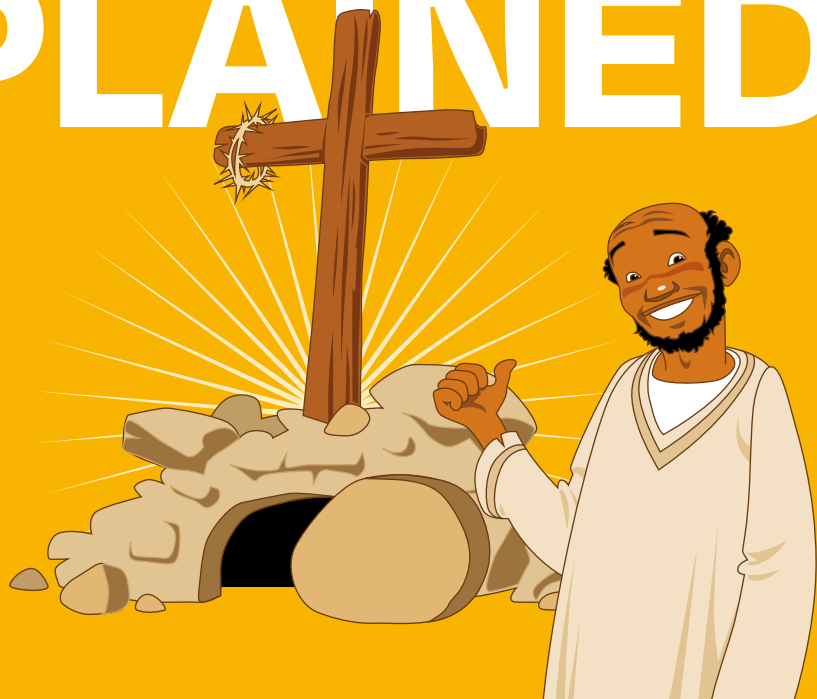


ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

# EASTER EXPLAINED



LESSON 4



**THE LOCKED ROOM:  
"STOP DOUBTING AND BELIEVE!"**

JOHN 20:19-20, 24-29

**faith**  **kids**

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Easter Explained

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We recommend the International Children's Bible for use with children during the lesson. Our leader's notes use the New International Version.

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'All for the glory of God alone' (1 Corinthians 10:31)

# THE LOCKED ROOM: "STOP DOUBTING AND BELIEVE"

JOHN 20:19-20, 24-29



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## Big Idea:

Because we know that Jesus is alive, we can believe that he is God.



## Faith in Kids looks like:

Children who trust Jesus as their Lord even though they can't see him.

## Preparation



### WHERE ARE WE GOING?

We leave the action in John's gospel with a challenge ringing in our ears – what is our response to the information we have heard? What do we make of Jesus? Who do we believe he is and what difference will that make? The resurrection of Jesus means he is God. We trust him as Lord. We will rise, just like he did, to be with him one day too, let's stop doubting and believe.



### LOOK AT THE PASSAGE

#### Peace, not fear (v19–20)

The disciples were gathered, they'd heard the stories of Mary, Peter and John, but there was uncertainty and fear. They were afraid of the Jewish leaders, hiding behind locked doors – perhaps worried that people thought they had stolen Jesus' body (Matt 28:13). But then Jesus came and stood amongst them and said, "Peace be with you." What beautifully soothing words to hear – I'm here, bringing peace, you are not alone. No yelling, no disappointment that they are hiding in fear. How good is Jesus – they will be OK because he is with them, for them and will help them.

#### Belief, not doubt (v24–28)

Poor Thomas gets a bad deal – "doubting Thomas". He wasn't there when the others saw Jesus, it just felt too good to be true, so he stated his terms; he'd believe only when he saw and touched Jesus' scars. The overwhelming kindness of Jesus is displayed again. Thomas got to see, touch and hear his saviour say "Peace be with you... stop doubting and believe." Thomas responded brilliantly – "My Lord and my God!" Let's notice the positive and rename him "believing Thomas" because, ultimately, it's how we finally respond to Jesus that matters.



