

Welcome to Families on Faith Adventures @ Home!

This resource has been put together for you by the United Reformed Church Children's and Youth Work team and the synod CYDOs and their equivalents.

We hope you will enjoy sharing a time of faith and fellowship together as a family through these stories, games, activities, and prayers. They are designed as a 'pick and mix' of ways to experience God's message through the Bible, exploring what it means to you and express that in words and action. They are not linked to the lectionary but can be used in any order as we explore all the different parts of the Bible.

The Walking the Way challenges are one way of continuing our walk with Jesus throughout the week.

These ideas are designed to be intergenerational - maybe even to be shared with family or friends via the internet.

These activities are planned to be used together as a family and under adult supervision. Please be aware of your family's ages and abilities as some activities may need more adult support than others. **Stay safe and have fun!**



With many varieties of activities and things to do to help explore the theme. Look out for this 'hands on' symbol.

This week's Bible story is:

How Will You Meet Him?

John 20 verses 24-29



Get to know your Bible

The Bible is like a library made up of 66 books written by many different people over many years.

The Old Testament books were written before Jesus was born. They are the holy stories he would have grown up hearing and reading. There are 39 of these.

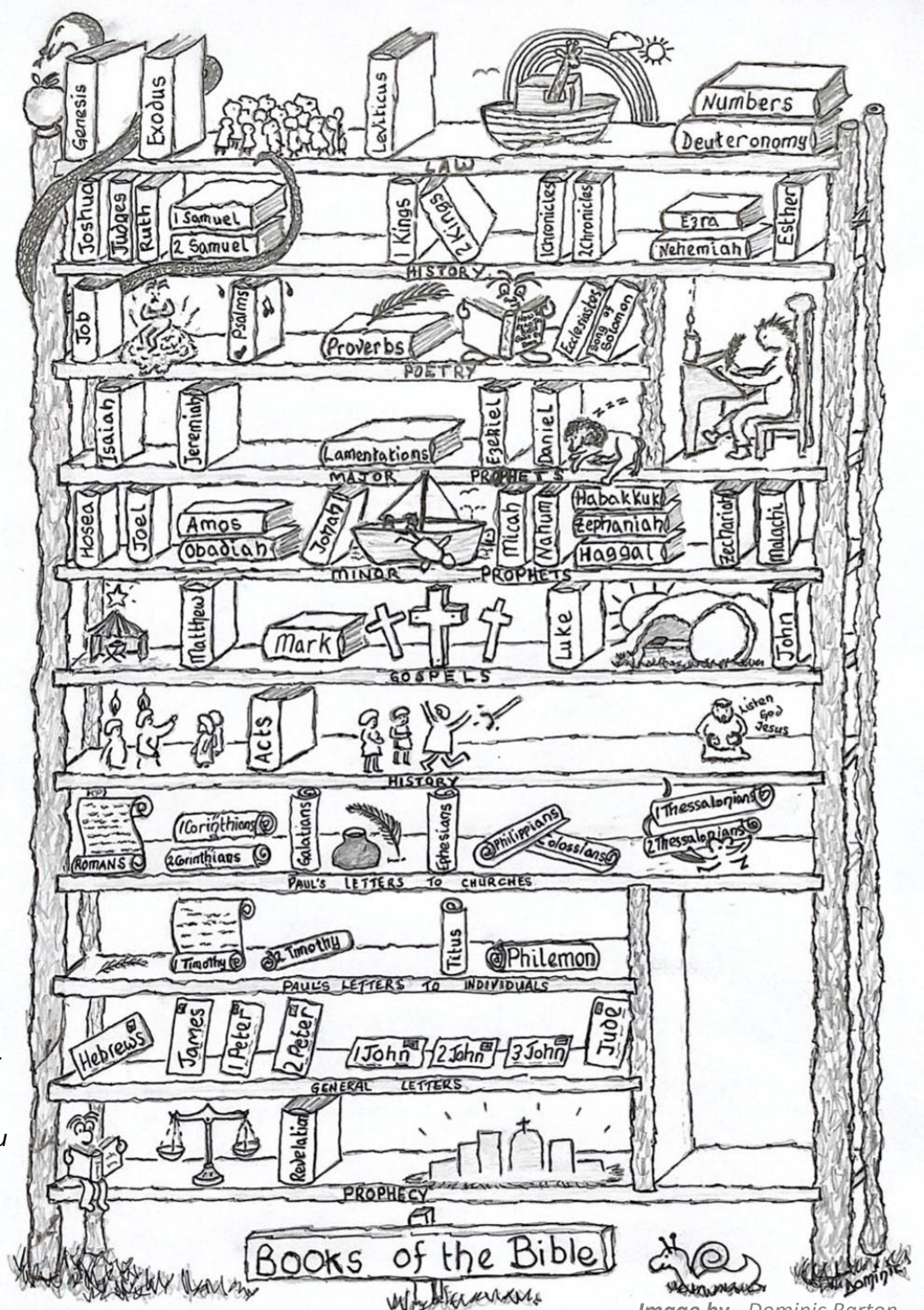
The New Testament tells us the stories of Jesus and his followers. There are 27 books in the New Testament.



