**GROWING TOGETHER:** FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Session 2 of 4

# Jesus and Thomas

### MEETING AIM

To allow the opportunity for children to understand that doubting is part of faith and to bring their doubts to Jesus.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

John 20:19-31

### BACKGROUND

This session plan is intended for use either in-person or online, depending on how you’re meeting. Adapt the activities to fit your situation.

Doubting is a normal part of the Christian faith. As we see Jesus answer our prayers and spend time with him, we grow in our faith. This session allows the children to safely explore and voice their doubts.

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### STARTING OUT – 5 mins

Start your time together with some simple refreshments. Chat about what the children have done this week and discuss the latest superhero or action film. Compare the heroes in different films. Which one is the best?

### INTRO ACTIVITY – 10 mins

**You will need:** pictures and brief descriptions of Robin Hood, King Arthur, Atlantis, Loch Ness Monster and Bigfoot (add your own if there are some local stories or legends); a chart with two columns: one with each legend’s name and the other headed: “Real of fake?”

Explain what ‘legend’ means to the group. Invite them to go on a ‘fact-finding mission’ around the room (or by sharing your screen if you’re online), looking at all the information provided. Give each child a chart and challenge them to decide whether the character was real or fake.

### BIBLE STORY – 10 mins

**You will need:** bingo sheets containing the twelve key words in bold; keys; nails; washing-up or latex gloves

Before the session, blow up the gloves and secure the ends. Hide these, the keys and nails around the room. (Or somewhere slightly visible behind you, if you’re online.) Make up bingo sheets with the bold words on.

Give out the bingo sheets and challenge the children to listen out for the words in the story. When they hear the words ‘key’, ‘nails’ or ‘hand’, they have to go and find (or spot) that item before crossing it off their sheet. Go on to tell this story:

Hi there, my name is **Thomas**. You may have heard of me before. Some people call me ‘Doubting Thomas’. I know why, but I don’t think it’s very fair. I just like to see stuff before I can believe it, that’s all!

The first part of my story I can only tell you because others have told me about it. My mates, the rest of Jesus’ squad (otherwise known as the **disciples**) won’t stop talking about it!

After Jesus had died, we were all pretty freaked out. **Scared** was an understatement. We thought the Jewish leaders would be coming for us next! And three days later, the squad had locked themselves away in a room so that they wouldn’t be found.

Apparently, while they were all hiding away, right into the middle of the room walked Jesus! I mean, Jesus, who was dead! Walking! Unbelievable! He showed them his **scars** and they just couldn’t believe their eyes. But they did. Believe their eyes, I mean.

Well, when they told me about it, I thought they’d lost the plot. Maybe all this fear and worry had gone to their heads! I said to them there and then that I wasn’t going to believe that kind of nonsense. Unless I saw with my own eyes the **nail** marks and put my finger where the **nails** were, and put my **hand** into his side, I was not going to believe it.

I mean, how could I? I know Jesus had done some unbelievable and impossible things when he was with us, but this was just a step too far. Coming back to life after that kind of awful death? I thought they’d gone **crazy**.

That is, until a week later. We were hiding again. I’d locked the doors with the **keys**. I knew those doors weren’t going to be opened without that **key**. We were safe. Or so I thought.

Without even unlocking and opening the **door**, Jesus appeared in the middle of the room!

Whoa. I’d seen some crazy things, but this just topped it off. I didn’t know what to say. Thankfully, Jesus did.

He showed me his **hands**. They had holes in them. He told me to put my finger right into the hole. I regretted my words then! And then he showed me the hole in his side where the spear had pierced him. Almost my whole hand went in there! That was one of the most horrible things I’ve done. But Jesus told me to stop **doubting** and believe.

I was speechless and totally amazed. The only words I could squeak out were: “My Lord and my God!”

It really was him. He really had come back to life. The rest of my squad looked pleased with themselves and I heard a few of them muttering: “**I told you so**.”

Jesus spoke to me again then: “Because you have seen me, you have **believed**,” he said. “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

Well, I couldn’t imagine not seeing Jesus and believing in him, but I guess that’s where you guys come into the story…

### CHATTING TOGETHER – 5 mins

Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns to contribute:

* If you’d been the rest of the disciples, how would you have tried to convince Thomas that Jesus had really appeared?
* What would you have done if you’d heard about Jesus appearing but hadn’t yet seen him?
* What does this tell us about Jesus?
* In what ways are we like Thomas?

### CREATIVE TIME – 10 mins

**You will need:** wax candles; watered-down paint; sheets of white paper or card

Invite the children to respond to this story by thinking about what they want to say to Jesus. Is there something they need help to believe? Or perhaps they need to see an answer to a prayer.

Ask each child to write their message to Jesus on the paper with the wax candle. Then show them how to paint over the paper, revealing the words. (If you’re online, ask parents or carers to provide the materials, or drop off a resource pack to each household before the session.)

### PRAYER – 5 mins

**You will need:** paintings from ‘Creative time’

Divide into pairs or threes. Using their secret messages, invite the children to pray for one another. If you’re online, ask the children to hold their pictures up to the camera and all pray together.

**HELEN HODGSON**

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