

Doubting Thomas (John 20:24-31)

For parents: All of us have moments of doubt. We wonder if God is listening, if God cares or if God is even there. But it's through these times of doubt our faith becomes stronger. With God's help, our doubt will be transformed into faith.

With thanks to the Diocese of Bristol for their help in preparing this family resource. Don't feel you have to do everything here, just pick what will work for your family.

To get you started:

0-7's

Blindfold one member of the family and get them to 'feel' another member of the family. Ask them: Can you guess who it is? Can you be sure it is them? Take off the blindfold. Were you right? Take it in turns to have a go.

Or, place an object in a cereal box so it can't be seen. Ask the child to put their hand inside the box - can you recognise the item you are holding even if you can't see it? Can you be sure it really is what you've guessed? Take the item out of the box. Ask: Were you right? Take it in turns to have a go using different objects!

8-11's

How many things can you think of that people say they've seen but can't prove? (eg. UFOs, unicorns, a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow)

Or try a trust fall, a trust-building exercise in which a person deliberately allows themselves to fall, trusting someone else to catch them. Before you have a go, watch how not to do it! <https://youtu.be/FHJS6Kaxv9g>

Did you laugh? Would someone like to have a go? Remember to fall backwards! This activity involves placing your trust in someone you cannot see and can lead nicely into a discussion about trusting God.

Watch the story:

Jesus appears to Thomas told by a group of children (for little ones you may want to watch this first - it just mentions scars on Jesus hands)

<https://youtu.be/cgfcMK5KktQ>

Or read from a child friendly version of the Bible - John 20:24-31

Talk about:

This Bible story is about a man named Thomas. Thomas was a disciple (friend) of Jesus, who followed him for three years. After Jesus was crucified and rose to life, he appeared to all of his disciples (friends) except Thomas, who was not with them. The others told Thomas about Jesus as soon as he came back, but Thomas had a hard time believing something he could not see! The next Sunday the disciples were together again and Thomas was with them. Jesus came in! Everyone was excited and Thomas believed when he saw Jesus. But Jesus said; "Thomas, you believe because you saw. But there will be lots of people [like us] who never get to see me but they will believe any way. That's a good thing."

We never see lots of important things. We don't see the wind, we don't see love, but we feel them; we know they are there. Don't be like Doubting Thomas. Trust God's love and God's power. We don't need to see God's love. We know it is there!

Building faith:

Find some boxes or toy bricks which can be stacked on top of each other to make a tower.

Think about Thomas's life with Jesus and start stacking the boxes or bricks as you name each thing - Thomas is chosen by Jesus (Matthew 10:2-4), Thomas follows Jesus (John 11:15-17), Thomas asks questions (John 14:2-6), think of things that Thomas may have seen being with Jesus, maybe some of the miracles and add a box for each one you can think of.

The tower you have built represents the faith that Thomas had in Jesus being God's Son. All the things he'd seen and heard helped him to believe. But when Jesus died on the cross, Thomas' faith fell apart - that wasn't what was supposed to happen to God's Son. Push the tower to make it fall down.

Thomas' friends were saying that they had seen Jesus alive again but Thomas didn't have any more faith left and refused to believe them. What was going to make Thomas believe again?

Thomas saw Jesus! Stack up the boxes again and add a new one to represent Thomas seeing Jesus. Do you think Thomas was changed by seeing Jesus again? History tells us that Thomas later went to India to tell people about Jesus and 17 000 people believed what he told them and decided to follow Jesus too!

I wonder how we have faith in Jesus even though we can't see him like Thomas did?

Pray together:

Give each member of your family a piece of paper and ask them to draw around and cut out the shape of their own hand. On the four fingers you can write or draw:

