Jesus Appears to His Disciples - Day 1
Teacher's Background Information

Central Truth: Satan uses our fears and worries to lead us to doubt the truth about Jesus. In the Bible, God’s true Word, Jesus reassures us that He always loves us, that He forgives our sins, and that He indeed lives forever.

Lesson Objectives: By the power of the Holy Spirit, the students will:
- **KNOW** that Jesus appeared to Thomas to give him the proof he needed to believe that Jesus is the risen Savior.
- **GROW** in faith that all of the Bible’s teachings are true, especially those concerning Jesus’ resurrection from the dead.
- **GO**, certain that Jesus is their risen Savior who lives forever.

Bible Memory Verse: "These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." John 20:31

Bible Background
Read Luke 24:36–49; John 20:19–29. Each Scripture reference presents the same Bible story. After you read both accounts, compare the facts that each author included.

1. In the evening of the first Easter day, Jesus’ disciples, except for Thomas, were all together. The doors of the room “were locked for fear of the Jews” (John 20:19). So far on this amazing Sunday, Mary Magdalene, Peter (Luke 24:34), and also Cleopas and the other disciple on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13–35) had actually seen Jesus physically alive. The disciples gathered in the locked room had heard their accounts, but had not yet seen Jesus alive with their own eyes. They were in a locked room because they were afraid that the Jewish leaders would come after them and kill them as they had crucified Jesus. Suddenly, “Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you!’” (Luke 24:36, John 20:19). Jesus did not enter through the door. He just suddenly appeared. “They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost” (Luke 24:37).

2. Among Jewish believers there was a great fear of ghosts. People in those times believed that dead souls were able to roam the earth. Even though they had witnessed Jesus raising several individuals from the dead, including Jairus’ daughter and Lazarus the brother of Mary and Martha, it was unthinkable that a dead person could raise himself or make bodily appearances. Jesus understood the fears of his followers. So the first words He spoke to them were, “Peace be with you!” These words were meant to calm his friends. Then Jesus gave them physical proof that it was indeed Him in the flesh. “He said to them, ‘Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at My hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.’” (Luke 24:38–39). Even after Jesus showed them his hands and feet with the wounds from his crucifixion, their hearts and minds still struggled with the truth. “While they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, He asked them, ‘Do you have anything here to eat?’ They gave Him a piece of broiled fish, and He took it and ate it in their presence” (Luke 24:41–43). If Jesus was a ghost, He would certainly need nothing to eat.
Jesus Appears to His Disciples - Day 1
Teacher's Background Information

3. Then Jesus shared with his followers the same truths that He had told them all throughout his earthly ministry (Luke 24:44–47). He told them that all that was written about Him in the Old Testament Scriptures had to be fulfilled. “Then He opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures” (Luke 24:45). Today, we have these same Scriptures, along with the New Testament, which testify to us who Jesus is and explain to us what He has done to save us and to give us eternal life. Jesus then told the disciples, “‘As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.’ (John 20:21). The disciples would soon be going out to preach repentance and the forgiveness of sins to “all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:47). The disciples could do this because they were “witnesses of these things” (Luke 24:48).

4. But the disciples would need help to carry out Jesus’ commission to them. So Jesus “breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’” (John 20:22). The disciples would receive a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost as well (Acts 2). The key to the disciples’ mission would be the forgiveness of sins. So Jesus gives them the authority to do this (John 20:23). This authority is what the Christian church calls the Office of the Keys.

5. Thomas was not with the other disciples when Jesus appeared to them on the first Easter evening. “So the other disciples told him, ‘We have seen the Lord!’” (John 20:25) But Thomas would not believe that Jesus was truly alive unless he had actual physical proof. Thomas wanted both to see and touch Jesus’ wounds (John 20:25). A week later the disciples were together in the same place again. This time Thomas was there too (John 20:26). As the doors were locked, Jesus once again appeared in the room the same way He had done the week before. He “came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you!’” (John 20:26.)

