
Trade Fear for God's Peace

Children's Sermon Lesson on Jesus Appearance to His Disciples and Doubting Thomas in John 20:19-31



Children's Message on Replacing Fear with God's Peace

Lesson Objective: This message illustrates for children the comforting hope that Jesus has given us the Holy Spirit and promises to stay with us always. He wants to take away our worries and fears and replace them with His peace. The message demonstrates this "swap" by challenging kids to carry a large burden of "fear", and then trade it for something light and comfortable, just as Christ trades our sorrows and anxieties for joy.

Law/Gospel Theme: Jesus came to transform our lives. He offers forgiveness and wants us to forgive others. Christ does not demand from us perfection or behavior worthy of His love, but gives us His presence and peace no matter who we are. We all have worries and fears about things, but Jesus wants to take those away and give us gladness and strength.

Optional Materials: Backpack or bag, heavy items (books, etc.), light and comfortable items (pillow, toy, etc.).

Bible Passage: John 20:19-31

More Doubting Thomas Activities for Children's Ministry

- Watch the [John 20:19-31 children's sermon lesson](#) and related [Doubting Thomas crafts](#)
- Compare our full [Doubting Thomas Sunday School lesson](#)
- Compare another [children's sermon on Doubting Thomas](#) and related [Faith Object Lesson](#)
- Download [Doubting Thomas coloring page worksheets](#)
- Read the [meaning of John 20:24-29 and Jesus' appearance to Doubting Thoms in the Bible](#)

Teacher Tips: This message uses a few examples of "underdog reversal" stories from historical battles and sports, relating these to the remarkable death reversal of the resurrection. Feel free to adapt based on timing and audience, focusing on whichever elements work best to describe.

John 20:19-31 Children's Sermon: Jesus Appears to Doubting Thomas

Greet students and ask for an audience volunteer...

Hello, children of God! Do you ever feel worried about things? What are some things that make you feel fearful? (*Take a few answers.*) It can be hard feeling scared sometimes. I want to show you what it's like...first, I need a volunteer (*take a volunteer from students*). Okay, I have this backpack here. Can you put it on for me? (*Allow volunteer to don the bag.*) Great! Now, this bag might not seem too bad to carry around. But I'm going to add some items to it... *Begin placing heavy objects into the backpack or bag.* How does it feel now? *Add a couple more heavy things to the bag.* And now? Is it getting a little heavy? Sometimes when we have anxiety and fear, it can feel like a heavy burden. Now, would you like to let that backpack go? In fact, I have an option for you: what if I trade you? I'll take the heavy bag, and in its place I'll give you something light and easy to carry. Does that sound like a good option? *Offer a pillow or stuffed animal in place of the heavy bag.* That's a little better, isn't it? You'd probably much rather have something light to carry than the heavy backpack. And I'm happy to swap it out for you.

Did you know that God does the same thing for us? There are a lot of things that might worry or scare us, but God wants to take those fears away and give us peace instead. We see this throughout the Bible. One particular event shows up right after Jesus rose from the dead. His disciples were hiding away in a room, because they were afraid. They knew that Jesus had been arrested and killed, and they didn't want to be arrested, too. While they were huddled away in fear, guess who showed up? Jesus! He just appeared in their midst and said "peace be with you." He knew that they were worried, and offered His peace instead. Jesus showed the disciples His scars and told them He wanted to send them out to proclaim His message into the world. He breathed on them with the Holy Spirit, reminding them that His presence would go with them always and that they should pass on His forgiveness to others.

Jesus wants us to know that His peace and presence is for us, too. Later in this passage (while speaking with Thomas, who refused to believe until He felt the scars of Christ), Jesus said that those who believe without seeing are especially blessed. That's us! We can trust that Jesus is near, even though we do not see or feel Him all the time. There are things that are scary and burdensome to us, but Jesus wants to take those burdens and replace them with His peace. He wants us to rely on Him.

He can take away those fears that are so heavy, and swap them for His peace. We don't have to bear grudges and worries alone. We can have the comfort of His love surround us always. We'd be silly to keep a heavy backpack when we had the opportunity to trade it for something easy to carry. We'd be foolish to refuse God's comfort, too! He wants to give it to us. And we can share the love, forgiveness, and peace of Christ with others around us.

Let's say a prayer to thank God for Jesus and His promise of peace in place of fear:

Children's Prayer:

(Have kids repeat each line, if desired)

Dear God,

Thank you for the peace of Jesus

Help us to rely on that instead of fear

Help us to trust in you

And share your love with those around us

Thank you for loving us

We love you, God!

Thank you for Jesus

In His name, Amen!

Bible Verses/story to Reference:

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." 20 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. 21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." 22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."

24 Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe."

26 Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." 28 Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written so 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 20:19-31



Thank you for downloading these free materials. Our team is grateful for your trust and pray that God will bless your ministry.

This resource was prepared by [Kristin Schmidt](#) (pictured right). She serves at the Epiphany Lutheran Church in Castle Rock, CO. She has shared her teaching gifts through Ministry-To-Children since 2014 and now serves as our lead curriculum writer.



Every week she writes new [Sunday School lessons](#), [Bible crafts](#), and [children's sermons](#).

Kristin has a professional background in elementary and pre-school education. A graduate of Biola University, she holds a Master of Education and will receive the Master of Theology degree from Concordia University, Irvine, California, in May 2020. Kristin grew up in southern California and lived the past 10 years in Georgia. She is a long-distance runner and voracious reader. In addition to children's curriculum, she shares her student ministry activities and lesson ideas on [YouthGroupMinistry.com](#)

My name is [Tony Kummer](#) (pictured below). I started Ministry-To-Children.com in 2007 as a free resource for anyone sharing Jesus with kids. I am building three new websites. One is called [Ministry Answers](#) to help Christians find answers in God's Word. The other two are [Devotional Christian](#) and [10 Bible Verses](#) to help you focus on personal prayer and quiet times.



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