# Saint Thomas Becket

The Troublesome Priest

**Ages about 7-11** | Video 6:23 | Group lesson about 25-35 minutes

**Central truth** Thomas's friendship with Henry was tested by his responsibility to the Church. His story asks how we can remain faithful, disagree honestly, and take responsibility for our words.

**Learning goals** Children will explain Thomas's difficult choice, trace the effect of Henry's anger, and practice a truthful response to pressure from a friend.

**Gather** Video access, one handout per child, pencils or crayons, and a Bible.

**Watch online** Open this video on Servus Dei

### Before watching | 2 minutes

Ask: Can good friends disagree? Watch for the responsibility that changes Thomas's relationship with Henry.

### Watch and notice

Pause after Thomas becomes archbishop. Name what Henry expects and what Thomas believes he must do. Notice both Thomas's exile and Henry's later sorrow.

### Talk together | 6-8 minutes

**1. Why did Henry want Thomas to become archbishop?**
He expected his trusted friend to support his control of the Church. Thomas understood his new role as a responsibility before God.

**2. Did disagreeing mean Thomas had stopped caring about Henry?**
No. Caring about a friend does not require agreeing to everything. Thomas believed faithfulness required a difficult refusal.

**3. Why do Henry's angry words matter in the story?**
Four knights act after hearing him. Words from someone with power can encourage harm, even when their speaker has not thought through the consequences.

**4. What does Henry's sorrow invite us to consider?**
We should admit harm and seek forgiveness and repair. Regret matters, but it cannot simply undo what happened.

**Then respond and pray** Allow 6-8 minutes for a handout or the activity on page 2; finish with the closing prayer.

# Lead the response

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**Short family lesson** Watch the video, choose one recall question and one application question, then pray. About 12-18 minutes; the handout is optional.

## Choose a handout

**Draw & Tell** Children show two friends disagreeing, then draw a peaceful way to speak the truth. Use an ordinary situation rather than the cathedral attack.

**Read & Write** Children explain the two responsibilities, identify the consequence of careless speech, and write a firm but respectful response to peer pressure.

## Adapt by readiness

Ages 7-8: use a simple example, such as a friend asking someone to hide a broken toy. Model a kind refusal.

Ages 9-11: discuss why conscience needs prayer, learning, and wise advice. Feeling certain does not automatically make a choice right.

## Pause, choose, repair | Optional 4 minutes

Offer the pretend sentence 'Get them out of our game!' Children pause, name the feeling, and replace it with words that explain a concern without attacking. Then suggest a repair if someone has already been hurt.

**Look for understanding** Look for Thomas's responsibility to God, a link between words and consequences, and a response that combines truth with care.

**Closing prayer** God, form our consciences and guide our words. Give us courage to do good, humility to admit wrong, and kindness toward those who disagree. Saint Thomas Becket, pray for us. Amen.

**At home** Practice saying, 'I care about you, but I cannot help with that. We can ask an adult for help.' Choose a simple family example.

**Handout answer notes** Thomas believed his duty to God and the Church came first. Knights acted after Henry's words. Accept a truthful refusal, a peaceful alternative, and seeking adult help.

## Teach with care

Introduce Henry as king and Thomas as his friend who becomes archbishop. Preview the martyrdom ending for sensitive children; avoid reenacting the attack. The film simplifies a complex medieval conflict. Dialogue is dramatized; Henry's famous wording and exact intent are historically uncertain. Thomas's refusal to flee is not an instruction for children to remain in danger. Seeking safety and help is wise.

**Words to explain** Chancellor: an important adviser to a king. Archbishop: a bishop with particular responsibilities in the Church. Conscience: our judgment about the good we ought to do and evil we must avoid.

### Sources for the leader

Life and martyrdom: Vatican News: 29 December

Responsible speech: James 3:1-12