

RESPOND 10

Open the leaflets and pass out pencils and game chips.

Let's tear and do the square!

1. Hand out a pile of buttons or game chips to each kid.
2. Ask kids to take turns reading the statements on the leaflet out loud.
3. Place your chip in the column that applies to you. Do you believe it right away? Need more information? Or is this something you simply do not believe?
4. Invite kids to write their own zany statements in the blank spaces and place their chips in the columns.
5. Split kids into pairs and invite them to discuss their answers and ask each other questions.
6. After talking about it with a partner, did your response change? Move your chip if it did.
7. Invite kids to draw an X under each game chip to keep a record of this discussion.
8. It's a good thing to ask questions! It's how we learn and grow in our faith.

LAUNCH 10

Circle up with kids for a quick review.

Sometimes Christians have questions about faith—and that's okay! What can you do when you have a question about your faith? Take time to hear kids' responses.

Return the leaflet panels.

Invite kids to fill in the blanks on their leaflet:

"I'm not sure about _____ but I know I believe _____."

Send kids out.

Remind kids that Jesus came and stood among the disciples and said, "Peace be with you." Etch the sign of the cross in the palms of each other's hands and say "Peace" to one another.

Pray together: **God, thank you for belief and for doubt, too. Help us to wrestle with good questions in our church. Thank you for loving us. Amen!**

Thank kids for their faith, their questions, and their faithful struggles with belief and doubt. Remind them of the Family Square on the other side of the leaflet.

Thomas Believes

BELIEVE • EASTER 2 • YEAR A

TODAY'S READINGS

Acts 2:14a, 22-32 Psalm 16 1 Peter 1:3-9 John 20:19-31



What is happening in this story?

Jesus appearing to his disciples immediately follows the Easter story in John. Thomas plays an important role. Traditionally cast as the doubter, we can understand Thomas as a follower of Jesus with some questions. Because he was not there when Jesus appeared to the others, Thomas had a hard time believing it was true. To believe, he needed to see and touch Jesus' wounds. Jesus gives Thomas exactly what he says he needs. Jesus' actions answer Thomas's questions. Thomas responds in faith, "My Lord and my God!"

Why does this story matter for kids?

Kids of all ages know what it is to be afraid or anxious about what will happen next, so they can grasp why the disciples in the locked room were scared and confused. They can identify with Thomas because they understand the need to question. Many may have questions about this story. Encourage them to ask! It is important for kids to know that Jesus encouraged questions in his teaching and storytelling. Critical thinking can be an important part of believing and growing in faith.

What is the lectionary connection?

During the 50-day season of Easter we explore many stories of Jesus appearing after he was resurrected. All of those stories include someone who does not recognize him right away. Thomas is not the only believer, then or now, to have questions.

AGE LEVEL TIP

Kids this age are beginning to challenge many beliefs. Let them ask the tough questions, while reassuring them that it's okay if they don't have all the answers.



GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Pens or pencils
- Permanent markers

LESSON SUPPLIES

- Buttons or game chips

WHIRL SUPPLIES • WHIRL NRSV BIBLE • DVD • WALL CHART • LEAFLETS

Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

Invite kids to play Two Truths and a Myth. Kids take turns telling two truths about themselves and one myth that isn't true. The other kids guess which statements are true or false. Make sure new kids are included as they arrive.

Invite kids to look at the Wall Chart.

Point out the season and color. **Have you ever been a part of something huge that ended abruptly? The disciples knew that Jesus was God's son, so imagine their surprise when he died! And imagine their confusion and questions when he did not stay dead. Today we continue the celebration of the Easter resurrection. But we also acknowledge that in the joy, there was also confusion. Take a minute to think about some of the questions you have for God. Grab a marker and squeeze your question on the wedge of the Wall Chart.**

Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Let's give some high fives and a "Peace out!" shout-out to one another.

Pass out leaflets and pens.

You may have heard of a Six-Word Story. It's a type of short story—a very short story. Can you write a

six-word question that paints a bigger picture? Share these examples:

- Fortune cookie asks, "Who's paying bill?"
- Geek, jock, clown, and princess: Friends?
- Awoke in ice. Where am I?

Talk about what might be behind those six-word questions. Encourage kids to write their own six-word questions on the front of the leaflet.

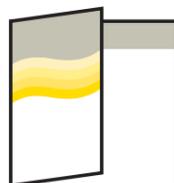
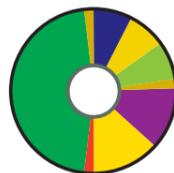
Gather kids around the screen where you'll watch the video.

Anybody have a little brother or sister who always asks questions? Why do you think little kids ask so many questions or say "why?" so often? It helps them learn and understand.

View "Scary Queries."

Ask kids these questions about the video.

- What do you think Leo meant when he said, "Look, you guys, I think you're confusing faith with certainty"?
- Do you agree that you can have faith along with questions?
- Why do you think the others were so shocked to hear Leo's questions?
- What questions do you have about the Bible?



Pass out Whirl NRSV Bible Samplers.

Let's find today's Bible story. We are in the Gospel of John this week. Open your Bible Sampler with kids to the Preview Activity on page 6. Do it together and compare responses.

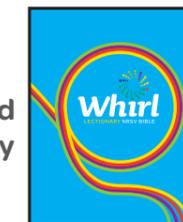
Read John 20:19-31 together. **When we enter today's story, it's a few days after Jesus had been killed in an awful way. The disciples no doubt felt their lives were at risk, too. Many of them hid together behind locked doors, feeling nervous and afraid.**

Ask a volunteer to narrate John 20:19-31. Ask two volunteers to read the words of Thomas and Jesus. Appoint 2-3 kids as the sound effects crew. Practice making sounds such as doors slamming shut and locking, wind (for breathing and the Holy Spirit), and noises that reflect fear, doubt, and surprise. Read the Bible story together with its kid-created soundtrack.

Ask these questions after you read the story.

- Why do you think Thomas has such a bad reputation as a doubter?
- How might you have reacted in Thomas' shoes?
- How are doubt and questions part of your faith?
- We don't have the opportunity to see Jesus or feel his wounds, so how do you believe without seeing?
- How might your faith change if you could hang out with Jesus like the disciples did?
- Remember, it's okay to doubt or have questions. Thomas was still a follower of Jesus, even though he had doubts.

Invite kids to underline "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe" in verse 29.



BIBLE BIT

Thomas wasn't the only doubter in scripture. The Bible is filled with stories and psalms of faithful struggles.

WATCH IT AGAIN

Look for how Gabe tries to get Leo to pretend not to have doubts. Why do you think Gabe was worried about Leo's questions?

OUR CHURCH

Invite an older church member to come speak to the kids about how they've handled times of doubt in their lives.