

Blessed are those who question — Christian ed @ home

Adapted from an article by JOELLE BRUMMIT-YALE in the Presbyterian Outlook



Scripture: John 20:19-31

Materials: paper, crayons or markers, scissors and glue

Optional: children's Bible such as [Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible](#) and coloring handout

I love the questions that kids ask. They're often uncensored and profound and they make me reconsider things I thought I knew and understood well. They reflect pure curiosity and a desire to make sense of the world around us. Each year as we look at the story of "doubting Thomas" I think of the children I work with. Like them, Thomas questions. He wants to hear more and see Jesus' wounds before he believes he is, in fact, the risen Lord. Rather than dismiss Thomas' questions as those of an unbeliever, Jesus meets Thomas where he's at. Using this story as a guide, your children will ask God their most burning questions and recognize that God invites our curiosity.

Introduce

Begin the time with your children by telling them they can ask you any questions they would like to know the answers to. As they share each question, answer to the best of your ability. If you don't know the answer or it is too complex to explain, be honest. The goal of this time is to open them up to asking any and all questions, even if the asking doesn't result in a satisfying answer.

Prepare

Prepare to read aloud John 20:19-31. If your children are young, you may want to use a children's Bible to share this story. [Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible](#) includes a nice, succinct child-friendly retelling.

- Explain to your children that this story takes place after Jesus' resurrection.
- Jesus is visiting his disciples in the house where they are hiding. They rushed here after Jesus' death, fearing they would be punished just like he was.

Read

Read the Scripture passage aloud.

- Ask your children to recount how the disciple Thomas reacts when the others tell him the man in their home is Jesus risen from the dead. What does Thomas ask Jesus to do in order to prove he is who he says he is?
- Next, look at how Jesus reacts to Thomas. How does he respond to Thomas' disbelief?

Note that Jesus does not hesitate to show Thomas his wounds, just as he did for the other disciples when he arrived in the room.

- He allows Thomas to explore the wounds until he comes to believe the resurrection is true.
- He doesn't shame Thomas or show concern that Thomas doesn't instantly understand the situation.
- Rather, he encourages his questioning.

Do

Tell your children that Jesus doesn't just welcome Thomas' questions — he encourages all of his disciples, including us, to wonder. Prepare to create a paper "prayer" with your children.

- Gather several sheets of paper, crayons or markers, scissors and glue.
- Cut one or two of the sheets of paper into 2-inch-wide strips.
- Give a few of these strips to each child.
- Ask your children to write or draw questions they would like to ask God on these strips of paper.
- When they have written all of their questions on the paper strips, have them glue the strips on to a full sheet of paper.
- Read aloud each of the questions, offering them as prayers to God.

As an alternative to this activity, you use the "Praying in Color" coloring handout for your children to use to record their questions.

- Encourage them to record their questions in the large spaces and then to offer the questions in silent prayer while coloring in the smaller spaces.



Wonder

Next, talk about the ways that God might respond to their questions.

- Ask them to list all of the ways that God speaks to them.

- Note that sometimes God answers our prayers by bringing up an idea in our heads.
- Other times, we experience an answer through the actions of others.
- We might even observe something in the world that lets us know God is speaking to us.
- Encourage your children to notice ways God may be speaking to them throughout the week.
- Note that sometimes we do not receive answers from God right away. We may need to wait for a while.
- Also, share that sometimes we don't notice an answer to a prayer. Explain that asking these questions of God may be more important than hearing the answers.



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