

Alley SG - April 27-28, 2019

Bible Story: (All I Ask of You) Jesus Appears to Thomas • John 20:19-29

Bottom Line: Whatever happens, remember God is bigger than your questions.

Key Question: What questions do you have for God?

Memory Verse: *"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."*
John 16:33b, NIV

1. Just for Fun

What You Need: Blindfold (1 per group)

What You Do:

- **Blindfold** one of the students and ask him/her to sit on the floor.
- **Choose** another student to stand in front of the person who's blindfolded.
- **Give** the blindfolded student 10-seconds to figure out who is standing in front of him/her by feeling that person's shoes.
- **Switch** and let others take a turn.

2. Take a Snapshot

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- **Ask** students to share questions they would ask the following people if they had a chance to do so:
 - The President of the United States
 - Your favorite movie star
 - A soldier
 - Jesus
 - God

What You Say:

"Everyone has questions for God. Often the answers can be found in the Bible. We just have to know where to look or who to ask to help us. When life is tough, though, we may have doubts. Hard times bring on big questions. When that happens, it's okay to wonder why things happened the way they did. Often the only answer is to trust that God knows what's best. He is bigger than any problem we face. He's smarter, wiser, kinder, and more powerful than we can imagine. We can find hope when we remember that God is bigger than our questions."

3. Bible Story Extension

What You Need: Bible, pens, hand wipes

What You Do:

- **Break** your group into partners
- **Give** each student a pen and a Bible to each set of partners (or let students use a Bible App on their phones).
- **Assign** each group a portion of John 20:19-29 to look up and read with their partner.
- **Ask** the first partner to write a question about their passage on the palm of the second partner.
- **Ask** the second partner to write the answer to the question on the palm of the first partner.
- **Review** the story by inviting teams to take turns holding out their palms and asking their questions to the others.
- **Check** the answers with what's written on the palms of the other partner's hands. Let them refer to their Bible passage to clarify any answers.

- **Hand out** the wet wipes so students can clean the pen marks from their hands.
- **After the review**, ask students if they think it was wrong for Thomas to doubt that Jesus was alive until he saw the nail marks on Jesus' hands. Challenge them to give reasons for both sides of the argument.
- **Encourage** students with the fact that, like Thomas, we all have faith questions at some point. We should look for answers to our questions and know that God wants to help us trust Him when we have doubts.
- **Ask** the group to suggest questions people might have for God in the following situations:
 - The Bible doesn't make sense.
 - My friends don't believe the Bible is true. They say it's just an outdated book that doesn't apply to today.
 - Mean people get away with being bad.
 - Bad things happen to people who don't deserve it.
 - Someone you love has disappointed you.

Tip: *Provide a safe atmosphere for students to freely share any faith questions they struggle with. Give answers when you are able to and continue to follow up in the weeks ahead. Encourage questions even if you don't always know the answer. It's likely that some of your students will ask questions that there aren't answers to! Encourage conversation around these questions and help students understand that it's okay to have big questions.*

4. Discussion Questions

- Why is it important to ask hard questions about the Bible, God, and our faith?
- Is it okay to doubt? Why or why not?
- What should you do when you have questions and doubts about your faith? Where can you go to find answers to your faith questions? Who can you talk to?
- What questions do you have for God right now?

5. Verse to Take with You

What You Need: Bible, "Hope Mail" Activity Page (1 set per group), paper and envelope (1 per student, per service), pens, clipboards

What You Do:

- **Give** each person a pen, envelope, sheet of paper, and one of the "Hope Mail" cards. If your group is less than five students, consider giving more than one "Hope Mail" card to each student.
- **Ask** students to write their names at the top of the stationary then pass it to the left.
- **Tell** them to write on the stationary whatever their "Hope Mail" card suggests then pass the stationary to the left.
- **Continue** writing and passing until the papers have reached the final student. Note that they will be writing the same thing on each page. Let them know it's okay to write on both sides of the paper if needed.
- When the paper reaches the student seated next to the person whose name is on the top of the paper, have them write on the stationary then fold it and place it in an envelope.
- **Pass** the envelope to the left and let that students write his or her name and address on it. (This should be the person whose name is at the top of the stationary.)
- **Explain** that you will put the envelopes in the mail and students will receive them sometime during the week.
- **As you close**, read John 16:33b aloud.
- **Challenge** the students to read through the things their friends wrote when they receive their "Hope Mail" and to remember that even during the dark times of life, there is a bright side for those who know Jesus.

6. Make it Personal with Prayer

What You Need: Envelopes from Activity 5

What You Do:

- **Give** each person one of the addressed envelopes from Activity 5.
- **Invite** students to pray for the person whose name is on the envelope.
- **Lead** them in a silent prayer with the following prompts and pauses:
 - Thank God for creating this friend in His image.
 - Think of a promise God has made then pray that promise for this friend.
 - Pray that if this friend doesn't have a relationship with Jesus yet that he or she will know and believe that Jesus died for our sin and rose from the dead.
 - Ask God to help this friend find answers to his or her faith questions and grow in trust of God and his Word.
- *Collect envelopes and be sure coach/staff member gets them so they can be mailed during the week.*

What You Say:

"Dear God of hope, YOU are the reason there is a bright side. YOU give us hope in every dark day. YOU give promises that you keep. YOU have created us to be in a relationship with You and made a way for that to happen through Jesus' death and resurrection. YOU help us when we doubt, give answers to our faith questions, and never stop working in our lives. Give us hope in YOU—no matter what. In Jesus' name, amen."

BEFORE DISMISSAL: AT "COMMUNION CALL"

HAND OUT "GOD TIME" CARDS TO EACH STUDENT BEFORE DISMISSING AND ALLOW THEM TIME TO BEGIN WORKING ON THE WEEKLY ACTIVITY

IF STUDENTS BRING THEM BACK THE FOLLOWING WEEK, THEY RECEIVE \$3 IN ALLEY CASH!