

Middle School Sunday School Lessons by



Year 3: Session 8 – Post-Crucifixion

Class 22: John 20:19-29 – Resurrected Jesus and doubting Thomas

CONCEPTS that will be covered in the lesson

- Resurrection is a team event/experience
- The only team that experiences resurrection is the Disciple Team (no Pharisee Team, no Crowd Team).
- Thomas demonstrates how being absent from the team keeps him from experiencing Resurrected Jesus.
- Thomas also demonstrates how it's never too late to experience Resurrected Jesus (a reminder especially pertinent to us today – 2000 years after Jesus' resurrection)

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Movie clip (from rfour.org)
- TV and equipment needed to play movie clip
- At least 4 notecards per individual in class
- One writing utensil per individual in class

THE LESSON

OPENING PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION

- For the opening question for today's class, one of the teachers will ask the question and then to give you some time to think of an answer; the teacher asking the question will answer first.
- Once the teacher answers the question, we'll go around the circle.
- When it's your turn, start with your name and then answer the question to the best of your ability.
- **Here's this week's question:** *What's your favorite [sports] TEAM?* (looking for teams, not individuals; could be a team that you have personally played for or a college team or a pro team – doesn't necessarily need to be a sports team -- could even be a fictional team...like the X-men or Avengers or...the Incredibles)

TELL

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- Today we start a new session of stories that look at what happens after Jesus' crucifixion.
- In today's story, we will look at a story about Jesus' resurrection.
- To get us started with today's lesson, we'll begin with a video clip.
- The video clip is from a movie called "Coach Carter." In the clip, there's one member of the team who has not been listening to the coach. And the rest of the team mostly doesn't like how he's treated the coach. So the coach won't let him be part of the team unless he "earns it" by doing something like 1000 push-ups and 100 suicides (a type of running exercise) by the end of practice. Needless to say, the player tries, but can't do all those exercise. Let's see what happens.

WATCH MOVIE CLIP

ASK

- At the start of the clip, has the player who is trying to get back on the team done what he needs to do to get back on the team? (Nope)
- So what does the coach say to the player ("Nice try, but you're off the team")
- How does the team respond? (By saying that as a team they share each other's burdens and successes and then they start doing the exercises for the player, so that the player can meet the requirements to get on the team)
- Does the coach agree with this understanding? (Yes – with a head nod at the end and telling the assistant coach to keep count – possibly not shown on the rfour.org clip version)

TELL/Transition to scripture

- We live in a culture that cares more about individual performance than team performance – which is why YOU are graded in class instead of your whole class receiving one grade (or why you can't look at other people's tests when taking a test). It's also why individuals are remembered in history books more than groups or teams of people.
- So even when we are teams, it is difficult, sometimes, to THINK and ACT as a team – which is why there's something surprising about this movie clip where the team is actually thinking and acting like a team.
- It is also easy to think about and read the Jesus stories with this understanding of the importance of an individual – that the stories are about Jesus, not about a team.
- Although it is true that Jesus is a unique/prominent individual in the stories, the narrative arc of the pre-crucifixion Jesus stories IS about a formation of a team: That team is TEAM DISCIPLES.
- Think of Jesus as the coach of that team doing whatever he can to get them to be an actual team.
- And what the disciples are supposed to do as a team is follow Jesus/learn what he is teaching them about living God's better way.
- Jesus' death and resurrection is an important part of the formation of TEAM DISCIPLES.
- We'll see one way this team thing works in the following scripture story.
- The story takes place on Easter (Sunday) evening.

READ John 20:19-29 *(recommend class reads it out loud; one person per verse)*

19 When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." 20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. 21 Jesus said to them again,

"Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." 22 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 retain the sins of any, they are retained." 24 But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, 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 the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe." 26 A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, 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. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt 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 come to believe."

