Preschool–Grade 6

Thomas Sees Jesus

Sunday School Lesson for Preteens (Ages 11–12), 45–60 minutes

Main point: Jesus really rose from the dead. Thomas saw Him and confessed, "My Lord and my God": Jesus is the one God manifest in the flesh. We have not seen Him, but God wrote these things so that we might believe and have life through His name.
Bible passage: John 20:19–31. Students read John 20:19–31 and John 14:5–9 out loud themselves.
Memory verse: "Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." *John 20:29 (KJV)* and "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." *John 20:31 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each student, paper or a notebook and a pen for each student, a whiteboard and a marker, and one take-home sheet for each student.
Before class: read John 20, John 14:1–18, Luke 24:36–49 and Acts 1:1–14. Write both memory verses on the board. Decide who reads which verses.

1. Opening game: How Do You Know? (5–10 minutes)

Write on the board: *the wind, your great-great-grandparents, the other side of the moon, a country you've never visited.* Ask: *Have you seen any of these? How do you know they're real?* Write their answers: we see what it does, people who were there told us, there are photos, it's written down. Then ask: *Which kind of proof is strongest?* Say: "Today one disciple said, 'I won't believe unless I see it myself.' Let's see what happened."

2. Bible story: Students Read It (15 minutes)

Read out loud: John 20:19–31. Students take turns, a few verses each. Old words in this passage:

- **assembled** (20:19): gathered; **for fear of the Jews**: because they were afraid of the leaders who had opposed Jesus (Jesus and His disciples were Jews too); **in the midst**: in the middle
- **shewed** (20:20): showed
- **as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you** (20:21): I am sending you, the way the Father sent Me
- **called Didymus** (20:24): his second name, a Greek word for "twin" (the Bible doesn't say who his twin was)
- **except** (20:25): unless; **the print of the nails**: the marks of the nails; **thrust**: push
- **reach hither** (20:27): reach here; **behold**: look at; **faithless**: not believing
- **signs** (20:30): miracles that show who Jesus is; **that ye might believe** (20:31): so that you would believe

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Read out loud: John 14:5–9. Old words: **whither thou goest** (14:5): where You are going; **cometh** (14:6): comes; **henceforth** (14:7): from now on; **sufficeth** (14:8): is enough.

Put it together: Before the cross, Thomas asked, "how can we know the way?" and Jesus said, "I am the way" (John 14:5–6). Philip asked to see the Father, and Jesus said, "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (14:9). After the resurrection, Thomas looked at Jesus and said, "My Lord and my God" (20:28). Jesus accepted it and said Thomas had believed (20:29). Luke adds that Jesus ate in front of the disciples to show He was not a spirit (Luke 24:39–43), and Acts 1:3 says He showed Himself alive "by many infallible proofs," seen for forty days.

Teacher note on John 20:22: Jesus breathed on them and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Read Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:4–5: He also told them to wait in Jerusalem for "the promise of my Father." Thomas was in the upper room with the others (Acts 1:13), and on the day of Pentecost "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues" (Acts 2:1–4). Teach it from these verses and say no more than they say.
Teacher note on one God: there is one God (Deuteronomy 6:4), and "God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Timothy 3:16); "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9). Thomas's words say it plainly. Never put down another church.

3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. The disciples hid behind shut doors (20:19). Jesus' first words were "Peace be unto you." What does that show about how Jesus meets people who are afraid?
2. Thomas set his own terms: "Except I shall see... I will not believe" (20:25). Is it wrong to have questions? What is the difference between asking honest questions and refusing to believe?
3. Jesus repeated Thomas's own words back to him (20:27). What does that tell you about what Jesus knows and how He cares?
4. "My Lord and my God" (20:28). How does Thomas's confession, with John 14:9 and 1 Timothy 3:16, help you understand who Jesus is?
5. Jesus called people who believe without seeing "blessed" (20:29). Read 1 Peter 1:8 and Romans 10:17. Where does faith come from for us?
6. John says why he wrote his book (20:31). What does "life through his name" mean to you?

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4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Explain the words: in John 20:29, **saith** means said, **thou hast** means you have, and **blessed** means happy because God is good to you. In John 20:31, **these are written** means the things John wrote in his book, **the Christ** means the one God promised to send, and **through his name** means through Jesus. Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say John 20:29 this week; keep working on John 20:31 next week too.

5. What this means for us (5–10 minutes)

Say: "Jesus is alive, and He is Lord and God. God loves you, and 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, God who came as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:3–4, KJV). We obey the gospel the way Peter preached it: 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) We **repent**, turning from sin, and our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are buried with Jesus by baptism in His name, all the way under the water. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we rise to walk in newness of life, a brand-new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the Holy Ghost, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance, which means as He gives the words (Acts 2:4). Jesus called this being born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5)."
Pray with the students, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

Teacher note on John 20:23: this lesson does not teach verse 23. If students ask, read Luke 24:47 together: "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name." Then read Acts 2:38, where Peter preached exactly that. Say no more than these verses say.

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6. Activity: Journal (10 minutes)

Each student writes privately. No one has to share. Write these three prompts on the board:

1. What is one question I have about God or the Bible? Who could I ask, and where in the Bible could I look?
2. Thomas said, "My Lord and my God." What would it look like this week for Jesus to be my Lord?
3. Write a short prayer telling Jesus that you believe in Him, even though you have not seen Him.
   If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

This week: read one chapter of the Gospel of John each day. John wrote it "that ye might believe" (John 20:31). Write down one thing you learn about who Jesus is.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that Jesus is alive and that You wrote Your Word so we can believe. Jesus, You are our Lord and our God. When we have questions, help us bring them to You and to Your Word. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a student asks about the wounds: keep it reverent and short. The nails made marks in Jesus' hands, and His side was pierced (John 19:34; 20:25). He showed them so His followers would know it was really Him (20:20, 27; Luke 24:39). The Bible doesn't say whether Thomas touched Him.
If a student asks whether doubting is a sin: Jesus didn't send Thomas away; He came to him and said, "be not faithless, but believing" (20:27). Bring questions to God and His Word (Romans 10:17), and keep believing.

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