

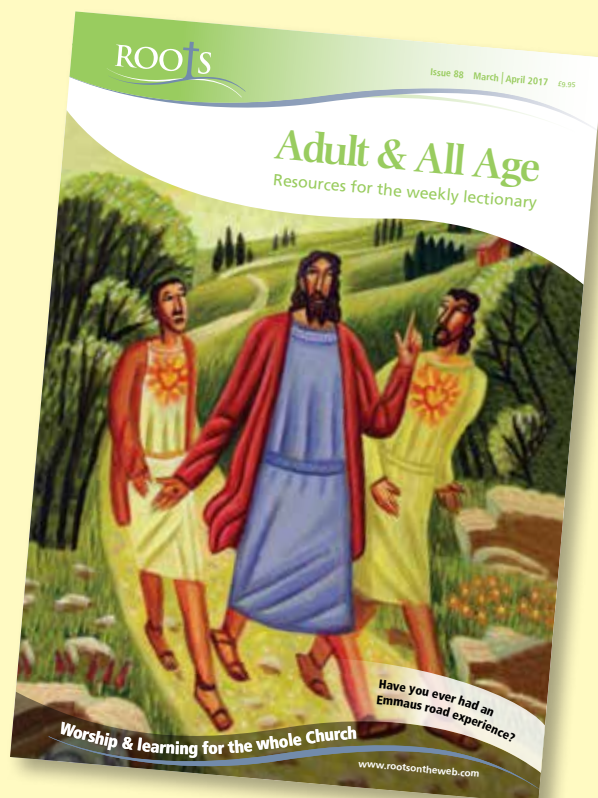
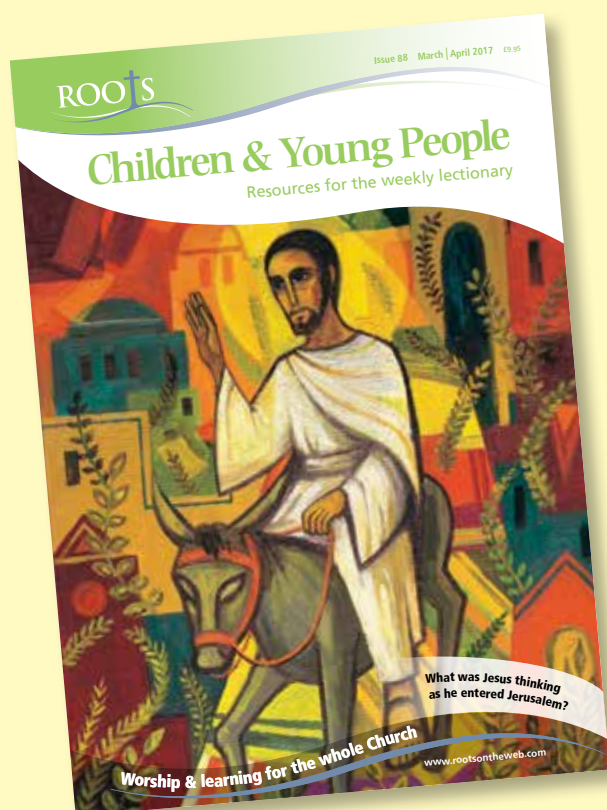


FREE sample materials

Resources for the weekly lectionary

Adult & All Age

Enriching worship and learning
with adults, families and all ages



Children & Young People

Flexible, engaging materials
for toddlers to teens

Free inside

All ROOTS resources for one whole
week: **23-29 April 2017**

www.rootsontheweb.com



Helping you to

- plan inspiring worship
- encourage discipleship throughout the week
- and nurture children and young people in their faith...

...every single week of the year.

ROOTS offers two sets of resources.

Adult & All Age

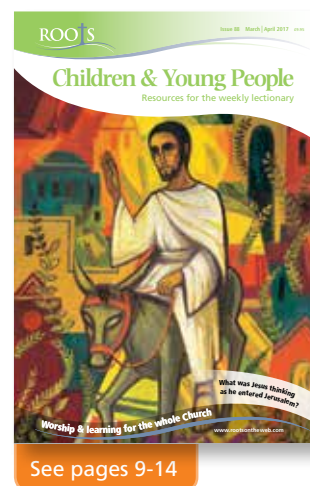
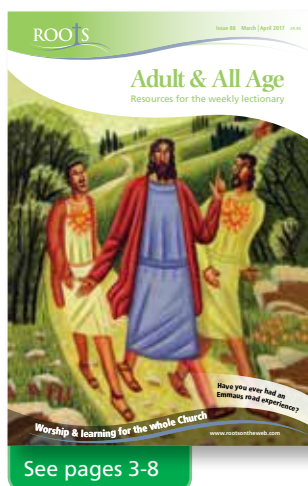
Enriching adult, family and all-age worship

► See pages 3-8

Children & Young People

Inspiring ideas and resources to use with toddlers to teens

► See pages 9-14



You can subscribe to **Adult & All Age**, **Children & Young People**, or to both sets of resources.

ROOTS and the lectionary

Each week, both ROOTS **Adult & All Age** and **Children & Young People** explore the same passage from the *Revised Common Lectionary*. Where *Common Worship* differs, we provide materials online.

Helping everyone get to know the Bible better

The lectionary helps to tell the 'big story' of the Bible. ROOTS resources enable us to hear this big story in our present generation – as a source of wisdom and insight in our lives today.

In so doing, we support you in equipping everyone to feel confident in joining the conversation about the Scriptures – a conversation that has been going on since they were written.