NOTE (just in case it comes up): *In verse 19, there's the phrase "fear of the Jews" – in the Gospel of John, this phrase "the Jews" refers to Jewish leadership, not the entire Jewish people. Important to note that the actual characters in the story, including Jesus, are also Jews.*

ASK (answers are in parenthesis)

- In verse 19 what day do you think is being referred to as "evening on that day" (The day that Jesus' body was not found in the tomb in the morning...it's Sunday/Easter evening)
- In verse 19, the doors are locked...and then who shows up? (Resurrected Jesus)
- Verse 20, do the disciples seem to understand what/who they are seeing? (Not really. They seem to need proof of identity – so Resurrected Jesus shows them his wounds)
- Why do you think the disciples didn't recognize Resurrected Jesus right away? (Because resurrection is different than resuscitation. Jesus wasn't just *revived*, he was resurrected – which means he's somehow *different*. Which is why he shows up in a locked room and isn't recognizable right away. Resurrected Jesus does not play by the same rules as everyone else. But he's not completely different, since he still has the marks of his crucifixion.)
- Verse 21 and 22 – what is Jesus doing here? (He's *still* teaching – giving instruction to the disciples. He's still coaching the team, telling them what to do – to do what he did. Think of a coach who says, "Play this way" and then shows the player how to play that way. That's what Jesus is doing here. Jesus did what he did because of God's Holy Spirit – and that's what he's showing his disciples in this moment – yet again. Forgiveness appears to be an important part of this teaching as well. NOTE: Jesus breathing on the disciples seems odd – but the Greek word for spirit and breath is the same word, "pneuma." So the two bolded words of "he **breathed** on them" and "Receive the **Holy Spirit**" refer to the same Greek word – in other words Jesus is sharing God's Holy Spirit with his disciples).
- Verse 24 – who doesn't see Resurrected Jesus? (Thomas)
- And why doesn't Thomas see Resurrected Jesus? (because he's not there)
- Verse 24 - Who *else* isn't there – hint: what three groups surround regular Jesus during his ministry? (The disciples, the **crowd** and the **Pharisees**)
- Did the people who did not join TEAM DISCIPLES experience Resurrected Jesus? (No, they did not)
- Verse 25 – Does Thomas believe his teammates when they tell him what happened? (No, he does not)
- Verse 26 – Next time TEAM DISCIPLES gather, who is with them? (Thomas)
- And because Thomas is with TEAM DISCIPLES, what happens? (He sees Resurrected Jesus)

TELL

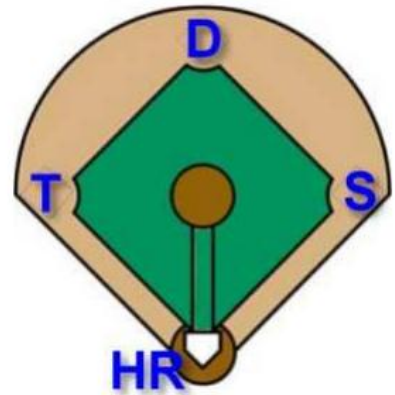
- There are certain things that we cannot do on our own, or if we can, it's not nearly as good as it would be if others joined us.
- For example, we can't play tug-of-war by ourselves.
- We can't play football, basketball, soccer or baseball by ourselves. (**Note:** *We can practice components of these things by ourselves, but we need others for the full experience*)
- In today's story (and just about every other story about Jesus' resurrection), we see that we do not experience resurrection and Resurrected Jesus by ourselves **because resurrection is a team event.**
- Thomas has doubts and doesn't see Resurrected Jesus because he doesn't do what the team is doing.
- But, the good news is, once Thomas rejoins the team, then he sees and experiences the Resurrected Jesus. *In other words, it is not too late for Thomas.*
- This is important for us to realize because this second chance that Thomas gets is a reminder that it is not too late for us to choose to join TEAM DISCIPLES.
- Then, if we keep at it, it will not be too late for us to experience Resurrected Jesus.
- A few things for us to remember if we decide to join TEAM DISCIPLES
 - By the time TEAM DISCIPLES experiences Resurrected Jesus, they have been together and learning together for quite awhile. Coach Jesus has been training them for 3 years (in the Gospel of John, anyways). So, experiencing Resurrected Jesus with TEAM DISCIPLES will not be an instantaneous thing. It takes time and practice.
 - How Resurrected Jesus appears is not how regular Jesus appeared. So it is highly unlikely that a current day TEAM DISCIPLES will experience Resurrected Jesus as a dude who appears in a locked room and starts showing off the holes in his hands.
- This process of experiencing resurrected Jesus also informs us of why the other teams (the Pharisees and Crowd) don't experience Resurrected Jesus. They aren't practicing in the same ways that TEAM DISCIPLES are practicing.
- So one question to consider is this: Once TEAM DISCIPLES experiences resurrection and Resurrected Jesus – what are they supposed to do? There's a few answers to this, but the simplest answer is that they become coaches for other TEAM DISCIPLES, just like Jesus was for them. We'll discuss this a little bit more in our next session.

