

## Testing truth

### John 20.19-31 Easter 2

The story of 'doubting Thomas' is often seen as a negative one – the disciple who wouldn't believe without seeing the risen Jesus – and yet he is someone who just wanted to see the evidence for himself. It would have been easy for Thomas to go along with his friends who had already seen Jesus, but Thomas wanted to experience it for himself in order to believe. The meeting with Jesus provides him with the chance to test the truth for himself.

*This week we explore how we come to believe.*

#### Prepare your young people's session

Read Bible notes on [WEB](#).

Think of an example when you, or those in your community or wider society, have needed to test the truth. How did this affect your trust in: God, friends, government?

Young people may have experienced their faith being challenged by their peers. The example of Thomas may be reassuring for them, allowing them to explore their own doubts and questions and find new strength in their faith.

Find more ideas opposite. Go to [www.rootsontheweb.com](http://www.rootsontheweb.com) for links, templates, images, tracks.

- Set out some rules: the guest can only answer 'yes' or 'no', there is a limit of 10 questions, and the question can't be, 'Is this story true?'.

#### Belief snapshot 10 mins **E S**

Define your faith using images

**You will need:** phone cameras.

- In small groups, or as a whole group, storyboard a Snapchat or Instagram 'story' consisting of a montage of six pictures/videos on the theme of 'what I believe'. Encourage the young people to think about relevant images, text and hashtags to use.
- Challenge each young person to create these images on their phone and share with the group.

#### Door prayer 15 mins **E S**

Symbolise doubt as a door to discovery

**You will need:** 'Door to discovery' prayer and copies of the door template (see [WEB](#)), scissors, pens, glue.

- Project or print out the 'Door to discovery' prayer.
- Play the track 'Egypt', Cory Asbury on *The Father's House*, during this activity.
- Give out copies of the door template. Invite the young people to fold the paper in half with the door in front, decorate the door and cut round the dashed line to create a hinged door. Ask them to glue the halves together, leaving the door free to open.
- Read the prayer together. Ask the young people during the week to write their own prayer of doubt behind the door.

[WEB](#) Check-in: Connecting faith with everyday, real-life issues.

## GATHER

#### Fake news 5 mins **WE**

**You will need:** headlines (on [WEB](#)).

- Read out the headlines and ask the young people to work out which are real and which are fake.
- Discuss: How do we know whether something is true or false? Do you ever question whether a friend/teacher/family member is telling you the truth? What would convince you to believe that what they were saying was true?

#### First impressions [WEB](#)

You could also use the image and following questions to help introduce the theme.



- How can you tell if something is 'fake news'?
- If someone asked, what is your 'evidence' for your faith?
- What would you ask Jesus if you had the chance?

## SHARE THE WORD

RCL Easter 2 Year B: Acts 4.32-35; Psalm 133; 1 John 1.1–2.2; John 20.19-31.

#### Capture words and attitudes

5 mins **WES**

**You will need:** pens, two pieces of paper for each young person.

- Encourage the young people to think about the words and attitudes in the passage which are about testing the truth. How does Thomas test the truth about Jesus' resurrection? How does Jesus offer proof?
- Read the passage aloud and ask everyone to write down the words or attitudes of Thomas and Jesus on separate pieces of paper.
- Play the track 'Head to the Heart', United Pursuit on *Simple Gospel*, as you read.

## EXPLORE AND RESPOND

#### Mystery guest 10 mins **W**

Decide if someone is telling the truth

**You will need:** a mystery guest.

- Invite your guest to read out three interesting stories about themselves. However, only one should be true. Ask the young people to work out which story is true by asking the guest questions.

## GO WITH GOD

Consider together what you have explored, what that means for each of you and how it might influence your daily lives.

- Ask the young people to close their eyes and picture a word, image or character from the passage that resonates with them about where they are on their journey of belief and faith.
- Encourage them to spend a quiet moment reflecting on their own doubts, questions and certainties.

#### Go with God 24/7

Revisit the *Go with God* activity during the week – is what you reflect on the same, or does it change? **WE**

As you finish, give out the **ROOTS at home** resource [WEB](#), to encourage faith at home.