesson handout. The primary reason for this page is to create some space for each learner to reflect and engage the questions on his or her own. Often, any given group will have one or two vocal learners and others who may not speak up. Consider using techniques to help engage all learners in the process, such as having each learner write down his or her reflection privately before sharing, having each learner share with a partner before opening up discussion, or changing the seating arrangements to create small groups.
- Use the opening reflection question as a time to build community. Adult learners, generally speaking, desire to share their experience with one another, and this lesson starter provides an opportunity for this.
- For each narrative section, ask volunteers to read the text aloud while the rest follow along. Don't force anyone; adults, like children and youth, may be self-conscious about their reading or public speaking ability.
- Download the Enduring Faith Page from the online digital resource center and hand out copies to your learners. Near the end of the lesson, talk through the prompts, which help the learners extend the lessons in their households throughout the week. Encourage learners to take this page home along with the lesson handout to be used throughout the week.

THE PROOF ROOM

Jesus Appears
to Thomas
John 20:19–31
AD 33

BIBLE TRUTH

Jesus died and rose from the dead for us.

LEARNER GOAL

I can recognize how Jesus' death and resurrection are at the center of the Christian faith.

BIBLE VERSE

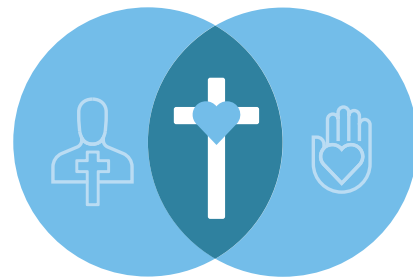
Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. John 20:29

LAW & GOSPEL

I sin when I rely on human reason instead of God's Word.
The Holy Spirit gives me eyes of faith to believe that Jesus died and rose for my salvation.

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

With the words "Peace be with you" (v. 19), the risen Lord appears among His disciples gathered in hiding from the Jews. Thomas, who is not among the disciples that evening, doubts their report of Jesus' resurrection. Eight days later, while Thomas and the disciples gather in the locked room, Jesus appears among them once again. Thomas witnesses the physical truth of the resurrection as he touches Christ's wounds. Jesus concludes by telling Thomas and us, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (v. 29).



CONNECTING IDENTITY & CALLING

IDENTITY: WHO AM I?

God reveals the truth of Jesus' resurrection in His Word.

CALLING: WHY AM I HERE?

I know that Jesus' resurrection is proof of the promise of my resurrection.

GROWING IN FAITH FOR LIFE

See how this lesson builds on previous learning for each age.

ADULT

I can recognize how Jesus' death and resurrection are at the center of the Christian faith.

YOUTH

I can share how Jesus' death and resurrection gives us new life in Him.

ELEMENTARY

I understand how Jesus' death and resurrection gives me new life in Him.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

I know the message of Jesus' resurrection is true: Jesus is alive.

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read the narrative and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible (TLSB)*.

MORE TIME Read the section on the Office of the Keys in *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation* (2017).

IN DEPTH Read the parallel account in Luke 24:36–49 in *TLSB* with study notes.



LEADER NOTE

If your learners are confused by this question, prompt them to think about different times people quote the Bible or different messages of TV preachers. People use the Bible for different twisted purposes, including preaching prosperity, trying to force Bible readings in public schools, and using out-of-context snippets to argue their cause. Have some discussion about the different ways people see the words of Scripture being used in the culture, in the media, and in other congregations. Then lead them to this narrative, where we get a clear picture of the purpose of the Bible: that people may believe in Christ and receive life in His name.



BONUS ACTIVITY

Jesus gives the disciples the authority to forgive sins in His name here. If you have time, consider reviewing The Office of the Keys in Luther's Small Catechism, talking about how this commission is still carried out by the Church today.

LAUNCH

WELCOME

Welcome the group and open in prayer. It may be a good time to take prayer requests; pray for those requests either now or at the conclusion.

REVIEW

Review the Bible Truth, Learner Goal, and Bible Verse. Then, begin with the opening reflection question on the lesson handout.

OPENING REFLECTION

Brainstorm a list of the different purposes, good and bad, for which people use the Bible. What does each use communicate about what people believe?

LEARN & LIVE

JOHN 20:19–23

BIBLE COMMENTARY

In the morning, the risen Jesus had appeared to the women and Mary Magdalene. He'd appeared to the two disciples on the Emmaus road, and He had likely appeared to others. Now, Jesus appears to the disciples (minus Thomas). Just as He had disappeared in front of the two disciples at Emmaus, now He supernaturally appears in front of the disciples in the locked room. Jesus greets them with the word "Peace," which has multiple meanings, including both the friendly salutation and a declaration of what He has done. In His life, death, and resurrection, Jesus has restored peace between God and man. The marks of His crucifixion, which He shows to the disciples, bear witness to how He has given that peace. By His wounds we are healed. After this revelation, Jesus wastes no time. He breathes on the disciples, giving them the Holy Spirit for a special purpose. They are to continue to spread God's peace to the world in His stead by forgiving or retaining the sins of others. The Office of the Keys is given, and this outpouring of the Spirit serves as a foretaste of the greater gift of the Spirit that will come at Pentecost.

REFLECTION QUESTION

How do the different words and actions of Jesus in this section reveal what Jesus came to do? What does this mean for us as God's people today?

REFLECTION HELPS

Jesus greets them with "Peace," and then shows them the means by which He brings peace between man and God, the marks of His suffering. He then commissions them to forgive sins in His stead, using the Church as the means of spreading that eternal peace to the world. The Church continues this mission today.

