

5

Believing Is Seeing

Community
We share Jesus' love with others.

POWER TEXT

"Jesus said to him, 'Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed'" (John 20:29).

KEY REFERENCES

- John 20:24-31
- *The Desire of Ages*, chap. 84, pp. 806-808
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 9, pp. 165-169
- Student lesson on page 62 of this guide

OUR BELIEFS

- No. 10, The Experience of Salvation
- No. 9, The Life, Death, and Resurrection of Christ
- No. 7, The Nature of Humanity

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

- **Know** that Jesus reveals Himself to us when we worship Him in the community of believers.
- **Feel** the desire to share with others their trust in God.
- **Respond** by encouraging others to trust in God.

POWERPOINT

Our faith in Jesus is a witness to those around us.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Since His resurrection Jesus has appeared to all His disciples except Thomas. Thomas does not want to believe what the others tell him, because he did not see it for himself. When Jesus appears and fulfills his demands, Thomas realizes how foolish he has been. Jesus gently deals with Thomas and still loves him anyway.

This is a lesson about community.

Even today Jesus provides evidence of His love and care. If we concentrate on God's blessings and goodness, there is no need to doubt. As we experience Jesus' love we are inspired to share it with others. We, like Thomas, can choose to accept God's love and to share with others what He has done in our lives.

Teacher Enrichment

"Many who are given to doubt excuse themselves by saying that if they had the evidence which Thomas had from his companions, they would believe. They do not realize that they have not only that evidence, but much more. Many who, like Thomas, wait for all cause of doubt to be removed, will never realize their desire. They gradually become confirmed in unbelief. Those who educate themselves to look on the dark side, and murmur and complain, know not what they do. They are sowing the seeds of doubt, and they will have a harvest of doubt to reap. At a time when faith and confidence are most essential, many will thus find themselves powerless to hope and believe" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 807).

"His example shows how we should treat those whose faith is weak, and who make their doubts prominent. Jesus did not overwhelm Thomas with reproach, nor did He enter into controversy with him. He revealed Himself to the doubting one. Thomas had been most unreasonable in dictating the conditions of his faith, but Jesus, by His generous love and consideration, broke down all the barriers" (*ibid.*, p. 808).

How does my life reflect my trust in God? In what ways can I share with others my trust in God for what He has done for me? How could I help strengthen the faith of a person who has doubts?

Welcome

Welcome students at the door and direct them to their seats. Ask them how their week has been. Encourage learners to study their Sabbath School lesson regularly, and use several minutes to debrief students on the previous week's lesson.

Ask: **What was the most interesting part of the Bible story? What activity did you find the most helpful? Which activity was the most fun?** Invite students to share their experiences and/or the handiworks they created for Sabbath School during the week. (The leader should be familiar with the previous lesson to be able to direct the discussion.) This is also a good time to have students recite the power text.

Have students begin the Readiness Activity of your choice. »

Program notes

LESSON SECTION	MINUTES	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS NEEDED
Welcome	Ongoing	Greet students at the door. Ask about their week.	
1 Readiness	10-15	*A. Can You Believe It?* *B. Amazing Facts From Nature*	Bibles, paper, pens or pencils list of scientifically proven facts from nature
* Prayer & Praise	15-20	See page 57. Prayer & Praise may be used at any time during the program.	songbooks, world map, pushpins, offering box
2 Bible Lesson	15-20	Introducing the Bible Story Experiencing the Story Exploring the Bible	Bibles Bibles Bibles, questions on paper
3 Applying the Lesson	10-15	*Sharing the Faith*	
4 Sharing the Lesson	10-15	*Remember*	church members
* Closing		A. Prayer and Closing Comments B. Reminder to Parents C. Coming Up Next Week	

1

READINESS ACTIVITIES

Select the activity or activities that are most appropriate for your situation.

A

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pens OR pencils

Can You Believe It?

As students arrive, give them a piece of paper and a pen or pencil and ask them to write a "Can You Believe It?" story. When the stories are ready, have each student read their story and the rest of the class vote whether or not they believe the story to be true. Each student gets one point for every person's story they guessed correctly.

Debriefing

Ask: **What helps you believe that a story is true? For what stories would you need proof to believe them? Why?**

Say: **In our lesson today we will learn about someone who didn't believe the evidence of his friends. Let's say together our power text, John 20:29:**

"Jesus said to him, 'Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed' " (John 20:29).

The power point reminds us that

Our faith in Jesus is a witness to those around us.

Accommodations for students with special needs

Allow students with special needs who experience difficulty with this activity to work with a partner who could assist them.

