

Special Lesson: New Sunday, New Life

New Sunday: Believe and Be Renewed

Teacher Preparation and Materials Needed:

For the Lesson: Orthodox Study Bible or Holy Bible: Armenian Church Edition

Recommended Orthodox Study Bible [HERE](#).

Recommended Holy Bible: Armenian Church Edition [HERE](#).

Scripture Reference: John 20:20-29

Activity #1: Doubting Thomas word search

Activity #2: Fill in the blanks worksheet

Words of the week:

ամենեցուն - a-me-ne-tsoon - to all

խաղաղութին - kha-gha-ghoo-tyoon - peace

յարութին - har-oo-tyoon - resurrection

Objective and Moral Character Focus:

Students will understand the significance of Jesus' appearance to the disciples and Thomas, recognize the value of believing without seeing, and reflect on how Christ's Resurrection calls us to live with renewed faith and purpose as Orthodox Christians.

Memory Verse:

**“Blessed are those who have not seen
and yet have believed.”**

John 20:29

Lesson

Lesson Opening & Creating Interest:

**Wisdom Prayer, written by St. Nersess the Grace-filled (Shnorhali).*

Open with prayer:

Իմաստութիւն Զօր՝ Յիսուս, տու՛ր ինձ իմաստութիւն, զբարիս խորհել եւ խօսել եւ գործել առաջի
Քո՝ յամենայն ժամ. ի չար խորհրդոց եւ ի բանից եւ ի գործոց փրկեա՛ւ զիս. եւ ողորմեա՛ Քո
արարածոց եւ ինձ բազմամեղիս: Ամէն

Eemasdootyoon Hor Heesoos, door eents eemasdootyoon uzparees khorel yev khosel yev kordz arachi
ko hamenayn jham. Ee char khorhrtos yev paneets yen kordzots prgya zees yev voghormya ko araradzots
eents pazmameghees. Amen.

Wisdom of the Father, O Jesus, grant to me the wisdom to think, speak, and do that which is good in Your
sight. Save me from all evil and distracting thoughts, words, and deeds. Have mercy upon your creatures
and upon me, a great sinner. Amen.

Lesson Body:

The days following Jesus' crucifixion were cloaked in grief, confusion, and silence. For the disciples, it felt as though the sun had set on everything they had come to believe. For three years, they had followed Jesus—seen His miracles, heard His parables, and dared to hope that He was the promised Messiah. They had witnessed the blind receiving sight, the dead rising, and sinners forgiven with a word. Every step they took with Him had been a step into light. But now, that light seemed extinguished by the darkness of the Cross. Their Lord had been arrested, humiliated, crucified, and buried. And in the echo of His final cry—"It is finished"—their world had collapsed.

Behind closed doors and locked hearts, the disciples hid. Fear clung to them like a shadow. What would happen to them? Would the authorities come for them next? Had they been wrong to believe? Their hope was buried in the tomb with Christ.

But then came the dawn of a new day. A miracle so profound that it shook the earth and eternity alike: Jesus Christ rose from the dead. The grave could not hold Him. Death could not defeat Him. The silence of the tomb was shattered by the voice of the Risen One.

He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, then to the women, to the disciples on the road to Emmaus, and eventually to the very ones who had fled in fear. He entered their locked room—not with rebuke or wrath—but with a gift: "Peace be with you." It was more than a greeting. It was a healing. A declaration. A new beginning.

He showed them His hands and side—not to shame them for running, but to restore their broken trust. These wounds were no longer signs of death, but signs of victory. Sorrow turned into joy. Confusion gave way to clarity. Fear melted into faith. Jesus was alive. And everything would be different because of it.

Yet one was missing: Thomas, the twin. When he heard the others say they had seen the Lord, he couldn't accept it. Perhaps he was protecting himself from more heartbreak. Perhaps his grief was too deep. "Unless I see the marks of the nails in His hands," Thomas said, "I will not believe."

Jesus returned again—this time, for Thomas. Not to scold, but to gently invite him into faith. "Place your finger here... Do not be unbelieving, but believing." And in that holy moment, Thomas gave one of the most profound confessions in all of Scripture: "My Lord and my God!" It wasn't just belief in a miracle—it was surrender to a person.

Words of the Week:

ամենեցուն - a-me-ne-tsoon - to all
խաղաղութիւն - kha-gha-ghoo-tyoon - peace
յարութիւն - har-oo-tyoon - resurrection

Memory Verse:

“Blessed are those who have not seen
and yet have believed.”
— John 20:29

This story of Thomas is not merely about doubt—it’s about Christ’s mercy. It’s about how He meets us even in our hesitation. It reminds us that Jesus does not turn away from those who question. Instead, He steps toward us, speaks peace, and invites us to come closer.

Like Thomas, we, too, wrestle with questions:

“Is God truly near?”

“Why is there suffering?”

“Why does He feel silent?”

But our Lord doesn’t demand perfect faith. He offers His wounds and His peace. And He says, “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” That includes us.

