

# Session 5

Thomas wonders how to believe without seeing

Children realise that it is okay to wonder sometimes, but Jesus wants us to trust in Him

**Scripture: John 20:19–31**

**Supplies:**

- Cards of the disciples and Jesus
- A box, to be used as a table, in the sandbox
- A piece of cardboard, with a door drawn on it, for the sandbox
- Sandbox
- Optional: A page with the words “I believe it” and one with the words “I don’t believe it”
- Popsicle sticks
- Glue
- Crayons
- Enough copies of the hands on cardboard
- Scissors
- Toilet rolls and foil
- Arrange to have coins next week if you will be talking about Judas then



**Welcome**

**Believe it or not:** (This game works with a big or small group and doesn’t need any preparation.)

Has anyone ever told you a story, but you doubted whether it was true? For example, someone told you that they caught a fish, and the fish was **THIS** (show the size with your arms stretched out) big? Maybe you would have believed them if you saw a photo of the fish, but without any evidence it’s difficult to believe this story.

Today we are going to play a game called “Believe it or not”. I’m going to make a few statements and if you believe them, you must run to that (show the corner) corner of the room. That’s the **“I believe it!”** corner. If you don’t believe me, then run to that corner (show the opposite corner). That’s the **“I don’t believe it!”** corner. Are you ready? Here we go!

*If you want to, you can print out pages to name the corners with the words “I believe it!” and “I don’t believe it!”. After each statement, give the group time to choose which corner they want to go to. Once everyone has chosen a corner, reveal whether it was true or not. Afterwards everyone goes back to the middle of the room for the next statement.*

- Do you believe that penguins can smell toothpaste 2 km away? Do you believe it or not? It’s false.
- Do you believe that in Tokyo, Japan, it’s faster to travel by bicycle than by car for short distances? Do you believe it or not? It’s true.
- Do you believe that the zebra is the fastest animal on earth? Do you believe it or not? It’s false.
- Do you believe that elephants eat with their trunks? Do you believe it or not? It’s true.
- Do you believe that bats are the only mammals that can fly? Do you believe it or not? It’s true.

Sometimes it’s hard to believe things that we can’t see, or maybe it’s hard to believe a story because of who is telling it. If it’s someone trustworthy who is telling us, then it’s easy to believe them, but sometimes we need a little more convincing. In today’s story we are going to talk about Thomas who struggled to believe without seeing.



## Worship

**Settle-down ritual:** Let us place ourselves in the presence of our loving God. Sit with your back resting against your chair. Put your feet on the floor. Feel the floor. Rest your hands gently in your lap or on your knees. Close your eyes. Listen to the sounds outside the room. (15 s) Listen to the sounds inside the room. (15 s) Listen to your breathing. “Thank you, Lord, for breath. Amen.”



## Word

Use the dialogue and the disciple cards to portray the story in the sandbox or use the dialogue for a short play. All the disciples except Thomas are sitting round the table and talking.

**Disciple 1:** Hey guys, are you sure the doors are locked? We don't want the Jews to come in.

**Disciple 2:** Yes, I made sure the doors are locked. But I'm wondering, what if Thomas wants to come inside? Because I see he isn't here.

**Disciple 3:** I don't think Thomas is coming tonight. It's dark anyway and no one knows where he is nowadays.

*Jesus arrives out of the blue and speaks to the disciples.*

**Jesus:** Peace to you!

*The disciples get a big fright and almost fall over.*

**Disciple 2:** What! I thought the door was locked. How did you get in, Jesus?

**Jesus:** I came to show you that I'm alive! Look, here are the scars on my hands. But more than that, I have come to send you out to continue my work of spreading love on earth. Now it's your job to go out and tell everyone who I am and what I do.

**Disciple 3:** Jesus, we're so glad that you're alive because that means that you really came to forgive our sins. But I don't think we're ready to continue your work... It's a very big responsibility!

**Jesus:** Yes, it is, but you don't have to be worried. I have taught you from the beginning how to do it. I will now blow over you all and you will receive the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will always be with you to help show you how and when you should tell other people of my love.

*Jesus blows over the disciples.*

**Disciple 4:** Thank you, Jesus! Are you going to visit us a bit longer?

**Jesus:** I didn't come to stay, only to encourage you.

*Jesus disappears again.*

**Disciple 2:** Wow! Can you believe what just happened?! Where is Thomas? He won't believe this! If we see him again, we must tell him this story.

*Explain to the group that the Bible doesn't tell us exactly when the disciples saw Thomas again, just that it was a while after this.*

*Thomas arrives.*

**All the disciples together:** Thomas! We saw Jesus!

**Thomas:** What?! No way. You're making up stories now. If I don't see the scars from the nails in his hands and put my finger on the scars on his side from the spear, I'll never believe it.

*It is eight days later, all the disciples, including Thomas, are sitting around the table, and talking.*

**Disciple 1:** I don't want to sound crazy, but are you guys sure the door is locked this time? You know what happened last time.

**Disciple 2:** Yes, it's locked. It's not like it mattered last time anyway, because you know Jesus didn't come through the door.

**Thomas:** Are you guys still going to say that Jesus is back with us?

*Suddenly, before Thomas' words are cold, Jesus appears between them.*

**Jesus:** Peace to you!

*Thomas gets a massive fright.*

**Jesus:** Thomas, bring your finger here and look at my hands. Put your hand on my side and don't doubt anymore. I really did rise from the dead. You can believe me.

**Tomas:** My Lord and my God! You are alive!

**Jesus:** Do you believe now that you've seen? Blessed are those who did not see that I really rose from the dead and still believed.

**Disciple:** Do you believe us now, Thomas?

**Thomas:** How can I not believe? I just saw him for myself!

Children reflect on the story:

1. I wonder why Thomas doubted that Jesus rose from the grave.
2. I wonder why Thomas didn't believe the other disciples.
3. I wonder if Thomas would have doubted forever if he didn't see Jesus and his scars.
4. I wonder how you know that Jesus rose from the grave without having seen it with your eyes.



## Working and Playing

- Hand bookmarks: Give each group member a copy of the hand and a popsicle stick. Let them decorate it and cut out the hand. Cut a hole in the middle of the hand on the dots. This hole reminds us of Jesus' wounds. Glue the hand to the top of the popsicle stick. Use this stick as a bookmark in your Bible to remind you that Jesus rose from the dead and lives again. Even though we have not seen it with our own eyes, we know it is true because we read about it in the Bible.
- Now use your stick to read the Bible by looking at the page through the hole in the hand.
- Make binoculars with toilet rolls and cover the front with foil.

## Close with the benediction:

Jesus loves you very much.  
He has invited you.  
You are very welcome at his table.  
He forgives you. He heals your heart.  
His Spirit lives in you.

