

Thomas Believes

PreK-
K

BELIEVE

JOHN 20:19-31

What's happening in this story?

Jesus' grace—not Thomas's doubt—is the focus of this story. Thomas is a follower of Jesus with some questions—questions similar to those the other disciples had, and got answered, when Jesus appeared among them one week earlier. But Thomas was not there when Jesus appeared to the others, and he was not going to be fooled. People do not, as a rule, rise from the dead. He needed to know this wasn't a hoax—he needed to see and touch Jesus' wounds. Jesus gives Thomas exactly what he says he needs. Thomas responds in faith with the words "My Lord and my God!"

What does this story mean for kids?

Kids understand the need to question, and can identify with Thomas. They probably have many questions about this story, in fact—questions that should be encouraged. It is important for kids to know that God loves questions; that Jesus encouraged questions in his teaching and storytelling; and that Thomas's critical thinking and desire to be sure are important aspects of faith, just as they are important in other realms of life. God never asks us to sign onto something glibly.

Why this theme?

Belief isn't something that is above doubt. Kids will have questions—everyone doubts at some point in their life. But this story reminds us that true belief comes from asking questions, that faith is interwoven with doubt and grows from it.

AGE LEVEL TIP

There are so many things that kids this age believe. They are full of wonder and trust. Keep in mind they may have heard that doubting is wrong. Help affirm their natural ability to question when they are unsure. Let them know you have questions, too, and who you ask for answers.



GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Crayons

LESSON SUPPLIES

- Play dough
- Craft pom-pom (small, 1)
- Blocks or interlocking toy bricks

WHIRL SUPPLIES • WHIRL KIDS STORY BIBLES • DVD • WALL CHART & STICKER • LEAFLETS

Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

Place play dough on a table. Invite kids to roll out log and ball shapes. Use the pieces to form question marks. As kids finish each question mark, encourage them to ask a friend a question. **People asked Jesus many questions, and Jesus often had surprising answers!**

Circle up with kids for an opening conversation.

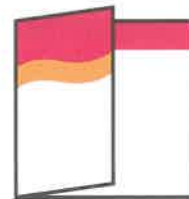
Ask kids if they think they can blow a pom-pom across the floor. **Who thinks they can do this? Who has questions about how to do this? I love questions.** Pass the pom-pom to one kid who asks a question. As one kid blows, keep a running dialogue of questions about how they will do the challenge or how long it will take. **Today's Bible story is about asking questions and believing.**

Pray together: **Dear God, thank you for answering our questions. Help us remember that we learn by asking questions and listening for the answers. Thank you for sending Jesus who died and rose again. Amen.**

Pass out leaflets and crayons.

Invite kids to study the picture. Make a question mark in the air. **Look for shapes that look like this. They're**

question marks. In today's Bible story, one of Jesus' disciples has questions. We have questions too. We ask questions when we want to learn things. Use a crayon to circle all the question marks hiding on and among the kites in the picture. Collect their leaflets until Respond.



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

The Whirl kids have questions to ask the pastor at their church. Let's watch together to see what happens when someone worries about people asking questions.

View Episode 8, "Any Questions?," on the Year Gold Spring PreK–Grade 2 DVD.

Ask kids these questions about the video:

- **Where do the kids go to try to find answers to their questions?**
- **Why does Victor try to stop them?**
- **How does Victor feel at the end of the video?**
- **I wonder what Jesus would think about us asking questions.**
- **Who answers your questions about Jesus?**



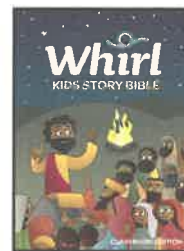
Open your Whirl Kids Story Bibles.

Let's find our story for today! Help kids find "Thomas Believes" on page 338. Before you read, invite kids to look for the people who are happy to see Jesus alive.

Read the story and Ada and Otto's questions and comments on each page.

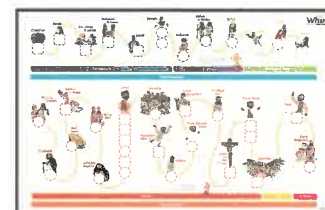
Ask these questions after you read the story:

- **Why were the disciples hiding?**
- **Who suddenly appeared in the room?**
- **What did Jesus show the disciples so they would know it was him?**
- **Why was it hard for Thomas to believe that Jesus was alive?**
- **What happened to change Thomas's mind?**



Gather near the Wall Chart to place today's sticker.

Point out the Testament (New) and character image (Risen Jesus). **When Thomas first heard Jesus was alive, it was hard for him to believe. Let's add a sticker to remind us of what Jesus showed Thomas** (Jesus' hands with holes from the nails). Point to the corresponding images of Jesus' hands and Thomas on pages 338 and 341 in the Whirl Kids Story Bible.



Play together!

Before class, hide blocks or interlocking toy bricks around your space. **We're going to hunt for blocks around our classroom. When you find a block, come put it on the table.** Give kids time to hunt for the blocks.

What can we build with blocks? Let kids build together. **Is it easy or hard to build with blocks? What can we build with questions? Questions help us build our faith! Who asked Jesus questions? Is it easy or hard to ask questions? When we ask questions like Thomas, our questions help us grow and believe.**

BIBLE BIT

The word *disciple* can refer to the twelve closest followers of Jesus or to any follower of Jesus. We don't know how many people were in the room when Jesus appeared.

WATCH IT AGAIN

If you watch the video again, count how many kids have questions for Pastor Donna.

OUR CHURCH

If possible, take the kids to your pastors' offices. **This is a place where we can ask questions. Where else can we go to find answers to our questions?**

RESPOND 10

Pass out leaflets and crayons.

Unfold and tear off leaflet square.

1. Point out the illustration in the upper right corner of page 339 in the Whirl Kids Story Bible. **The disciples were hiding in the house after Jesus died. What can you tell about how they are feeling from this picture?** Let kids share. **Make your mouths look like the disciples' mouths in the picture.**
2. **Now look at the picture at the bottom of the page. What are the disciples feeling now? How can you tell? Make your mouths look like theirs.**
3. Turn to page 341. **Look at Thomas. How is he feeling in the first picture? How does he feel in the big picture?**
4. **The leaflet shows the Whirl kids, but their faces are missing something!**
5. **Think about the different shapes of mouths the disciples had on their faces. Use crayons to draw mouths with the same shapes on the Whirl kids. Choose one kid to be scared. Choose another to be worried. Choose someone to look surprised. Who will you make look happy? Drawing feelings is fun!**
6. **Thomas may have felt confused or sad before he saw Jesus. Seeing Jesus was a big surprise that made him feel happy! When have you had a big surprise that made you feel happy?**

LAUNCH 10

Circle up with kids for a quick review.

Thomas had questions. So did the other disciples. After Jesus died, they all met together. Thomas asked questions based on his belief in Jesus. I wonder what questions you have for Jesus.

Pass out leaflet panels and crayons.

Color the sections of the puzzle the same color as the dot in each space. What do you think we'll find when all the spaces are colored in? It's always good to ask questions to learn more about Jesus.

Send kids out with a blessing.

Circle up with kids. **God blesses all of us. And that means me** (place a hand on your chest). **And that means you** (place your other hand on the shoulder of the kid next to you). Each kid passes the blessing by repeating those words and actions. When the blessing makes it back to you, say, **Go and bless the world.**

Thank kids for coming today. Remind them of the Family Square on the other side of the leaflet.