



Messy Tom

Is seeing believing?

Activity time

Try these activities and see if you can start guessing what might happen in our story today. If you can't get exactly these materials, just see what you can find around the house instead!

1 Feely bag

You will need: a pillow case; random different-shaped objects to go in it such as a teddy, a plastic bottle, a roll of sticky tape

Hold the top of the bag shut and invite others to try to work out what's in the bag just by feeling them through the bag.

Talk about whether they would believe you, if you told them what was in the bag before they felt it for themselves. Talk about the way that Thomas hadn't been with the other disciples when they saw Jesus after he came back from the dead and he said that unless he saw and touched Jesus for himself, he wouldn't believe Jesus had risen.

2 Touchy-feely resurrection

You will need: pencil; glue; thick string; card; foil or playdough, sand, mud or flour

Write one letter from the sentence 'Jesus is alive' on a piece of card. Then spread glue over the top of the letter and press string down on top of it. Smooth foil over the top, pushing it gently up against the foil letter so the letter stands out. Put the letters together to make the sentence and feel the shape of them with your finger. You could also do this more simply but in an equally tactile way, with playdough or another feelable substance.

Talk about times you have needed to touch something or someone to make sure they're really there. Why do you think Thomas said he wanted to see and touch Jesus for himself? Why didn't he believe the other disciples when they said they'd seen Jesus alive again?

3 Draw it!

You will need: paper; pens or paint and brushes

Imagine you're Thomas. It's the week after the Sunday when all the other disciples claimed Jesus had come back to life. You've been too upset and angry about seeing him die to want to be with them at all

over the last week. But today you've joined them in the house and made sure they've locked the door, so nobody gets arrested for being a Jesus-follower. It's very crowded. Everyone ought to be as depressed as you are. But instead, the other disciples seem to be excited and edgy, as if they're expecting something to happen. They explain that they've all seen Jesus alive again – even the women have! What a bunch of dreamers, you think! They can't even accept that Jesus is dead – even when they all saw him die! You aren't going to fall for it. You tell them you simply won't believe it until you see and touch Jesus for yourself – as if that's going to happen! And then suddenly everyone goes quiet and you realise they're looking at something behind you. You turn round and there he is! Not a ghost, not a misty see-through vision, but Jesus, as solid and heavy as he was over a week ago. He greets them like he always did, then looks straight at you and, like he always did, knows just what you're thinking. He holds out his hand with the wound in it from the nail, and invites you to touch it, and to touch the wound in his side; to stop doubting and believe.

Can you draw or paint what that moment is like for you as Thomas? What can you see? Do you go ahead and touch Jesus? How are you feeling as you say to him, 'My Lord and my God'?

Talk about how you feel as you are drawing or painting your response.

Celebration

Read the story from [John 20:24–29](#).

- If you'd been Thomas, would you have touched Jesus?
- Who do you usually hold hands with, hug, slap on the back, sit close to?
- What does it feel like for you, not to be close enough to touch anyone outside your household?
- How can you stay close without touching people?
- How can you stay close to Jesus without being able to touch him?

Pray: Jesus knew it was hard for Thomas to believe without the evidence of seeing and touching. He knew it would sometimes be difficult for us to believe in him too. He told those first disciples that we would be 'blessed' because we would not have seen him with our eyes like they did, but we would still believe.

Try saying this prayer, with one person reading one line and everyone else replying with the great words of Thomas as a response:

Jesus, I haven't seen you with my eyes, but I believe you are

My Lord and my God.

Jesus, I haven't touched you with my hands, but I believe you are

My Lord and my God.

Jesus, I haven't heard you with my ears, but I believe you are

My Lord and my God.

You could say the [Lord's Prayer](#) and the [Messy Grace](#).

Mealtime

According to tradition, Thomas kept on believing Jesus was his Lord and his God and wanted everyone else to believe it too. He went as far as India and told people there about Jesus being alive again, even though it cost Thomas his life. To remember Thomas and his longing for everyone everywhere to know Jesus is their Lord and their God, how about eating a curry today?