## Notes

Pray and read the Bible passage. Read *Where are we going* and *Look at the passage* to give you a better understanding of how to apply the truth.

## Faith, not sight (v29)

As we follow the action in the room, we might wonder why we can't share Thomas' experience. But wonderfully, verse 29 is our saviour thinking about **us** – here is the same incredible kindness to us, “blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” Jesus loves us for believing without hands-on experience. All that time ago, he knew what we needed to hear, WOW! A saviour as kind and loving as this is worth praising and following.



*This truth is for your heart too.*



### WIN MY HEART

Thomas was honest, he openly stated his “Unless I... I will not believe” and we're quick to point out his doubt problem. If we are honest, we all have our own versions: “Unless I see some fruit in Sunday school, I will not believe it's worth carrying on”; “Unless this problem goes away, I will not believe that you really love me”; “Unless things start to get easier, I will not believe that being a Christian is worth it.”

Our risen Saviour stands before us and says, “Stop doubting and believe”! His unending love is written on his hands and feet, our future is certain because he is alive. Every effort we make to speak of Jesus and live for him is worth it, because standing before him is where everyone's journey ends. So we point to him with our words, lives and time, despite our circumstances. Let's hear our risen Saviour speak peace to our fears and doubts today – “Stop doubting and believe”.

## Questions for your heart

- Where in life are you tempted to say, “unless I... I will not believe”?
- What difference could it make in those moments to remember that Jesus is alive and Lord of all?



### 5 MINUTES TO FOCUS ON YOUR GROUP

Do your children show any signs of believing that Jesus is alive? Do they doubt that he was really real, that he has really risen? How can you encourage your children to be honest about their doubts, with Jesus and with others?

For those who believe that Jesus is their living Lord, does this make a difference to their everyday lives? How can you encourage them in this?

*What do the children in your group need?*

*Pray for them:*

- to grasp the truth
- to live it out
- to rely on the Spirit



## ALL TOGETHER TIME



This has been written as an all age slot to introduce the whole church family to what the children are learning today, but it could be adapted for the children's classes.



### You will need

three pictures of camouflage and one of a party goer, scarf, party hat, glasses, gloves and a helper to act as Thomas.



### What to Say



### What to Do

I've got a challenge for you – I'm going to show you some pictures and you need to see if you can spot who is hiding:

1. A jaguar camouflaged in the jungle
2. An owl camouflaged in a tree
3. A wildlife cameraman camouflaged

Use images from the internet.

Ask children to spot the hidden animals / person in the picture

They are doing a really good job of hiding aren't they?

Today our Bible story starts with the disciples hiding. They were all together in a room with the doors locked, because they were afraid. That's a surprise! Peter and John had seen the empty tomb, Mary had met the risen Jesus and she'd told the other disciples "I have seen the Lord." Why weren't they out telling the world the amazing news that Jesus is alive?!

They were behaving like this...

When they should have been behaving like this...

Put a scarf over your head to hide  
Put party hat on and shout "hooray!"

Then, all of a sudden, Jesus appeared, right in the middle of the room and said – "What are you all doing hiding in here? Get out there!"  
OH wait – sorry, let me read what actually happened, from the Bible.  
*Read verse 19-20: Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"*

Wow, how kind is Jesus? When they were afraid he came, bringing words of peace. They saw him alive and THEN they started the party!

Have you heard the phrase "FOMO", fear of missing out, when we worry that everyone is doing something better than us?

There was a disciple called Thomas who missed out on seeing Jesus.

So when everyone told him "Hey Thomas, Jesus is really alive, he was here, you missed it, he really has risen from the dead",

Thomas said "Unless I **SEE** the nail marks in his hands, unless I **TOUCH** where the nails were and the wound in his side, I will not believe."

Get a helper to act as Thomas

Put a pair of glasses on Thomas  
Put some gloves on Thomas

continued →

## What to Say

## What to Do

Have you heard the phrase "FOMO", fear of missing out, when we worry that everyone is doing something better than us?  
There was a disciple called Thomas who missed out on seeing Jesus. So when everyone told him "Hey Thomas, Jesus is really alive, he was here, you missed it, he really has risen from the dead",  
Thomas said "Unless I **SEE** the nail marks in his hands, unless I **TOUCH** where the nails were and the wound in his side, I will not believe."

