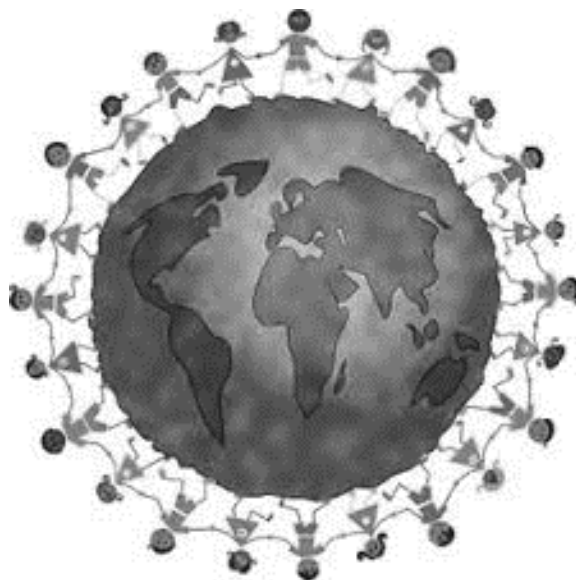


Stories from around the world

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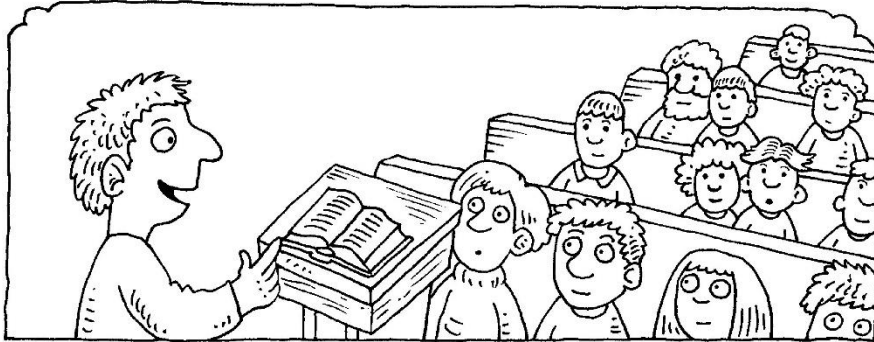
Levels 20 – 25

The man who shared his jumper

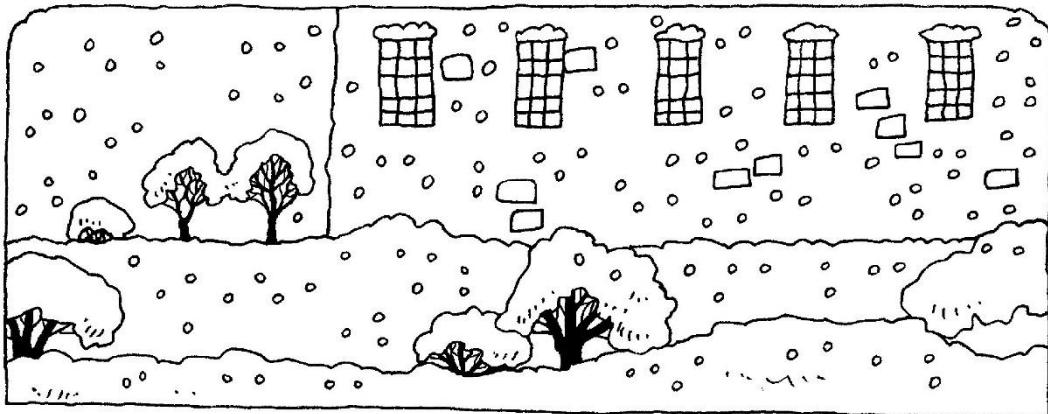
You don't have to be rich to help others. Just give out of what you have in your hand.



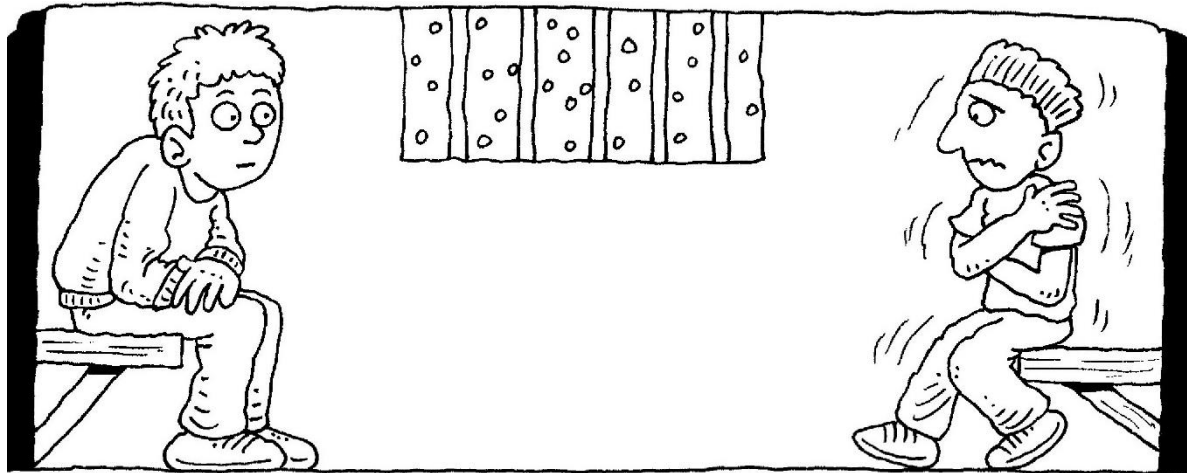
A long time ago, in the country of Romania, there was a good Pastor who told the people in his church how much God loved them.



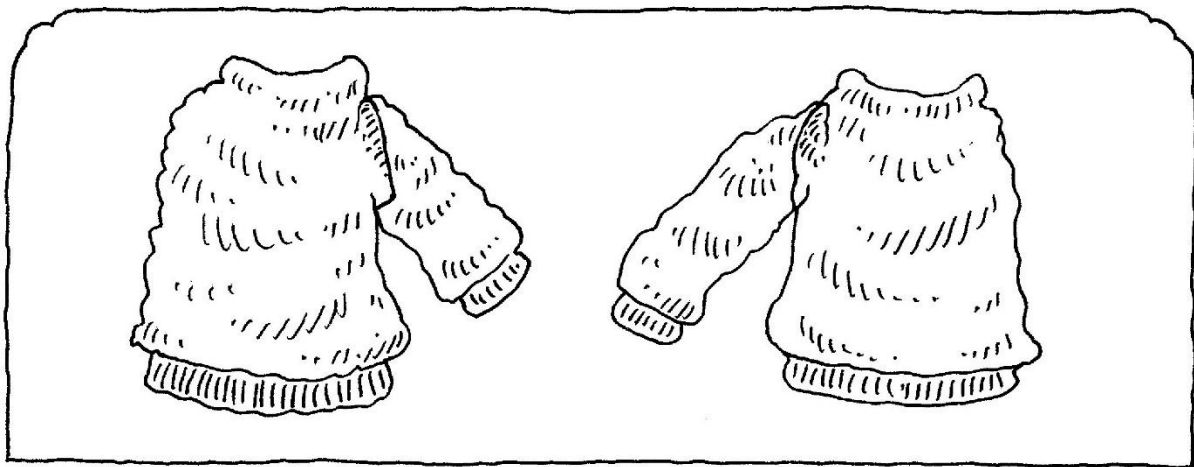
But the government made a new rule. Anyone telling people about God would go to jail. It was snowing the day the good Pastor was sent to prison.



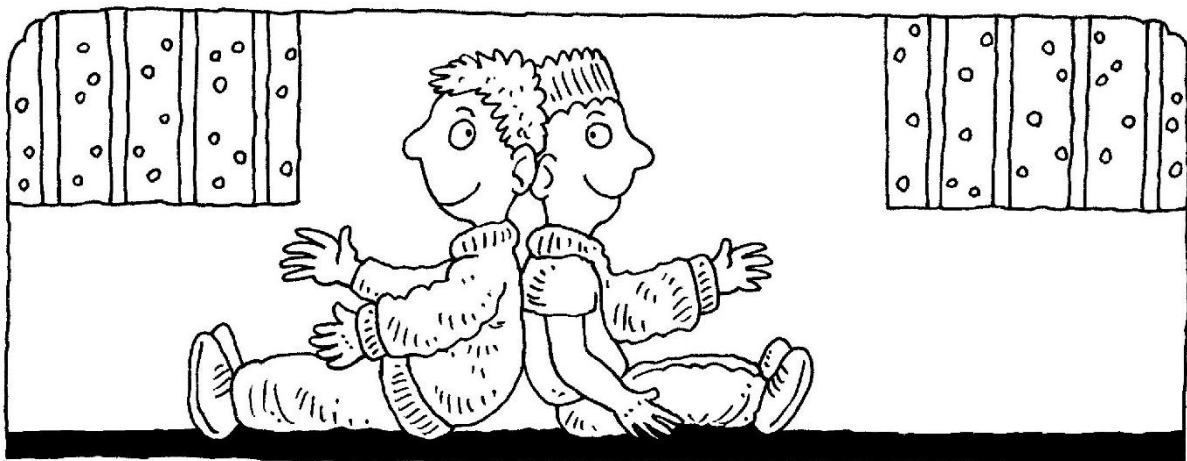
He thanked God that he was wearing his jumper but the other prisoner in his cell was cold and hungry. "We will freeze, or starve to death here," he said.