B

YOU NEED:
- ☐ list of scientifically proven facts from nature

Amazing Facts From Nature

Prior to Sabbath School, prepare a list of interesting scientific facts. Tell students that you want them to raise their hands to indicate whether or not they believe the things you will be reading to the class. After each statement you will be reading, check for the show of hands and acknowledge the reactions of agreement as well as those of disagreement. Only after reading the list will you announce to the students that what you have read were proven scientific facts. Your list may include the following:

- The blue whale can produce the loudest animal sound. At 188 decibels the noise can be heard more than 500 miles (800 kilometers) away.

- Hummingbirds can fly backwards.

- Though the fur of polar bears is white, they have black skin.

- Horses can see almost everything all around them at the same time.

- Flying squirrels are capable of gliding for distances of up to 295 feet (90 meters).

- Bald eagles build very large nests, sometimes weighing as much as a ton.

- The largest turtle is the leatherback sea turtle. It can weigh more than 2,000 pounds (900 kilograms).

(Adopted from *Science Kids: Fun Science and Technology for Kids!* Retrieved from http://www.sciencekids.co.nz.)

Debriefing

Ask: **How many of you believed everything I've read? Why? Why not? What makes it difficult to believe/disbelieve the things you have just heard about animals?** (lack of proof/evidence; may not have heard about these facts before and were therefore not accepted as common knowledge.) **Do you find it easy or difficult to share with your**

peers things that are hard to believe without tangible or clear evidence? Why is that? Yet having experienced the salvation that Jesus offers us we will want to share the good news with those around us. In our lesson today there was someone who found it difficult to believe, even though there was a lot of evidence. Let's say our power text together:

"Jesus said to him, 'Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed' " (John 20:29).

Our power point helps us remember that

Our faith in Jesus is a witness to those around us.

Prayer & Praise

Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). If they have given you permission, share one or two special items from students' Bible study during the week. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special, warm greeting to all visitors.

Suggested Songs

"All That I Need" (*Praise Time*, no. 64)
"Cares Chorus" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 141)
"Spirit Song" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 72)
"Our Prayer" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 137)

Mission

YOU NEED:
- ☐ world map
- ☐ pushpins

Use Adventist *Mission* magazine for youth and adults (go to www.juniorpowerpoints.org and click on MISSION) or another mission report available to you. Using a world map, have the students identify and mark with pushpins the location where the mission story is taking place.

Offering

YOU NEED:
- ☐ offering box

You can continue to use the offering box suggested four weeks ago. Say: **Our offering helps to spread the news that God offers salvation to all who trust in Him.**

Prayer

Have a "popcorn" prayer. Ask students to pop up with words, one word each at a time, that describe the evidence of God's love in their personal experience. Conclude with praise for God's goodness in providing all that they need. Close with a prayer for the students' joys and sorrows, for the birthday and other special event celebrants, as well as for the visitors.

2

BIBLE LESSON

Introducing the Bible Story

Say: **There are many things in our lives that we can't believe and many that we really need to believe. If we look for God to guide us, He gives us all we need to know the difference. Let's open our Bibles and read John 20:24-31.** Ask a volunteer to pray for wisdom to do God's will.

Experiencing the Story

This study is based on the New International Version, but welcome any version that the students have.

Ask the students to form groups of two or three. Invite one pair of students to stand up front with you. This pair will take turns reading the Word. For a prayerful study experience, intersperse reading from the Word with a comment from you and short prayers by everyone in their small groups.

The Word
John 20:24, 25 (first two sentences)
The Comment

"We have seen the Lord" too—though not face-to-face. But we have seen evidence of Him: in the eyes of a believer, in the Gospels, in beautiful hymns, answered prayer, and changed lives. Take a moment now to pray, in your groups. Let us each thank God for times we have seen with eyes of faith and recognized without the shadow of a doubt that God has done great things on our behalf that were humanly impossible. (Pause for student prayers. Pray with the students standing with you.)

The Word
Rest of verse 25
The Comment

This is Thomas, who won't believe unless he sees and touches the evidence. Thomas has been with these men for three years. He knows he can trust them; he knows Jesus would not mislead them. So what is his problem? But wait, that could be me. I know I should trust God, yet I worry as if I had to bear every burden on my own. Could Thomas be me? Let's each briefly confess our doubting when God or our parents try to show us the way we should go. (Pause for the students to confess their doubt.)

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles

The Word
Verses 26-28
The Comment

There are no threats or taunts or "told you so!"s. Jesus just stands there surrounded with peace. The truth sinks into Thomas's conscience: he was wrong, but Jesus loves him just the same. Forget the scars! Thomas can't tear his eyes from Jesus' face. I am Thomas; Jesus holds my gaze too. "My Lord and my God!" I whisper in total devotion. In your group, offer your own sentence of praise. (Pause for the students to offer praise to God for the gift of salvation as well as for His many blessings. When your group is done, ask them to join you in softly singing, "God Is So Good." The others will join you.)