Get a helper to act as Thomas

Put a pair of glasses on Thomas

Put some gloves on Thomas

We can all be like Thomas – finding reasons to not believe, trying to make deals with God: "Unless my friends believe in you, I won't"; "Unless you give me what I'm asking for, I won't trust you."  
Jesus has done enough by dying and rising again to prove that you can trust him forever. He loves you, he's for you – you can stop doubting and believe.

One week later, the disciples were all together again, in the room, doors locked – but this time, Thomas was there.  
Jesus appeared and said again – "Peace be with you!"  
Jesus went to Thomas and said, "Put your finger here, put your hand here – stop doubting and believe."

Act out showing hands and side

Thomas got this next bit right.  
He said to Jesus, "My lord and my God!"  
He was now certain that Jesus is the risen son of God, the King of the universe, the one who has beaten sin and death and is worth trusting and following forever.

You might be thinking "It's alright for Thomas, he got what he wanted. He got to see, he got to touch. But what about us? We can't do that."  
In the next verse, something really amazing happens – Jesus talks to Thomas about us – about you and me!  
"Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."  
That's us! We don't get to see with our eyes, or touch with our hands – that's why God made sure John wrote down what Thomas saw. He put it in the Bible for us so that we can be as sure as Thomas was.

Put the glasses and gloves on yourself

Take off the glasses and gloves – put on the floor

We get to believe in our hearts because of what we have read, what we have been told, what God by his spirit helps us understand.  
That Jesus Christ is the risen King of the universe and we are his people!

Thomas was changed that day - from doubting to believing.  
The disciples changed – from being afraid and hiding to excitedly sharing the good news of Jesus.  
What difference does it make to you that Jesus is alive – will you ignore him or will you trust and follow him?

Show camouflage and party picture contrast again

## Pray



## 7s and under




### GET GOING

#### What is in the bag?

Have a feely bag / drawstring bag so that the children can feel inside without seeing the object. Have a couple of familiar objects to feel and guess what they are, e.g. an apple, toy car, toothbrush, teddy. You could also use an ordinary bag and scarf as a blindfold.

Allow the children to take turns guessing – highlight that they are trusting what their hands can feel.

 **Link:** Today we learned that Thomas wanted to touch Jesus' hands and side before he would believe that Jesus was really alive again.



### TEACHING TIME

#### Happy, not sad (v19–20)

Ask one child to pretend to be Jesus – they could put a cloak on, or you could draw a felt tip dot on their hands like a nail mark.

Ask the other children to sit in a circle - they are going to be the disciples, hiding in a room with the door locked. Peter, John and Mary have told them about the empty tomb. Mary met Jesus and knows he is alive. But the disciples are afraid - afraid of the people who sent Jesus to the cross.

Ask the children to act out looking worried, frightened and mumbling to one another.

As the children mumble, Jesus stands in the middle and says "Peace be with you!" He shows the nail marks on his hands and they know it is really Jesus, he really is alive!

Get everyone to smile and shout HOORAY!

continued →



### Notes

*Flexible resource: look at both lesson plans, pick what works for your group.*

*Use this activity to introduce today's theme.*

*Use a suitable Bible translation - we use the International Children's Bible (found online at [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)).*

**You will need:** glasses, gloves, felt tip pen, possibly a cloak

## Believing, not doubting (v27)

Someone was missing from the room when Jesus first appeared. His name was Thomas.

Play Thomas yourself – sit in the middle of the circle and ask the children what happened the other day. Say that you don't believe them.

Everyone must have been desperate for Thomas to believe them, but Thomas said I want to...