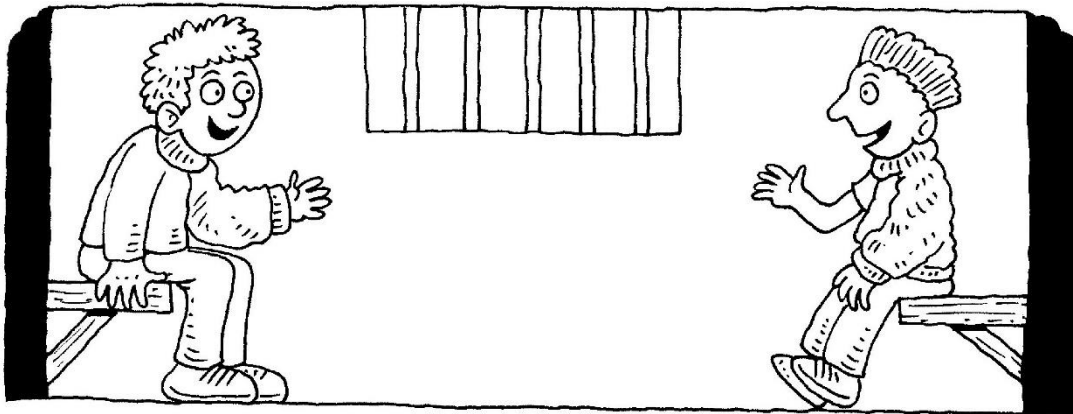
"How can God be with you in this awful place?" he asked. The Pastor carefully unpicked his jumper. He gave one half of his jumper to the other man.



While they sat back to back, warming each other and sharing the jumper, the Pastor told him how much God loves us all.



Soon the other man started to believe in God too. "Let us show other prisoners how much God loves them," he said.



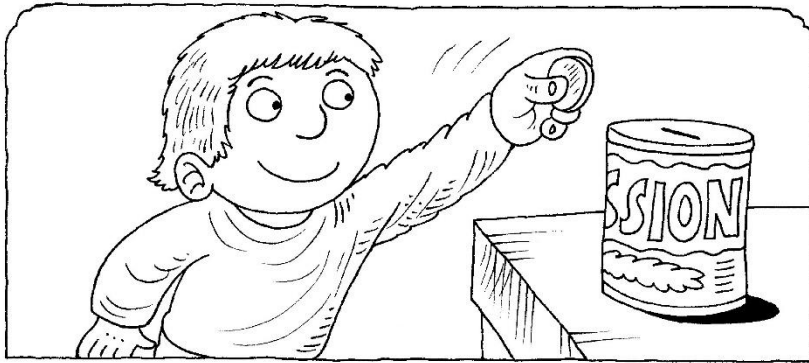
They each began to share a piece of their bread with sick and hungry prisoners. You don't have to be rich to help others.



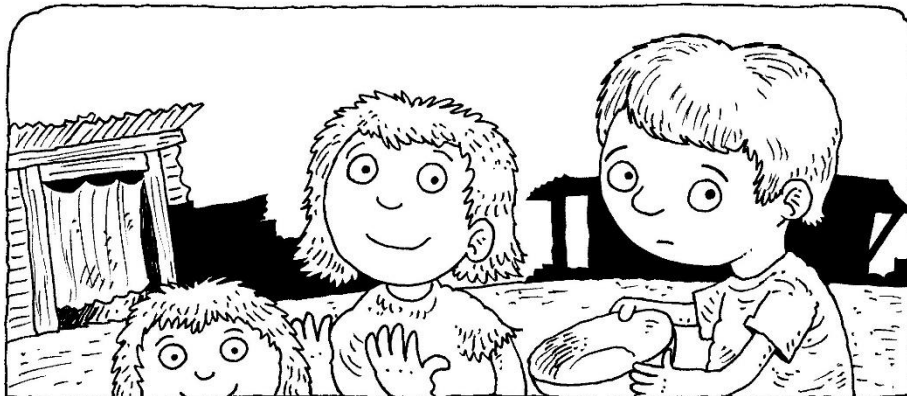
What do missionaries do?

Jill Kemp www.lambsongs.co.nz

Do you know what happens to the money we give to missionaries, and what missionaries do? The money we give will send missionaries helps people in other countries.



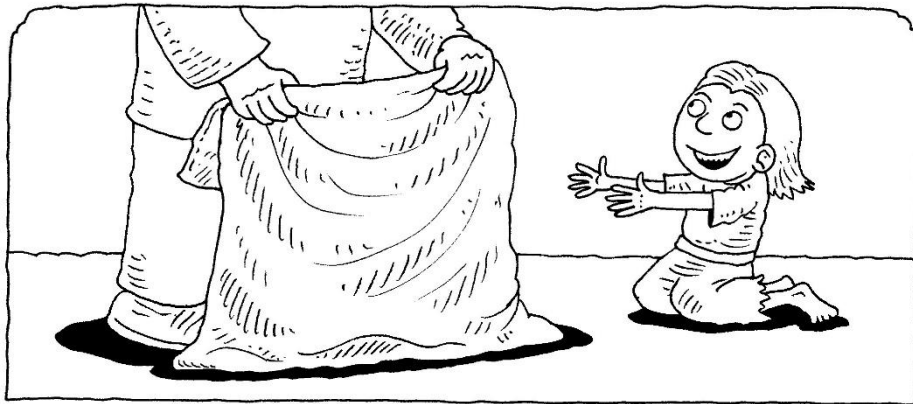
They help to build hospitals, schools, churches, houses.



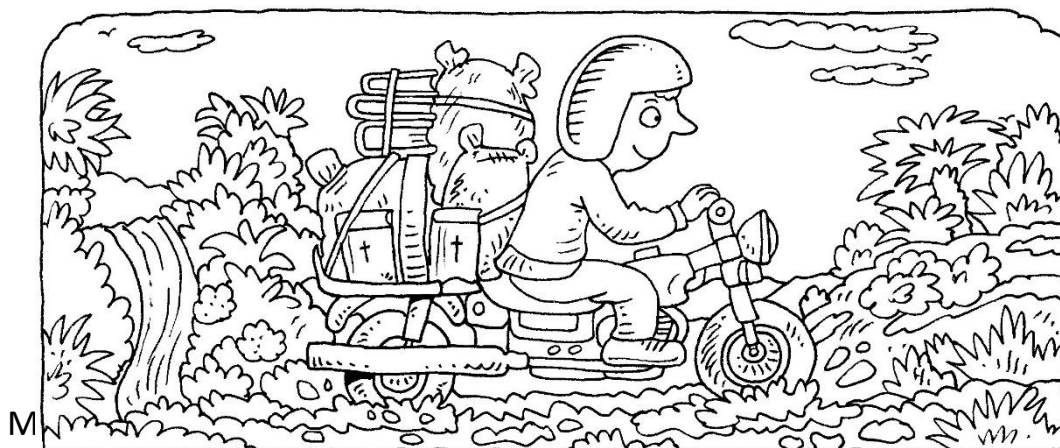
The money we give buys water pumps, so that they have clean water to drink. This will stop the children getting sick.



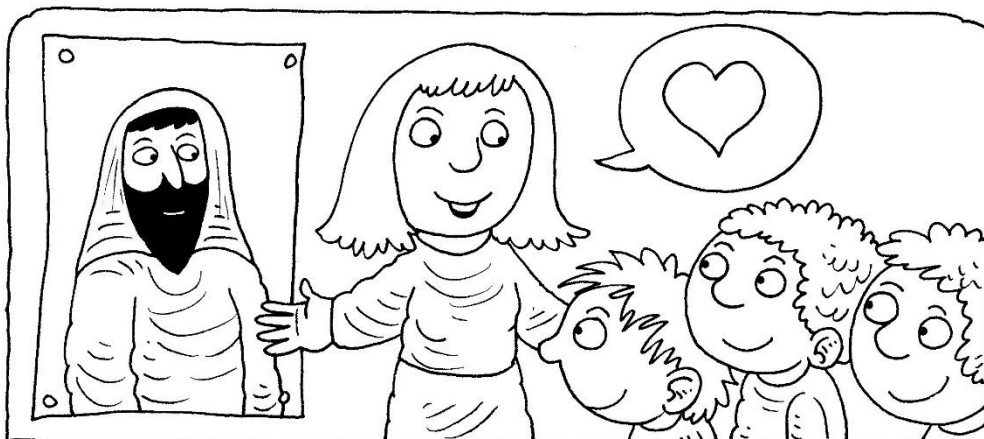
Missionaries help people to grow their own food for the children and they will have some vegetables to sell.



