



# SHADOW SIDE

## GROUP GUIDE

## DOUBT BUILDS FAITH

### START UP

While we often think doubt is bad, there's a shadow side to it: doubt can actually propel our faith forward if we handle it well. Doubt is not the enemy of faith. But if we're not careful, it also has the potential to repel and drive us away from God.

- Buddy the Elf once said, "The best way to spread Christmas cheer is singing loud for all to hear." If you're honest, how much Christmas cheer are you feeling right now?
- Did you grow up in an environment where tough questions about faith, life, and God were encouraged or discouraged? How did this affect you?

### DISCUSS TOGETHER

Read **John 20:24-29**.

- Why do you think Thomas struggled with doubts? Was it something about his personality, what he had experienced or not experienced, or something else?
- Jeff shared how there are some people who tend to believe more easily and others who are naturally more skeptical. Which category do you most identify with? How does that affect the way you approach faith?
- How does Jesus respond to Thomas' doubts? Why is this significant?
- Dale Bruner said, "The Christian faith is bipolar. Disciples live their lives between worship and doubt, trusting and questioning, hoping and worrying." How does this quote challenge your understanding of the relationship between faith and doubt? In what ways do you find it freeing?
- Jeff shared how doubts can either propel us toward Jesus or repel us from Him depending on how we handle it. What are some unhealthy things we can do with doubt? Have you experienced how doubt can keep you from God?
- How does Thomas demonstrate faith even in his doubts? What can we learn about dealing with doubts from him?
- Thomas was honest about his thoughts. So, let's get honest about our own doubts. Are you dealing with nagging doubts this season? Is it an intellectual struggle? Or is it a personal struggle where you thought life would have turned out differently? Share with the group.

### LIVE BIG

This is the last message discussion guide for the fall—we'll resume in the new year with a special series called *Future Quest*.

As you wrap up this season of group, take a few moments to celebrate and think about what God has done over the last few weeks. Ask people to share:

- A highlight from this season of LifeGroup.
- A "thank you" to a person who did or shared something particularly meaningful.
- A hope for what God will do in the group in the new year.