Can you find and colour the book on the bookshelf that this week's story is from?

If you have a Bible, see if you can find the story in there.

You could print this out once and colour each new book on the bookshelf as you read stories from it.



Bible context: John

The book of John was written by John the disciple around 90 AD. John was a fisherman before becoming a disciple and he writes with the everyday, normal people in mind. He wants to show that Jesus was more than a prophet, an amazing storyteller, he wants to show that Jesus was God's son. John walked and talked with Jesus and witnessed everything he did and said. He saw Jesus risen from the dead; he was there when Thomas saw the risen Jesus. This story reminds us that Jesus knows what we need to be able to believe and Jesus meets us where we are at.

As we move on from Easter, let's encounter Jesus in a personal way.

Online versions of the story

Watch and Listen

Jesus appears to the disciples animation by Superbook

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FAAn4YStt-SM>

Jesus appears to Thomas cartoon by Saddleback Kids

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A_QcGnwilXI

Children retell the story by PursueGod Kids

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cqfcmK5KktQ>

Jesus appears to Thomas by Gospel Project

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eqYs30C1uY>

Wintershall production clip from the life of Christ

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KMSb4GylXeE>

Dance and Sing

I believe in Jesus by Hillsong Kids https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OHRfZTX_fYc

I believe in Jesus by Saddleback Kids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c3eOC1yyMtA>

I believe by Go Fish <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I9YMXpjB25q>

We wanna see Jesus lifted high by Hillsong Karaoke

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

Because He Lives by West Coast Choir <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-LwBqG7uXbY>

The Story: John 20 Verses 24-29 (from The International Children's Bible)

Thomas (called Didymus) was not with the followers when Jesus came. Thomas was 1 of the 12. 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."

Scripture quotations are taken from the International Children's Bible®, copyright © 1986, 1988, 1999, 2015 by Tommy Nelson. Used by permission.

Ideas to Retell/Explore the Story

Personal Encounters

This week, talk together about how you best learn or explore the world around you. Is it through spoken words, written words, images, music, being active? This story reminds us that Jesus meets us where we are at. Jesus knows how we think and feel and can meet us in that way. Have a conversation about how you can experience God and meet with Jesus in these ways.

Guided Meditation – Meeting with Jesus

Find a space where you can sit or lie and be comfortable with minimum distractions.

Begin by reading the passage from John 20 v 24 – 29.

Then begin the meditation. Reading slowly and intentionally, leaving time and space for the children to use their imaginations and enjoy their own meditation journeys.

God made each of us, including our imaginations. Today we will use our imaginations to experience a guided meditation. Remember, Jesus said, "Seek, and you will find." If we seek Jesus and offer him our imaginations, we can sometimes meet him and spend time with him in a way that helps us understand how he wants us to live.

Let's try it and see! We are going to go on a journey to meet with Jesus.



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Close your eyes and relax.... Listen to your breathing.... Don't change it, just listen to it.... As you inhale, breathe in all the love God has for you....

As you exhale, feel all your distractions leave.... any aches and pains.... any worries.... any distractions at all.

Try to feel your heart beating.... the heart God created for you....