They can buy goats and chickens, so there are eggs and milk for the children to eat and some to sell. Missionaries help look after the sick children. The money we send can be used to buy medicine to make sick people better.



They tell others how much Jesus loves them.



A hungry child

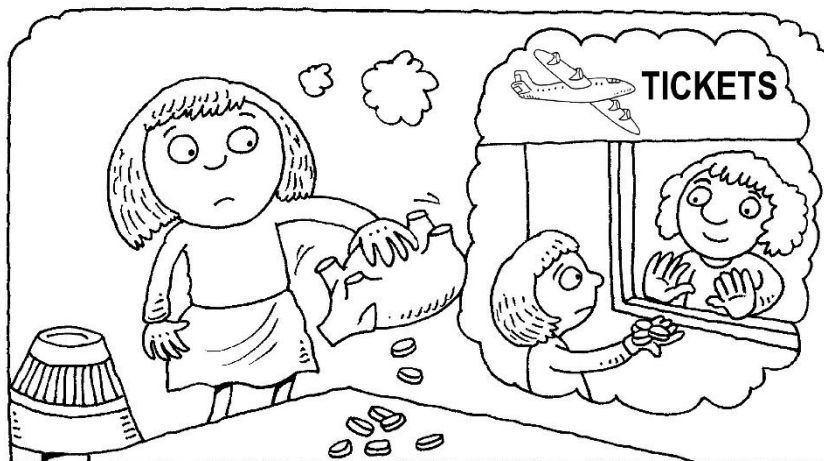
Missionaries leave their home, jobs and families to help people in other countries who are sick and hungry.



When I hear on the news about all the hungry children living in other countries I wish that I could help them.



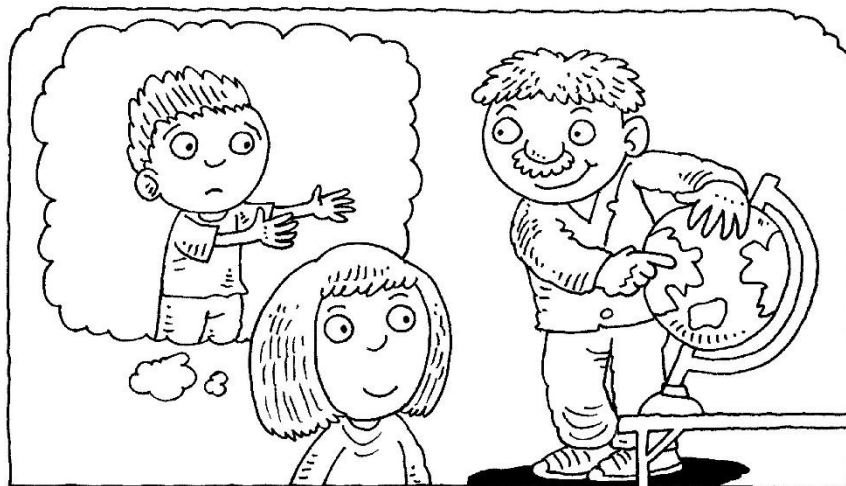
Even if I saved all of my pocket money, I wouldn't have enough to pay for a plane ticket.



I can pray for missionaries and for sick, hungry children and ask God to show me other ways that I can help.



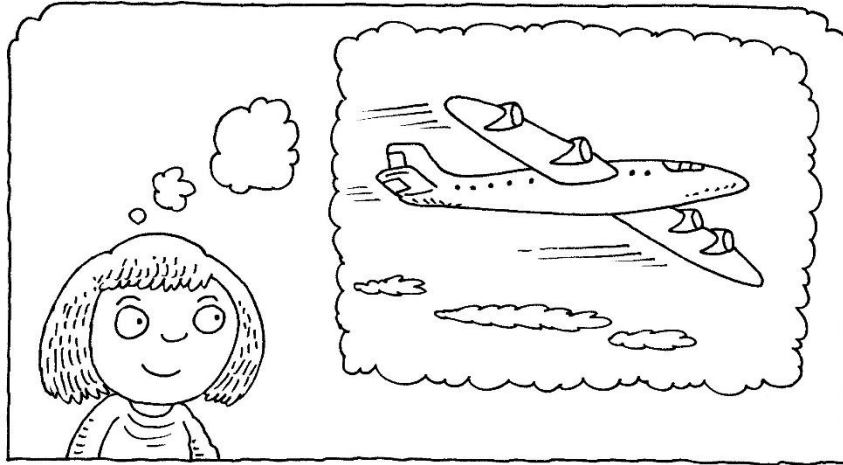
A missionary showed us the places in the world where he looks after children who are sick and hungry and need our help.



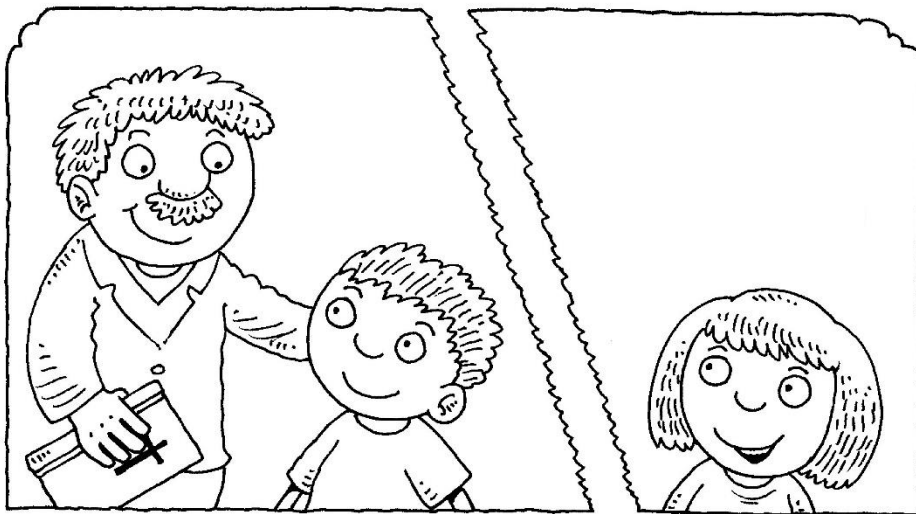
Missionaries need money to buy food and medicine. I will give some of my money to the missionaries who help the children.



Then I am helping hungry children, even though I can't go there myself.
If we all give what we can, together we can make a difference.



It is like being part of a team. I am glad that I can help a sick, hungry child have a better life and hear that God loves them.



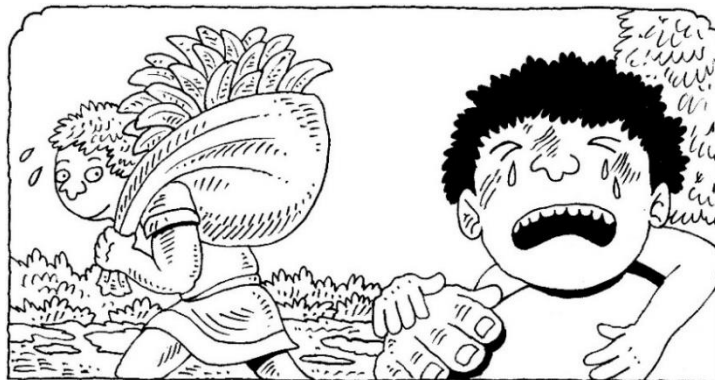
The boy who was different

It is important to be caring and to respect other people's culture and values. We can learn so much from them. Everyone needs a friend.

The Chief of a tropical island had a baby boy. He held him up to God. "I pray my son will grow up to love you and to be a good Chief. I will call him Suli, which means "Strong for God."



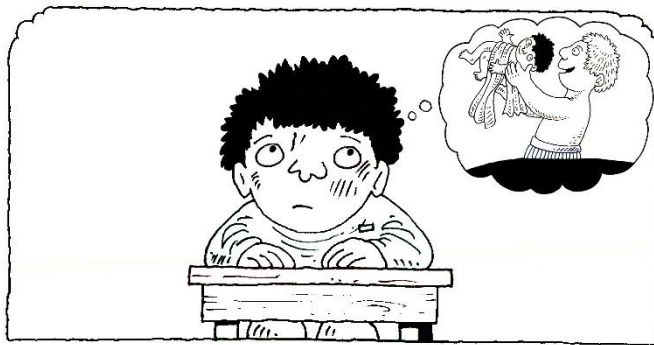
Suli was only a boy when he burnt his face. The people of his village all worked very hard, growing bananas to sell, so they could pay to send Suli away for an operation in another country.



