

# Explore It

## FOR LEADERS



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### JESUS AND 'DOUBTING THOMAS'

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 **John 20:19-29** Jesus appears to his followers and to Thomas

 **AIM: To be honest about our doubts**

In our story today we find the disciples alone, afraid and unsure about the future. Jesus appeared to them bringing words of peace, but Thomas missed the moment. He struggled to believe Jesus had risen from the dead. Today we explore what it means to doubt and how we can claim God's peace when things feel uncertain.

Each child will need:

→ Memory verse colouring-in poster and pens/pencils

You will need:

→ A container

→ Questions handout

## Start It

 **Say:** In the TV programme *Would I Lie to You?* contestants have to convince the opposite team that they are telling the truth. They must answer questions about their story and the opposing team then talks through what they believe and discuss doubts they have about what they have heard. For our starter today we're going to listen to one of the stories and decide whether it is the truth or a lie.

Watch the first part of the story and discuss whether they think it is the truth or a lie. Encourage the children to think about the parts of the story that make them doubt that it is true. Ask each child to share whether they think it is true or false and then decide on a group answer together. You can choose whether you want to show the part where the opposing team discusses their answer or skip to the part where they share their decision.

Watch the end of the clip to discover if Greg was telling the truth. Discuss the outcome and remind the children not to play 'snorkel parka, music practice room' at school!

**0:00-3:14:** Listen to Greg's Story

**3:15-3:53:** The team discuss their answer (optional)

**3:54-4:28:** Greg's answer is revealed

The clip has been reviewed to check it is appropriate for the age group, but please be aware of any pop-ups or ads that may appear if shown directly from YouTube. It may be advisable to download the clip in advance.

## Video

*Would I lie to you: David Mitchell and Richard Osman take part in Greg Davies' made up game!* by *Would I Lie to You?* (4 mins 28 secs)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=Akee4fJgAMA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Akee4fJgAMA)

## Sing It

**Say:** In our story today the disciples are afraid. Having watched Jesus die on the cross, he then appeared to them, bringing words of peace. Our song for today reminds us that each one of us can feel the peace of Jesus.

'Peace Like a River' kids worship motions with lyrics by CJ and Friends (1 min 40 secs)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=d6085sLXCMs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d6085sLXCMs)

## Tell It

**Say:** A couple of weeks ago we joined Jesus on his journey to Jerusalem as the crowd shouted words of praise. Last week we heard how the shouts of praise turned to cries of 'Crucify him!'. We watched as Jesus died on the cross and was buried in the tomb. Today we find out what happened next in the Gospel of John.

**Say:** At this point in the story the disciples were all gathered together in one room, and they were afraid.

### Ask:

- What do you think they were scared of?
- How would you have felt if you were a disciple at that time?

**Say:** Let's find out what happened next in the Gospel of John.

### Read:

#### Jesus appears to his followers

**'It was the first day of the week. That evening Jesus' followers were together. The doors were locked, because they were afraid of the Jews. Then Jesus came and stood among them. He said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. His followers were very happy when they saw the Lord.**

**'Then Jesus said again, "Peace be with you! As the Father sent me, I now send you." After he said this, he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven. If you don't forgive them, they are not forgiven."**

#### Jesus appears to Thomas

**'Thomas (called Didymus) was not with the followers when Jesus came. Thomas was one of the twelve. The other followers told Thomas, "We saw the Lord."**

**'But Thomas said, "I will not believe it until I see the nail marks in his hands. And I will not believe until I put my finger where the nails were and put my hand into his side."**

**'A week later the followers were in the house again. Thomas was with them. The doors were locked, but Jesus came in and stood among them. He said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here. Look at my hands. Put your hand here in my side. Stop doubting and believe."**

**'Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"**

**'Then Jesus told him, "You believe because you see me. Those who believe without seeing me will be truly happy."**

— (John 20:19-29 ICB)

Cut out the questions from the Questions handout, fold them up and place them in a container. Ask a child to remove a question and read it out for the rest of the group. Discuss the answer together and then move on to a different child to select another question.

**Say:** Jesus said to **all** the disciples, including Thomas, 'Peace be with you!' Rather than being angry with Thomas, Jesus wanted to reassure him and strengthen his faith. It's OK for us to have doubts, but Jesus is the only one who can bring us peace when they surface.

## Action It

**Say:** We can all understand why Thomas found it difficult to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead and why he struggled with doubts. Having said that, we also need to remember all the time Thomas had spent with Jesus. He had seen Jesus heal the sick, teach the people, and perform miracles.

**Say:** Sometimes when we are afraid or filled with doubt, we forget all the amazing things God has done in our lives. We forget all the reminders around us of his goodness. Today we are going to use our memory verse to remind us who God is and to help us when we doubt that he is with us.

### Memory verse poster

Give each child a memory verse colouring-in poster. The children can colour in and decorate the decorative memory verse, then decorate the rest of the sheet with reminders of God's goodness. Perhaps they could draw pictures that represent times God has answered their prayers or recreate scenes in nature that remind them that God is with us. When they have completed their pictures, they can share them with the rest of the group and then practise the memory verse together.

### Memory verse

**'You are my God, and I will thank you.  
You are my God, and I will praise your greatness.  
Thank the Lord because he is good.  
His love continues for ever.'**

— (Psalm 118:28-29 ICB)

## Pray It

**Say:** In today's story the disciples were filled with fear and doubt, but Jesus brought a surprising message. After watching Jesus taken away and killed on the cross, they must have been afraid the same might happen to them, but Jesus said, 'Peace be with you!' The surprising thing was that nothing had changed in their situation. Following Jesus was still a risky business, but they knew Jesus was with them and they felt his peace.

**Say:** We are now going to have a time of peace and quiet where you can bring your doubts and fears to Jesus. Find a quiet place to rest or lie down and spend time with Jesus as you listen to the music.

### Video

'It is well with my soul' by Audrey Assad (4 mins 10 secs)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=zY5o9mP22V0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zY5o9mP22V0)

Although a YouTube clip is provided for this activity, the children do not need to see the screen as the focus is on listening to the music. When the song finishes, close the session in prayer.

*On a separate note, just for leaders, the singer Audrey Assad is currently on her own journey of doubt and, despite her successful recording career, is unsure whether she would even describe herself as a Christian any more. Although this may not be a discussion point for your group, we wanted to share the reason behind choosing this particular song and singer.*

Remember to send home the *Explore It Ideas* for children and families.

# Explore It

## IDEAS

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.

APRIL  
SESSION 03

### JESUS AND 'DOUBTING THOMAS'

 John 20:19-29 Jesus appears to his followers and to Thomas

© AIM: To be honest about our doubts

## FOR ME

## TOGETHER



### Explore

When we feel afraid or are doubting Jesus is with us, we can be reassured by his words of peace. Dive into your Bible and see if you can find five Scripture verses that talk about God's peace.



### Play

In this week's session we watched a clip from the TV show *Would I Lie to You?* Ask the people at home to write down a statement and play the game together to find out if it is 'true' or 'false'.



### Song for the week

'Peace like a River' kids worship motions with lyrics by CJ and Friends

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### Memory verse

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### KIDS ALIVE! ONLINE

<https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/kidsalive>

*Kids Alive!* The UK's only weekly Christian comic – is filled with jokes, competitions, Bible-based cartoons and much more... and is now available to read online!