The ROOTS ecumenical partnership

Bringing together Churches and other Christian organisations since 2002



Enriching worship and learning for adults, families and all ages together

Each week the resources focus on the Gospel reading.

These focus on two of the week's readings, including a weekly exploration of the **links between the lectionary readings**.

Resources for welcoming
your congregation, and for
introducing worship.

- **To help the listener:**
context notes that could be read out before the readings are heard
- **Present the readings:**
fresh ways for all ages to engage with the readings
- A weekly mini Bible story and play activity **to use with very young children.**

A wide range of prayers
for different times within
worship – also available
in Welsh at
www.rootsontheweb.com

- **Sermon ideas**
- **An informal talk,** suitable for all ages
- **Active worship:** ideas to engage different ages, spiritual styles and learning preferences.

Equipping people with a suggestion for putting faith into practice during the week.

We can support you with encouraging discipleship all through the week – not just on a Sunday. Here are just three ways in which ROOTS does this.

- **Bible notes** – use them with a study group, or you could email them to others for personal study or reflection
- **Active worship** – ideas can be used in midweek groups and in fresh expressions such as café church
- **Prayers** – use them in prayer meetings, in care homes or with the housebound; print them on a news sheet or even email them?



Over the next few pages you'll see our magazine pages for **23-29 April 2017**.

All these materials are also available online for our subscribers.

View this week's materials online
for free at
www.rootsontheweb.com/sample

For ROOTS **Children & Young People**,
see pages 9-14

Trust the story

John 20.19-31

- The risen Jesus appears to the disciples behind locked doors.
- He assures them of his blessing and commissions them for his mission.
- Thomas learns that trusting is more important than seeing.

This week's resources explore: a questioning faith; believing without seeing; shalom (peace be with you).

The direction of the resources is the same in both magazines, so everyone can explore the passage as a community – even when they're in their own groups.

Easter 2

Lectionary Bible readings

RCL Easter 2 Year A

Acts 2.14a,22-32

Psalm 16

1 Peter 1.3-9

John 20.19-31

St George's Day [WEB](#)

You can access seasonal materials on our website.

Bible notes [WEB](#)

New Testament

Acts 2.14a,22-32

This extract from Peter's Pentecost speech shows him speaking at two levels. First, he refers to human activity: what Jesus did in his ministry, and how others responded. But he also speaks of divine activity: how God was at work in what Jesus did and what others did to him, notably in reversing the verdict of the Jewish and Roman authorities that he deserved to be executed. But the resurrection is not simply a one-off divine decision. It flows from God's hidden purposes, about which the Scriptures provide the clues. Many Jews at the time believed that the message of the Scriptures was not locked up in the past, but waiting to be disclosed when the Messiah (anointed one) came and the Holy Spirit revealed God's ancient purposes. So, Peter reads David (the assumed author of Psalm 16) as a prophet who spoke of the Messiah and his resurrection (v.31). On this understanding, the resurrection of Jesus confirms his divine authority as God's anointed one. And now, 'having freed him from death' (v.24), God has opened up a new age of freedom, beginning in Judea before extending to the ends of the earth.

Peter's speech weaves together trustworthy stories: the Hebrew Scriptures' promise of God's blessing, and the story of Jesus that takes shape after Pentecost, as God's promises are realised. By holding these two strands together in the story of the trustworthy God, the Bible proves to be indispensable for Christians in all ages.

Gospel John 20.19-31

As does John's Gospel as a whole, this extract from what was probably the original ending of his Gospel (verses 30-31 read like a conclusion) has Jesus speaking to two audiences: the first disciples in Jerusalem, and the Christ-followers for whom John writes. The evangelist has the disciples remaining in Jerusalem after Passover. They are behind locked doors in the house they had rented for the festival, afraid that the authorities will come after them too. They are ashamed by the humiliation of Jesus and their own failure to show their loyalty to him.

John's readers are also afraid. The local synagogue is hostile towards them, and some at least have been expelled (see 15.18-20; 16.2). Though he has promised to be with them in the coming of the Advocate (14.16-17), it would be easy for them to feel that Jesus is absent when they need him the most. The coming of the risen Christ to those whose security depends on locked doors reassures both audiences. His wounds reveal that the mysterious figure in their midst, unconstrained by space and time, really is their master and friend who was crucified. His repeated 'peace be with you' (shalom) is the traditional Hebrew greeting. Jesus, though, invests it with new meaning, as the peace that he had earlier promised (14.27) overcomes the power of death, and remakes the world that God so loves. Little wonder that the disciples rejoice. Breathing on them is a reminder that their wounded Lord is the source of God's renewing Spirit, like living waters flowing from his pierced heart (John 7.38-39; 19.34-37). Now they are commissioned to come out from

behind locked doors and extend his 'Lamb of God' mission that refuses to allow anyone's sins to have the last word (see John 1.29).

The story of Thomas says that even those who were not there at the beginning are given a share in Jesus' victory and commission. It isn't necessary to see or touch, only to take on trust the story that is captured in the witness of Mary Magdalene and the other disciples: 'I/we have seen the Lord' (20.18,25). Thomas'

Bible notes, written by a biblical scholar, focus on two of the week's lectionary readings. This section shows, for example, how the New Testament passage sheds light on the Gospel.

The links between the lectionary readings

Peter's speech in Acts 2 uses Scripture to write a trustworthy story of Jesus' resurrection. John's story too can be trusted, because it rests on the reliable evidence of the first apostle of the resurrection, Mary Magdalene. 1 Peter echoes the message of the Gospel that trust in the Easter message brings love, joy and hope.