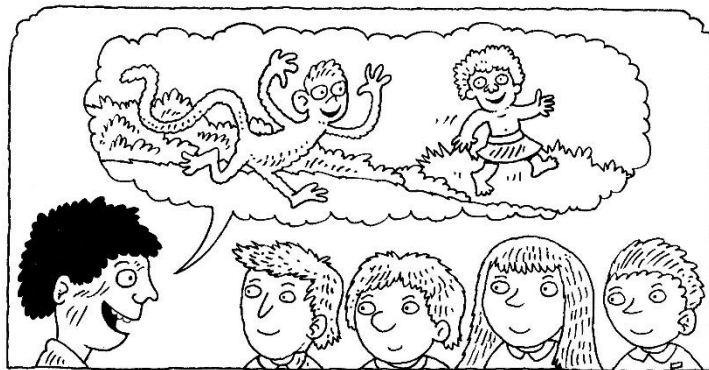
Suli would be going to school in the new country too. But the children were not kind, because he was different. They laughed at him and called him names. "Silly Suli! Ugly face!" they yelled.



Suli felt all alone and asked God to help him be brave. He thought about his family at home, praying for him and remembered how hard they had all worked to get enough money for his operation.



Suli told the class the meaning of his special name and about his father, the great Chief. "I have a pet monkey," he said. Everyone wished they had a pet monkey, like Suli.



He sang Greedy Monkey song and did a monkey dance. The children laughed and clapped! No one noticed that Suli was different any more. He was just a boy like them and he was clever too!



The teacher talked to the class about being kind. They learnt how important it is to know, understand and accept people from different cultures and those who look, or act, differently. Everyone needs a friend.

The Emperor's Seed

A Chinese folk tale

The Emperor was getting very old. He sent out messengers inviting everyone, in his kingdom, to the palace. He was choosing the next Emperor.



Lots of people went to the palace in their VERY best clothes, feeling VERY important and expecting that THEY would be the next Emperor.



The Emperor made an announcement. "I need to choose a new Emperor. To help me find the best person I have an important job for all of you to do.



I have some very special seeds. Take only ONE seed each. Plant it, water it and make it grow well. Bring your plant back in one year.”



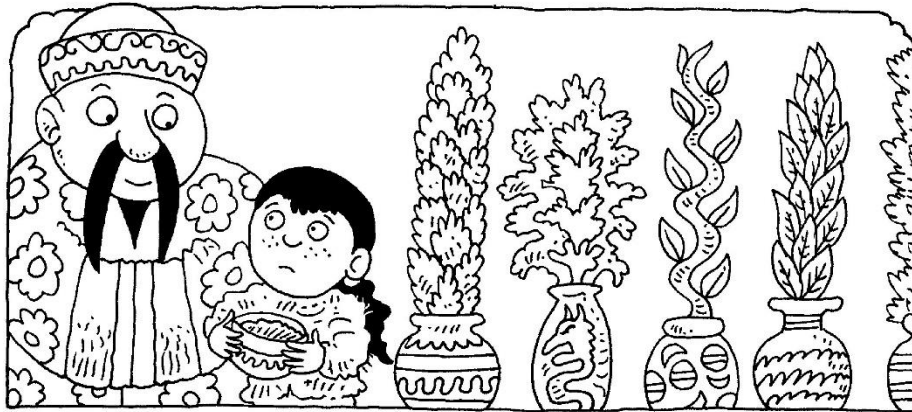
Everyone lined up to get one seed. A little boy lined up too. Holding the special seed carefully as he ran home to show his mother.



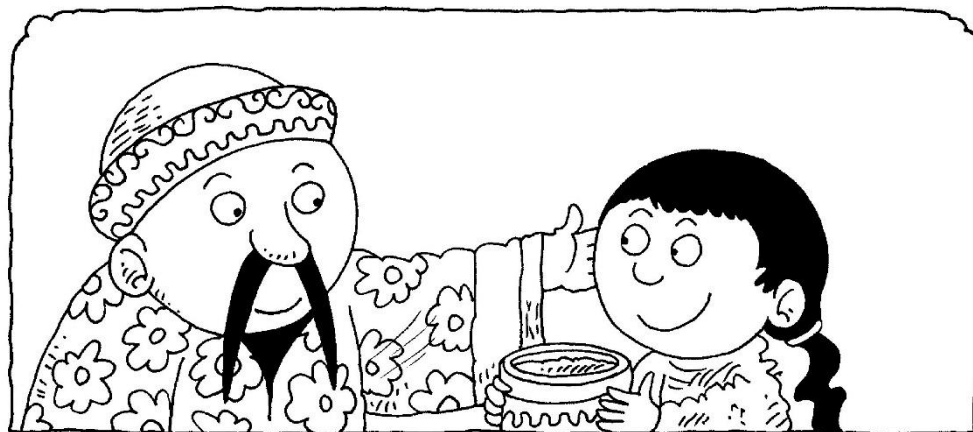
The boy planted the seed in a pot. For one whole year he took good care of it. But that seed did NOT grow!



The next year, everyone took their amazing plants to the Emperor. The boy was the only one with an empty pot. Then the Emperor stopped in front of the boy.



“You will be the next Emperor,” he said. “I boiled all the seeds. None could EVER grow. You are the only honest person here. You alone can be trusted with this important job.”



Jill Kemp www.lambsongs.co.nz

The Donkey's Band

There was once a donkey who was too old to work. His owner didn't want him anymore, so the donkey said, "I will leave home and sing in a band."

He walked down the road and met a dog. "Will you join my band?" he asked the dog.

"Yes," said the dog. "I can howl very well. My master doesn't want me anymore because I am too old."

"Come with me," said the donkey."

As they walked along the road, they met a ginger cat.

"Will you join our band?" asked the donkey. "You have a good singing voice."

"Yes," said the cat. "My owner says that I'm too old to catch mice anymore."

"Come with us," said the donkey.

They walked down the road and met a rooster.

"Will you join our band?" asked the donkey. "You can crow very well."

"Yes," said the rooster. "My master does not like my crowing. He wants to make me into chicken soup."

"Come with us," said the donkey.

The four animals walked along, and they came to a cottage in the woods. It was dark by now.

They saw a light in the cottage so they looked in the window. They saw a table full of food...

and three robbers sitting at the table.

"That food would be good to eat," said the rooster."

"I've got a plan," said the dog.

The dog climbed on top of the donkey.

The cat climbed on top of the dog.

The rooster climbed on top of the cat.

The donkey brayed.

The cat mee-owed.

The dog howled.



The rooster crowed.

Then they all rushed into the room through the window with a terrible crash!

The robbers got such a fright that they ran out of the cottage, and up the hill.

The four animals sat down and ate the food. Then they looked for a nice place to sleep.

The donkey slept outside the door next to a pile of manure.

The dog slept inside the door on the floor.

The cat slept next to the fire.

The rooster slept up on the rafters in the roof.

The robbers could see a light in the cottage from up on the hill.

"Why were we so scared?" said the chief robber. We must go and see who is in the cottage. "You go and see," he said to one robber.

Now the cottage was dark, because the animals had turned the light off and gone to sleep. The robber crept in and went to the fire to light some paper. He poked the paper into the fire, but poked the cat in the eyes instead! The cat sprang at the robber and scratched his face.

The robber ran for the door, but tripped over the dog who bit him on the leg. As the robber tried to run out the door, he got kicked by the donkey, and fell into the pile of manure. The rooster woke up and crowed, "Cock-a doodle-doo."

The robber ran back to the other robbers on the hill.

"We must not go in that cottage again," said the robber. "I got scratched by a woman with long finger nails. I got stabbed in the leg. Then a big black monster hit me with a wooden club. Worst of all, a policeman on the roof called out, "Let me get him too."

The robbers ran away as fast as they could. They never went near the cottage again. The animals lived in the cottage and were very happy.

Cinderella

Cinderella is a French story, over 400 years old. It is a made-up story that shows us the importance of treating all people with kindness.

Once upon a time there were two grown-up sisters. They lived with their mother and father in a big house. They were very rich. They had beautiful clothes and shoes.

There was someone else living in that house. Her name was Cinderella. Cinderella had come to live with the family because her own parents had died. But it was not a happy life for Cinderella.

The two sisters were very lazy. They did not do any housework. They made Cinderella do it all. Cinderella dusted, swept and cleaned the cinders in the fireplace. The sisters were very mean to her. Cinderella did not have beautiful clothes. Her clothes were like old rags. They were always dirty from cleaning out the fireplace.

One day a letter came. It was an invitation to the Palace ball. There would be music and dancing and fine food. Everyone was invited.

“You cannot come,” said the mean sisters to Cinderella. “You do not have any beautiful clothes to wear to a ball.”

The day of the ball came. The ball was to take place in the next town, and it would take two hours to get there in the days of the horse and carriage. The mother, father and sisters left for the ball, dressed in their beautiful clothes. Cinderella sat alone by the fireplace in her old clothes and cried.

