

More Than a Name

Module: THE THREE D'S OF IDENTITY THEFT

Lesson 3: DOUBT – HOW CAN WE OVERCOME DOUBTFUL THOUGHTS?

Objectives:

- Students will explore how Jesus responded to doubt in the lives of people
- Students will learn how to respond to any doubtful in and around them

Materials Needed

- ☐ Balloons, enough for at least 2 per person (plus some extras, just in case)
- ☐ String (2-feet length x 2 legs x # of students = length you need)
- ☐ Nametags (or something to discern who is who in acting out scripture)
- ☐ Copies of handout “Thomas the Doubter” (one for each character in your play i.e. minimum of 6, maximum of 15 copies)

Minds On

To prepare for this opening game, you need two balloons for each person in your group (plus some spares for those that might break whilst you're inflating them). If you do not have time before the lesson to inflate the balloons, have the youth blow up their own balloons, making sure they are of mediocre size (not too big but not too small). Attach two-foot long strings to the ends of each balloon. Give each person two balloons and have them tie one to each ankle, so the balloon is lying behind their foot. You can play this game in whatever area you wish based upon the size of your group. **Note:** the bigger the playing place, the harder it will be to pop the balloons.

When you say start, the kids try to pop the balloons from the other team by stepping on them. When both your balloons have popped, you're out and must sit down. The person with the last balloon wins the game.

Action

Ask: *“Have you ever had a friend come up and tell you something that they did over the weekend, but you had a hard time believing it? For example, your friend came up to you and told you that his/her parents allowed her to get a new pet snake. (You can make the example whatever you like based upon the demographics of your youth) What would you say to him/her if you didn’t quite believe him/her?”*

Some answers may include (with some variation, of course): “NO WAY! I’ve got to see this to believe it!”; “Yea right, like they would ever do that.”; or “I don’t believe you, prove it.”

After some answers have been given, **saying something like:** *Sometimes it’s hard to believe something that you don’t see or know as fact, and it’s easier to believe after you have seen proof of whatever is at question.*

Tell the students that you're going to talk and learn about a man in the Bible named Thomas who was one of the twelve disciples. He got to experience firsthand many of the miracles that Jesus performed. Thomas was known for having an identity of faith in Jesus Christ. He was bold to follow Him in instances where others were afraid to follow Jesus. There is one particular story that involved Thomas that we're going to examine and play out.

Let the students know that they will be acting out a story from the Bible, with Thomas being the main character. Ask for volunteers to be different people in the story. You will need: 1 Narrator, 1 Jesus, 3-11 Disciples (depending on group size these characters are more dispensable if you have less people), and 1 Thomas. As people volunteer to participate in the acting, give them nametags so that they know who is acting what part of the story.

Before they start the story, give context to the story and what has previously happened.

Say something like: *This story takes place after Jesus has resurrected from the dead. He has come to a house where the disciples are gathered. Here is the story of Thomas.*

Give each actor a copy of the handout. The Narrator should be put off to the side so that they are not in the way of the other actors. Have all the disciples together, huddled close and to one side of the stage. Have Jesus enter from the other side of the stage. Thomas is off to the side and not on stage to begin with. Once the story is acted out, thank your volunteer actors and have them take a seat with the others. (All other explanations of action are on the handout).

Discuss the story by asking, *"How do you feel about the way Thomas reacted to hearing the news of Jesus being alive? What would you have done if you heard the same thing?"*

Make sure to ask follow up questions to each question based upon the answers that you get (such as "why do you feel that way?", "why would you have reacted that way"). This

is a time for students to generally discuss the story, their feelings about the story, and perhaps what they would have done if they were Thomas.

Once you have heard from the students, continue by focusing on the last verse that was just acted out. Have a student or leader read out the verse John 20:29, and have students reflect on that verse for a moment, particularly focusing on one or two words, or a phrase that struck them.

After 30-60 seconds have the student or leader read the verse again. This time, have students pair up to discuss their thoughts on the verse *and* what they think Jesus' message was. Give the students about 2 minutes to discuss in their pairs, then bring them back as a group. Have students share as they feel comfortable what their partners discussed together. Make sure that other groups are being respectful and allowing for groups to share what they have to say, but once a group is done, give others the opportunity to respond.

Consolidate/Debrief

Say something like: Thomas doubted that Jesus came back to fulfill what He had promised would happen. Luckily for Thomas, Jesus was able to show himself to prove that what the disciples had told Thomas was true. Jesus essentially "popped" Thomas' balloon of doubt. However, as Jesus states, "blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." He is telling us that He will not be appearing again to anyone else. Jesus is telling us that we must walk by faith in what He has promised, as opposed to having to see proof in order to believe.

Help students understand that even though Thomas was a strong believer, doubt got in his way. Ask students what they think they can do if they ever have doubts or questions regarding the faith. Answers may include: talk to youth pastor, talk to a friend, talk to pastor, ask a friend to pray for them, pray to Jesus, read the Bible.

Let the students know that doubt can tie them down and get in the way of them knowing and showing their true identity in Christ. While it is natural for us to want to see proof of something before believing it, Satan uses that to his advantage by planting questions and seeds of doubt in our minds. Help students see that Christians live in community for a reason, to build each other up and be there for one another when others fall down or are questioning something. Encourage them to help each other with their balloons of “doubt”, stomping on them and helping their friends find the truth that they are seeking.

Close the session by praying for your students, the upcoming week, and the doubts and temptations they will have, encouraging them to stay grounded in their faith and seek the truth in every situation.

HANDOUT: THOMAS THE DOUBTER

The Narrator should be put off to the side so that they are not in the way of the other actors. Have all the disciples together, huddled close and to one side of the stage. Have Jesus enter from the other side of the stage. Thomas is off to the side and not on stage to begin with.

Narrator: On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said,

Jesus: “Peace be with you!”

Narrator: After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. Again Jesus said,

Jesus: “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”

Narrator: And with that he breathed on them and said,

Jesus: “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

Jesus leaves the stage and all the other disciples go to where Jesus was and meet up with Thomas.

Narrator: Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him,

Disciples: “We have seen the Lord!”

Narrator: But he said to them,

Thomas: “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”

Everyone travels back to the other side of the stage.

Narrator: A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said,

Jesus: “Peace be with you!”

Narrator: Then he said to Thomas

Thomas: Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.

Narrator: Thomas said to him,

Thomas:” My Lord and my God!”

Narrator: Then Jesus told him,

Jesus: Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.