

Explore It

FOR LEADERS



LOTS OF QUESTIONS

John 20:24-29 Jesus appears to Thomas

Each child will need:

- A cardboard tube – for example, from a toilet or kitchen roll
- Pens/pencils and paper

You will need:

- A bag or pillowcase with one or two items inside like a toy elephant and a ball – see Start It section
- Pictures showing the evidence for the Truth game – see Truth game, Start It section

Start It

- **Say:** If I told you that I have been to the moon, would you believe that? Why or why not? What if I told you I brushed my teeth this morning? That might be a little more believable, but you still didn't watch me do it ... so you would have to take my word for it.
- **Say:** Look at this bag. Would you believe me if I told you I had an elephant in this bag? How do you know?

Have the children close their eyes – except for one child who gets to see inside, and ask that child again if it is an elephant. The others should hear that child give the answer 'Yes'. Ask the children whether they believe them. Take the toy elephant out the bag and hold it up.

- **Say:** Now that we can all see it, we can know for sure, right?

Play a Truth game. Say some statements and the children decide if they believe you or doubt you. Do a 'thumbs up' or 'thumbs down' to share their opinion.

All these statements are true! You can add some of your own examples if you like from the Guinness World Records.

- Hippopotamus milk is pink.
- They have square watermelons in Japan because they stack better.
- Kangaroos cannot jump backwards.
- Cans of Diet Coke will float in water, but regular Coke cans will sink.
- MacDonald's created bubblegum-flavoured broccoli.
- The heart of a shrimp is in its head.
- You can cut a cake into eight equal pieces with only three cuts.
- There is a pill that will make your poo smell of chocolate (had to include this one!).

Show pictures on the screen to show visual evidence that these are true; or prove some live, like slicing the cake in three cuts, or dunking the cans of Coke.

- **Say:** Now we can see – do you believe they are all true?
- **Say:** Today we will be looking at a story from the book of John. This is the story of a disciple named Thomas, who did not believe Jesus had come back to life. Jesus had risen from the dead and had appeared to his other disciples, but Thomas wasn't with them; so he had not seen Jesus. Thomas would not believe that Jesus was alive unless he could see Jesus with his own eyes and touch him.

Sing It

This song, based on Matthew 7:7, reminds us that God is always with us. We just need to ask!

'Ask, Seek, Knock' by Hillsong Kids

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J3vXskhIlig>

Tell It

Ask: Do we always have to see things in order to believe they exist? What are some things that we can't see but still know are there? (Give the children time to share their thoughts.)

☞ **Say:** We can't see the air all around us, but when the wind blows we can feel the air, or we can see the things it moves. We can't see sound waves, but when we hear a loud noise (use whistle to illustrate sound), we know that sound is real.

☞ **Say:** We can't see the love that our parents and friends have for us, but we feel their hugs and hear their loving words, and we know that their love is real.

☞ **Say:** Have you ever doubted God? Guess what – you are not alone! In our story today, someone had a hard time believing what others tried to tell him. The story of Jesus appearing to his disciples after Easter is so exciting. Imagine you had seen him die and you were really upset, but now you have just seen the most amazing thing – he was alive again! But one disciple missed out.

☞ **Say:** Thomas was not in the room when Jesus first came, and he didn't see him personally. He did not believe what his friends told him about seeing Jesus. Thomas said that he could not believe it, that he would not believe it, until he saw Jesus face to face and could touch him.

☞ **Say:** Then seven days later, Jesus showed up again, looked Thomas in the face and showed him his wounds. I wonder how Thomas felt? If he felt embarrassed? Or humbled? Or uncomfortable? Jesus wasn't upset with Thomas, and said, 'You believe because you see me.'

But then Jesus gave us this great message: 'Those who believe without seeing me will be truly blessed' (v29 NCV).

☞ **Say:** Jesus praised people who believed in him without having to physically see him face to face. Do you know who that is? That's us! We haven't physically seen Jesus, but we can still believe in him.

Ask: But how? How do we know about Jesus?

☞ **Say:** We might hear about Jesus from other people, and that is great. But we have the word of God, most importantly, in the Bible.

☞ **Say:** We know God exists because of the impact he has on our lives. He lets us know when we do wrong. He comforts us when we are sad. He answers our prayers. And the list goes on. Those who have faith that God is real know that he is active in their lives.

☞ **Say:** The Bible gives us great hope. We can't see God necessarily, but we see his evidence and know he gives us life. The Bible is God's word, given to us so that we can know and believe!

Watch the video *The Story of Doubting Thomas* by PursueGod Kids

<https://youtu.be/vLqX5VQTCbg>

Action It

☞ **Say:** Thomas had big questions about whether Jesus was alive or not. Sometimes we have questions too. I had questions and I still have questions. Sometimes they get answered, and sometimes not – but even when they are not, I trust in Jesus because I know I can trust him.

Ask: I am wondering if you have things you don't understand about God ...

Ask the group to each take a piece of paper, fold it in half and then half again – so when they open it, it has four sections. In each of the sections they write one of these words: hard, funny, me, God.

🗨 **Say:**

- ➔ In the 'hard' section, write down the hardest question that someone has ever asked you.
- ➔ In the 'funny' section, write down the funniest question you have ever been asked, or maybe a funny question you yourself have asked.
- ➔ In the 'me' section, write if there is a question that you want to ask about anything that is troubling you, worrying you, or something you don't understand.
- ➔ In the 'God' section, write if there is a question you might want to ask God or about God, to help you understand something better.

Give the children time to complete this, and then encourage anyone who wants to to share what they have written. Make sure you take some time to respond to the questions.

Pray It

Start the prayer time by doing the 'hole in your hand' optical illusion. With a toilet paper roll, look through it with your right eye. Then, place your left hand against the tube with your palm facing you. Look straight ahead with both eyes and you'll see it looks as if a hole has formed in your hand!

🗨 **Say:** The holes Jesus showed Thomas weren't illusions; Thomas had seen the nails driven in. But seeing wasn't the point; believing was what mattered then, and what still matters today. God gave Thomas what he needed, and while it's different for us, Jesus gives us today what we need, too.

🗨 **Say:** Jesus does not mind if we ask questions especially when we have doubts – he wants to help us understand.

Comment on some of the questions asked in today's session, and where appropriate include them in a closing prayer.

Explore It

Remember to send home the Explore It (For Me) and Explore It (Together) ideas for children and families.