

Children's Message for April 19th, 2020

Object: A copy of Robert Ripley's "Believe It or Not.", if you have access to it. Alternatively, you can use the examples below. There is also a Ripley's "Believe It or Not" comic strip online and other materials at ripleys.com

Scripture: John 20:19-31 (NRSV)

Jesus Appears to the Disciples

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."

Jesus and Thomas

24 But Thomas (who was called the Twin[a]), 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."

The Purpose of This Book

30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. 31 But these are written so that you may come to believe[b] that Jesus is the Messiah,[c] the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

Message

There is a very interesting book called "Believe It or Not" by Robert Ripley. Mr. Ripley enjoyed collecting strange and amazing bits of information which, although they seem unbelievable, were true. Let me share some examples of some of the amazing things he discovered.

A man by the name of James Cook once had a chicken that laid a perfectly square egg. Now, I've seen white eggs, brown eggs, even spotted eggs, but I have never seen a square egg. Have you? I think I'd have to see it to believe it!

Joann Barnes was a 15-year-old from California, and she once swung a lot of hula-hoops on her body at the same time! How many do you think she swung on her body? (Take guesses until kids say 68.) Can you believe that? I can't even keep one hula-hoop going. I think I would have to see that to believe it!

This book is filled with things that are very hard for me to believe. But do you know what? If it's true, it's true--whether I believe it or not!

In today's Bible lesson we learn that on the Sunday that Jesus rose from the grave, he appeared to a group of His disciples. One of the disciples, whose name was Thomas, was not with them. When the disciples told Thomas that they had seen Jesus and that he was alive, Thomas said, "I won't believe it

until I see it with my own eyes. I want to put my finger in the nail-prints in His hands—and place my hand where the spear was thrust into his side.

A week later, Thomas saw Jesus. Jesus invited Thomas to touch his hands where the nails had been. He told Thomas to put his hand in the wound in his side. Then Thomas believed! Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

A lot of people today won't believe that Jesus really rose from the grave because they haven't seen him with their own two eyes. Do you know what? It is true whether they believe it or not. You and I have never seen Jesus, but we believe. We know this by faith. We don't have to see it to believe it!

Prayer

Dear Jesus, thank You that You help us accept by faith that You have risen from the grave and that You are alive. In Jesus' name, amen.

Optional Activity

BELIEVE IT OR NOT GAME: Have everyone write three statements about themselves. Two of the statements should be true, and one of the statements will be false. Read the statements and see if they can guess which of the statements is not true.