- See with my own eyes – *get everyone to point to their eyes as you put the glasses on.*
- Touch with my own hands – *get everyone to wiggle their fingers as you put some gloves on.*
- Then I will believe that Jesus is alive again – *get everyone to do a little dance*

A week later, Jesus came back to Thomas – *use the helper with felt tip nail marks on their hands.*

Thomas got to see Jesus' hands with his own eyes – *look at the hands, point to your eyes.*

Thomas got to touch Jesus' hands with his own hands – *touch the hands, wiggle your fingers.*

Thomas believed that Jesus was alive again – nod your head /shout HOORAY! Do a dance!

## Trusting, not seeing (v29)

Jesus said to Thomas, "Because you have seen me, you have believed". Then Jesus said something about other people; "blessed are people who have not seen but have believed."

Jesus was talking about us - people who don't see him or touch him but who believe because of what they hear and read about him. He says "well done, you are blessed!" - show each other a thumbs up.

Can you give me your reason for being sure Jesus is alive, even though we haven't seen him? *Give options if there are few answers - because the stone was rolled away, because the angels arrived, because the tomb was empty, because Mary met Jesus at the tomb, because Jesus arrived in the locked room meeting all the disciples.*

That's us – Jesus says "good job, bless you all, keep it up" – show each other a thumbs up.

- Jesus is alive, that means we have good news on even a sad day.
- Jesus is alive – we can trust him all the time.
- Jesus is alive – He will help us keep on believing in him until the day we get to see him and touch him and hug him in heaven.

continued →







## BRAIN BREAK

### "Faith not sight"

Put the children in teams of two or three - one is the leader, the others are the followers. The followers are blindfolded and have to trust the leader, they place their hands on the shoulders of the person in front who has to take them safely around all the obstacles and lead them to the reward.

➡ **Link:** You had to trust, even when you couldn't see, that the person you were following was going to take care of you and get you to the prize. We trust in Jesus, even though we don't get to see him yet, he will help us and lead us safely home to be with him one day.



*A chance to rest the children's minds before Heart and Hands. Get moving and have fun with this game.*

**You will need:** A reward of sweets / stickers on one side of the room, simple obstacles to navigate and scarves as blindfolds.



## HEART & HANDS

### Blessed are you who have not seen but have believed glasses

**Prepare in advance:** cut out the glasses and stick them together.

Stick black paper over the lenses of the glasses, or colour the lenses in black so that you cannot see through them. Decorate the glasses with crayons/felt tips.

➡ **Link:** As the kids decorate their glasses, remind them that God says that **we** are blessed because we have not seen but have believed.

*Make a craft and have a chat. Give the children time to reflect on today's big truth, so it can impact their hearts.*

**You will need:** print out of page 13 on card - or buy craft glasses to decorate, black paper or black felt tip pens, crayons, scissors, glue