The Word
Verse 29
The Comment

Blessed too are those people in our lives "who have not seen and yet have believed," and the people who brought us to God. (Name the person who first led you to believe in God. Praise the Lord for that person.) **In our groups, let's each name a person who has helped us believe in Jesus, though we have not seen Him.** (Pause while the groups pray.)

The Word
Verses 30, 31
The Comment

What a blessing it is that God has inspired the Gospel writers to record all these miracles—for us. God knew how hard it would be to know what to believe. So He left evidence that we can read. Because by "believing [we] may have life in His name" (verse 31). Forever life, that is. Let's pray one more time. This time, ask God to keep us faithful so we will never again give in to doubt. (Ask the two students up front each to pray this prayer for the entire group.)

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ questions on paper

Exploring the Bible

Divide the students into groups, each with an adult facilitator if available. Give each group one of the following texts and accompanying questions. Ask the groups to find the texts and prepare to share their questions and answers with the rest of the class when they have finished. Allow several minutes.

1. Matthew 14:25-31. When did Peter start to doubt? What could have saved him from doubting? What can we do to avoid doubt?

2. Matthew 21:18-21. What guidelines did Jesus give for doubters? How can we implement them today?

3. Jude 22. How should we treat those who doubt? What are some ways you can help someone stop doubting that Jesus loves them?

Debriefing

Read John 20:30 aloud to your students.

Ask: **What can we do when we have doubts? How can we help others?**

Say: **The best way to overcome doubts is to stay connected with Jesus. Let's say together our power text, John 20:29:**

"Jesus said to him, 'Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed' " (John 20:29).

The power point reminds us that

Our faith in Jesus is a witness to those around us.

Accommodations for students with special needs

Make available a handout with the list of Bible references and questions from this activity if there are students with visual impairments or other special needs in your class who would benefit from having it.

Sharing the Faith

Divide the students into groups of three or four and have them discuss the following questions. Ask: **When was a time you were facing doubts? What strengthened your faith during those difficult times? Did you tell someone about your trust in God for what He has done for you?** Have students share what helped them to believe.

Debriefing

Have groups share and affirm their responses. Read Proverbs 3:5, 6, which says that God will make the way clear when we trust Him.

Say: **Let's repeat the power point, which reminds us that**

Our faith in Jesus is a witness to those around us.

4 SHARING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- ☐ church members

Remember

Invite students to tell the class if they had the opportunity during the past week to share with a friend one of the evidences that God cares for them. Ask: **What experiences did you share that are clear evidences to God's care and providential leading in your life? Why is it important to share faith-building stories with our friends?** (Accept various answers.) Say: **When we tell others about the amazing ways in which God works in our lives when we trust Him we help strengthen their faith. In the process of sharing what God has done for us, our faith is being strengthened as well.**

Say: **One of the ways God helps us trust Him is by asking us to share stories of how He has led us in the past.** Invite a few church members to share their experiences of how God has helped them overcome doubts and fears when they trusted in Him. Ask them to tell students how those experiences strengthened their faith in God. Alternatively you could share personal experiences that strengthened your faith in God and helped you overcome doubts. You may also ask some of your students to talk about events or situations in their lives that strengthened their belief in Jesus. Ask them ahead of time.

Debriefing

Ask: **What have you learned today?** (Allow time for responses.) **As the power point reminds us:**

Our faith in Jesus is a witness to those around us.

Closing

Prayer and Closing Comments:

Let's ask God to help us recognize the numerous proofs we have that He cares for each of us. Close with a prayer that asks God to open each person's eyes to His care.

Reminder to Parents:

Say: **Check out the student Bible study guide to find Parents' Pages for your use in family worship, or however you wish to use them to spiritually guide your children. You may listen to the podcast of the lesson online at www.juniorpowerpoints.org/podcast.php?channel=1.**

Coming Up Next Week:

Say: **Heaven is more wonderful than we can imagine. God's love gives us hope and encouragement.**

Notes

Student lesson

Believing Is Seeing

Remember Cleopas and his friend who met Jesus on the road to Emmaus? Remember how excited they were to hear Him explain all the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah?

As Cleopas and his friend entered the room that night in Jerusalem, they were so excited! They had much to share! Not only had they seen and spoken with their risen Lord Jesus, but He had helped them understand the entire Old Testament during one visit!

The other disciples were excited to share that "the Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon [Peter]!" (Luke 24:34). As they shared their experiences with amazement, suddenly they saw another Person standing before them.

They recognized their Master's voice as He said to them, "Peace to you" (Luke 24:36). He showed them His hands and side, the clear marks of His crucifixion. Then He asked for food.

