

Lesson 1 / March 7, 2010

# The Sad Truth about Santa

for use as

## STEP 1

### Lesson 1 Focus:

Jesus is the answer to our doubts.

### Lesson 1 Bible Basis:

Luke 7:18-23

Students will explore the potential for and the problem of doubt.

've discovered something really tragic that may upset you. Are you sitting down? Are you ready for a shock?

Here it is: Santa Claus isn't real.

I know some of you still want to believe, but consider this scientific evidence from an article in *Spy* magazine. If Santa brought presents to all the good kids in the world, he'd have to visit more than 800 houses *every second*. To leave gifts at every house, the sleigh would need to carry 350,000 tons of presents. (That's heavier than a cruise ship.) As a result, Santa's sleigh couldn't be pulled by eight reindeer—it would take around 215,000 of them.

Plus, Santa would have to travel fast—3000 times the speed of sound. That's so quick that the sleigh would heat up, kind of like the Space Shuttle does when it comes back to earth. As a result, Saint Nick and his sleigh would burst into flames almost instantly. (Anybody want to try Fried Reindeer?)

So here's the sad truth: Santa wasn't the one who brought your bike without training wheels, it was your parent(s). And they ate the cookies and milk you left, too. I hope I haven't sent anybody into depression.

- Seriously, how many of you believed in Santa Claus as a kid? Does anybody remember when they found out he wasn't real?
- How did you feel? Were you okay with it, or did you feel like you'd been tricked?

As Christians, we believe in God. However, some people—even intelligent people—think God's existence is just as improbable as Santa's existence. They've come up with arguments about how the world evolved without any need for a Creator. They say Bible stories are fairy tales, and Jesus never rose from the dead. They tell us praying doesn't do any good.

- Why does it make more sense to believe in God than in Santa?

Lesson 1  
**Memory Verse**

“Believe the miracles,  
that you may know and  
understand that the  
Father is in me, and I  
in the Father.”  
—John 10:38b

The fact is, most people—even Christians—wonder about that sometimes. If we’re really honest, we start to question whether believing in God makes sense. Or maybe we just wonder if Jesus really loves us and listens to our prayers. Either way, questioning our faith can be a hard experience!

- ▶ **Think of a time when you experienced doubt. Would anyone like to tell us about it?** (*Encourage your students to share by possibly sharing first. Hopefully, some of the teens will follow suit, but don’t pressure them.*)
- ▶ **When you doubted, did you try doing anything to restore your faith? How did it work?**

Like I said, most people have had doubts at some point in their lives—and it’s no wonder! We’ve believed in other things during our lives (like Santa) that turned out not to be true. So we can’t help wondering if God is the same way.

But there’s good news if you have doubts about God. Our God doesn’t just sit up in heaven doing nothing. He came to earth, lived as a man, died on a cross, and rose from the grave! So we can ask the living Christ to help us believe . . . and He will.

In fact, He had some experience with doubters on earth. Let’s take a look at how Jesus responded when John the Baptist asked Him a really tough question. Jesus didn’t yell at him, or even act disappointed. Instead, Jesus helped John have more faith.

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your *Middle School Teacher’s Guide*; your Step 4 appears below.)

Source:

“Is There a Santa Claus?” by Richard Waller. It was originally published in *Spy* magazine, January 1990. You can find the article at the following link.

<http://www.theittlist.com/site/ittlist/ind/1786/>

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## STEP 4

### Lesson 1 Focus:

Jesus is the answer to our doubts.

### Lesson 1 Bible Basis:



Luke 7:18-23

Students will plan ways to deal with their doubts.

#### Materials:

- a small candle for each student
- a long taper candle
- matches

**O**ur ultimate resource in the midst of doubt is Jesus Himself, who's still alive in heaven to answer your prayers. He's always been merciful to questioners, and not just John the Baptist. Remember Thomas, the famous doubting disciple? After the resurrection, Thomas said he wouldn't believe until he saw Jesus alive and felt the nail holes from the cross. So what did Jesus do? He appeared to Thomas, so that even a doubter could believe! (See John 20:24-29.)

-  **What doubts are you experiencing right now?** (*Ask for volunteers to share.*)
-  **What are some things you could do this week to help you find answers for your doubts?** (*search the Bible for answers, ask your questions to mature Christians, pray and ask God to reveal the truth to you*)

If you're doubting, Jesus wants to help you. So let's conclude our time together by talking to Him.

If possible, dim the lights in your classroom. Distribute a small candle to each student.

For many years, people of faith have been using candles as symbols of prayer. The smoke rises towards heaven, just like our requests. So I'm going to give you a candle. As you light it in just a moment, say a prayer by telling God about a doubt that's bothered you. You don't need to pray out loud. Just whisper to God in the privacy of your heart

Then as the candle's smoke rises, imagine your doubt being carried away on the wind, into the hands of the One who can answer your toughest questions!

This doesn't mean you shouldn't get help with your doubts. If you have big questions, ask a mature Christian about them. God can use other people to help you. But don't let questions drag you down. Right now, you can give them over to Jesus and ask Him to show you the truth. He will speak to you if you are listening. It might not be right away, but eventually He will show you what you need to know.

Lesson 1  
**Memory Verse**

“Believe the miracles,  
that you may know and  
understand that the  
Father is in me, and I  
in the Father.”

—John 10:38b

Use a match to ignite the taper candle. Pass it around so that each student can use it to light their own small candle. Then close with a prayer for those who are doubting, perhaps using the famous words of the man who sought Jesus’ healing in Mark 9:24 “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!”

(David C. Cook is not affiliated with and does not endorse any Website listed on these pages.)