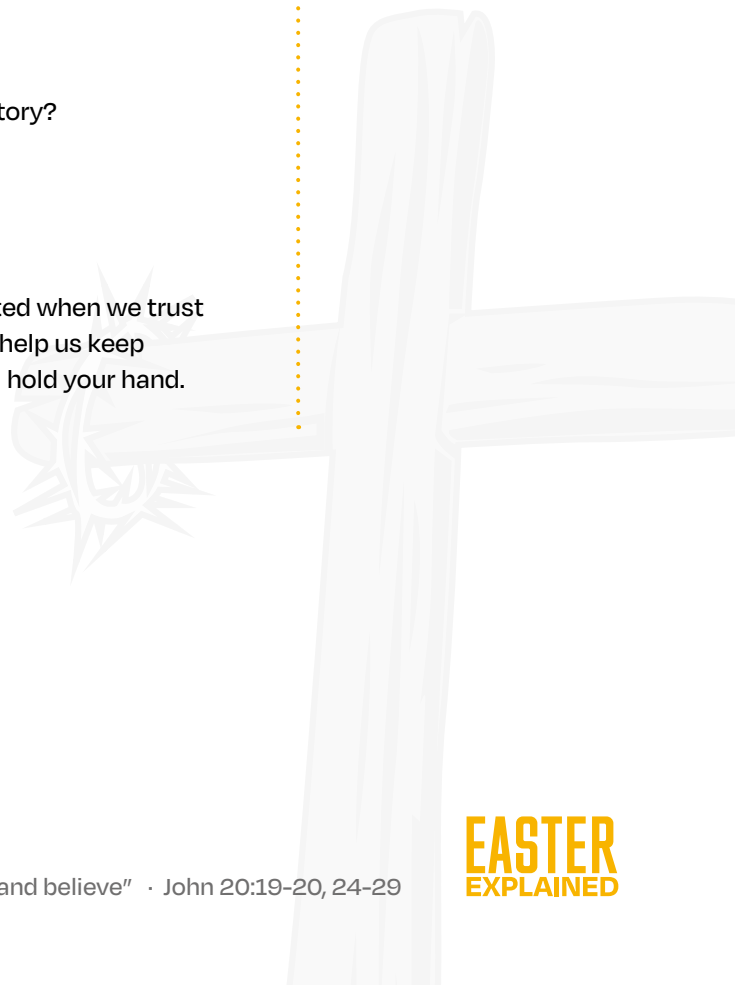
### Think time

**Big question:** What did the disciples believe about Jesus in the story?

**A follow up question:** What do you believe about Jesus?

### Pray

Thank you Jesus that you are alive again and that you are delighted when we trust in you. Help us to remember that you are alive and that you will help us keep trusting you until the day we see you with our own eyes and can hold your hand.  
*Amen.*





## 8s and over




### GET GOING

#### Odd one out?

Read out a statement and ask the group to write down what they think will be the most common answer to the question – try and guess what everyone else will say and see if there is an ‘odd one out’ who gives a different answer to everyone else.

- What is the best fast food restaurant?
- Name the tastiest flavour of crisps?
- What is the worst lesson in school?
- What is the best lesson in school?
- What is the nicest chocolate bar?

 **Link:** This game was about guessing what most people would say. At the start of today's Bible story, all but one of the disciples gave the same answer to a question - Thomas was the odd one out.



### TEACHING TIME

#### Seeing and believing (v19–20, 24–27)

Have the Bible Passage open and work together to read the passage and fill in the table - *examples included to help you stay on track.*

Or let them work in 2s / 3s with feedback after each section, depending on reading ability etc.

Verses to read	What do the disciples see?	What does Jesus say?	What does Thomas see?	What is the response?
v19, 20, 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus alive</li> <li>• His hands</li> <li>• His side</li> </ul>	"Peace be with you"	Nothing, he isn't there	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciples – change from fear to joy</li> <li>• Thomas – doubts his friends</li> </ul>

continued →



### Notes

*Flexible resource: look at both lesson plans, pick what works for your group.*

*Use this activity to introduce today's theme.*

*Use a suitable Bible translation - we use the International Children's Bible (found online at [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)).*

#### You will need:

Bibles, a large sheet of paper with the table drawn out, pens.



Verses to read	What do the disciples see?	What does Jesus say?	What does Thomas see?	What is the response?
v25-27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jesus alive</li> <li>Jesus being kind to Thomas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Peace be with you!"</li> <li>"Put your finger here"</li> <li>"Stop doubting and believe"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jesus alive</li> <li>His hands</li> <li>His side</li> <li>Nail marks</li> </ul>	Thomas – changes from "I will not believe" to "My Lord and my God!"

In these verses the disciples start out hiding in fear in a locked room and then change to being overjoyed because they know that Jesus is alive.

And we see Thomas change - from doubting and unsure to believing and praising Jesus. These changes were caused by seeing Jesus and hearing him speak comforting words.

### Trusting not seeing (v29)

We were not in the room that day, but Jesus said something to Thomas about us - people like you and me! Let's look together at verse 29. What does Jesus say about us? *"Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."*

Jesus is telling us that he knows it's a harder deal to believe without seeing, but it's still what we need to do, to know the blessing of peace with God and Jesus as Lord. We can trust him, we can believe, it is worth it.