The peace that Christ offers is not mere comfort—it is strength. It is courage. It is the presence of God that emboldens us to go out and live boldly, even in a world that still nails truth to a cross. The disciples, once trembling behind closed doors, became messengers of the resurrection, unafraid to proclaim what they had seen and experienced—even at great cost.

In the Armenian Badarak, this peace is not just remembered—it is shared:

խաղաղութիւն ամենեցուն – Khaghaghootyoon amenetsoon – “Peace unto all.”

These are not symbolic words—they are Christ’s very peace, offered again to His people, through the Church. Just as He entered the room of the disciples, He enters our midst in every Divine Liturgy. He gives Himself in the Body and Blood, He speaks through the sacred hymns, and He reveals Himself in the prayers of the Church. The faith of the Armenian Church is not built merely on what was seen in the past, but on what is experienced now, in the mystery of the resurrection.

The Church does not only teach about Christ. She offers Christ. Not as an idea or distant memory, but as the Living God, risen and glorified, ever-present and ever-near.

So when we gather around the altar, when we receive the sacraments, when we hear the words, “Peace be with you all,” let us remember—we are like those disciples. And Christ is here. He breathes peace into our fears and calls us to go forth with joy, saying: “As the Father has sent Me, so I send you.” (John 20:21)

Let us go forth as witnesses—not just of what we believe, but of Whom we have encountered.



Name: _____

Date: _____

Doubting Thomas

R G S R E F K S F G U C E R W D G
 G M B O P S E L C A R I M T K I Z
 Z R H Z B N Q T S T L S B J B W K
 N P A H D E V E I L E B Y O L W Y
 O M N L Z B L R U R S H Z A G X M
 B M D G A P S U A K E G Y G L M Z
 E H S H I U L O Q P U N Y Y D G Y
 F Z S C S G O I D A C P I K N E R
 O U S E H D C V P H S I U I V G E
 K I J N T Q K A E I E K T W W P H
 D T Y B U M E S F Z R B A G E D T
 T H O M A S D T N B U U Y A B B E
 R A T O U C H E D O A W N K X X G
 F J B L E S S E D W X X R Q H T O
 I F M I L D C Y R L E S I D E U T
 D O O R S X R K W S J A G J F L C
 D M W X G B K D Y V C R K E S Y B

disciples
 miracles
 touched
 doors

believed
 saviour
 locked
 Jesus

doubting
 rescues
 Thomas
 side

together
 blessed
 hands

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

Complete the paragraph by filling in the blanks with the correct words from the word bank at the bottom of the story.



On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, _____ came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his _____ and _____. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

Now _____, one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have _____ the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the _____ marks in his hands and put my _____ where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not _____ it."

A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were _____, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop _____ and believe."

Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

John 20:19-28 (NIV)

believe	finger	jesus	nail	side
doubting	hands	locked	seen	Thomas

Review

Memory Verse Review:

“Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” – John 20:29

Lesson Review:

Questions:

1. Why were the disciples hiding after Jesus died? (They were afraid they would also be crucified)
2. What did Jesus say when He appeared to them? (Peace be with you)
3. How did Thomas respond to Jesus’ invitation to believe? (“My Lord and my God”)
4. What does it mean to live your faith even when you cannot see Jesus? (Being a disciple and following His commandments)
5. How do we apply the peace Jesus blessed us with in our lives? (When we are in trouble, we need to pause and pray, trusting in Jesus)

Words of the Week:

ամենեցուն - a-me-ne-tsoon - to all

խաղաղութիւն - kha-gha-ghoo-tyoon - peace

յարութիւն - har-oo-tyoon - resurrection

Life Application

What are we going to do with what we have learned today?

Faith isn’t always easy, especially when we face things we can’t understand. Sometimes we don’t feel God near. But remember—Thomas needed time, and Jesus gave it to him. He didn’t demand instant faith. He invited Thomas to draw closer.

This week, ask yourself:

- Do I sometimes doubt or feel distant from God?
- Is there a part of me that needs to be renewed?

Maybe you can offer peace to a friend who’s struggling. Maybe you need to forgive someone—or ask for forgiveness. Maybe it’s time to read Scripture more regularly, or simply be silent and listen to God. This is the time for renewal.

** Departing Prayer, written by St. Nersess the Grace-filled (Shnorhali).*

Close with prayer:

Պահապան ամենայնի Զրիստոս, աջ Զո հովանի լիցի ի վերայ իմ, ի տուէ եւ ի գիշերի, ի նստիլ ի տան, ի գնալ ի ճանապարհ, ի ննջել եւ ի յառնել, զի մի երբեք սասանեցայց եւ ողորմեա՛ Զո արարածոց եւ ինձ բազմամեղիս: Ամէն

Bahaban amenayn Kreesdos, ach Ko hovanee leetsee ee vera eem; ee dveh yev ee keesher-ee, ee nsdeel ee dan, ee knal ee janabarh, ee nunchel yev ee harnel, zee mee yerpek sa-sanetsayts yev voghormya Ko araradzots yev eents pazmamyghees. Amen.

O Christ, guardian of all, let Your right hand guard and shelter me, by day and by night, at home and abroad, in sleeping and in waking, that I may never stumble. Have mercy upon Your creatures and upon me, a great sinner. Amen.