

THE PROOF ROOM

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

OVERVIEW

BIBLE TRUTH

Jesus died and rose from the dead for us.

BIBLE VERSE

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

LEARNER GOAL

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

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).

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read the text 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** and study notes in *TLSB*.

SUPPLY LIST

FOR THIS LESSON

- ☐ Poster paper or whiteboard
- ☐ White paper for drawing

FOR EVERY LESSON

- ☐ Device with downloaded music
- ☐ Pens or pencils
- ☐ Student copies of *Explore Bible Guidebook*
- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Copies of downloadable activity page
- ☐ Supplies for bonus activities



LEADER NOTE

This narrative has a lot going on. It's about more than just Thomas. Adjust your focus based on what your students already know and how they can handle the more abstract concepts in this lesson.



GUIDEBOOKS

Hand out student copies of the *Explore Bible Guidebook* and turn to Lesson 14.



BONUS ACTIVITY

Check the back page for the “I Doubt It Game” activity to extend the learning. This game is a great opportunity to talk again about how the Bible is the true Word of God, not a book of make-believe.

LAUNCH

PRAY Dear God, our Father, You sent Jesus to pay the price for our sin, to die and rise again so that we might have new life with You. Help us when we struggle to believe this Good News. Thank You for the gift of Your Word, that it may help us to believe. In Your name we pray. Amen.

SING “These Things Are Written”
“It’s a New Day, Rejoice!”
Music can be found in the digital resource center.

SAY (Draw a big heart on the whiteboard or on a piece of poster paper. Have students make a heart with their hands.) **What is your heart full of?** (Most students will say “love,” but then remind them that no, our hearts are full of sin. Write the word *sin* in the middle of the heart and have students crumple their hand hearts into fists.) **The sin in our lives makes us worry and doubt and sometimes think terrible thoughts. Our sin separates us from God. But Jesus came to pay for our sin, restore our relationship with God, and fill us with His peace.** (Erase the word *sin* and write the word *peace* in the heart. Have students make a movement with their hands as if to wipe their palms clean.)

LEARN

READ “THE PROOF ROOM”

Use the *Explore Bible Guidebook* to read the Bible narrative aloud to your students.

DO SOMETHING

FOR YOUNGER LEARNERS As you go through this narrative, pantomime or act out events and emotions. Pretend to lock the door. Have some students be disciples, one Thomas, and one Jesus.

FOR OLDER LEARNERS This passage of Scripture contains three different sections: verses 19–23; 24–29; and 30–31. Instead of reading from the *Explore Bible*

Guidebook, read each section directly from Scripture and talk through what happens in each section. Give students each a piece of white paper and fold it into three sections horizontally. While you are reading and discussing each part, have students draw a representation of each section, either with drawings of people, word art, or a combination.

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

- During this time after the resurrection, Jesus shows His divine attributes far more fully and readily. He has fulfilled God’s plan of salvation. Even though He still has His earthly body, His body is no longer bound by the same physical limitations as before.
- Thomas is given saving faith and responds by worshiping Jesus as God. This account is about what Jesus has done for Thomas, not anything that Thomas does on his own. We do not create faith on our own; it is a gift. Yes, we can reject it, and we can harden our hearts to the gift that God gives to us, but we cannot by our own will make it happen.
- When we rely on our own human reason, we can’t help but mess things up. Instead, we rely on God’s Word.
- John provides a written purpose for this Gospel: that people would believe in Christ and have life in His name. And we should all share in that same purpose. The entirety of Scripture and all that we do in our churches should point to Jesus as our Savior.

LIVE

EXPLORE THE CONTEXT

Before you start the discussion questions, use the *Explore Bible Guidebook* for further details about this lesson, found on the second page of Lesson 14.

TALK ABOUT IT

Choose from the following questions. For a few helps, encourage students to look in their *Explore Bible Guidebook*.