Now picture, right before you, a large door, standing all alone....

Go to the door, push it open, and walk through....

You are in your favourite place. Where are you, I wonder? Perhaps a beach or a meadow or a playground. What do you see as you look around? What can you hear? What can you smell? What do you like to do here?

You are here alone today. But you look up and you see someone coming towards you. Can you see who it is?....

It is Jesus. He is waving and shouting hello as he gets closer.

Do you recognize him? His face, his clothes, his walk, his voice.

He asks what you are doing here? He asks if he can join you for a while.

You sit together, you talk together.... You tell him things that are on your mind.

You might be sitting on a bench; you might be walking with Jesus.

Being with Jesus is good. I wonder what you are talking about?....

And now listen as Jesus responds to what you have shared with him. Just be open to his response, whether it be in actions, or as a feeling, or an image, or in words. Hear him speak your name.... and wait for his response.

It is good to spend time with Jesus, but now it is time to leave.

You know that Jesus goes with you, he is with you always through his spirit.

You do not walk alone.

You say goodbye for now and you turn to go, and you see the door is still standing open.... As you walk up to it, you take one last look and remember that you can return at any time.

You go through the door, closing it behind you.... and find yourself back here in this room....

Slowly you wiggle your fingers and toes.... stretch your arms and legs.... and, when you are ready, open your eyes.

Reflection points:

How was the experience for you?

What spoke most to your heart?

What did you sense God is saying to you?



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The Easter Story

Enjoy this retelling of the Easter Story using finger paints and hand prints

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?fbclid=IwAR03skYia5uX-J25HSC9Tq025N4xh-ZF2khyCXc6jbFaktwArXK-k11w8ao&v=qFw1cTnT3Jo&feature=youtu.be>

Table Top Discussions

Each day over a mealtime, have a quick conversation. Here are a few questions to get you going:

- *I wonder what is the most amazing thing you have ever seen? Have you ever seen anything, and no one believed you?*
- *I wonder how you like to encounter Jesus?*
- *The passage doesn't tell us if Thomas touched Jesus hands or not, it just tells us that Jesus offered. What do you think happened?*
- *What is it that makes you believe in God? Is there anything that makes it hard for you sometimes?*
- *What do you think this story has to say to us about our faith?*

What's in the box?



What treasures can you find to put in the box for your little ones to explore?

Perhaps older children could help find the things.



Use a box or a bag to hold the treasures and encourage any little ones to explore what's in the box/bag each week to go with the Bible story.



Toys representing Jesus and Thomas

Something with
rainbow colours
for God's promise



A dark blanket, towel,
or cloth to hide Jesus



A happy face and sad face,
maybe on opposite sides of a
paper plate or spoon

Pray Together

Stand, Listen and See Prayers



Sometimes we have to be like Thomas was in the story today, we need to stop, listen, and see. Find yourself a quiet place inside or safely outside, take a deep breath in, and a deep breath out.

Stand- stand still, close your eyes, and think of all those times you are busy, when you are asked to help and do tasks. It is easy to forget what's important when our minds are full. Stand quietly, thanking God for always being close to you.



Listen- what do you hear? If outside, you may hear a car or aeroplane, a dog barking or people talking. If you are inside, maybe you can hear a clock ticking, someone in another room. Wherever we are, God is there- always ready to listen to our prayers.

See- gently open your eyes – look at what you can see. Often, we take those things we see every day for granted, so look at them again and be thankful for all we have.



As you stand, listen, and see - thank God for all he does for us, everyday!

Amen.

Pray Together

Find Your Own Way to Pray

Thomas wanted to see Jesus for himself he wanted a personal encounter with Jesus. We can pray in lots of different ways, and we need to find the way that is right for us to feel close to God. Sometimes that might be sitting alone and quiet or it might be in a group with others. Here are some ideas in a short film called time to pray.

<https://youtu.be/AbvrmcBSwCs>

I wonder which part of the film you liked best?

I wonder how do you like to pray?

Take some time to sit quietly, perhaps holding your favourite soft toy or with a blanket and cushion. Be still and ask God to be with you. You could listen to some music or maybe read a story from the bible. Remember that we can talk to God anywhere and at any time. No matter how busy we are or how noisy, God will always be there to talk to us and is ready to listen to us.