Although Cinderella had no parents, she did have a rich auntie, who was her God-mother. A God-mother is a person who makes a promise to the parents and to God, to make sure that a child is well looked-after. The auntie lived a long way away, and did not see Cinderella very often. She did not know that Cinderella was being badly treated. It was before the days of phones.

But it happened that on this day, the auntie was making a trip to Cinderella’s town. About 4 o’clock there was a knock on the door.

“Who could that be?” thought Cinderella.

She went to the door. What a surprise. It was her special auntie that she had not seen in years. The auntie saw that Cinderella had been crying.

“Why are you so sad?” she asked Cinderella.

“I have no clothes or shoes to wear to the ball,” she said. “The family have gone off to the ball and left me here alone.”

“Don’t worry,” said the auntie. “It is only 4 o’clock and there is still time to go to the shops. I will buy you some clothes and shoes.”

They quickly went to the shops and came back with a beautiful dress for Cinderella and a pair of sparkly shoes.



“You cannot go to the ball without a coach,” said the auntie. I will order a horse and carriage. Soon there was a coach waiting for her outside.



“You must remember,” said the auntie, “You can only stay until midnight. At 12 o’clock your coach will be there to take you home. You must run when you hear the clock strike 12, or the coach will leave without you.”

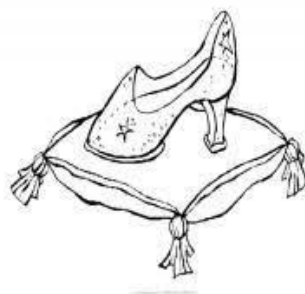
Cinderella went to the ball and danced with the Prince, who thought she was more beautiful than any other lady at the ball. No one knew Cinderella. She looked different in her beautiful clothes.



Then the clock struck 12. Cinderella ran quickly. In her hurry, she left behind one of her beautiful sparkly shoes.

The prince found the shoe.

“This must belong to the beautiful girl I was dancing with. If anyone can help me find this girl, I will give a reward. I would like to marry the girl who was wearing this shoe.”



The next day, the prince took the shoe to every house. Every lady hoped that they would fit into the shoe. But no one did. Then he came to the house of Cinderella and two sisters. The sisters were called to try the shoe, but it was too small.

“Is there anyone else in the house?” asked the Prince.

“There is a servant girl, but she was not at the ball,” said the mother.

“I would like to see her anyway,” said the Prince.

Cinderella was called. She tried on the shoe. It was a perfect fit. The Prince knew that this was the girl he had danced with.

Cinderella married the Prince and lived happily ever after.



Trying to please everyone

One day a man was going to market with his son and his donkey. They met a couple on the way.

"Why walk when you have a donkey to ride?" called out the husband. "Let the boy sit on the donkey."

"I would like that," said the boy. "Help me up Father."

And the father did that willingly.



Soon they met another couple. "How shameful of you!" said the woman to the boy. "Let your father ride. Won't he be tired?"

So, the boy got down and the father rode the donkey. Again, they marched on. Soon they met someone else.

"Poor boy", said the next person. "Why should the lazy father ride while his son is walking?"

So, the boy got onto the donkey too. As they went on, they met some travelers.

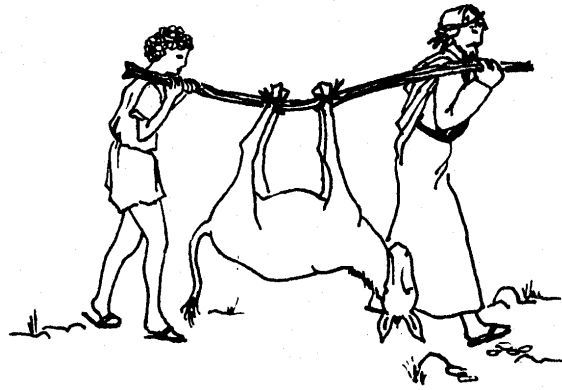
"How cruel of you both!" they said. "You will kill that poor donkey," cried one of the travelers.

Hearing this, the father and the son got down. Now they decided to carry the donkey on their shoulders.

When they roared the won the people roared with laughter.

"Look," said one of the boys. "here are two fools carrying their donkey to market instead of letting the donkey carry them."

“I’ll tell you what we have learned from this,” said the father to the son. “By trying to please everyone we have pleased nobody. In future, we will just do what we think is right, whatever people may say.”



Activities

1. Why were the man and his son unwise?
2. What do you think they should have done?
3. Jesus wants us to obey Him first. We read this in John 14:15 – “If you love me, obey me.” If we do this, we will not be able to please everyone. Who might we not be able to please and why?
4. It is important to think for yourself and not just do what people say. What kind of advice from people might *not* be good to follow?

The Ugly Duckling

Once upon a time down on an old farm, lived a duck family, and Mother Duck had been sitting on a clutch of new eggs. One nice morning, the eggs hatched and out popped six chirpy ducklings. But one egg was bigger than the rest, and it didn't hatch. Mother Duck couldn't recall laying that seventh egg. How did it get there? TOCK! TOCK! The little bird was pecking inside his shell.



"Did I count the eggs wrongly?" Mother Duck wondered. But before she had time to think about it, the last egg finally hatched. A strange looking duckling with gray feathers that should have been yellow gazed at a worried mother. The ducklings grew quickly, but Mother Duck had a secret worry.

"I can't understand how this ugly duckling can be one of mine!" she said to herself, shaking her head as she looked at her last born. Well, the grey duckling certainly wasn't pretty, and since he ate far more than his brothers, he was outgrowing them. As the days went by, the poor ugly duckling became more and more unhappy. His brothers didn't want to play with him, he was so clumsy, and all the farmyard folks simply laughed at him. He felt sad and lonely, while Mother Duck did her best to make him feel better.



"Poor little ugly duckling!" she would say. "Why are you so different from the others?" And the ugly duckling felt worse than ever. He secretly wept at night. He felt nobody wanted him.

"Nobody loves me, they all tease me! Why am I different from my brothers?"



Then one day, at sunrise, he ran away from the farmyard. He stopped at a pond and began to question all the other birds. "Do you know of any ducklings with grey feathers like mine?" But everyone shook their heads in scorn.

"We don't know anyone as ugly as you." The ugly duckling did not lose heart, however, and kept on making inquiries. He went to another pond, where a pair of large geese gave him the same answer to his question. What's more, they warned him: "Don't stay here! Go away! It's dangerous. There are men with guns around here!" The duckling was sorry he had ever left the farmyard.

Then one day, he found himself near an old woman's cottage. Thinking the bird was a stray goose, she caught him.

"I'll put this in a hutch. I hope it's a female and lays plenty of eggs!" said the old woman, whose eyesight was poor. But the ugly duckling laid not a single egg. The hen kept frightening him.

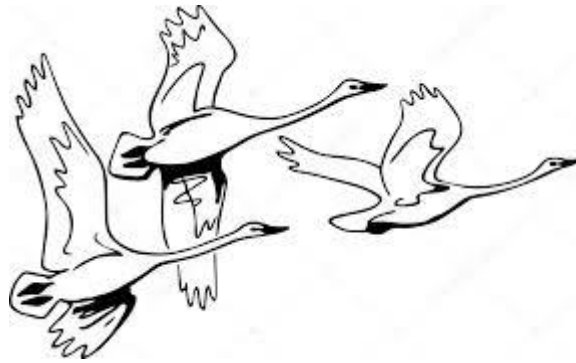
"Just wait! If you don't lay eggs, the old woman will wring your neck and pop you into the pot!"

And the cat chipped in: "Hee! Hee! I hope the woman cooks you, then I can gnaw at your bones!"

The poor ugly duckling was so scared that he lost his appetite, though the old woman kept stuffing him with food and grumbling: "If you won't lay eggs, at least hurry up and get plump!"

"Oh, dear me!" moaned the now terrified duckling. "I'll die of fright first! And I did so hope someone would love me!"

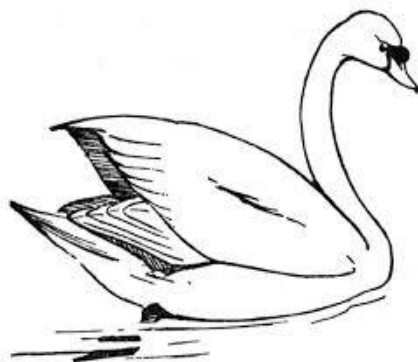
Then one night, finding the hutch door slightly open, he escaped. Once again, he was all alone. He fled as far away as he could, and at dawn, he found himself in a thick bed of reeds. "If nobody wants me, I'll hid here forever." There was plenty a food, and the duckling began to feel a little happier, though he was lonely. One day at sunrise, he saw a flight of beautiful birds overhead. White, with long slender necks, yellow beaks and large wings, they were migrating south.



