

26. Thomas, the Doubter



Dwell Flex, Story Symbols, [www.dwellcurriculum.org](http://www.dwellcurriculum.org), © 2020, Faith Alive Christian Resources, [www.faithaliveresources.org](http://www.faithaliveresources.org)

## 26

# Thomas, the Doubter

**Leader Notes:**

- View [this session's focus](#), faith nurture goals, leader devotional, and story symbol (click on the story symbol to download or print).
- For the full set of DWELL Flex story symbols use the link in the sidebar.
- Need this as a PDF? Just [print this page](#) and choose to save/print as a PDF.

*Take a few moments to greet the children and let them know how glad you are to see them.*

**I love exploring God's story with you. Let's get ready to do that together.**

## Breathe

*Use this time to focus your attention on God.*

**Do this with me: calm your head, heart, and hands as you slowly breathe in . . . and out.** (*Demonstrate a few deep "in and out breaths" with eyes closed.*)

## Tell and Wonder

**Let's enter God's story together. Here's the story symbol for the part of God's story that we'll be spending time in today. I wonder what clues it gives us about the story we're about to hear?** (*Show the story symbol. Accept any answers without giving away whether or not the kids have guessed correctly.*)

**Listen closely as we read the story together to see which story our symbol represents.**

*Read "Thomas, the Doubter" aloud (below), pausing throughout to allow children to answer the wondering questions. NOTE: It's always a good idea to read through the story beforehand so you'll be able to tell it well.*

*You can also read the story from a children's Bible or a simplified translation of Scripture like the New International Reader's Version (NIRV). Remember to pause throughout to allow time to wonder.*

## Pray

*Close with prayer, using the following words or your own:*

**Jesus, thank you for dying on the cross. Thank you for appearing to the disciples. Thank you for appearing to Thomas to prove to him that you're alive. Even though we can't see you, even though we can't put our hands in your scars, help us to always believe in you. Amen.**

See [5 Ways to Pray with Kids](#) for other ways to pray.

## Respond

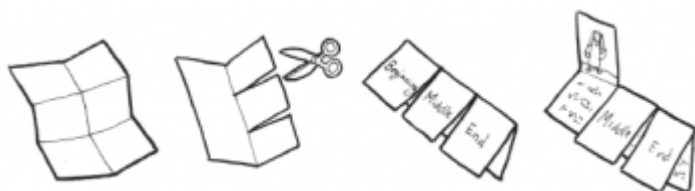
*Select and do one or more of the response activities from God's Big Story card #136\* or check out [5 Ways to Retell a Bible Story with Kids](#) for some fun ways to retell this story. Include older kids in the retelling by having them read the story aloud while the younger children act it out.*

*\*God's Big Story cards can be ordered from [FaithAliveResources.org](http://FaithAliveResources.org).*

## Easy Extra

*Retell the story using flip-flap books. Prepare a flip-flap book for each child in advance, using the following instructions:*

- *Fold a sheet of paper into sixths (by folding it in half lengthwise and then into thirds)*
- *Open and cut to center fold as shown.*
- *Write the words Beginning, Middle and End, one word on each flap.*



*Under the flap marked Beginning, invite kids to draw or write what happened in the beginning of the story. Repeat with the space under the remaining flaps. Pair kids up to share their completed flip-flap books with each other.*

*If you're meeting virtually, remember to send the instructions for creating flip-flap books to parents so that they can create them in advance for their children. Since children won't be able to pair up to share their completed books, encourage your group to share the book with someone in their family.*

## Story: Thomas, the Doubter [John 20:24-31](#)

*Open your Bible and show the kids that this story is found in the book of John. Read [John 20:24](#). Then continue telling the story.*

We don't know why, but Thomas, one of the disciples, was not with the rest of the disciples when Jesus appeared to them and the two friends who walked with Jesus to Emmaus. Thomas had not actually seen Jesus.

So when Thomas showed up, the other disciples were so eager to tell him the great big news—that Jesus is alive! **Imagine that you are talking to Thomas about how Jesus appeared in the room—what would you say?** *(Pause for responses.)*

No matter what they said, Thomas couldn't quite believe it. After all, Jesus had been dead for three days! Thomas also knew how much they all wanted Jesus to be alive—so maybe they were imagining things. Or maybe it was a ghost. Jesus coming back to life just couldn't happen, Thomas thought.

Thomas listened to all the things they said, but he could NOT believe it. He stood up and held up his hands to silence them. He said, "Unless I see the nail marks in Jesus' hands and put my finger on the scars, unless I see his side where they put the spear into it and put my finger on that scar, I will not believe it!"

Thomas probably couldn't get it out of his mind. He kept thinking about his disciple friends trying to convince him. But he still couldn't bring himself to believe that Jesus was truly alive. One week later, Thomas was in the same house with the disciples again. **What do you think they were talking about?** *(Pause for responses.)*

The doors were locked—maybe because the disciples were afraid that some of their enemies would come and find them because they were friends with Jesus. Suddenly, without knocking or unlocking or opening the doors, Jesus appeared in the room. He said, "Peace be with you!"

Imagine being in that room with the disciples. **What is going through your mind when suddenly you see Jesus standing in front of you—again?** *(Pause for responses.)*

Almost as soon as he appeared, Jesus went to Thomas and held out his hands. He said, "Thomas, put your finger here on my hands. Touch the scar. Reach out your hand and touch my side. Stop doubting! Believe!"

Right away Thomas knew it was really Jesus—alive and standing in front of him. Did he fall on his knees before Jesus? Did he bow his head in respect? The Bible doesn't tell us what Thomas did, but it does tell us what Thomas said: "My Lord and my God!"

**What kind of look do you think was on Thomas's face when he realized that it was truly Jesus—alive?** *(Pause for responses.)*

Jesus told Thomas, "Because you have seen me, you believe. Blessed are the people who have not seen and yet have believed." That's right. Jesus said, "Blessed are the people who have not seen and yet do believe."

*Say, Listen to how this part of God's great story ends. Read [verse 31](#) to the group.*

I have not seen Jesus alive. You have not seen Jesus alive like Thomas did. And Jesus promises that we will be blessed because we believe it without having to see it.

## Looking for More Activities for This Story?

Click below to access the full age-specific *Dwell* session for this story:

- [2nd-3rd Grade: Thomas, the Doubter](#)
-