Dear God

**Thank you that we can talk to you,
and that you are close to us.**

**No matter who we are,
what we feel or where we are,
we can always talk to you.**

**Thank you that you listen to us, and
you hear what we say and know what is in our hearts,
even when we do not know ourselves.**

Amen.

Pray Together

Praying Hands

Thomas needed to see Jesus' hands and feet to know that it was Jesus. Our hands can help us to pray.

Start with one hand made into ball. Think about all the things that worry you or make you feel anxious. Now wrap your other hand around it, asking God to protect you and help you.

Slowly unfold your hands and join them to make praying hands. Think about all the people and places you want to pray for and ask God to fill those people and places with love and peace. When you are ready, slowly open your hands until they are flat with your palms facing upwards. With your open hands, give all your prayers to God and then when you are ready say Amen.



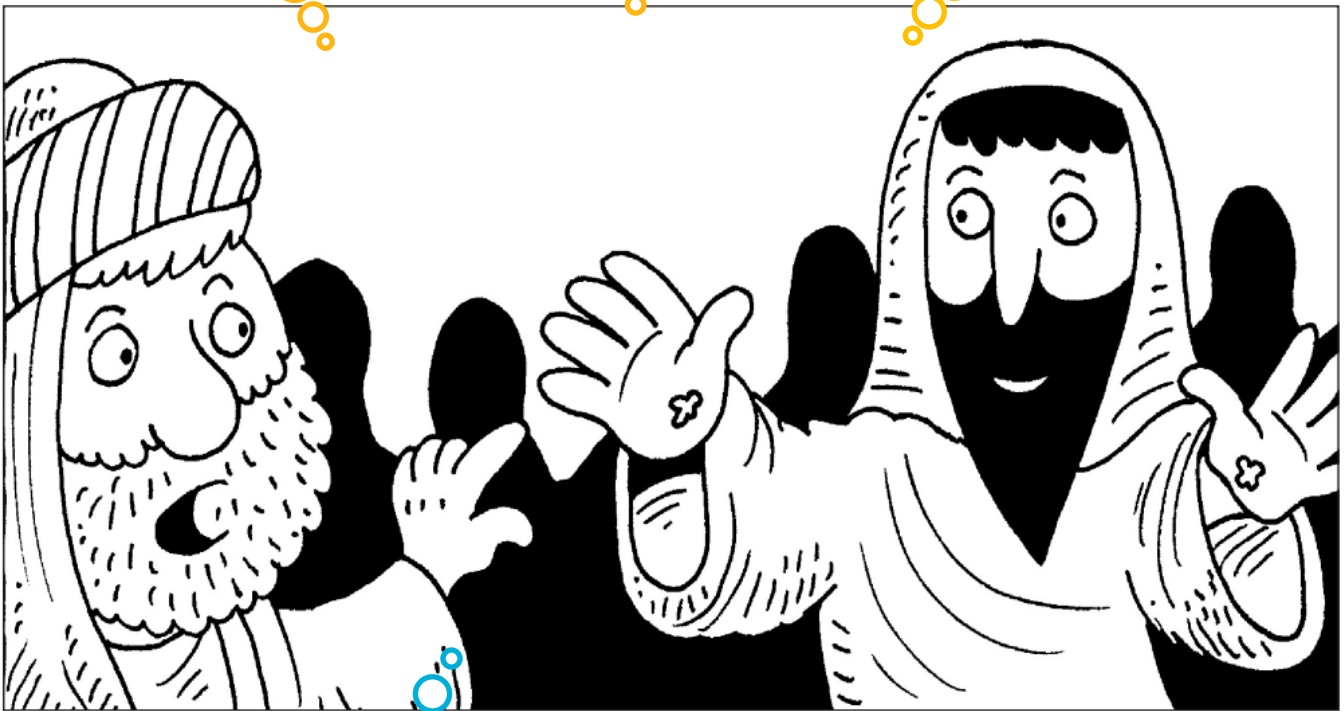
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I wonder why Thomas found it difficult to believe the others?