6. Jesus 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) As soon as Thomas received this proof he said to Jesus, “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:28) Jesus gave Thomas the physical proof he needed to be certain of his resurrection. We have this proof in the Bible, God’s true Word. As Jesus says, “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” (John 20:29).

The Bible verse the children will learn in this lesson is found at the end of the story of Jesus’ appearance to Thomas. “These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, you may have life in his name” (John 20:31). We can be certain that Jesus is alive because Holy Scripture says it is so. It is God’s true Word and God cannot lie. God blesses us whenever we read his Word. By the power of the Holy Spirit, He strengthens our faith, erases our doubts, and empowers us to tell others the truth of Jesus’ saving love.

PRESENTING THE LESSON

OPENING

Say

In the name of God the Father,
In the name of God the Son,
In the name of the Holy Spirit,

Do

Lift hands above head.
Fold hands across heart.
Hold hands out palms up, with elbows bent at waist level.
Jesus Appears to His Disciples- Day 1
Teacher’s Background Information

Praise the Lord and clap your hands. Clap hands.

PRAYER: Dear Jesus, Thank you for this day and for this time to hear your Word. Send your Holy Spirit into our hearts to drive away our fears and doubts. Teach us to look on your empty grave with confident faith that we are saved. Help us always trust in your loving care. Amen.

INTRODUCING THE BIBLE STORY
Activity: Fair or Unfair
Say, I’m going to read some sentences. After each sentence raise your hand if the sentence is true. Stand up if the sentence is not true (false).
Read each of the following sentences, pausing after each one to allow the children to respond. All of the sentences you will read are true, but you will not reveal this to the students until the end of the activity.
1. The fastest land animal in the world is the cheetah.
2. The largest continent in the world is Asia.
3. The country in the world that has the most people is China.
4. Jesus rose from the dead and lives forever.
After you have read the last sentence say, All of the sentences I read are true facts. Sometimes it is hard to believe that something is true unless we see it for ourselves or have some kind of proof that it really happened.
It is amazing and true that Jesus rose from the dead and lives forever. The Bible tells us this is so and we believe that the Bible is God’s own true Word. God gives us the faith to believe that Jesus lives forever even though we have not seen Jesus ourselves.
One of Jesus’ disciples didn’t believe that Jesus had risen from the dead because he didn’t see Jesus on Easter as the other disciples had. Listen carefully to the Bible story to find out how Jesus helped this disciple believe.

READ THE BIBLE STORY
Late Easter Sunday evening, most of Jesus’ disciples were together in a room in the city of Jerusalem. They had locked the doors because they were afraid that the Jewish leaders might be looking for them. Ever since Jesus had been arrested and crucified, the disciples had lived in fear. They were afraid that what had happened to their Lord might also happen to them.
Two disciples from Emmaus had joined the other disciples and were telling them how they had seen Jesus that afternoon. Suddenly, even though the doors were locked, Jesus Himself was standing right there in the room with them! “Peace be with you!” He said.
The disciples were startled and frightened when they saw Jesus. They thought they were seeing a ghost!
“Why are you afraid?” Jesus asked them. “Why do you doubt what you see? Look at my hands and feet, and see that it’s really me. Touch me, and you’ll realize that I’m really here! Ghosts don’t have flesh and bones. But you can see that I do.” Then He showed them the wounds in his hands and feet and side.
The disciples still found it hard to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead. It all seemed too good to be true! To take all their doubts away, Jesus asked them, “Do you have anything to eat?” The
disciples gave Him a piece of broiled fish. Jesus took it and ate it while they all watched. Now they believed that this really was Jesus come back to life.

Then Jesus said, “While I was still with you, I told you that everything written about me in the Scriptures had to happen.” Then Jesus opened his disciples’ minds so that they could understand the Scriptures, and He told them, “The Scriptures said that the Savior would suffer and die and come back to life on the third day. Now the message of repentance and forgiveness must be preached to all nations. You have been witnesses of all these things. I want you to go and tell people everywhere what you have heard and seen. As the Father sent me, so I am sending you.”

Then Jesus breathed on his disciples and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. Whenever you forgive people’s sins, those sins are forgiven. Whenever you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.” The disciples were full of joy, knowing that their Savior was alive again!

