



FOUR KEYS FOR FAMILIES

Faith Talk:

Discuss in your household or small group:

- What is something you find hard to believe? Why?
- Thomas found it difficult to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead until he saw him with his own eyes. Are you a little or a lot like Thomas?
- Jesus said: "Blessed are those who believe without seeing me" (John 20:29). What helps you to believe in Jesus without seeing him in the flesh?

Devotional Practices:

In your family devotion times this week pray for people (by name if possible) who are struggling to believe in Jesus. Ask for God's help to share Jesus' love with them.

Rituals and Traditions:

While his disciples were hiding in a locked room on the first Easter Sunday, the risen Lord Jesus appeared with them and said "Peace be with you". When you gather as a family this week "pass the peace" to one another with handshakes, kisses or hugs. Say "The Lord's peace be with you" as you greet one another.

Service:

When Jesus first appeared to his disciples, Thomas was not with them. He must have felt like an "outsider", not having the same experience as his friends. Is there a person who is a newcomer to your community or church who may feel like an "outsider" at times? Invite them to your home to share a meal with you, or to a church function with you. Introduce them to others and help them feel more at home in their new environment.

Parent Toolbox:

Responding to the Faith Questions of Children

At times, our children may ask us questions about God or faith that challenge or unsettle us. How should we respond?

Here is some advice to consider:

- Always answer honestly, even if the answer is "I don't know." It never hurts for adults to admit there are things about God we don't understand – in fact, it helps to illustrate that faith is not about "knowing it all" but trusting Christ in spite of what we do not know.
- Take every child's question seriously. If it matters enough to them to ask, it should matter enough for us to answer thoughtfully.
- Help your children to think further by asking follow-up questions. It is better to encourage our children to think through things for themselves than to give them all the answers.
- Use their questions as a chance to learn together. Open your bibles and discover together!

FIRST READING: Acts 2:14a, 22–32

A reading from Acts.

^{14a}But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, ²²You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know — ²³this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. ²⁴But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power. ²⁵For David says concerning him,

'I saw the Lord always before me,
for he is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken;
²⁶therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;
moreover my flesh will live in hope.

²⁷For you will not abandon my soul to Hades,
or let your Holy One experience corruption.

²⁸You have made known to me the ways of life;
you will make me full of gladness with your presence.'

²⁹Fellow Israelites, I may say to you confidently of our ancestor David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would put one of his descendants on his throne. ³¹Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, saying,

'He was not abandoned to Hades,
nor did his flesh experience corruption.'

³²This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses.

PSALM: Psalm 16

The psalm will be sung responsively by whole verse. The assembly will sing all verses in bold print.

¹Protect me, O God, for I take refuge in you;
I have said to the LORD, "You are my Lord, my good above all other."

²**All my delight is in the godly that are in the land,
upon those who are noble among the people.**

³But those who run after other gods
shall have their troubles multiplied.

⁴**I will not pour out drink offerings to such gods,
never take their names upon my lips.**

⁵O LORD, you are my portion and my cup;
it is you who uphold my lot.

⁶**My boundaries enclose a pleasant land;
indeed, I have a rich inheritance.**

⁷I will bless the LORD who gives me counsel;
my heart teaches me night after night.

⁸**I have set the LORD always before me;
because God is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.**

⁹My heart, therefore, is glad, and my spirit rejoices;
my body also shall rest in hope.

¹⁰**For you will not abandon me to the grave,
nor let your holy one see the pit.**

¹¹You will show me the path of life;
in your presence there is fullness of joy, and in your right hand are
pleasures forevermore.

SECOND READING: 1 Peter 1:3–9

A reading from first Peter.

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

⁶In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, ⁷so that the genuineness of your faith — being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire — may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

⁸Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, ⁹for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

GOSPEL: John 20:19–31

¹⁹When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." ²⁰After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. ²¹Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." ²²When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

²⁴But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

²⁶A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." ²⁷Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." ²⁸Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

³⁰Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. ³¹But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

Daily Bible Readings:

These readings are related to the Lectionary readings for this Sunday.
Try to take time each day to read the assigned Bible passage.

Sunday	John 20:19-31	Thomas sees and believes
Monday	Genesis 32:22-32	Jacob wrestles with God
Tuesday	Judges 6:36-40	Gideon and the fleece
Wednesday	2 Corinthians 5:1-10	We live by faith, not by sight
Thursday	Hebrews 10:35 – 11:3	The nature of faith
Friday	1 Peter 2:21-25	Healed by his wounds
Saturday	Isaiah 33:5-6, 20-24	Look upon Zion
Sunday	Luke 24:13-35	On the road to Emmaus

Scripture Verse for this Week:

"My Lord and my God!" Thomas exclaimed. Then Jesus told him, "You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me." John 20:28-29

- Cut out & carry with you.
- Say at each mealtime.
- Read at bedtime.
- Commit to memory.

Prayers for this Week:

"Risen Lord Jesus, please give me the Holy Spirit so that I may share your grace with others. Amen." (John 20:22)

For Throughout the Day:

"Lord Jesus, I believe. Help my unbelief. Amen." (John 20:28-29)

Mealtime Refrain:

"Praise God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: By raising Jesus from death, he has given us new life and a living hope." (1 Peter 1:3)

A Blessing to Share:

"May the Risen Lord Jesus replace your doubts with faith, your fears with boldness and your sadness with joy. Amen." (John 20:19-29)

Easter Mealtime Prayer:

"Risen Lord Jesus, we praise you for the gifts of this table and the feast of Easter Joy. Fill us with your love and life. Amen."



SCRIPTURE