What allows us to believe? *Evidence of the Bible - the words of those who did see and touch. Faith of others. Faith that Jesus kept his promise to rise again.*

Believing Jesus is alive and in heaven means that we don't have to be afraid of the future, we don't even need to fear death, because Jesus has beaten it and is in heaven. Jesus has promised to help us keep trusting and believing in him, even though we can't see him with our eyes or touch him with our hands - until the day we do see him and can hug him and be with him forever.



### BRAIN BREAK

#### "Faith not sight"

Put the children in teams of two - one person is blindfolded, the other is the guide. The guide has to speak instructions to get their partner across the room, around the obstacles. The blindfolded person has to trust their guide and listen for the right voice leading them safely to the reward. Swap over, moving the obstacles if you have time.

**Link:** You had to trust that your guide was going to take care of you and get you to the reward even though you couldn't see where you were going. We trust in Jesus, even though we don't get to see him yet, he will help us and lead us safely home to be with him one day.

*A chance to rest the children's minds before Heart and Hands. Get moving and have fun with this game.*

#### You will need:

A reward of sweets / stickers on one side of the room, simple obstacles to navigate and scarves as blindfolds.



## HEART & HANDS

### Did you spot it?

- How did Jesus prove to the disciples that he was really alive?
- Who was missing?
- What did Thomas want?

### Work it out

- Why didn't Thomas believe what his friends told him at first? What changed his mind?
- If you had been there, what would you have said to Thomas when he refused to believe that Jesus was alive?
- How are we blessed, even though we don't get to see Jesus and touch him?

### Live it out

- Why might we find it hard to believe that Jesus is alive? What do you think Jesus would say to us?
- Thomas responded to the living Jesus by saying, "My Lord and my God!" What might living with Jesus as Lord look like in your life this week?

### Extra stretch

- When do you stamp your feet, like Thomas, and say, "Jesus hasn't done enough to convince me"? Is it OK for us to have doubts and questions about Jesus and faith? What should we do with them?
- What evidence do we have that Jesus is alive – is it enough?
- Look at John 20:30-31. What does John the gospel writer and best friend of Jesus want for you as you walk away from his book?

