The Disciples

Lesson 4: Dealing with Doubt

**Lessons in this series:** [1](http://www.teensundayschool.com/330/lesson/i-will-tell-your-name.php) [2](http://www.teensundayschool.com/331/lesson/love-in-your-obedience.php) [3](http://www.teensundayschool.com/333/lesson/what-are-you-thinking.php) **4**[5](http://www.teensundayschool.com/334/lesson/leaving-a-legacy.php)

LESSON OBJECTIVES

Goals

1. To introduce students to the disciple named Thomas  
2. To expose students to the presence of their own doubts  
3. To inspire students to deal with their doubt in a healthy way

Topics

Apostles, Believing, Disciple, Doubt, Faith

Scripture Memorization

John 20:29

OPENING PRAYER (5 to 10 minutes)

GROUP BUILDING (10 to 15 minutes)

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| **Sock Basketball (Game)** Roll up a pair of socks and get out two trashcans. Form two teams. In an open area in your space, play basketball with these objects. A few rules to make it work:  • You don’t have to dribble, but you can’t hold on to the sock for more than five seconds. • No defenders can be within three feet of the trashcan. • Everyone must play on their knees. • You CAN try to take it out of someone’s hands, but if you are unsuccessful, they get a free throw (a shot without a defender) • First team to three points wins!  • Make up your own rules as necessary.  After one team wins, change the teams around and play again as time permits. |

GETTING STARTED (5 minutes)

Today we are going to study an often-misunderstood disciple, Thomas. So, to prime the pump, let’s play some Thomas trivia. Each question is multiple choice.   
  
(Have the students pair up with a partner or play individually. These questions are also shown in the lesson workbook so the students can circle what they believe are the correct answers.)

1. Thomas is most famous for: Doubting / Dying / Denying *(Doubting)*2. Thomas had another name “Didymus” which means:  Naïve / Twin / Lonely *(Twin)*3. Thomas had a brother who was a disciple: True / False *(False)*  
How did everyone do?

DIGGING IN (30 minutes)

Let’s get to know Thomas for real. Everything we know about him comes from the Gospel of John, so turn there.

**Read John 11:1; 7-16**

**Discussion Questions:**1. What is going on in this passage? *(Lazarus is very sick, in fact dies, and Jesus is going there to be with the family.)*2. What did the disciples think of this plan? *(Unnecessary and dangerous.)*3. What does Thomas say? *(“Let’s just go die with Him”)*4. With what tone does he say that? Commitment? Sarcasm?  
5. If Thomas believed he would die, what does it say about him that he was willing to go with Jesus anyway?

**Read John 14:4-6**

**Discussion Questions:**1. How would you describe Thomas in this passage? Confused? Sad? Angry? Why?  
2. Do you think Thomas was more of a realist or a dreamer? Was he cynical or optimistic?  
3. In what ways are you like Thomas? How are you different from him?

**Read John 20:24-29**

Thomas is most remembered for these verses.

**Discussion Questions:**1. With what words does Thomas begin his question? *(“Unless I…”)*2. Why do you think Thomas needed to see Jesus with his own eyes?  
3. It is interesting to notice what Thomas wants to see in particular. What does he want to see? *(The wounds.)*4. Why do you think Thomas wanted to see these things as proof?

At its root, doubts are often a manifestation of self-centeredness. It is our unwillingness to take anyone else’s word for faith. While it is good for us to be resistant in what we simply believe, our skepticism can go too far. Thomas somewhat selfishly demands some proof here. However, Jesus' response says something, too.  
  
5. Does Jesus refuse to grant Thomas’s request? *(No)*6. Do we have any indication that, once Jesus was with him, Thomas actually felt the wounds of Christ?  
7. What was Thomas’ response to seeing Jesus? *("My Lord and My God!")*8. What do you think Jesus’ words in verse 29 mean?

MAKING IT REAL (10 minutes)

**General Discussion:**• Is Thomas’s doubt of Christ something you would consider “normal”?  
• Have you ever doubted God? Why?  
• What are some situations that would cause someone to doubt God?

Doubt may be normal, and it may not even be bad, but it does always lead us in one of two directions.

**Doubt causes us to grow deeper.**When this happens to a Christian, it is almost always GOOD. Because Christianity is the truth, we usually find some peace and assurance through our journey for answers. Doubt by itself is not harmful, as long as we are using it to think about our faith becoming deeper as a result.

**Doubt causes us to struggle in our faith.**When doubt grows to a level where we are really struggling with our faith, it is no longer challenging us to deepen our faith.  Instead, we now have a difficult time believing what we knew to be true. Our doubts have built up walls to block our understanding of truth.

While our doubts can help us grow deeper because they push us to study, pray, and meditate on aspects of God and our salvation in Christ, they CAN be a stumbling block to us. While the immediate answer to our doubts should not be “just have faith,” at some point our faith in Christ must hold true. Some things we can never fully understand. Remember the words of verse 29.

**Read John 20:29** (again)

While I am constantly saying to God, “Lord, I do NOT understand this," I also say to Him, “I will trust in You through all things.” Proverbs 3:5 says, “Trust in the Lord with all of your heart and lean not on your own understanding.”

That’s something we should all remember, even in the midst of doubt.

CLOSING PRAYER (2 minutes)

Let the students get together in pairs, and pray for each other.