[WEB](#) Notes on Psalm 16 and ideas for using it together.

Ways of using today's psalm, including background notes and actions to accompany a response line, so that everyone can be involved.

'ROOTS is a brilliant resource and an excellent start for planning.'

Ros Harper, Reader, St Michael's Church, Kirk Langley

Adult & All Age

Prayers

WEB All prayer text and Welsh translations.

Call to worship

Open your eyes!
Fall down and worship;
for this is your Lord and your God.
Amen. We come to worship.

A variety of prayers for different times within worship. The text of all the prayers is also available in Welsh at www.rootsontheweb.com.

A gathering prayer

We gather as disciples of the living Christ,
yearning to know him better,
delighting in his presence with us,
and finding joy only in him.
Amen. We gather as disciples of Christ.

A prayer of approach

We approach as those who have not seen,
those who believe – and doubt and hope.
We approach our God of life and love;
let us draw near.
Amen. We draw near to God.

A prayer of confession

We come with busy hearts and minds:
let us confess to God all those things we should not carry.
O God, forgive us when we cannot see you for all our questions,
when we refuse to believe, out of uncertainty or fear,
when we don't recognise you at work within us.
Forgive us, God of mercy.

O God, forgive us when we keep you to ourselves,
unwilling to share your joy with others,
preferring to stay in our comfort zones, behind closed doors.
Forgive us, God of mercy.

O God, forgive us when we muddle up our priorities,
misunderstand our purpose and potential,
and do not listen to your calling.
Forgive us, God of mercy.

We thank you for taking our sins from us.
In Jesus' name.
Amen.

A prayer of praise and adoration

Loving God,
we praise and adore you for your great compassion,
for giving us new birth into a living hope.
The glorious truth of the resurrection astounds us;
we pray that we never lose the wonder
of what you have done for us,
of the wonderful, lasting inheritance
you provide for us.
Amen.

Supporting you all week

You could use the prayers at a care home,
in school, at a meeting or you could print/
email some on a weekly news sheet.

Prayers of intercession

Gracious God, who hears the cries of the forgotten,
and sees those who are hidden: draw close.
We ask for your loving kindness to surround those
who are struggling with anxieties, doubt or despair,
and we pray that they may know your peace.

We ask for your unfailing, powerful love to pierce
the outer shell of hearts grown hard,
for those who once whispered your name
but now seem unwilling to seek you.
We pray that your love might compel them
to draw near to you once more.

We think of those at a loss as to how to cope
with even the simple practicalities of life –
we pray for your empowering,
and for others to offer help in appropriate ways,
so that they might no longer feel alone.

Have mercy, gracious God, who defeats death and sin.
You overcome the darkness, you cannot be contained.
Fill our lives today with the power of your Spirit.
Amen.

A personal prayer

Jesus, give me:
faith to walk in your ways,
hope to follow you wholeheartedly,
love to echo your own love,
peace to fill me
and overflow to all those I meet.
Amen.

A way into prayer

Write down a few words or images that represent any questions
or doubts you may have about your faith (especially those you
may not be prepared to raise with someone else). Cradle those
questions in your hands as a sign of offering them to God, and say
to yourself, 'God can be trusted with these'. Ask God to help you
be patient and accepting while you wait for – and as you seek –
answers to your questions.

A prayer for all ages together

Lord Jesus, we often have questions (*raise one hand in air*).
We don't always find an answer (*shake head*),
but we know we can trust you with the worries inside us
(*hand on heart*).
Help us always to look to you when we are unsure (*point to eyes*).
In your name we ask.
Amen.

A sending out prayer

Lord, thank you that in your presence is fullness of joy,
that in you we find life.
You lead us throughout our lives,
always beside us,
always faithful to us.
Go before us now, and may we bring joy to our world.
Amen.

Gather

Prepare the space

Display a large sheet of paper with the title 'Today I have come to...' and underneath, in three columns, add these images and the associated words: a question mark ('to ask questions'), a fish symbol ('to affirm my faith'), and a dove ('to seek peace'). Prepare small cards, each bearing one of the symbols –

Ways of introducing children to the themes explored this week.

Children's talk

WEB This week's talk, before they go into groups, is about things that are difficult to believe, and knowing the truth.

Open the Word

To help the listener

The reader could use these words to provide context.

In the reading from Acts, Peter brings the hopes of the prophet David to life in the trustworthy message of Jesus' resurrection. And in the Gospel, Jesus' promise of peace turns the disciples' fear and confusion into joy and faith.

Present the New Testament

Display a picture of the crucifixion or a crucifix, together with the caption: 'Could this man be the Messiah, the Christ?' Choose three people from the congregation to read (from their places) the Bible verses as indicated.

Introduce the reading by saying, 'In his Pentecost sermon, Peter addresses the question: can someone who was crucified really be the promised Messiah? According to Moses a crucified person was under a curse (read Deuteronomy 21.22-23). Peter deals with this by referring to the Psalms. Later Paul will give a similar answer (read Galatians 3.13). Paul also showed that this was a common stumbling block for Jews in his letter to the Corinthians (read 1 Corinthians 1.23-24). In Peter's case, as today's reading shows, his argument bears fruit.' Now read 1 Peter 3.1-9.

You can read out these notes before the readings to set the context of the passage for your congregation.

Present the Gospel

WEB Script to print out.

The reading tells of two events, a week apart. This can be emphasised by splitting the reading into two (vv.19-23 and vv.26-31), with an interlude between them in the form of an imaginary dialogue between Mary Magdalene and Thomas. You could also present the two parts

Fresh ways to help all ages engage with the readings.