I wonder how Jesus knew what Thomas needed to help him believe?

I wonder what helps you meet with Jesus?



I wonder what other stories you know of people meeting Jesus or God?

I wonder what this story means to you?



To Do Together...

Seeing is Believing Pictures

You will need: A camera

What you do:

Go out and about and, using the things you see around you, create an optical illusion photo. It may be that someone looks like they are pushing a tree over, or holding a big branch up, they could look like they are driving a fancy car or even standing in a bin!

Sometimes we see things in an image, and we need to look really carefully to actually see what is there. When you show the photos, can you see what is really there?

Do we really believe our eyes? How do we decide whether it's true or not?

Thomas needed to see Jesus to really believe but other disciples believed without seeing. I wonder how it is for you?





To Do Together...

I spy Bottles

You will need: Empty bottles or jars
Some small objects
Some sand or salt

What you do:

Place to sand or salt into a bottle or jar, together with some small objects. Remember to leave a bit of space – don't fill the bottle right to the top. Fasten the lid on firmly.



Shake up the bottle and play I spy, trying to guess the objects by finding them and guessing what they are by the little bit that you can see.

Sometimes we need to see what a thing is before we believe it is there. Sometimes we can use clues to help us, and sometimes we can simply believe without seeing because someone we trust tells us it's true. Thomas needed to see Jesus to really believe he had risen from the dead. Last week, Paul believed because he heard Jesus' voice in a vision.





To Do Together...

Touchy Feely

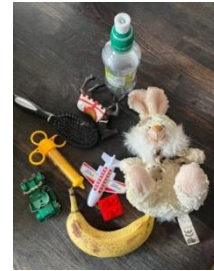
You will need: A box
Some objects

What you do:

Create a box with an opening.

Place objects inside the box and encourage everyone to put their hand in and guess what is inside. Think about what it feels like, and if it is soft or hard?

Some people learn and experience the world best through different senses – this is a good way to experience the world through touch. As we play with different things in the box, we can remember that Thomas was someone who used touch to help him understand and believe things, so Jesus offered him what he needed. Which of your senses helps you most when it comes to exploring God's story?



Walking the Way

Living the life of Jesus today

**Our Walking the Way
Challenge this time is...**

Everyday Faith:

Although we can't meet Jesus in person, we often say that we can see him in other people. I wonder if people see Jesus in us too? This week, think about what characteristics of Jesus we might see in others and then be on the look-out. Do you see people behaving like Jesus might behave or saying things that Jesus might say?

Scrapbooking:

Collect some amazing facts – things you believe but that you haven't seen personally – and make a "ten amazing facts" page for your scrapbook including something from everyone. It may be words, it may be pictures, it may be photographs. There are so many amazing things about our world, but often we rely on others telling us about them. At the bottom of the page, add the amazing truth that Jesus is alive and wants to meet with us.

Take it Further:

The Bible Society is a charity that believes everyone should have the chance to read the Bible in their own language and find out more about how to meet the living Jesus for themselves. You can learn about how it started, and the story of Mary Jones, here:
<https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/about-us/our-history/>. And why not revisit the story of Easter by watching their Easter poem video
<https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/resources/the-easter-poem/>



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Adventurers Go!

You've shared together, now share with us!

Why not send photos of your crafts, your treasure boxes, your Walking the Way challenges - or dress up to make a tableau of the Big Story and take a photo to send in.

Email your photos to: lorraine.webb@urc.org.uk
with parental permission for them to be used in publicity and online URC social media.

Alternatively, share them on our Facebook page
<https://www.facebook.com/URCchildren.and.youth/>

Remember you can find more resources on our website:
<https://urc.org.uk/resources-for-children-and-youth>

And if you've enjoyed these activities, why not see whether your local church runs Pilots or Friends on Faith Adventures (FOFA) when things get back to normal again.

Created for you by Nicola Grieves (Eastern Synod), Judy Harris (National Synod of Wales), Hannah Middleton (Northern Synod), Philip Ray (Wessex Synod, North), Lorraine Webb (Programme Officer for CYW), and Ruth White (Wessex Synod, South) on behalf of the CYDO+ and Children's and Youth Work team and Pilots.



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