The followers of Jesus watched Him eat; they listened to Him speak. Gradually their faith was restored and great joy took the place of doubting. With indescribable joy they welcomed their risen Savior.

As Jesus revealed Himself to His disciples, He brought back to their memory all that He had made known to them before His death. They finally understood that all things that were written in the books by Moses, in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning the promised Messiah had to be fulfilled. What a wonderful Bible study that must have been! Learning how the prophecies about the Messiah found fulfillment in Jesus.

Yet one disciple was not in the room with the others when Jesus first met with them in the upper chamber. Thomas heard the reports of the others, and he received plenty of proof that Jesus had risen and met with his fellow disciples. As he heard the disciples share their experiences, he did not share their joy and excitement. He complained that Jesus had appeared to others, but not to him; Jesus had spoken to others, he murmured, but not to him. Thomas failed to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead, and, as a result, he missed out on the blessing of recognizing Jesus as the Redeemer and Savior whose mission was to save everyone who would accept His sacrifice and believe in Him.

As Thomas brooded over his feelings of self-pity, he allowed doubt to control his mind. He repeatedly said, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe" (John 20:25). His attitude stood in stark contrast with the faith and joy exhibited by the rest of the disciples.

Then one evening, as Thomas met with the other disciples, Jesus came and stood among them. He said, "Peace to you," then turned to Thomas. "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing" (John 20: 26, 27).

Thomas, bowing, answered, "My Lord and my God!" (verse 28).

Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (verse 29).

Would you like to be one of those who are blessed even though you have not seen?

As with Thomas, Jesus wants you and me to believe in Him. That means we need to keep our focus on Him. We need to rest our faith on His Word. His promises will strengthen our faith and remove our doubts. Jesus will fill us with hope and joy through the Holy Spirit! We are not to complain and murmur; we are not to feel sorry for ourselves when things seem to go wrong. We are to hang on to faith and hope that Jesus is with us at all times.

As we grow in faith and we anchor our hope in Jesus, we will *want* to tell others the good news about the resurrection of Jesus! In Him we find the promise of eternal life as it is written: "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3). This is the greatest message of hope ever given. Therefore, we have the responsibility and great privilege to share this life-changing message with everyone we meet.

KEY REFERENCES

- John 20:24-31
- *The Desire of Ages*, chap. 84, pp. 806-808
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 9, pp. 165-169
- Our Beliefs, nos. 10, 9, 7

POWER TEXT

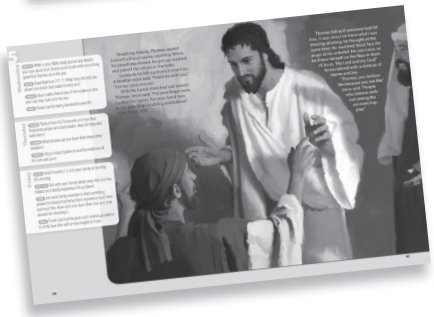
"Jesus said to him, 'Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed'" (John 20:29).

POWER POINT

Our faith in Jesus is a witness to those around us.







Sabbath

DO Do the activity on page 46.

Sunday

READ Read John 20:24-31 and this week's story, "Believing Is Seeing."

LEARN Begin to learn the power text.

THINK What Bible promises helped you overcome your fears or doubts? What experiences built your faith in Jesus and helped you to trust Him always?

PRAY Ask God to help you experience His love.

Monday

READ Read Psalm 32:8.

THINK How have you experienced God instructing you and guiding you in the way you should go?

LEARN Find and read Bible verses that could help build your faith in God. Share the Bible promises you found with someone who is struggling with doubts.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to help you strengthen someone's faith.

Tuesday

READ Read Psalm 78:52 and John 16:13.

ASK Ask someone to share experiences of God's leading. With an adult, discuss the role of the Holy Spirit in teaching and instructing us?

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to help you see His leading in your life.

Wednesday

READ Read Matthew 7:7-11.

WRITE Write in your Bible study journal something good that God has done for you. What does this tell you about how much God wants to help you?

SHARE Share with a friend one of the evidences that God cares for you.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Thank God for being involved in your life.

Thursday

READ Read Matthew 14:25-31.

THINK Think of stories from the Old Testament or New Testament about people who had doubts. Did they overcome their doubts? How?

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAISE Sing a praise song about God's love and grace.

Friday

READ Read Proverbs 3:5, 6 at family worship.

DISCUSS Talk with your family about ways that God has helped your family experience His guidance.

FIND Ask each family member to find something around the house that reminds them of God's love. Have each share their item and their reasons for choosing it.

REPEAT Say the power text aloud from memory.

PRAY Thank God that He gives each one meaningful evidences of His love that we may trust Him always.