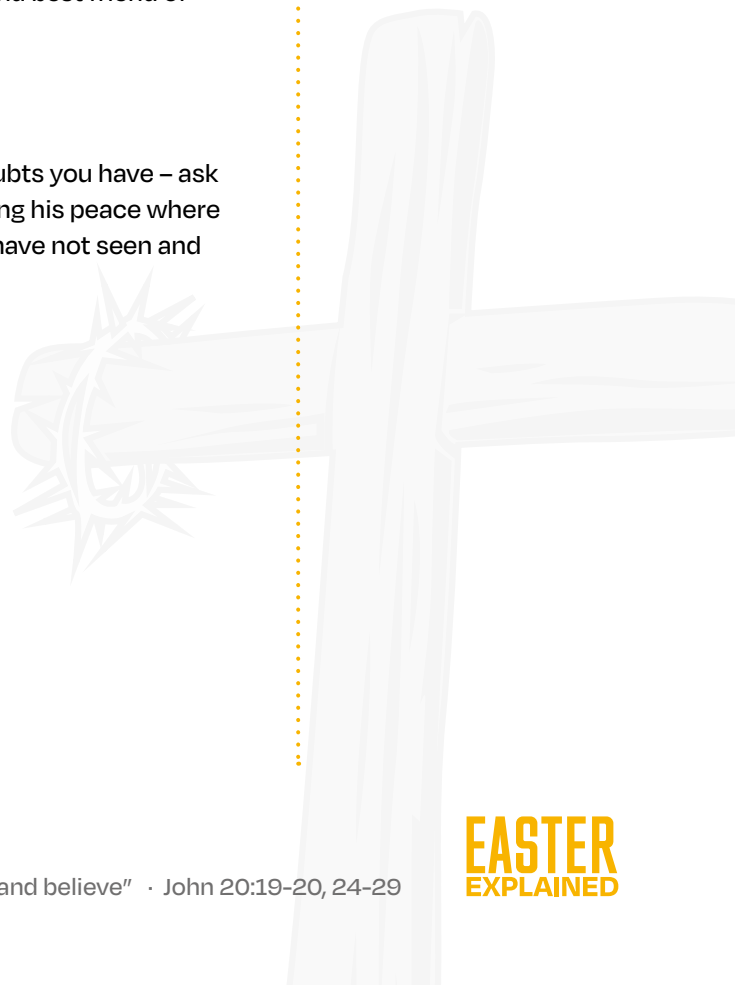
### PRAY

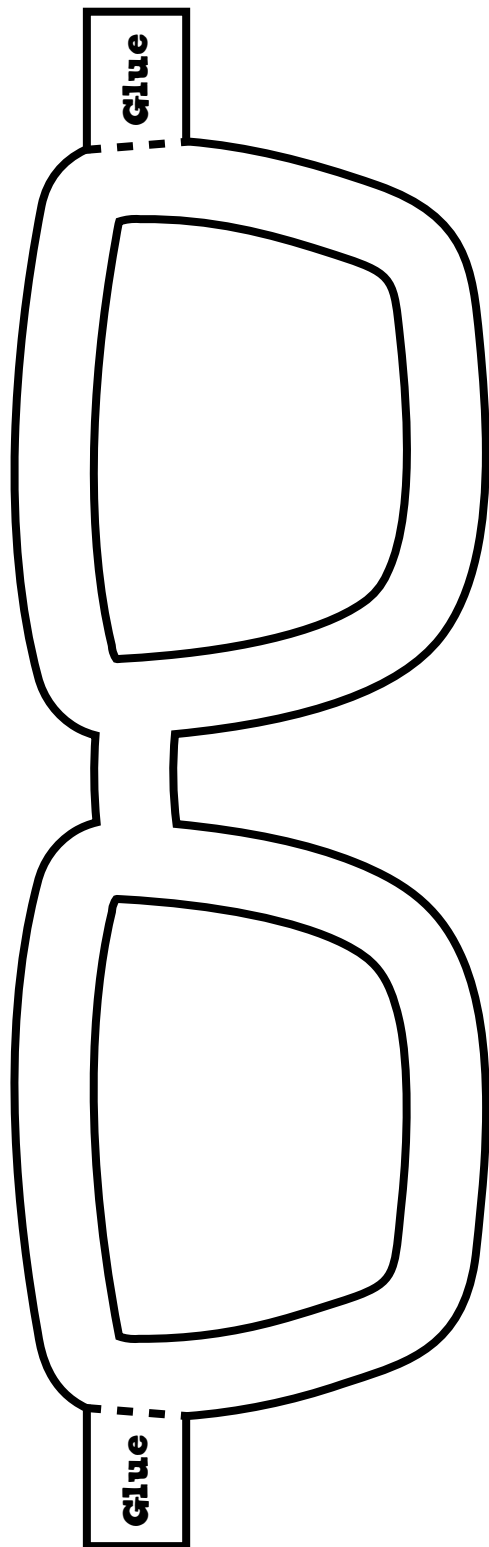
- Thinking about what you believe about Jesus and what doubts you have – ask Jesus to help you stop doubting and believe, ask him to bring his peace where you are afraid, thank him for saying "blessed are you who have not seen and yet believe."



*A chance to reflect and chat about how the truth, through the Spirit's work, changes our thoughts (head), feelings (heart) and actions (hands).*

*Use the **Chat Time** sheet (see page 14) – you could enlarge it and work on it together. Hand out sticky notes so children can still respond personally.*





“Stop doubting and believe”