- ▶ **Today's Bible account is about faith. Our faith is a gift from God. It's not something we can make on our own. How does God's gift of faith come to us?** (Through the Means of Grace: Baptism, Holy Communion, hearing His Word in church, reading His Word at home, learning hymns that proclaim God's Word, listening to sermons in church) **We can't will ourselves to have faith, but we can put ourselves in places where God's Word is readily available, such as church, Sunday School, family devotions, and personal time studying the Bible.**
- ▶ **Name some things that are real but that you have never seen or can't see.** (Some examples are: air, atoms, bacteria, famous people, distant stars.) **Why do you believe that these things really exist?**
- ▶ **Are we all that different from Thomas or the other disciples?** (If you have time, make a T-chart that compares how you are the same as or different from Thomas and the disciples.) **When it comes right down to it, sometimes we are afraid and confused. We must rely on God's Word to show us the truth. We can rely on Jesus to give us the same peace that He gave Thomas.**

SAY THE BIBLE VERSE TOGETHER

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

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

- Jesus says we are blessed! This is such good news! We have not seen Jesus with our eyes, but we see Him with our hearts, thanks to the Holy Spirit.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

Ask students to tell you why some people refer to this narrative as "Doubting Thomas" and why others would rather call it "Believing Thomas." Ask them which title they prefer.

LEAVE

- SAY** Jesus died and rose again! Wow, this changes everything! Even though sometimes we are like Thomas and have trouble believing, the Holy Spirit helps us in our unbelief.
- SING** The Doxology, "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow"
"The Lord's Prayer"
Music can be found in the digital resource center.
- PRAY** Dear Jesus, our risen Savior, in You we have peace. You died and rose again for us. You are our Lord and are worthy of our worship! Help us share Your love and forgiveness with the world. We love You, Lord! Amen.



DOWNLOADABLE PAGE

Extend learning by printing the downloadable activity page found in the digital resource center. See the back page of this guide for details.



CHRIST CONNECTION

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



LEADER NOTE

If you are doing this as the last lesson of this unit, send home the *Explore Bible Guidebook* with students to read together with their family. If some of your students are not present this week, save the extras to send home next week.

DOWNLOADABLE PAGE HELPS

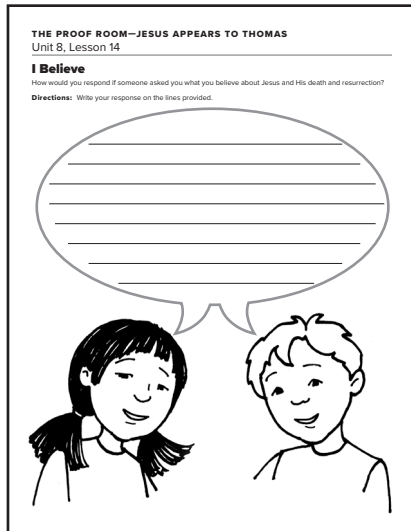
Make copies of the downloadable activity page found in the digital resource center. Use the helps below as a guide.

As a class, discuss the question posed on the activity page. Jot down student thoughts on the board or a large sheet of paper to help students as they compose their own answers. Lead students to include in their faith statements why Jesus died and rose for us. Review previous lessons in this unit to provide additional truths.

THE PROOF ROOM—JESUS APPEARS TO THOMAS
Unit 8, Lesson 14

I Believe
How would you respond if someone asked you what you believe about Jesus and His death and resurrection?

Directions: Write your response on the lines provided.



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.

BONUS ACTIVITIES

HANDS AND HEARTS

10 minutes

Have students trace both their hands with thumbs facing out on a piece of cardstock or construction paper. Then cut out red hearts to glue in the middle of the hands, or color them in red. The hearts are to remind us of the wounds in Jesus' hands for us. Have students copy today's Bible Verse on the page. Cut out the hands if you want.

I DOUBT IT GAME

Times may vary

Do some research before class (or have older students do it in class) and make a list of what seem like unbelievable things that happen in the Bible, ending with Jesus rising from the dead. Then throw in some things that didn't actually happen in the Bible. Mix up your list and play a game where students respond with the words "I doubt it" or "I believe."

PEACE POEM

10–15 minutes

When Jesus appears to the disciples and to Thomas, He immediately says, "Peace." He brings peace and He has made peace between God and man. Together or in pairs, write the letters of the word *PEACE* vertically on a page and use each letter to start a line of a poem about how Jesus brings us peace. If time allows, illustrate the poem.