With very young children

Play, and explore Jesus meeting doubting Thomas.

Play materials: paper, feathers, sparkles, glue sticks, paints, brushes.

Mini Bible story with actions

The disciples were hiding and afraid (*head under arm*). Suddenly Jesus came, saying, 'Peace be with you (*shake hands*),' and showing them his wounds (*touch hands and side*). They were filled with joy (*dance*)! He breathed on them (*blow*), saying, 'Receive the Holy Spirit

Supporting you all week

A weekly mini Bible story and play activity enables even the youngest to be engaged in worship – ideal for Sundays or midweek toddler groups.

Play activity

Invite the children to choose materials to make a peaceful picture.

Further provision for very young children is available online.



Each week we offer a thought-provoking image, plus related questions online, to stimulate reflection and discussion.

Explore & respond

On the **WEB** find links, images a resource suggestions.

Sermon ideas

WEB *PostScript*: up-to-the-minute comment on Thursday morning.

- In the book *Life of Pi* (Yann Martel, 2001) the young hero, sole survivor of a shipwreck, is cast ashore after being adrift for months in the ocean. An insurance agent and a writer hear two versions of his story: one a fantastical tale of being adrift with a menagerie including a tiger; the other, more prosaic, of a violent struggle among the survivors that

Every Thursday we add *PostScript* to our website: a comment on events in the news, linked to the coming Sunday's readings.

and the disciples are hallucinating? Is he right to ask for evidence? How might this apply to us? How does Jesus respond?

- Anselm famously wrote: 'I believe in order that I may understand.' Often this is seen as a helpful insight into the relationship between faith and reason. Science involves accepting a basic hypothesis – such as the uniformity of nature – in order to investigate phenomena. In a similar vein Susanna Wesley, John and Charles Wesley's mother, once said: 'There are two things to do about the gospel – believe and behave it!' Jesus' final beatitude in John's Gospel (v.29) could be addressed to us who come to faith through the witness of Scripture and by the example of those who live it out.

- When questions and fears torment us we will often seek a safe place where we can hide. Similarly, the disciples sought refuge behind the locked doors of the upper room. However, it was empty of the one presence that would bring them relief and release. Suddenly, Jesus stands among them speaking his word of peace, and resolving their questions by demonstrating that it is really him, risen from the dead. Peace, however, is not a comfort blanket. It is a calling to share and to be that peace to others. What

Picture pointers **WEB** Questions for reflection

- How does this picture symbolise peace?
- Why do you think the birds are faceless?

In addition to exploring the Word through a sermon, these ideas help everyone to make a personal response to the reading.

would our church and community be like if we actively worked to be peace sharers in the world, rather than only within the confines of the church building?

● Every church has its Thomas. Or rather, there are probably times when each one of us, like Thomas, questions our beliefs. How do we respond to those who ask those uncomfortable questions that we are afraid to voice? What pearls might be discovered through these 'irritants'? How can such questions enrich the Church and help it grow? Some seem to assume that such questioning is always destructive, but is that necessarily so?

Informal talk

A way for leaders to guide all ages through the reading.

There are many things in our modern society that we take on trust. A lot of us don't really understand electricity, but we happily use it all the time. Unless we are financial experts, we probably don't fully understand the workings of financial institutions, yet we depend on them to pay for things every day. Without such trust our society falls apart.

Faith operates in a similar way. We rely on the evidence of witnesses, and history, and the Scriptures that bring the stories to us. Those first disciples were convinced – by the resurrection appearances – that Jesus had broken the power of death. Some, such as Thomas, needed more convincing. He was not convinced only by being told; he needed to see for himself. But then, Thomas makes the strongest statement of any of them: 'My Lord and my God!'

But what about us? We haven't seen; yet we are here because we believe. Hold up a genuine banknote and a toy one (e.g. Monopoly™). Ask, 'Which one would you rather have? Why?' and gather some responses. Read what it says on the front of the banknote: 'I promise...' and draw attention to the signature and the bank's name. As Christians we have to take on trust what those first witnesses believed about Jesus and his resurrection. It is a bit like the banknote – the Gospels tell a story and carry a promise. Some people will not take it immediately at face value. Some of us need to make sure that it is not counterfeit, or based on delusions. Some of us will keep testing it throughout our lives. But that's all right – after all, the consequences of believing are truly life-changing.

Active worship

Ideas to engage different ages, spiritual styles and learning preferences.

A simple worship activity for all ages

Read John 20.19, repeating Jesus' words, 'Peace be with you'. A cantor/singer – holding a plain cross to represent the risen Jesus – sings the chorus, 'Shalom, my friend' to the congregation [WEB](#). Ask everyone to turn and face the person next to them; if appropriate, ask them to join hands. Now invite people to sing the chorus to each other. Continue to sing the chorus, asking people to face or join hands with another person. This can continue for as long as is appropriate. Finally, ask everyone to sing the chorus a final time, turning to face the walls of the building – as a sign of sharing peace with the world around them. The song can be sung more than once, in each instance; it can also be sung as a round. **W E S A**

The question card *

Invite people to write questions about faith on sticky notes, and then to put these on a display board. Working together, decide how the various questions might be handled. For example, some might be answered there and then, while others need a considered response, or research. Select a small group to continue to work on this after the service. **W E A**

The affirmation card *

In advance, prepare a display of items that could be used as symbols of faith (e.g. Bible, hymn book, living plant, photo of the congregation, prayer card, a flyer for a church charity or event). Invite people to choose an item and to say, briefly, why or how it speaks to them about their faith. **E S**

The peace card *

Light a large candle (or gather round the Easter candle). Sing or listen to the Taizé chant 'Peace I leave you, my peace I give you', inviting people to imagine Jesus coming among you now, and saying these words to all present. Encourage people to pray that Jesus will help them to share his peace with others. **W E S A**

'Spiritual styles' are different ways in which people connect with God. By taking these spiritual preferences into account, ROOTS helps you to engage everyone in worship.

