

Unless I...

 **John 20.19-31**

The risen Jesus appears to the disciples and offers them his peace. Thomas is not present and declares that he needs physical evidence that Jesus is risen. Jesus visits the disciples again.

Now read **John 20.19-31** see p.2 for text.

A note on the passage

Thomas missed out on seeing Jesus and his reaction is perhaps unsurprising. However, when he does encounter the risen Jesus, he is clearly overwhelmed. In a world of suspicion where people are beginning to demand proof of everything, Jesus shows the need for trust and belief in experiences that may be spiritual rather than physical.



How do you know if this is or isn't real?
How do we know the stories about Jesus are real?



Thomas probably felt left out because he was not there when Jesus appeared to the disciples. It's easy to feel left out or overlooked. Is there someone you have not seen or spoken to for a while? Phone or text them.



Make a cross of nails to remind you to have faith even though you cannot see Jesus or his wounds.

You will need: Two nails and a rubber band.

Form the nails into a cross. Carefully hold them and loop the rubber band around the back of the vertical nail, over the horizontal nail and back under the vertical. At the top, cross over the sides of the band and repeat. Keep repeating this until the rubber band has been used up and the cross is secure. Put the cross in a place where you will see it regularly this week, as a reminder of your faith.

ACROSTIC



An acrostic is a composition in which the first letter of each line spells out a word. Think about Thomas and what he might have prayed for and then write a prayer in which the first line begins with T, the second with H and so on.



LISTEN



Play 'Seeing is Believing' by Mike + the Mechanics <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8bi9GN0GYbs>

Reflect on what you believe in and why, and what it means to you to believe in the power of love.



In the morning, remember Jesus words, 'peace be with you' and pray for peace in the world.

In the evening, remember these words again, and reflect on any times during the day when your words or actions have not been full of peace. Say sorry to God.

Choose a version of the passage to read. The first is the ROOTS version for children, the second is the NRSV text which may be suitable for older children, young people and adults.

The return of Jesus from the dead was all the disciples could talk about. Every one of them was so excited about it. Well, not exactly every one of them. Thomas wasn't excited, because Thomas had missed it. 'Unless I see the marks the nails made in his hands, I won't believe he's alive,' Thomas said.

A week earlier, Jesus had appeared to 10 of the disciples. They were gathered together, hiding because they were afraid they would be killed next. Although they were in a locked room, Jesus appeared and said, 'Peace be with you.' As the disciples rejoiced, Jesus said, 'As God the Father sent me, now I send you.' Then he breathed on them, saying, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. When you forgive people their sins, they are forgiven. When you find people guilty, they are guilty.'

Thomas was with the others in the house now. 'I'll only believe if I put my finger in the marks and my hand in his side,' he said. The doors were closed, just as they had been before, but, again, Jesus appeared. He said, 'Peace be with you.' Then he spoke to Thomas: 'Look at my hands and put your finger in the holes. Put your hand in the wound on my side. Do not doubt, but



believe.' Thomas was suddenly as excited as the rest of the disciples. 'My Lord and my God!' he cried. Jesus asked Thomas, 'Have you only believed because you have seen me? God blesses all those who believe even though they haven't seen me.'

This is why the story of Jesus was written down; so that people may believe that he is the Messiah, the Son of God. All who believe in Jesus will have life through him.

John 20.19-31

Did you know?

- After Jesus was killed, his followers thought that the Romans might want to kill them as well.
- This story comes before Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came to the disciples in Jerusalem.
- 'The Messiah' is the name Old Testament prophets gave to the person who would come and save Israel.

John 20.19-31 (NRSV)

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.