JOHN 20:27



## DID YOU SPOT IT?



Look at John 20:19-20 and 24-25

**How did Jesus prove to the disciples that he was really alive?**

**Who was missing?**

**What did Thomas want?**



## WORK IT OUT

**If you had been there, what would you have said to Thomas when he refused to believe it?**

**Why didn't Thomas believe what his friends told him?**

**What changed his mind?**



Thomas,



**How are we blessed, even though we don't get to see Jesus and touch him?**



## LIVE IT OUT

**Why might we find it hard to believe that Jesus is alive? What do you think Jesus would say to us?**

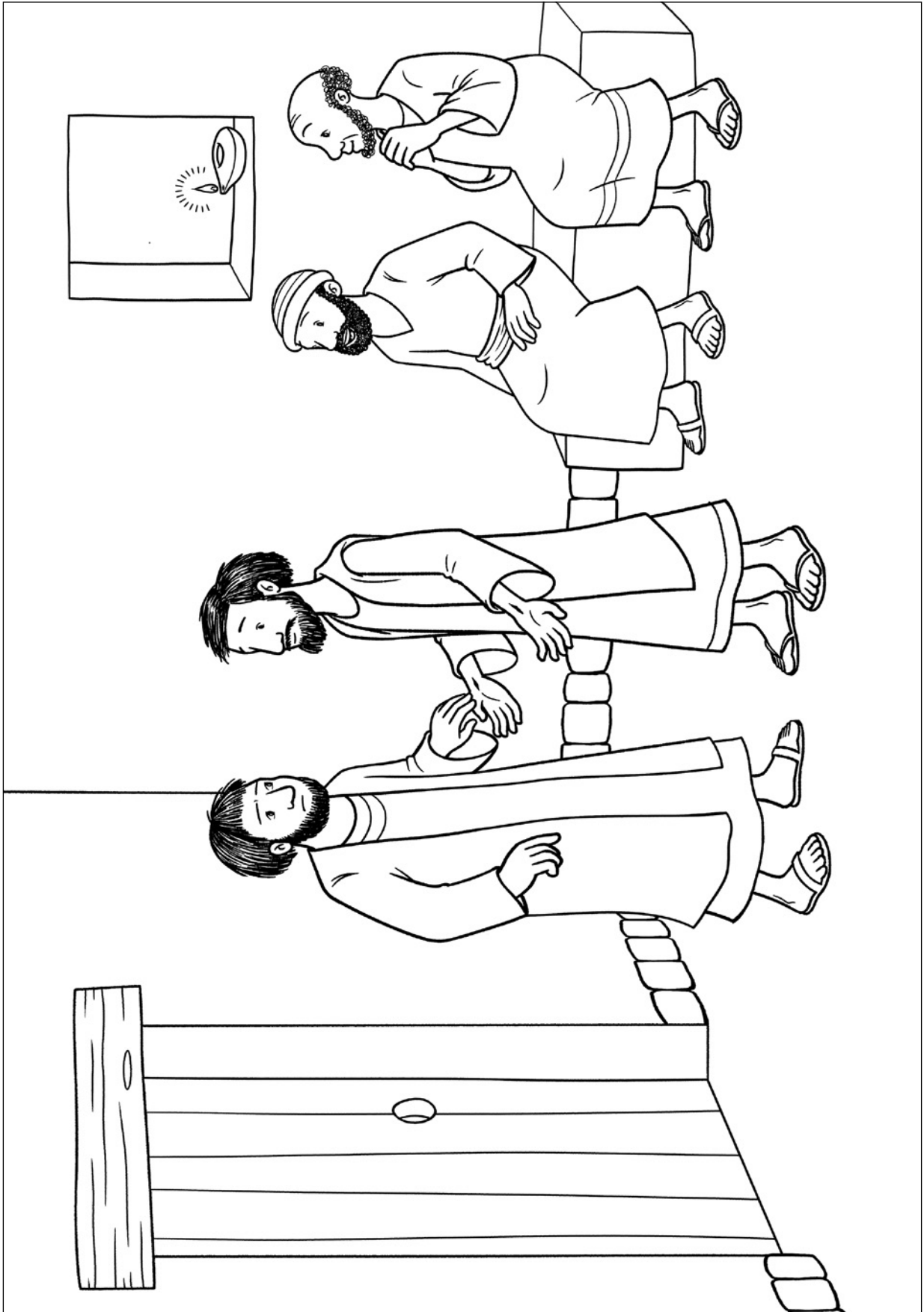


Thomas responds to the living Jesus...

"My Lord and my God"

**What might living with Jesus as Lord look like in your life this week?**







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