WEB extras www.rootsontheweb.com

Children's talk: to use before they go into groups

Children's Sheet: to do in worship and at home. Welsh version available.

Drama sketch: *Handsome Thomas*

Psalm 16: ideas for all ages

Picture pointers: with questions for reflection

Pass it on: resources to share for DIY discipleship

Items not to miss on the ROOTS website.

Hymns & songs

Songs in italics are suitable for all ages.

[WEB](#) See *Hymns, songs & music* for key to abbreviations.

All things bright and beautiful
Be still and know (WGWG)
Be still and know that I am God
Be still, for the presence of the Lord
Christ has risen while earth slumbers (CH4, STF, WGWG)
Come down, O love divine
Give us the wings of faith to rise
I believe in Jesus
Jesus, stand among us at the meeting of our lives
Let there be love shared among us
Lord, you are more precious than silver
Make me a channel of your peace
May the peace of God our heavenly Father (TS)
My peace I leave you (WGWG)
O God, our help in ages past
Shalom, my friend
Shalom, shalom, Jerusalem (TS)
We see the Lord, we see the Lord
We walk his way (STF, WGWG)

Send out

Live in faith **W E S A**

Give out cards bearing all three symbols (see *Prepare the space*) and invite people to use them each day, as a reminder to think through questions, live out their faith and share Christ's peace with someone else.

A suggestion for living out our faith during the coming week.

Spiritual styles:

W Word **E** Emotion **S** Symbol **A** Action

[WEB](#) More info in the *Support* section

Adult & All Age resources on www.rootsontheweb.com

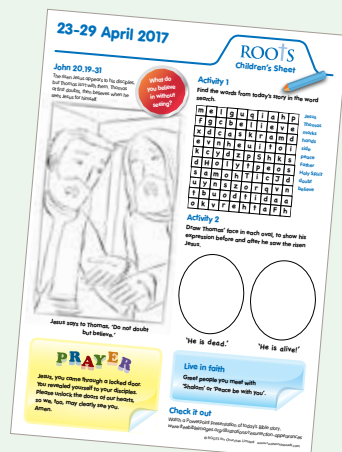
Each week at www.rootsontheweb.com, all the materials in the magazines are **also available online**.

In addition to all the magazine materials, the website provides:

- **support for your planning**
- **extra downloadable resources and links**, such as drama scripts, images, links to relevant websites and templates for activities
- **ideas for a children's talk**
- **PostScript** – added to the site every Thursday morning. PostScript is a comment on the news, linked to the coming Sunday's readings
- **ways of using today's psalm**
- **Children's Sheet** (in colour, black & white and Welsh versions)
- **access to our archive** of 14 years of previously published materials – a rich source of further inspiration!



Image



Children's Sheet

FREE

Go to www.rootsontheweb.com/sample to try this week's resources online

Seasons and festivals

As well as weekly resources, ROOTS offers you a rich online bank of seasonal material throughout the year.

- All-age seasonal services
- Prayers and prayer activities
- Special services for saints' days
- Drama sketches
- Resources to mark events in the secular year, such as Father's Day, major sporting events, anniversaries and commemorations.



Children and young people not only explore the same passage as the adults, but also explore the same threads within the passage.

Trust the story

John 20.19-31

- The risen Jesus appears to the disciples behind locked doors.
- He assures them of his blessing and commissions them for his mission.
- Thomas learns that trusting is more important than seeing.

This week's resources explore: a questioning faith; believing without seeing; shalom (peace be with you).

WEB Download a Planning Sheet to help prepare your session.

Easter 2

Other lectionary Bible readings

RCL Easter 2 Year A
Acts 2.14a,22-32
Psalm 16
1 Peter 1.3-9

St George's Day **WEB**

You can access seasonal materials on our website.

The wording of these prayers helps children to develop a sense of the language of prayer.

Bible notes **WEB**

- The disciples have heard that the tomb is empty and that Jesus has appeared to the women, but they are afraid of the Jews and have locked themselves away in a house rented for the festival. John's Gospel was written for a fearful community who felt Jesus' absence in the face of hostility from the local synagogue. Jesus' appearance reassures both groups. In his repeated 'Peace be with you', the traditional Hebrew greeting 'Shalom' is given new meaning as the peace that overcomes death, guilt and despair with life, reassurance and hope.
- After showing them his crucifixion wounds, Jesus breathes God's renewing Holy Spirit upon them. Thomas is not present and refuses to believe their account unless he is able to physically touch the Lord. The following Sunday, Jesus appears again to the disciples, and this time Thomas is with them. Jesus repeats his greeting and invites Thomas to test his identity by touching his wounds. Thomas' doubts are dispelled as he exclaims, 'My Lord and my God!'
- Thomas represents those who were not there to witness Christ's post-mortem appearances, and have their own doubts and questions to work through. Jesus praises those who take the story of his resurrection on trust, and believe the witnesses without seeing or touching him. The story is clearly not meant to remain behind locked doors. Peter, imbued with a new missionary zeal at Pentecost, makes a speech that bears witness to its trustworthiness (Acts 2.32).

