

1) Introduction:

Hi everyone at St Mary's young and youth church, we hope you are all well and happy. We miss seeing your lovely faces, but be assured you are all in our thoughts and prayers.

Once the Easter eggs have been found, chocolate consumed, and bonnets put away, it may seem that Easter loses its thrill. However, the empty tomb is only the beginning of the story, and there are important lessons to be gained from events immediately after the resurrection. Today we will focus on Christ's appearances after his resurrection and how the disciples perceived Him. The emphasis is on faith and trusting, as well as how we are encouraged to spread the Good News with others.

Today's 'social distance' Young and Youth Church is all about...

2) Warming up: Feel the objects

Put a blindfold on someone, and once you are sure that they can't see, give them a number of different objects to touch, and see if they can identify them (e.g. a spoon, a cucumber, a stuffed toy etc)?

Do this for several people, giving each of them 5 different objects (or more) and see who can identify the most by touch only

3) Digging in: Jesus Lives!

We hope you are able to partake in some, if not all this session and that you find it purposeful.

Have you ever hoped for the impossible? It is really guttingly disappointing, isn't it? If you put all your hope and trust in something that ultimately lets you down you feel like your heart has been shredded from the inside.

Imagine for a moment that you are Thomas. You have followed an amazing man (Jesus) for 3 years – you have seen miracles, you have been astounded by his words and you have really believed with all your heart that he's the Messiah - the chosen one. And now... he is dead. The dream is over.

However, suddenly, madness seems to break out: people close to you are claiming the most incredible things - the tomb is empty and Jesus is alive... There is nothing you want to believe more - you want to wake up from this nightmare - but you cannot face hoping for this impossibility

and having it torn away from you again. Therefore, you refuse to believe it - it is a measure of self-preservation.

However, the rumours are true - Jesus is risen - fully and gloriously and within a week, he has appeared to Thomas and proved the stories true. We cannot even begin to imagine the impact of that encounter.

As you read/share the Bible story of Jesus appearing to his disciples (below) focus on Thomas and how he was honest about his doubts and to see how Jesus responded to that and the effect that had on Thomas.

Younger children, or as an alternative to reading, if you have access to the Internet, watch this short video clip of John 20:19-31. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lzMo_fysxbl (from 1 minute in)

Jesus Appears to His Followers John 20: 19-31.

¹⁹ It was the first day of the week. That evening Jesus' followers were together. The doors were locked, because they were afraid of the Jews. Then Jesus came and stood among them. He said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. His followers were very happy when they saw the Lord.

²¹ Then Jesus said again, "Peace be with you! As the Father sent me, I now send you." ²² After he said this, he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven. If you don't forgive them, they are not forgiven."

Jesus Appears to Thomas

²⁴ Thomas (called Didymus) was not with the followers when Jesus came. Thomas was one of the 12. ²⁵ The other followers told Thomas, "We saw the Lord."

However, 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."

²⁶ 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!" ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here. Look at my hands. Put your hand here in my side. Stop doubting and believe."

²⁸ Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

²⁹ Then Jesus told him, "You believe because you see me. Those who believe without seeing me will be truly happy."

Why John Wrote This Book

³⁰ Jesus did many other miracles before his followers that are not written in this book. ³¹ But these are written so that you can believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Then, by believing, you can have life through his name.

Ask yourselves these questions...

Who said they saw Jesus?
Why didn't Thomas believe him?
What does Thomas say to their story?
What proof does he want?
What happens next?
What does Thomas do now?
What does he say?
How is Thomas changed in this story?

Thomas was honest about his doubts. And Jesus met him where he needed it. It resulted in him being convinced that Jesus was God and worshipping him as Lord.

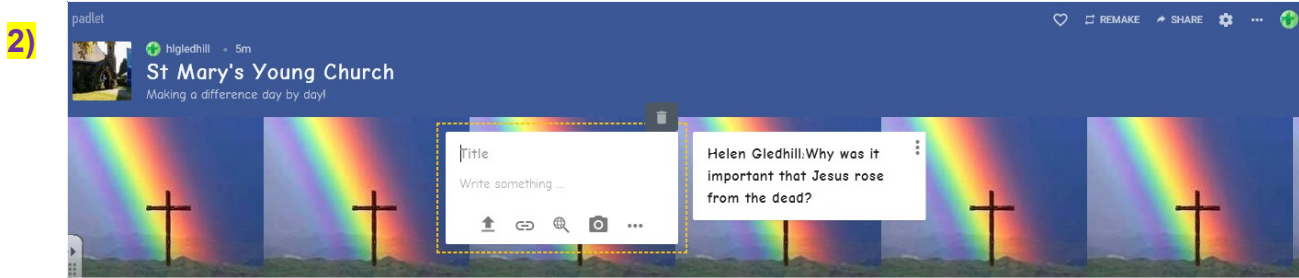
History tells us that Thomas later travelled to India to spread the Good News and that somewhere in the region of 17 000 people became followers of Jesus based on his testimony and message. That is some legacy to leave!

May all our encounters with Jesus leave such a mark on us that we cannot do anything but tell others about what we have seen.

If you want to, why not respond to an ultimate question on our very own Padlet.

1) All you have to do is access this page (copy and paste the URL). The page below should come up.

2) Then, double left click on the page and a text box for you to write in should appear. Where it states: Title. Type your first name, so we know who you are! Then answer the question, or just leave us a message. It is one way we can all stay in touch whilst keeping social distancing.



4) Response: Memory Verse...

Equipment needed:

- Post its or scrap paper and pens.
- As many family members as you have!

***“The people who have faith in me without seeing me are the ones who are really blessed.”
John 20:29b***

Write the words to this verse on post its or scrap pieces of paper. Then, lay your words out on the floor (or stick them to a wall). Read out the verse together. Now turn one of the word cards over to leave a blank sheet - read the verse again. Continue to turn the words over one or two at a time until you can say the verse with no words at all.

5) Take away:

Equipment needed:

- Faith A4 colouring PDF (if you have access to a printer and colouring pens) [\(Click Here\)](#)
- Doubting Tom colouring page PDF (if you have access to a printer and colouring pens) [\(Click Here\)](#)

Here are a few activities you may wish to have a go at to further your understanding and share with others through the week.

1) Take the printed sheet and fill the letters 'FAITH' with pictures or words to show the things that help you to have faith in Jesus. It might be Bible stories you have heard or things that you or those you know have experienced.

2) Colour the 'doubting Tom' colouring page and note key messages or today's memory verse around it which reflects Tom's change of ways as a result of his encounter with Jesus.

6) Close prayer and St Mary's key reflections:

- 1) What does this teach us about God/Jesus/Holy Spirit?
- 2) What do we need to do (this week)? (Have faith and trust and spread the Good News)



Dear Lord Jesus.

God of love and hope,
you made the world and care for all creation,
but the world feels strange right now.
The news is full of stories about Coronavirus.
Some people are worried that they might get ill.
Others are anxious for their family and friends.
Be with them and help them to find peace.

We pray for the doctors and nurses and scientists,
and all who are working to discover the right medicines
to help those who are ill.

Thank you that even in these anxious times,
you are with us.

Help us to put our trust in you and keep us safe.

In Jesus name, Amen.

Until next week St Mary's young church, may you be blessed in every way and keep the faith alive because 'Jesus Lives!'

Song links:

Range of contemporary children's Easter 'resurrection' songs visit:

<https://ministry-to-children.com/easter-worship-songs/>

Video links:

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