"If only I could look like them, just for a day!" said the duckling, admiringly. Winter came and the water in the reed bed froze. The poor duckling left home to seek food in the snow. He dropped exhausted to the ground, but a farmer found him and put him in his big jacket pocket.

"I'll take him home to my children. They'll look after him. Poor thing, he's frozen!" The duckling was showered with kindly care at the farmer's house. In this way, the ugly duckling was able to survive the bitterly cold winter.

However, by springtime, he had grown so big that the farmer decided: "I'll set him free by the pond!" That was when the duckling saw himself mirrored in the water.



"Goodness! How I've changed! I hardly recognize myself!" The flight of swans hd migrated north again and glided on to the pond. When the duckling saw them, he realized he was one of their kind, and soon made friends.

"We're swans like you!" they said, warmly. "Where have you been hiding?"

"It's a long story," replied the young swan, still astounded. Now, he swam majestically with his fellow swans. One day, he heard children on the river bank exclaim: "Look at that young swan! He's the finest of them all!"

And he almost burst with happiness.



The Sword of Damocles

A Greek Legend

There was once a king whose name was Dionysius (*Di-o-nis-ius*). He was so unjust and cruel that he won for himself the name of tyrant. He knew that almost everybody hated him, and so he was always in dread that someone should take his life.

But he was very rich, and he lived in a fine palace where there were many beautiful and costly things, and he was waited upon by a host of servants who were always ready to do his bidding. One day a friend of his, whose name was Damocles (*Dam -o-cleys*), said to him,

"How happy you must be! You have here everything that any man could wish."

"Perhaps you would like to change places with me," said the tyrant.

"No, not that, O king!" said Damocles; "but I think, that, if I could only have your riches and your pleasures for one day, I should not want any greater happiness."

"Very well," said the tyrant. "You shall have them."

And so, the next day, Damocles was led into the palace, and all the servants were bidden to treat him as their master. He sat down at a table in the banquet hall, and rich foods were placed before him. Nothing was wanting that could give him pleasure. There were costly wines, and beautiful flowers, and rare perfumes, and delightful music. He rested himself among soft cushions, and felt that he was the happiest man in all the world.

Then he chanced to raise his eyes toward the ceiling. What was it that was dangling above him, with its point almost touching his head? It was a sharp sword, and it was hung by only a single horsehair. What if the hair should break? There was danger every moment that it would do so.

The smile faded from the lips of Damocles. His face became as pale as ash. His hands trembled. He wanted no more food; he could drink no more wine; he took no more delight in the music. He longed to be out of the palace, and away, he cared not where.

"What is the matter?" said the tyrant.

"That sword! that sword!" cried Damocles. He was so badly frightened that he dared not move.

"Yes," said Dionysius, "I know there is a sword above your head, and that it may fall at any moment. But why should that trouble you? I have a sword over my head all the time. I am every moment in dread lest something may cause me to lose my life."



"Let me go," said Damocles. "I now see that I was mistaken, and that the rich and powerful are not so happy as they seem. Let me go back to my old home in the poor little cottage among the mountains."

And so long as he lived, he never again wanted to be rich, or to change places, even for a moment, with the king.



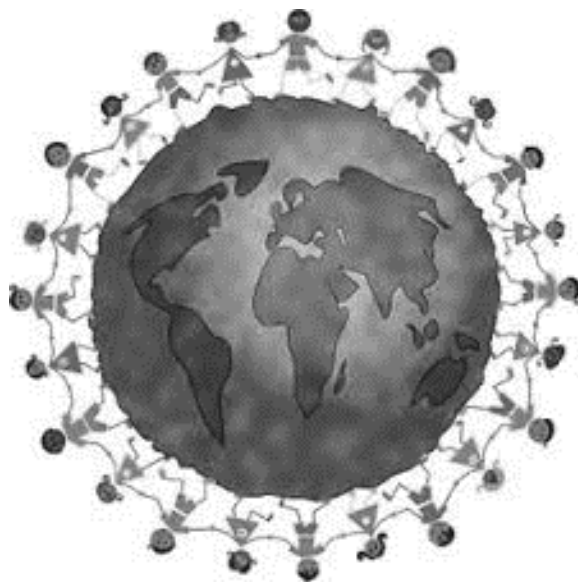
Questions:

1. What lesson did Dionysius learn?
2. Why was Dionysius called a tyrant?
3. Why was Dionysius in danger of losing his life at every moment?

Stories from around the world

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two



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Levels 20 – 25

A Boy Made of Wood

Geppetto's workshop

Long ago in Italy there lived an old clock-maker named Geppetto. *Tick-tock-tick-tock* went all the clocks in his shop. When he worked, Geppetto felt happy. But when he rested, a sad feeling came over him. "Ah!" he would think. "All my life I have had no child to call my own!" So, one day Geppetto carved a puppet from wood in the shape of a boy.

The arms and legs could move. He cut and sewed a little outfit for the puppet, as if it were a real boy. "I will call you Pinocchio," said Geppetto. That night, as Geppetto was getting ready for bed, he saw a big star out of the window. Geppetto looked out the window at the twinkling star.

"If I could make one wish, it would be that I could have a real boy of my own." But of course, he knew that was not possible.

That night, Geppetto dreamed that the puppet changed into a real boy that could walk and talk. But before the puppet could become a real boy, he would have to prove that he could be brave and true.

In his dream Geppetto went into the workshop to look at the wooden puppet, but he was in for a big surprise.

"Here I am, Father!" said Pinocchio.

Geppetto looked around. "What? You can talk?"

"Yes! I am Pinocchio, your boy!"

"How can this be?" said Geppetto. He rushed over to the puppet and held the wooden puppet in his arms. "Pinocchio, my son!" he said with great happiness.



Off to School

One day Pinocchio said, "I want to go to school, like other boys."

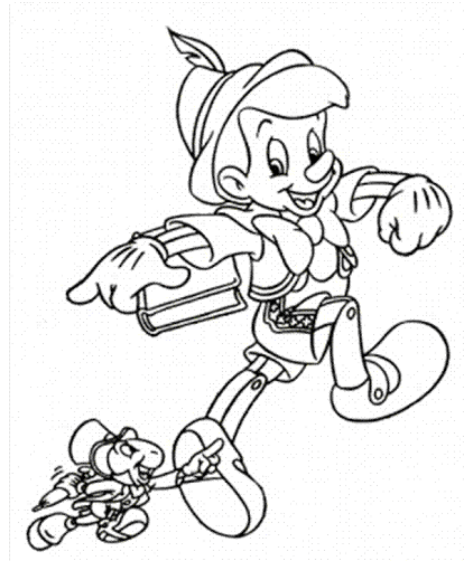
"Of course," said Geppetto. But he did not have the money to buy schoolbooks.

Later that day, Geppetto came back home with schoolbooks. "Now you can go to school," he said.

"But Father, where is your warm coat?"

With a wave of his hand Geppetto said, "There's no need to worry about that. What matters is that you will go to school tomorrow!" He did not want Pinocchio to know he had sold his warm coat to buy the schoolbooks.

The next morning, Pinocchio said good-bye to Geppetto. He skipped along the path to school, humming as he went. A friendly cricket followed him. The cricket would go with Pinocchio everywhere he went.



Coming up to them on the path was a fox and a cat.

"And where are you going on this fine day?" said the fox.

"I am going to school!" said Pinocchio.

"On such a fine day as this?" said the fox. "It is too nice to be stuck inside school! You should come with us, to the fair. Listen to me. Anything you need to know, you can learn at the fair. You don't need to go to school.

"Really?" said Pinocchio.

"Yes, of course," said the fox.

"Pinocchio!" said the cricket. "He does not know what he is talking about!"

The fox covered the cricket with his hat. No one could hear the little fellow as the cricket tried to call out, "Pinocchio, do not listen to him!"

"Okay!" said Pinocchio to the fox. "Let's go to the fair!" And off they went.

The Fair

What an amazing fair it was! By the gate was a man dressed in white. He called out, "Come in, come in! Right this way! Get your tickets here!"

With a sad look Pinocchio said to the fox and cat, "I do not have any tickets."

A man was selling old things at a table near the gate. He called, "Hey, you! Sell me those new schoolbooks of yours! That is how you can get money for tickets."

The fair was so bright and colorful and exciting. Pinocchio could not resist selling his school books for tickets.

"No, Pinocchio, stop!" called the cricket, who finally got out from under the fox's hat. But Pinocchio, the fox and the cat did not hear him. They were already inside the fair.

The man who ran the fair

On a stage was a puppet show! "I am a puppet, too!" said Pinocchio. "I can dance like that!" He jumped right onto the stage and started to dance with the other puppets.

"Look at that new puppet!" someone called. "It has no strings!"

"No strings?" said another. "Amazing!"

Everyone laughed and laughed. They threw coins on the stage.

The man who ran the fair saw coins fly onto the stage. "Well, now!" he said, thinking carefully, "This puppet with no strings will make me rich!"