Bible notes give you the biblical context, and encourage your own reading and reflection.

Prayers **WEB** All prayer text and Welsh translations.

A gathering prayer

Jesus, you came through a locked door.
Mime trying to turn a key.
You revealed yourself to your disciples.
Make a bow.
Please unlock the doors of our hearts,
Hand on heart.
so we, too, may clearly see you.
Mime putting on glasses. Amen.

A prayer of thanksgiving

Hold hands in a circle.
Lord,
thank you for bringing us here today.
We are together, as the disciples were,
when you joined them in that room.
We thank you, Jesus, that you are
in the middle of our circle now.
Bless us, Lord. **Amen.**

A prayer for forgiveness

Lord, sometimes we are like Thomas,
and have to see to believe.
Forgive us for those times
when we don't find it easy
to believe without seeing.
Help us to understand and love you more.
Amen.

A prayer for others

Response line: Fill them with your peace.
Jesus, please stand with people
who find it hard to believe in you;
Fill them with your peace.
who are ill...
who are frightened...
who are hurting...
who are lonely...
Amen.

A sending out prayer

Thomas said, 'My Lord and my God!'
Jesus said, 'Blessed are those
who have not seen me but believe.'
Blessed are we
who believe in you today, Lord.
Send us out now
to share the blessing
with everyone we meet.
Amen.

Helping the children to settle down, while setting the scene for the session.

Gather **WEB** Open the Bible at John 20.19-31

Prepare the space

Display on a table a key, three nails, a plate with slices/pieces of fruit, e.g. apple, satsuma, grapes, and if possible, an image of Caravaggio's painting, *The Incredulity of Saint Thomas* **WEB**.

Gathering activity

All sit in a circle. Take the plate of fruit, and offer a piece to the child sitting beside you. As they take it say, 'Peace be with you.' Pass the plate round, with each person repeating the words to their neighbour. Ask the group what the nails and key on display might represent. In today's story, Jesus appears to his disciples in a locked room and shows them his wounds.

Open the Word

Present the reading John 20:19-31

The risen Jesus appears to his disciples, but Thomas isn't with them. Thomas at first doubts, then believes, when he sees Jesus for himself.

Choose from these two ways of telling the story.

Seeing is believing Today's story is about Thomas, the disciple who said he wouldn't believe that Jesus was alive unless he saw him in the flesh. Read the story, and when you say **believe** for the first time, invite the children to shut their eyes and cover their faces with their hands. When you say **believe** again, they can uncover their faces and open their eyes again.

Stand up, sit down Beforehand, make some cards with the following names written on them: Jesus; Thomas; Disciple (enough of this card for everyone else and hand them out). As you read the story, invite the children to stand up every time they hear their name mentioned, then sit down again.

Having two different ways to tell the story enables you to provide variety and encourages children to participate.

For very young children

Play, and explore Jesus bringing peace, believing without seeing.

Play materials: toy windmills, instruments to blow.

Mini Bible story with actions

Peace and joy

The disciples were hiding and afraid.

Head under arm.

Suddenly Jesus came, saying,
'Peace be with you,'

Shake hands.

and showing them his wounds.

Touch hands and side.

They were filled with joy!

Dance.

Every week, we offer a mini Bible story with actions, two activities and an active prayer for very young children.

He couldn't believe that Jesus was alive again.

Shake head.

Jesus came again, and Thomas touched him.

Touch hands.

Now he could believe!

Nod.

Jesus said, 'You are blessed if you believe without seeing.'

Touch head then cover eyes.

Repeat so the children can join in.

Believing without seeing

You will need: lidded boxes with different objects inside, e.g. a torch, a toy animal.

Show the boxes to the children. Tell them what is inside each box, and ask them whether they believe you, e.g. 'there is a light in this box', 'there is a wild animal in this box'. Reveal the contents of the boxes, and invite them to play with them.

Peace be with you

You will need: paper, feathers, sparkles, glue sticks, paints, brushes.

Invite the children to choose materials to make a peaceful picture.

Prayer

You will need: a bubble machine.

Invite the children to enjoy the bubbles then repeat after you:

Prince of Peace,
breathe on us.

Fill us with the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

The return of Jesus from the dead was all the disciples could talk about. Every one of them was so excited about it. Well, not exactly every one of them. Thomas wasn't excited, because Thomas had missed it.

'Unless I see the marks the nails made in his hands, I won't believe he's alive,' Thomas said.

A week earlier, Jesus had appeared to ten of the disciples. They were gathered together, hiding because they were afraid they would be killed next. Although they were in a locked room, Jesus appeared and said, 'Peace be with you.' As the disciples rejoiced, Jesus said, 'As God the Father sent me, now I send you.' Then he breathed on them, saying, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. When you forgive people their sins, they are forgiven. When you find people guilty, they are guilty.'

Thomas was with the others in the house now. 'I'll only **believe** if I put my finger in the marks and my hand in his side,' he said. The doors were closed, just as they had been before, but again, Jesus appeared. He said, 'Peace be with you.' Then he spoke to Thomas, 'Look at my hands and put your finger in the holes. Put your hand in the wound on my side. Do not doubt, but **believe**.' Thomas was suddenly as excited as the rest of the disciples. 'My Lord and my God!' he cried.

Jesus asked Thomas, 'Have you only believed because you have seen me? God blesses all those who believe even though they haven't seen me.' This is why the story of Jesus was written down; so that people may believe that he is the Messiah, the Son of God. All who believe in Jesus

The retelling of the Bible story draws out the distinctive voices of the Gospel writers, by staying as close as possible to the Bible text.