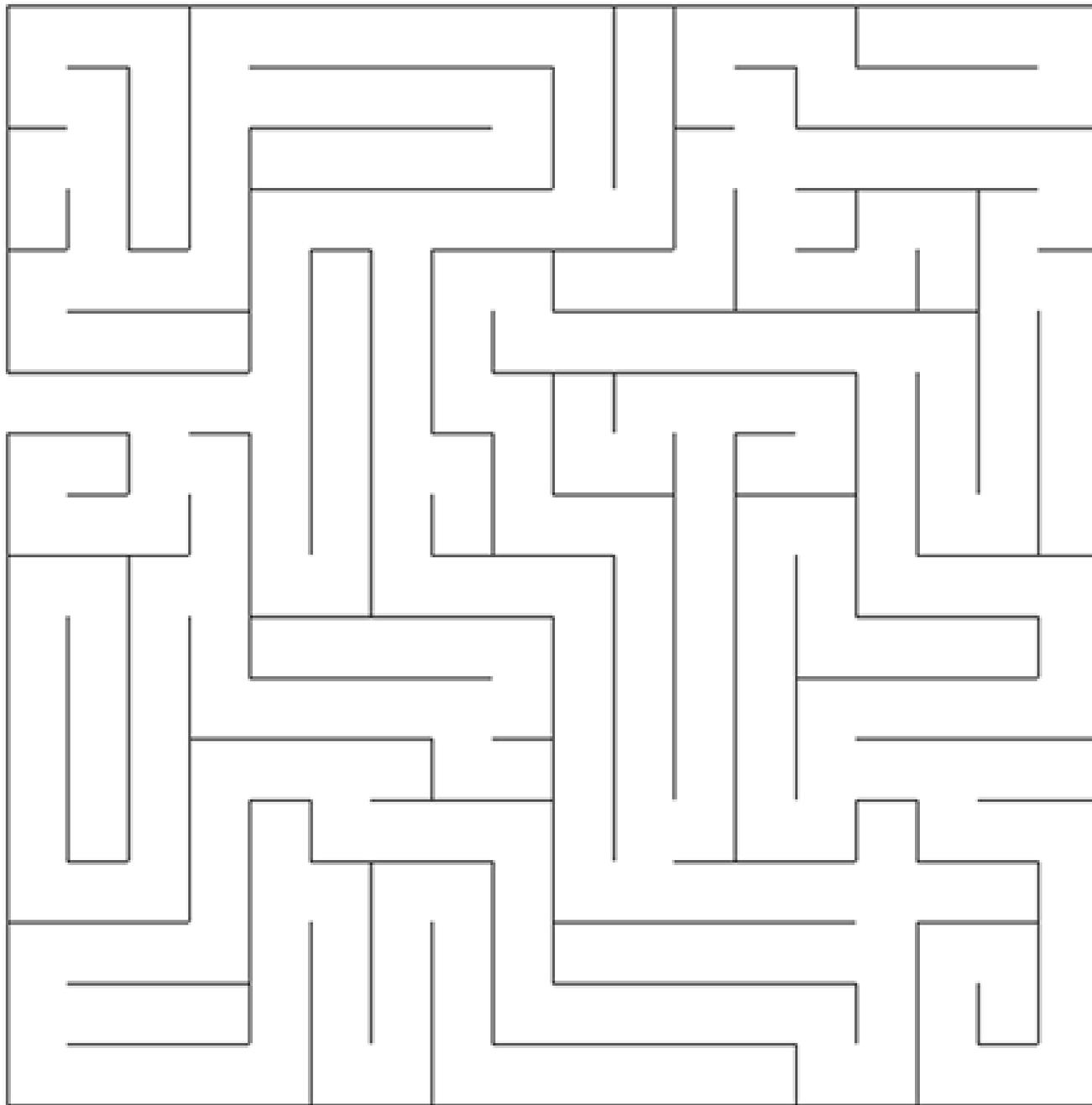
- Something to praise God for
- Something to thank God for
- Something you would like to ask God's help with
- Something you would like to say sorry for

When everyone has finished, you can either place all the hands in front of you so that everyone can see your creations. Or, if anyone prefers to keep their prayers secret, fold down the fingers on the paper which leaves the hand in the thumbs up shape - a reminder that God is present and has heard your prayers. Take turns to pray and then finish with a prayer asking God to turn our doubts into stronger faith.

'Faith is being sure of what we hope for and being sure of the things we cannot see.' Hebrews 11:1

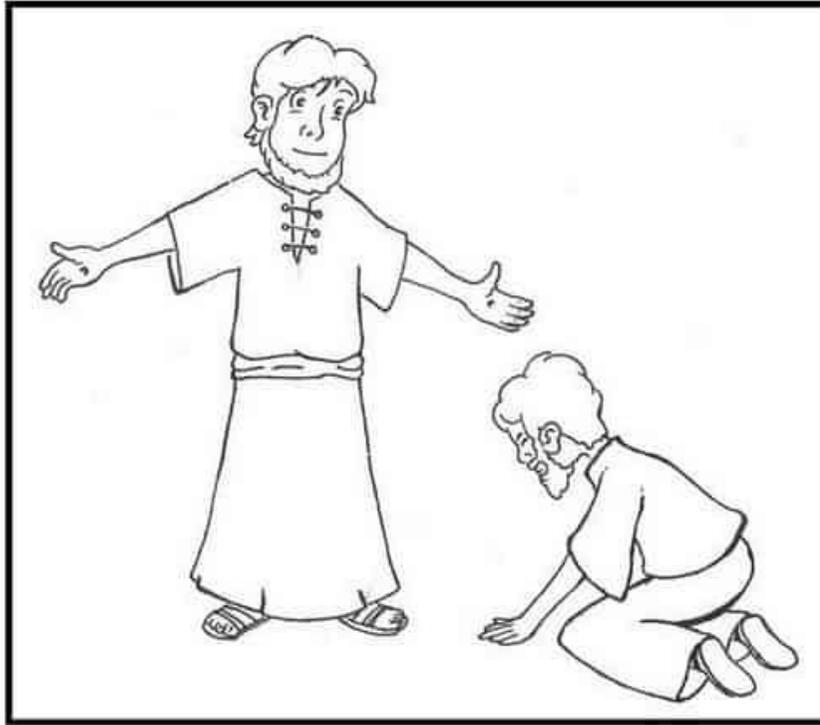


**From
Doubting**



**To
Believing**

CAN YOU SPOT THE DIFFERENCE?



Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"
Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me,
you have believed; blessed are those who have not
seen and yet have believed." John 20:28-29 NIV