The next thing Pinocchio knew, he was picked up and thrown in a birdcage. In the next moment, the door was locked shut.

"Hey, get me out!" called Pinocchio. But the person who had thrown him in just left the room. Only the cricket heard Pinocchio's calls. The cricket ran back and forth, in and out of the birdcage, trying to find a way to free the lock. But he could not unlock it.

"I am stuck!" cried Pinocchio. "How did this happen to me?"

The Nose Grows

Along came a kind lady.

“Please!” said Pinocchio. “Can you help me?”

“Tell me something first,” said the lady. “How did you get inside that cage?”

“Tell her what happened,” said the cricket.

Could he really tell the lady what had happened?
What would she think of him?

“I was robbed,” said Pinocchio.

“Is that right?” said the kind lady with a frown. Pinocchio’s nose began to grow.

“Yes, robbed!” said Pinocchio. “By two mean men – no, four!”

The nose grew more.

“They took my books. They made me come here. And they threw me into this cage!”

His nose grew longer and longer. Until Pinocchio could see nothing in front of his face but one big giant nose.

“Why is my nose so big?” Pinocchio cried out.

“Pinocchio!” said the lady in a stern voice. “You must know what the truth really is.”

“I guess so,” said Pinocchio. “I wanted to come to the fair. I came here with a fox and the cat.”

The nose grew shorter.

“I had to sell my books to get some tickets.”

“Had to?” said the lady.

“I mean, I decided to sell my books to get tickets,” he said.

The nose got shorter still.

“Then someone put me in this cage,” he said.



The nose was back to normal. "Good job, Pinocchio!" said the cricket.

"Well done," said the lady. "Now I will get you out of here."

The lady picked the lock with her hair clip and Pinocchio was out of the cage.

"Now," said the kind lady, "Make sure you do the right thing from now on."
And she was gone.



The Coachman

Pinocchio decided to leave the fair and go back home and go to school. A coachman drove up. "Would you like a ride?" he asked.

"No, thank you," said Pinocchio. "I am going home and then going to school."

"You will ride faster with me," said the coachman to Pinocchio. He said to himself, "He will ride faster all right, but not to where he thinks he is going!"

"Alright," said Pinocchio. "I want to get home and go to school right away!"

When Pinocchio was inside the coach, the coachman said, "Boy, why do you think boys like you go to school?"

"To learn things," said Pinocchio. "And to grow up, I guess. So we can get a job and earn money, and do something that we would really like to do."

"Well," said the coachman, "what if I told you that you could do what you wanted, right now?"

"Right now?"

"Yes! Think of it. No need for books. No need for school. Right now, how would you like to have all the sweets you can eat!"

"All the sweets?"

"Yes. Ice cream, too, of every flavor. You can smoke a cigar and play as much as you like. All this and more, at Pleasure Island."

"Pleasure Island?"

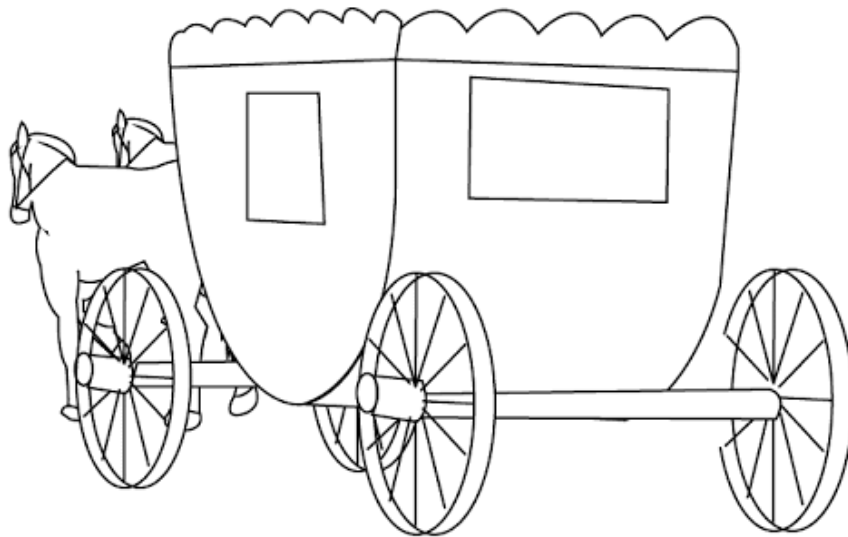
"Best place in the world for boys like you!"

"Don't listen to him, Pinocchio!" shouted the cricket.

"Why wait?" said the coachman. "I know just where Pleasure Island is. This is your lucky day, boy. So what do you say?"

"Let's go there!" said Pinocchio. "I'm going to Pleasure Island!"

"No!" said the cricket, waving his arms in the air.



Pleasure Island

After a while, the coach stopped. A man came up to the coach. "Have you got a boy with you in that coach?" said the man to the coachman.

"Yes," said the coachman. He grabbed Pinocchio and threw him down onto the ground. "He's all yours. Just pay me \$100."

The man paid the money and the coachman drove off.

What could it all mean? But as Pinocchio looked around, he no longer cared. He was on Pleasure Island! Everything the Coachman had told him was true! There were lots of sweets all about and tubs of ice cream in every flavor. Boys like him could eat and eat, and play all day. None of them had to work or clean up. There were even cigars if you wanted one.

But after a few days, something felt strange. "Where did all the boys go?" he asked the cricket.

"All I see now are donkeys," said Pinocchio.

"I must say, there used to be more boys around here," said the cricket.

Just then, one of Pinocchio's ears popped into a donkey ear. Then his other ear popped into a donkey ear, too.

"Oh!" cried the cricket. "What is happening to you?"

"I don't know - HONK!" said Pinocchio.

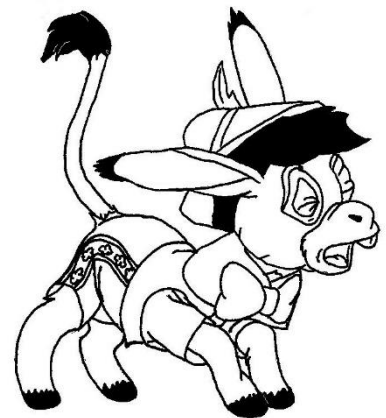
Pinocchio and the cricket saw a line of donkeys led by the man, onto a truck. "Oh, no!" said the cricket.

"Now I understand! Boys get turned into donkeys here. Then the donkeys are sold! Pinocchio, we have to get you out of here, fast - while we still can!"

"Let's go - HONK!" said Pinocchio. His two feet had popped into four.

"Run, quickly!" said the cricket. One good thing about Pinocchio's new four legs was that he could run very fast! Quickly, quickly, they ran out of Pleasure Island. Soon they were at a wharf by the ocean.

"Please sir!" Pinocchio called out to a man by the wharf. "I am looking for an old man named Geppetto. Do you know him? - HONK!"



“Sounds like you are getting a bad cold,” said the man. “Hmm, Geppetto. That’s the old man whose son left one morning and did not come back. He went out on a boat to look for him. No one has seen the poor fellow since.”

“Oh no! This is all my fault – HONK!” said Pinocchio. “I must look for my father!” Pinocchio jumped off of the wharf into the ocean. The cricket jumped in too, close behind.

The Whale

Most of Pinocchio’s body was still made of wood, so he could float on the ocean. The cricket rode on top of Pinocchio. “Father!” Pinocchio called out, paddling the water with his arms. “Father!” but there was no answer.

All Pinocchio could see around him was blue water, everywhere. But then he saw something far away... something that was rushing up to him. It was very big, and coming very fast!

In a moment, a giant whale was upon them. It opened its giant jaws and with one gulp, swallowed Pinocchio and the cricket! Like falling down a waterfall, they landed in the dark belly of the whale.

“Are you okay?” said Pinocchio to the cricket.

“I am fine,” said a voice of an old man.

“Wait a minute,” said Pinocchio. “Father, is that you?”

There was Geppetto!

“Father, Father, it’s me!” said Pinocchio.

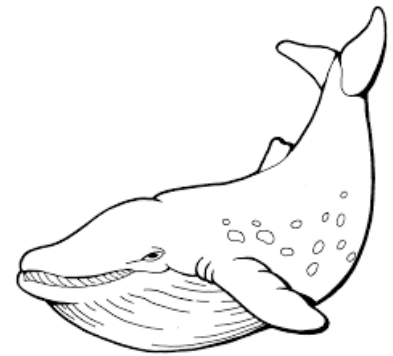
“My son!” said Geppetto.

They hugged in joy.

“Father, let’s tickle the inside of the whale’s tummy and make it cough.”

The whale gave a cough. “Hang on!” said Pinocchio. And then... WHAM!! In one big cough from the whale, Pinocchio, Geppetto and the cricket flew out of the whale’s mouth. They rolled over and over in the waves of the sea, and at last they rolled up onto the shore.

