

EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

SEEING

EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

Introducing the Gospel

The risen Jesus (John 20:19-31)

John's Gospel portrays Jesus coming and standing among his disciples on the evening of Easter Day. Thomas, who was not present when Jesus came, refused to believe without proper evidence. A week later (the second Sunday of Easter) Jesus came and stood among his disciples again. This time Thomas was there and Jesus provided him with the evidence he needed. Thomas saw and heard and touched the risen Jesus, and then he believed. But Jesus said 'Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.'

The image to stimulate reflection on John's account of Jesus' encounter with Thomas is *seeing*, seeing things in a different light.

Core extract from the Gospel (John 20: 19-31; for reflection throughout the week)

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve,
was not with them when Jesus came.
So 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.'

Gospel prayer (for use throughout the week)

Risen Lord,
you made yourself known to doubting Thomas.
When we, too, are surrounded by doubts,
open our eyes to recognise your presence
and to see you working in our lives;
for you are alive and reign for ever.
Amen.

READING NEXT SUNDAY'S GOSPEL

John 20: 19-31

Jesus Appears to the Disciples

When 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.' After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'

Jesus and Thomas

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So 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.'

A 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.' Then 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.' Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.'

The Purpose of This Book

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But 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.

ENGAGING WITH THE THEME

Dwelling with the text (John 20: 19-31)

Begin to explore John's account of Jesus' encounter with Thomas by employing the SIFT approach of Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, and Thinking. You may find that one of these approaches comes easier to you than the others. But it is worth trying all four.

- What details in the passage catch your attention (Sensing)?
- What big ideas in the passage spark in your mind (Intuition)?
- What most touches your heart in the passage (Feeling)?
- What most stretches your mind and makes you think in the passage (Thinking)?

Thinking and talking

Identify topics within the passage that can get you thinking and talking. Here are some ideas to get you started.

- Why are the disciples behind locked doors?
- What is important about Jesus' initial greeting, 'Peace be with you'?
- What do you make of Thomas' reaction when the others spoke of their experience?
- What changed Thomas' mind?
- What does this narrative say for us today?

Using your Bible

The encounter between Jesus and the disciples in John 20: 19-31 is distinctive to John's Gospel. Compare the accounts in Luke's Gospel, Matthew's Gospel, and at the end of Mark's Gospel, but be aware that Mark 16: 9-19 is thought to be a later addition to Mark's original text.

- Luke 24: 36-43
- Matthew 28: 16-20
- Mark 16: 9-14

Explore how Jesus opens the eyes of those who cannot see in John's Gospel.

- John 9: 1-12

Explore the image of sight and seeing in the Psalms.

- Psalm 119: 18

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER (YEAR A) Sunday 12 April 2026

Exploring online

Widen your exploration of John's account of Jesus' encounter with Thomas by looking up some of the following themes and others of your own choosing.

- Doubting Thomas by Caravaggio
- Prominent Christian thinkers who wrestled with doubt
- Doubting Thomas commentary

Drawing on experience

The image to stimulate reflection on John's account of Jesus' encounter with Thomas is *seeing*. Draw on your experience of seeing and believing. For example:

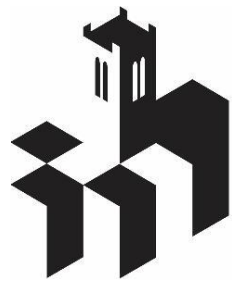
- What are your experiences of 'seeing and believing'?
- When have you believed something without seeing?
- Is it possible to test everything by seeing for yourself?

What have you learned about seeing?

Creating and making

This section offers pointers to some creative activities that may be inspired by the theme of John's account of Jesus' encounter with Thomas or by the image of seeing.

- Make a poster about Jesus' encounter with Thomas.
- Make a collage illustrating the image of seeing.
- Take the theme 'seeing is believing' and assemble pictures of evidence for Jesus' presence and activity in the world.
- Create a reflection, poem, or prayer on the theme of Jesus' encounter with Thomas or on the image of seeing.



Liverpool Cathedral

EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

Each week we are inviting people in their homes to look forward to those Sunday services that follow the Revised Common Lectionary Gospel readings. We employ the SIFT approach (Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, and Thinking) to encourage reflection on the Sunday Gospel. We are suggesting a variety of ways in which people of all ages, and households working together, may engage with the Gospel reading and celebrate that engagement with shared activities.

These materials have been developed by the Canon Theologian of Liverpool Cathedral working in collaboration with the staff team here at the Cathedral, and with sponsorship and support from the St Mary's Centre in Wales.



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