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Families growing faith at home

Church@Home is a fantastic resource that has been created to encourage and help church families enjoy a time of worship, explore the Bible, pray together and grow in their faith in the comfort of their own homes.

Every Sunday **Church@Home** provides a fun, engaging and easy-to-follow session using a Bible reading selected from the Church of England Lectionary. Each session lasts approximately twenty minutes and provides age-related material for toddlers to teenagers to accommodate everyone in the family. Thought-provoking questions, fun activities and crafts bring the Bible story to life as well as creative prayer ideas to help families focus, learn and grow in their faith together. Additional teaching and craft suggestions are also provided for families with very young children.

Church@Home can also be used as a fun way to help families connect with other families on Sunday mornings too during this time of distancing. Invite everyone to begin **Church@Home** at the same time and perhaps set up a WhatsApp group where families can share what they have done, or discuss the topic further together.

If your family or families in your church are using **Church@Home** please let us know. We would like to keep in contact, find out how you are doing as well as hear how **Church@Home** is helping families grow in their faith, so that we can share and inspire others during this time of distancing.

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Thank you 



Sunday 19 April 2020
2nd Sunday of Easter

Seeing is believing? John 20v19-31

Time to focus...

As you gather as a family, if possible, light a candle to mark the beginning of your worship time. Quietly stare at the candle watching the flames flicker and glow. Pause, and in the quiet moment invite God to be with you as you worship as a family...

Set the scene...

All of us have moments of doubt. We wonder if God is listening, if God cares, or if God is even there. But it's through these times of doubt our faith becomes stronger. With God's help, our doubt will be transformed into faith.

Question time...

- Make a list of outrageous things people say they've seen but can't prove. (e.g. UFO's, BigFoot, unicorns, pots of gold at the end of rainbows)
- What does 'seeing is believing' mean to you?

Watch the story...

Listen to the story of '[Jesus appears to Thomas](#)' beautifully retold by children.

Explore the story...

Today's story is about a man named Thomas. Thomas was a disciple of Jesus, who followed him for three years. After Jesus was crucified and rose to life, he appeared to all of his disciples except Thomas, who was not with them. The others told Thomas about Jesus as soon as he came back, but Thomas had a hard time believing something he could not see!

The next Sunday the disciples were together again and Thomas was with them. Jesus came in! Everyone was excited and Thomas believed when he saw Jesus. But Jesus said; "Thomas, you believe because you saw. But there will be lots of people [like us] who never get to see me but they will believe any way. That's a good thing."

We never see lots of important things. We don't see the wind, we don't see love, but we feel them; we know they are there. Don't be like Doubting Thomas. Trust God's love and God's power. We don't need to see God's love. We know it is there!

End with a prayer...

Dear God, turn our doubts into a stronger faith.
In Jesus' name, Amen.

Turn to the last page for a great creative prayer
that your family can all do together >>>

Faith is being sure of what
we hope for and being sure
of the things we cannot see

Hebrews 11:1



Sunday 19 April 2020
2nd Sunday of Easter

Seeing is believing?

Creative ideas / toddlers to teenagers

0-5s...

Teaching games: Blindfold a child and get them to feel another member of the family. Ask them: Can you guess who it is? Can you be sure it is them? Take off the blindfold. Were you right? Or, place an object in a cereal box so they can't see it. Ask the child to put their hand inside the box - can you recognise the item you are holding even if you can't see it? Can you be sure it really is what you've guessed? Take the item out of the box. Ask: Were you right? These activities lead nicely into a discussion about the theme 'seeing is believing?'

5-11s...

Worship: a nice song from Bethel Kids: "O taste and see"

Teaching game: A trust fall is a trust-building exercise in which a person deliberately allows themselves to fall, trusting someone else to catch them. Before you have a go, **watch** how not to do it! Did you laugh? Encourage everyone in the family to have a go - remember to fall backwards! This activity involves placing your trust in someone you cannot see and can lead nicely into a discussion about trusting God.

11-18s...

- 1) What does 'seeing is believing' mean to you? Is this always true?
- 2) Why do you think Thomas didn't believe the disciples story tomb and then met the living Jesus?
- 3) Are there times when you find it hard to believe?

+ Pray for friends and family that find it hard to believe in Jesus.

> Watch the incredible testimony of **Nicholas James Vujicic**

Then Jesus said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." John 20:27

Creative prayer / Hands

Give each member of your family a piece of paper and ask them to draw around and cut out the shape of their own hand.

On the four fingers you can write:

- Something to praise God for
- Something to thank God for
- Something you would like to ask God's help with
- Something you would like to say sorry for

When everyone has finished, you can either place all the hands in front of you so that everyone can see your creations. Or, if anyone prefers to keep their prayers secret, fold down the fingers on the paper which leaves the hand in the thumbs up shape - a reminder that God is present and has heard your prayers.

Encourage someone to conclude your prayer time including all the things that have been written down, leaving pauses for people to bring their own prayers to God silently.