JOHN 20:24–25

BIBLE COMMENTARY

Thomas had not been with the others that night. It is likely that the others had been discussing the reports of the women, so Thomas' absence is likely a sign of strong unbelief. Now, with the reports of his friends and fellow disciples, Thomas doubles down on his disbelief, using some of the strongest language possible to show he will never believe. The expressions he uses, putting his hands in the wounds of Jesus, almost make a mockery of the reports of the believers. Jesus alone will have to break down the hardness of Thomas's heart through His Word, just like He does for all who believe.

REFLECTION QUESTION

What might we learn here from Thomas's example about the nature of unbelief? How do you see that today?

REFLECTION HELPS

Unbelief is a hardening of the heart against God, despite the evidence or testimony of others. God alone can work to break down those barriers.

JOHN 20:26–29

BIBLE COMMENTARY

The next Sunday, the disciples are gathered again, this time with Thomas. They are likely still in Jerusalem, in the same room, and still in fear of the Jews. The text doesn't reveal why Thomas is with them this time, though it's not because of his faith. Perhaps he has just found comfort and fellowship with his old friends. Regardless, Jesus appears to them all, just like before. Though Jesus has every right to scold Thomas, He shows remarkable love and patience in revealing Himself to Thomas, showing His omniscience by recalling Thomas' words the week before. Thomas does not need to touch Jesus for proof; Jesus has revealed Himself to Him. He is alive and He is who He said He is: the promised Messiah and the Son of God. Thomas names Him both Lord and God, and Thomas' confession echoes through the ages to us. So does Jesus' statement to Thomas. He is blessed because He has seen, yet those who will come after will not see Jesus. Even so, they will believe as God grants faith through the Means of Grace and they, too, are blessed. It is as if Christ is speaking directly to us who believe today, and we can take great comfort in that.

REFLECTION QUESTION

How do the words and actions of Jesus and Thomas here serve as an example of how Jesus brings people to faith and how Christians respond? Why does this matter so much for us?

REFLECTION HELPS

Jesus alone does the acting. He patiently, understandingly, and lovingly reveals Himself and His foreknowledge to the disbelieving Thomas. Thomas is given saving faith and responds by worshiping Jesus as God. This shows, in a nutshell, that faith is a gracious gift of God through His living and active Word, and our life of response is a life of worship.

JOHN 20:30–31

BIBLE COMMENTARY

Here, John gives a fitting conclusion to the purpose of the book. Experts have agreed that John 21 serves as a kind of epilogue to the text, providing a kind of sending-off narrative. Here, however, we receive with all clarity John's purpose for the book: that people would believe in Christ and have life in His name. More than that, John also summarizes the entire purpose of Scripture, from beginning to end. It all is meant to reveal God's great plan of salvation for us in Christ, and by receiving God's Word, we receive eternal life.

REFLECTION QUESTION

Why is it so important that we keep the focus of our Bible reading on Christ? What potentially can happen if we lose that focus?

REFLECTION HELPS

The purpose of Scripture is that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ. Any reading that misses that will lead people to false belief about Christ, or lead people to think that the Bible is simply a set of rules for life.

LOVE

FINAL REFLECTION

In your own words, based on the text, recognize how Jesus' death and resurrection are at the center of the Christian faith.

TAKE HOME

Equip your learners with ideas for taking the lesson into their households by giving them access to the Enduring Faith Pages.

CLOSE WITH PRAYER

If you haven't yet, take prayer requests or encourage a volunteer from the class to pray before you leave.



BONUS ACTIVITY

John begins and ends his Gospel by talking about Jesus' purpose to give light and life to the world. If you have time, consider going back and taking a second look at John 1:1–18 and drawing connections between the opening lines of the book and John 20:30–31. How do they complement each other and build upon each other to give a more epic understanding of Jesus' mission?



CHRIST CONNECTION

Christ died and rose again to forgive me my sins and give me eternal peace with the Father.



LEADER NOTE

Like the disciples, we are powerless. Like Thomas, we are by nature faithless. Jesus came to them, revealed Himself to them, and gave them faith, eternal life, and a mission to share God's reconciling Gospel peace with the world. Without Jesus and His action, we would have no faith or eternal life.

THE PROOF ROOM

BIBLE TRUTH

Jesus died and rose from the dead for us.

LEARNER GOAL

I can recognize how Jesus' death and resurrection are at the center of the Christian faith.

BIBLE VERSE

Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. John 20:29

ADULT
Unit 8
LESSON HANDOUT
Lesson 14

Jesus Appears to Thomas

John 20:19–31

REFLECTIONS

OPENING REFLECTION Brainstorm a list of the different purposes, good and bad, for which people use the Bible? What does each use communicate about what people believe?

JOHN 20:19–23 How do the different words and actions of Jesus in this section reveal what Jesus came to do? What does this mean for us as God’s people today?

JOHN 20:24–25 What might we learn here from Thomas' example about the nature of unbelief? How do you see that today?

JOHN 20:26-29 How do the words and actions of Jesus and Thomas here serve as an example of how Jesus brings people to faith and how Christians respond? Why does this matter so much for us?

JOHN 20:30–31 Why is it so important that we keep the focus of our Bible reading on Christ? What potentially can happen if we lose that focus?

FINAL REFLECTION In your own words, based on the text, recognize how Jesus' death and resurrection are at the center of the Christian faith.

NOTES

This image shows a full page of dot grid paper. The background is a very light blue color. Overlaid on this background is a grid of small, solid blue dots. The dots are arranged in perfectly straight horizontal and vertical rows, creating a series of small squares across the entire page. There are no margins, text, or other markings present.