TRANSITION to Activity

- For the rest of the class, since we've been talking about being on teams, and that there are certain things we cannot do on our own.
- In the realm of sports, this is particularly true for baseball.
- So our following activity is something that demonstrates, at least a little bit, this concept of not being able to do something on our own – where we need the team in order to know the full experience of the activity.
- So what we're going to do is play a game of trivia baseball.
- Here's how it works.

EXPLAIN HOW TO SET UP for ACTIVITY

- I'm going to pass out four note cards to everyone (if there are 6 or less participants, pass out 8 cards per person)
- On one card (or 2 cards if you passed out 8 cards per person) write a "S" on the side you won't write on.
- On the next card (or 2 cards if you passed out 8 cards per person), write a "D" on the side you won't write on.
- On the next card (or 2 cards if you passed out 8 cards per person), write a "T" on the side you won't write on.
- On the next card (or 2 cards if you passed out 8 cards per person), write a "HR" on the side you won't write on.
- These letters stand for single, double, triple, and home run, respectively.
- On each of these notecards, write an interesting fact about yourself.
- Do not write any names on the sheets, because the goal of the game is to guess whose fact is written on each sheet.
- The fact written on the single ("S") sheet should be the easiest to guess; the double ("D") sheet should be a little harder to figure out; the triple ("T") even harder; and the home run ("HR") should be the hardest. (Might want to provide questions to help the writing of personal facts – see end of lesson for options)
- Once everyone is finished writing your clues, we will sort them into four piles per team: singles, doubles, triples, home run.
- We will shuffle all the cards (keeping the decks separated by team and by the title on the front of the card) and then arrange the piles into four different corners of the room, in the shape of a baseball diamond (see image to the right)



EXPLAIN HOW TO PLAY the GAME

- The way Personal Trivia Baseball is played is somewhat similar to regular baseball.
- There are two teams (...make two teams)
- Each team has three "outs" per inning and tries to score as many runs as they can.
- There is a batting order for each team (that they determine – however, no one can bat again on a team until everyone has batted)
- When one team is up to bat, their current batter chooses to go for a single (easiest), double, triple, or home run (most difficult) by announcing it.
- Someone from the other team (the "Pitcher" – and if you want, you can have a "Pitching Order" as well) goes to the corresponding pile and picks a card from THEIR OWN TEAM and reads it aloud.
- The batter then guesses the name of someone on the other team who wrote the fact.
- Once s/he makes a guess, the guessed person on the other team simply says "yes" or "no" (no lying!).
- If the guess is correct, the person successfully gets on base with a single, double, triple, or home run and moves to that part of the room.
- If the guess is incorrect, then the team adds another "out".
- In either case, the next batter is up.
- Runners advance in the same way "ghost runners" do in playground baseball -- if someone gets a single and then the next batter gets a double, the runner on first will end up on third. If someone gets a double and then the next batter gets a single, then that runner on second would stay on second.
- The batting continues until there are three outs.
- Once there are three outs, it is time for the other team to bat.
- We will keep track of the number of runs each team has scored.

- The winner is the team with the higher score at the end.

Note to teachers: Keep playing until all the clues are revealed, or for a shorter game, set a time limit or a set number of innings.

PLAY BALL!

CLOSING PRAYER

ADDITIONAL RESOURCE -- *Questions to ask to help students provide facts for Baseball Game*

(Note: You must answer with a complete sentence. For instance, "1 brother, 2 sisters" is not acceptable. But "I have 1 brother and 2 sisters" IS acceptable.):

Suggested Questions To Answer For A Single

- How many siblings do you have?
- What's your favorite sports team?
- What school do you attend?

Suggested Questions To Answer For A Double

- What's your favorite color?
- What's your favorite food?

Suggested Questions To Answer For A Triple

- What is your birth date? (just month and day are needed)
- What is your favorite song?

Suggested Questions To Answer For A Home Run

- Where's the farthest place you've traveled to?
- What's your favorite movie?