Glossary

sins the bad things that people do, that go against what God wants; **Messiah** the 'anointed one', someone chosen by God to save the Jewish people, also a title used for Jesus.

The glossary helps explain key words and phrases, enabling children to become familiar with Biblical language.

Talk together

- Have you ever been told something that you didn't believe but which turned out to be true?
- Why do you think Thomas didn't believe what his friends said?
- I wonder how Thomas felt when he saw Jesus for himself.

Questions to spark discussion and to link the story to children's lives.

It's easy to keep sessions fresh and varied, with a range of different types of activity.

Explore & respond

Ideas to engage different ages, spiritual styles and learning preferences. On the [WEB](#) find templates, and links to video clips and other online resources.

Do

Shalom song

10 mins **W E**

Learn to sing in Hebrew

You will need: the music and lyrics to 'Shalom Chaverim' [WEB](#), (optional) the letters S, H, A, L, O, M, written on coloured cards.

- Beforehand, preview the song 'Shalom Chaverim' so you can teach it to the group. It may be helpful to write the words out.
- Sit in a circle on the floor, and teach the children the song. It works well in a round.
- Sing the song together. You could pass the letter cards round the circle. The last person places each card in the centre to complete the word SHALOM.
- Talk about what the word 'Shalom' means (see *Bringing peace* on p.37) and why it was the first thing Jesus said to his disciples.

Visible and invisible

10 mins **W E**

Play a sorting game to discover what we believe in without seeing

You will need: picture cards (template on [WEB](#)), a holding cross.

- Beforehand, cut the cards into 10 individual pictures and lay them out randomly.
- Challenge the children to sort the cards into two piles: things we can see and touch, and things we can't see and touch, but know exist.
- Talk about how we know that invisible things such as love, friendship, sadness, fun and faith exist. How can you tell that someone believes in Jesus?
- If appropriate, you could pass round a holding cross and invite the children to say, 'I believe in Jesus because...' Alternatively, they could ask a question about Jesus.

Make

Hand of peace

10 mins **S A**

A reminder to offer Jesus' peace to one another

You will need: round foil containers, coloured play dough (recipe on [WEB](#)), sparkly bits/sequins/beads.

- Give each child a container and a lump of play dough to spread out into a thin layer.
- Invite them to splay their hand and make an imprint onto the play dough.
- They can decorate their hand with sparkly bits and/or spell out

'Spiritual styles' are different ways in which people connect with God. By taking these spiritual preferences into account, ROOTS helps you to engage everyone.

Spiritual styles: **W** Word **E** Emotion **S** Symbol **A** Action
[WEB](#) More info in the *Support* section

Bible verse banner

10 mins **W S**

Reveal Jesus' blessing for us

You will need: lining paper, a white wax crayon or candle, poster paint and brushes.

- Beforehand, write on the paper in thick large letters with the crayon/candle, 'Blessed are those who believe without seeing.'
- Ask the children if they can see anything written on the paper. Say that there are some of Jesus' words there but they can't see them. Do they believe you?
- Give them each a paintbrush and invite them to paint over the paper to prove what you say. The hidden words should be revealed.
- Remind them that Jesus said these words about us. You could say the blessing together and end with a loud **Amen**.
- Display the banner when dry.

Pray

In the room with Jesus

10 mins **E S**

An imaginative meditation

You will need: meditation script [WEB](#), (optional) cushions.

- Invite the children to sit or lie comfortably and close their eyes. Encourage them to be still and concentrate on breathing slowly.
- Read the meditation script slowly, pausing where indicated.
- Invite the children to share their feelings if they want to.
- Close with this prayer, then share the peace with each other. Loving God, even though we can't see Jesus, like Thomas did, help us to believe in him, feel his presence, and welcome him into our lives. Let us share his peace with one another. **Amen**.

More prayers are on p.34.

Sing

[WEB](#) See *Hymns, songs & music* for key to abbreviations.

All I once held dear
 I believe in Jesus
 I need faith just to live my life (KS)
 Make me a channel of your peace
 Shalom, my friend (CHY, RSJ)
 Yesterday, today, for ever

Supporting you all week

The variety of activities, games and prayers provide plenty of material for both Sunday and midweek.

WEB extras www.rootsontheweb.com

Children's Sheet: for session and at home. Welsh version available.

Psalm 16: response line with actions

Picture pointers: to download, print and share

Pass it on: resources to share for DIY discipleship

Items not to miss on the ROOTS website.

Send out

Live in faith **W E**

Encourage the children to greet people they meet this week with 'Shalom' or 'Peace be with you'.

Encouraging discipleship during the week.

ROOTS YOUNG PEOPLE

BIBLE John 20.19-31

Imaginative approaches to Bible study.

Find Bible notes and more prayers on p.34. Use this section first, then choose any combination of activities from the other sections. Extra ideas can be found in *Explore & respond* opposite. On the [WEB](#) find templates, links, images and *Pass it on*: resources to share for DIY discipleship.

Warm up 5 mins E

Play a game of mini blind man's buff. Mark out an area approximately 3-4 square metres. A blindfolded volunteer is 'on' and two others try and hide. Start a 60-second countdown and see if they can avoid capture. If the blindfolded person tries to leave the marked area, tell them to stop and turn around.

So many questions! 15 mins W

Give everyone a pen and paper. Read **John 20.19-31** twice, and ask them to write down any questions that occur to them – nothing is too silly! Discuss all the questions at the end.

