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

A friend can speak the truth

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Courage and kindness can belong in the same answer.

Name _____

Adult helper Read aloud. Invite drawing, pointing, or spoken answers. Writing is optional.

1 Draw two friends facing a difficult choice.

2 Draw a peaceful, truthful way to respond.

Tell What could your friend say without hurting or threatening?

Pray God, help me choose good and speak with care. Amen.

At home Share your picture and one thing you learned about God or following Jesus.

Friendship and a difficult choice

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Think about Thomas's responsibility and Henry's words.

Name _____

1 Name the choice

Why could Thomas not simply do everything Henry wanted?

Thomas was responsible for ...

2 Words have effects

What happened after Henry spoke in anger?

His words were heard by ...

3 Practice courage

A friend asks you to lie. Write a kind but truthful answer.

I can say ...

Pray God, help me choose good and speak with care. Amen.

Go deeper How can someone begin to repair harm after speaking carelessly?