On that Easter Sunday evening, when Jesus appeared to his disciples in Jerusalem, Thomas, one of the twelve disciples, was not with them. As soon as the other disciples saw Thomas, they told him, “We have seen the Lord! He’s alive!”

Thomas refused to believe them. He said, “First I have to see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger into those marks. I also have to put my hand into the place where the soldier’s spear went into his side. Otherwise I will not believe that Jesus is really alive.”

A week later the disciples were together again in the same house. This time Thomas was with them. And even though the doors were once again locked, Jesus suddenly appeared in the room and stood with them. “Peace be with you!” He said.

Then Jesus held out his hands to Thomas and said, “Look at my hands. Put your finger here and feel the nail marks. Then reach out your hand and feel the scar the spear left in my side. Stop doubting and believe.”

Now Thomas was certain that Jesus had risen from the dead. He cried out, “My Lord and my God!”

Then Jesus told him, “Thomas, you believe now because you have seen me. Blessed are those who have not seen me and still have believed in me.”

As the Emmaus disciples were telling the others that they had seen Jesus, Jesus himself suddenly appeared in the locked room. He ate food to show the disciples that He was not a ghost but was really alive again. He also opened their minds so that they could understand how the Scriptures showed that He was the Savior. Then He told them to preach his message of repentance and forgiveness to others. Since Thomas was absent when Jesus appeared to the other disciples on Easter evening, they told him what had happened. But Thomas refused to believe that Jesus was alive until he saw Jesus for himself and touched his wounds. A week later Jesus again appeared to the disciples. Jesus showed Thomas his wounds and told him to stop doubting and believe.

**REVIEWING THE BIBLE STORY**

**STORY QUESTIONS:** Ask these questions:

1. **What did Jesus show his disciples so that they would believe?** (Jesus showed his disciples the nail marks in his hands and feet. These were made when Jesus was nailed to the cross.)
2. **What did Jesus say to the disciples?** (Jesus told the disciples He was sending them to many places to tell other people about Him. Jesus gave the disciples the Holy Spirit so they would...
Jesus Appears to His Disciples- Day 1
Teacher's Background Information

have the power to forgive the sins of the people.)

3. Who was missing the first time Jesus appeared to his disciples? (Thomas was not there the first time Jesus appeared to the disciples in the locked room.)

4. What did Jesus say to Thomas? (Jesus said, "Thomas, because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed.")

If there is time... "I'm Going to Tell ... About Jesus"
Sit in a circle. The game starts when one student says, "I'm going to tell Ting (names a person they know) about Jesus". The second student says, "I'm going to tell Ting and Zhen (names a person they know) about Jesus." The third student says, "I'm going to tell Ting, Zhen, and Jiming (names a person they know) about Jesus." The game ends when someone forgets the names.

CLOSING PRAYER Ask if there are any prayer requests.
Dear God, thank you for showing us through your Word that Jesus is our crucified and risen Savior. As we read your Word, strengthen our faith in Him as our only Savior. Please continue to be with and help (insert special requests here). We pray these things in your name. Amen.

On the evening of the first day of the week, the disciples had gathered together.

They locked the doors of the place because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders.

Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’

When He had said this He showed them his hands and side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.
Jesus Appears to His Disciples - Day 1
Teacher’s Background Information

Then Jesus said to them, ‘Just as the Father has sent me, I also send you.’ After He said this, He breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone’s sins they are forgiven. If you retain anyone’s sins they are retained.’

Now Thomas, one of the twelve disciples, was not with them.

The other disciples told Thomas, ‘We have seen the Lord.’ He replied, ‘Unless I see the wounds from the nails in his hands and put my hand into his side, I will never believe it.’

Eight days later, the disciples were together in the house and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’
Then He said to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here and examine My hands, Extend your hand and put it into my side. Do not continue in your unbelief but believe.’

Jesus said to him, 'You believed because you have seen me. Blessed are the people who have not seen me and yet have believed.'

Thomas replied, ‘My Lord and my God.’