

7th Grade New Testament (Gospels)

Lesson Plan: Jesus' Resurrection (Thomas)

Learning Goals: Through independent study, students will assess the manner in which John records the giving of the Holy Spirit and how Jesus dealt with the doubts of Thomas.

Question: What does it mean to have faith? (*or Alternative Activity*)

Prayer.

Discuss question on board. (5 minutes)

Activity: "Show Your Scars"

Ask students to tell about a scar they have, show it (if they can), and tell the story that goes with it. Warning: Keep this under control. Don't let it get too graphic or inappropriate or embarrassing for anyone. Also students may want to go on forever in a "Can you top this?" mode. Keep in mind the purpose.

Follow Up Questions:

- What lesson did you learn in the acquisition of your scar?
- If you could, would you turn back the clock and change things so you didn't have the scar? Why?
- How does your scar influence what people think about you?
- How does it shape how you feel about yourself?

Have students read John 20:19-23 and answer the following questions:

1. On what day of the week did Jesus appear to the disciples?
The first day of the week (Sunday)
2. Why were the disciples hiding behind locked doors? How did Jesus get in?
They are fearful of the Jewish leaders - that they might be coming for the disciples next. They are fearful of the Roman authorities - that the disciples might suffer the same fate as Jesus. Jesus seems to have passed through the wall or door. His resurrected body is not the same as his earthly body.
3. How does Jesus greet the disciples? Why do you think he did this?
Jesus greets them by saying "Peace be with you." This emphasizes the fear they must have been feeling. They didn't know who this was and probably thought that Jesus was a ghost.
4. What does Jesus do to prove to them who he is?
He shows them his scars - hands and feet.
5. How is this passage connected to John's theme of witness?
Jesus commissions them - sending them out into world to tell of what they had seen.
6. How do the disciples receive the Holy Spirit?

Jesus breathes on them and they receive it.

7. In both Greek and Hebrew, the word for spirit is also the word for wind or breath (in Greek - *pneuma*, in Hebrew - *ruach*). How is this passage related to Genesis 2:7?

In the same way that God breathes into Adam the breath of life, Jesus breathes into the disciples the new life that he was offering them through the spirit.

8. How is this passage connected to Matthew 28:16-20?

The disciples are given the spirit and sent out in the world to proclaim the Gospel and God's forgiveness to the world in the same way that they were commissioned to go out and make disciples, baptizing others in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Read John 20:24-31

9. What are the different ways we have referred to Thomas based on his appearances in John's gospel up to now?

Thomas the Brave, Thomas the Honest, Thomas the Twin, Doubting Thomas

10. Why do you think Thomas was skeptical about the reports of the other disciples?

He knew that dead people don't get up and appear to others. This experience did not fit into what he knew about the world and life and death. It is hard when someone claims something so far outside our box and just says, "Trust me."

11. Do you think his request was unreasonable? Why or why not?

No. He was merely asking for the same experience that the other disciples had already had with the risen Jesus.

12. On what day of the week did Jesus appear to Thomas?

"Eight days later;" the first day of the week, Sunday

13. When Jesus returns, what is different about the disciples, where they are, and their attitude? Why?

Nothing, really. They are still behind locked doors, apparently afraid. Jesus' commission has not changed things yet (maybe because they have not yet received the Holy Spirit).

14. How does Jesus greet them?

"Peace be with you" - this is the common way we see angels of heavenly messengers greet humans. It is understandable since one might imagine fear being the common response to seeing a dead person appear among them.

15. What is the reaction of Jesus to the doubts of Thomas? How does that affect the way we understand doubts and struggles with faith? How do you think Jesus would respond to our doubts?

He doesn't come down hard on Thomas. He is willing to answer Thomas' objections and alleviate his doubts. This suggests that Jesus isn't going to come down on us and our doubts/fears with condemnation, but is willing to meet us where we are and lead us to faith.

16. Why do you think Jesus' resurrected body has scars?

Possible answers: for the sake of the disciples (inspire faith), he has not ascended back to heaven; these have become a fundamental part of who he is and the salvation that he offers.

17. Who is Jesus referring to in his response to Thomas (vs. 29)? How does this verse relate to Hebrews 11:1?

We are included in the statement "Those who don't see, but still believe." Jesus is pronouncing a blessing on those of us who have put faith in him because of the testimony of others. Additionally, the Hebrews passage describes this kind of faith - assurance of that which we have hoped for and confidence in things that we have not seen with our own eyes.

18. What is the purpose of all the signs that John recorded in his gospel?

The whole purpose of John's Gospel is to inspire and bring people to faith. This is an extension of the evangelistic purpose of John's Gospel. There are more that could have been listed, but John chooses seven for his purposes (theological purposes)

Lesson Summary/Review:

Students should review and highlight the following vocabulary terms and concepts from this lesson in their notes:

- Thomas
- What is the purpose of signs in John's Gospel?
- How does Jesus deal with the doubts of Thomas?