Questions to discuss

- Is a question the same thing as a doubt?
- Have you ever believed something without seeing it for yourself? Why?
- Why do you think Jesus repeats his greeting, 'Peace be with you'?

EXPLORE

Fun, interactive ideas to explore the passage further.

The unbelievable truth 10 mins W

Trust is a hugely important part of life. We rely on so many things without any real knowledge of how they work, and we frequently trust people we do not know personally. Give the group copies of the edited biography of Winston Churchill [WEB](#), and see if they can guess which four facts are false.

Do not doubt, but believe 15 mins+ E S

Display a range of images of Thomas' encounter with the risen Jesus, e.g. traditional, contemporary, iconographic, life-like, stylised [WEB](#). How do the young people respond to them? Have art materials available and invite them to create their own artistic representation of this moment of recognition.



Picture pointers [WEB](#) Questions for reflection

- ▶ How does this picture symbolise peace?
- ▶ Why do you think the birds are faceless?
- ▶ What questions do you want to ask the artist?

CONNECT

Ways to connect faith with today's world.

Questioning faith 15 mins W E

Beforehand, devise a list of questions about God, e.g. If God created the universe, who created God? What proof is there of God's existence? Why is there so much evil in the world? Why does a loving God allow suffering? Write the questions out, cut them up and lay them on the floor. Ask the group to select one at a time and share possible answers.

Bringing peace 15 mins W A

The risen Jesus greeted his disciples with 'Shalom'. The word means much more than peace: it represents harmony, wholeness, prosperity and tranquillity. Watch the film clip about the work of the Sycamore Tree programme, which involves prisoners in restorative justice [WEB](#). Discuss the idea behind the course. How might the young people be peacemakers in their own community?

[WEB](#) PostScript: weekly topical issues and commentary every Thursday.

PRAY

Creative ways to reflect and pray.

Meditative monologue 10 mins E S

Use a monologue by Thomas as the basis for a guided meditation [WEB](#). Invite everyone to close their eyes and imagine themselves in Thomas' position, after Jesus had appeared to the other disciples. Read the script slowly, and share responses at the end if appropriate.

'My Lord and my God!' 15 mins W S

Encourage the group to write some prayers of intercession together – they can include prayers for themselves, for others, for the church and for the world. After each section, use the response: My Lord and my God, hear my prayer.

Listen

Contemporary music to listen to.

Shadows, Tenth Avenue North
Orphans of God, Avalon
No Longer Slaves, Mighty Men Karoo feat. Joe Niemand

[WEB](#) See *Hymns, songs & music* for links.

Live in faith E

Encouraging discipleship during the week.

If you encounter difficulties or challenges this week, remember Jesus' word of peace: Shalom.

Children & Young People resources on www.rootsontheweb.com

Each week at www.rootsontheweb.com, all the materials in the magazines are **also available online**.

In addition to all the magazine materials, the website provides:

- **downloadable planning sheet**
- **templates** for craft and other activities
- **Children's Sheet** (colour, black & white and Welsh versions)
- **PostScript** – added to the site every Thursday morning, PostScript includes materials for young people based on the week's news
- **access to our archive** of 14 years of previously published materials – a rich source of further inspiration!



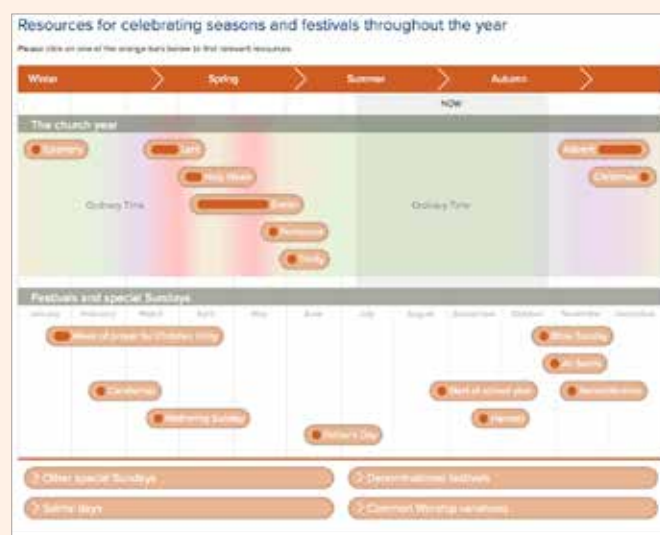
FREE

Go to www.rootsontheweb.com/sample to try this week's resources online

Seasons and festivals

As well as weekly resources, ROOTS offers you a rich online bank of seasonal material throughout the year.

- Seasonal prayers and prayer activities, specifically for children and young people
- Craft and other activities
- Drama sketches
- Specially-written songs
- Resources for one-off events such as holiday clubs
- Resources to mark events in the secular year, such as Father's Day, major sporting events, anniversaries and commemorations.



Which subscription is right for you?

ROOTS offers two sets of resources: **Adult & All Age** and **Children & Young People**. You can subscribe to one set of resources, or both.

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A single-user subscription is ideal if you use ROOTS for your personal reference and don't need to share resources with others.

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or

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To enable people in different roles within church communities and organisations to use the ROOTS resources, we also offer **sharing subscription packages**.

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We'll also give a separate account to the subscription administrator, to enable them to manage the subscription.

See more examples of sharing subscriptions and how they can work for you at www.rootsontheweb.com/sharingsubscriptions

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SAMPROOTS

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Number of web user accounts with this package*	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

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