“Pinocchio, where are you?” called Geppetto, getting up from the sand. The cricket was there beside him. But where was Pinocchio?



And then they found him! Pinocchio was face down, his head in a pool of water.

“Pinocchio!”

Were they too late? Geppetto and the cricket cried when they saw Pinocchio, the boy puppet, laying very still in the water. They thought he was dead. They rolled him over, face up.

Pinocchio opened his eyes and sat up. He looked at his soft arms and soft legs.

“Father!” he cried out. “Look! I am a real boy!”

“That you are!” cried Geppetto. “You have proved that you are true, and proved that you are brave.”

Then Geppetto found himself back in bed in his cottage. He woke up. It had all been a dream. He quickly went to the workshop to find Pinocchio. Pinocchio, his little wooden puppet, was still there. Geppetto decided that he would never sell Pinocchio. Geppetto made more puppets, but he kept Pinocchio as his favourite puppet, that he had dreamed about. That dream would always remind him about the importance of being brave and true.



Dick Whittington and his cat

Once upon a time, in small village in England, there was a boy called Dick Whittington who was very sad. His father and mother had died, and he was left all alone in the world. He had no one to look after him and he was very hungry.

He had heard a lot about London, the capital city of England. He had heard that it was a wonderful city where you could pick up gold in the streets, and where everyone was rich and happy. So Dick decided to travel there and become a rich man.

Dick walked for many days, but when he arrived in London there were no streets of gold! Tired and hungry, he fell asleep on the steps of a great house.

The house belonged to a rich businessman, named Mr. Fitzwarren, who found Dick and gave him a job. He was to clean the kitchen and help the cook.

Dick worked very hard and was fairly happy. He had enough to eat and at night he could sleep by the fire. There was a problem though! The cook was very cross, and beat him and made him work very hard; and he was given a little dark place to sleep in. At night, rats ran around the kitchen and kept him awake. They even ran over his bed.

"If only I had a cat!" he thought. "A cat would chase them all away." Then one day he cleaned a gentleman's shoes, and the gentleman gave him a coin. Dick went out into the street and there he saw a girl carrying a cat. "Will you sell me your cat?" asked Dick. The girl said 'yes' so Dick bought the cat and took it home. After that things were much better. The rats and mice stayed away and Dick grew to love the cat, his only friend.



Then one day Mr. Fitzwarren called his servants together. "I am sending a ship to a faraway country," he said. "The ship will be filled with things to be sold." (That was how he made his money.) "Each of you can put something on the ship to sell. Then when the ship comes back you will all get the money."

The servants were very pleased, and they all had something to send on the ship, all except for Dick. He didn't have anything to sell.

"Now Dick," said Mr. Fitzwarren, "haven't you anything at all to send?"

"No sir," said Dick. "I only have my cat."

“Well why not send that then?” said his master.

Dick was very sad to think about sending his dear cat away, but at last he agreed.

He was so lonely when the cat had gone, and the cook was so cross that he could not bear it anymore and he ran away.

After a while he stopped to sit on a stone and rest. There was a church nearby and the bells were ringing. He listened, and the bells seemed to be saying

‘Turn back, Dick Whittington. You will be Mayor of London!’

So Dick went back to the house and stayed there again, and soon Mr. Fitzwarren returned.

“My ship has come back,” he said, and everything on it has been sold. And who do you think has made the most money? It’s Dick! His cat has been sold for all this money.” And he gave Dick a big bag of gold.

Dick was amazed. “But why would anyone pay all that money for just a cat?” he asked.

The ship’s captain told Mr. Fitzwarren the story. “We went to a country in Africa,” he said, “and the king and queen were very pleased to see us. They invited us to dinner. But just as we were starting to eat, in rushed lots of rats and mice, that ate all the food. The king told us of the terrible trouble they were having with these creatures, and they did not know how to get rid of them.”

“I think I can help you,” said the captain, and he sent for Dick’s cat. More food was brought in, and in rushed the rats and mice again, but as soon as the cat saw them, she dashed at them and chased them all away. The king was so pleased and grateful that he bought the cat for a very big sum of money. And it was all for Dick.”

So Dick became a rich man, and began to do business in the city of London. In time he became Sir Richard Whittington, and after that he was made Lord Mayor of London.

About this story: Richard Whittington was a real person, a wealthy business man who became Lord mayor of London, who lived in the 1300s. But this story is probably not true. It is a famous children’s story that has been made up about the real Dick Whittington.



Dick Whittington and his cat

Questions

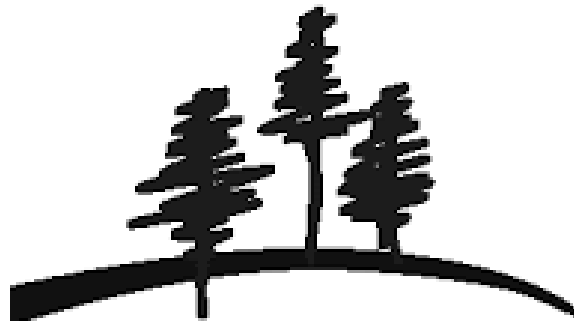
1. Why was Dick so sad at the beginning of the story?
2. What did he think London was going to be like?
3. What did Mr Fitzwarren do for Dick?
4. What did the cook do to Dick?
5. How did Dick get his cat?
6. What did Dick have to put on the ship for selling?
7. Why did Dick run away from Mr Fitzwarren's house?
8. What were the church bells telling Dick to do?
9. Explain how Dick received a big bag of money at the end of the story?
10. This is not a true story but it shows us how things can turn out for good even when they lose the best thing they have. Write a sentence about a time when you, or someone you know, lost something valuable to them, but it turned out for good.
11. Read Romans 8:28 and explain what this means for those who love Jesus.

The story of God's trees

This is the re-told story by Helen Frazee-Bower, who was born in the USA in 1896.

Far away on a hillside grew a forest of trees, little and big, old and young, tall and short. The trees were very happy with life just as it was on the hillside. They loved the warm sunlight of summer, the cool rain of spring, the beautiful colours of autumn and the blanket of glistening snow that fell in winter. We know that trees can't talk, but if they could, we can imagine that they sometimes spoke of the future, the things they would like to do and be when they grew up.

In this forest there was a mother tree and her three children.



One said, "You know, I would like to be a baby's cradle when I grow up. I have seen people come into this forest carrying babies in their arms."

The second tree spoke: "That would not please me at all. I want to be something important. I would like to be a great ship, beautiful and strong. I would like to cross many waters and carry cargo of gold."

The third little tree stood off by himself, thinking carefully. "And what would you like to be?" asked Mother Tree? Do you have any dreams for the future?"

"No," said the little tree. "I just want to stand on this hillside and point people to God."

“I could think of nothing better,” said Mother Tree.

Years passed and the trees grew up to be beautiful tall trees. One day men came to the forest and cut down the first tree.



“I wonder if I will be made into a baby’s cradle now,” said the first tree. “I hope so. I have waited so long.”

But the little tree was not made into a baby’s cradle. Instead he was sawn up into pieces of wood that were put together to make an animal’s feeding trough – a manger, in a stable, in the town of Bethlehem.

“I do not like this,” he cried. “This is not what I had planned. I did not want to be put into a dark stable with no one to see me but animals!”

In the same country there were some shepherds in a field, keeping watch over their sheep at night. And suddenly an angel came to them, and a bright light shone all around them. The angel said, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news, that will bring joy to all people. Today, in Bethlehem, a baby has been born. He is Jesus Christ the Lord and He will save people from their sins. You will find the baby wrapped in cloths, lying in a manger.” Then suddenly there was a whole host of angels, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on Earth, peace to those who please Him.”



After the angels had gone back to Heaven, the shepherd said to one another, “Let’s go quickly now to Bethlehem, and see what the angel has told us about.”

And when they arrived in Bethlehem, they found Mary and Joseph and the baby Jesus, the Son of God, lying in a manger.”

“Well,” said the first little tree. This is better than anything I had planned!” And the trees on the hillside clapped their hands because their brother’s dream had come true.

Months passed by, and men came to the forest to cut down the second tree.

“I wonder if I will be made into a great ship now,” he said. “I have waited so long. Perhaps I will do the great things of which I dreamed.”

But the second tree was not made into a great ship. Instead he was made into a tiny fishing boat, owned by a fisherman called Peter of Galilee. The little boat was very unhappy. His owner, Peter was not even a good fisherman. He had been out all night and had not caught a single fish.



The next day the fishing boat was anchored by the shore of Galilee while Peter cleaned his nets. Out from the crowd came a person called Jesus, who came and sat in the little boat and taught people about God. People listened eagerly to what He had to say. When He had finished, He told Peter to launch out into the deep and let down the nets again.

This time, there were so many fish that the nets broke. The little boat knew that he was carrying a wonderful person, who had made this miracle happen.

“This is wonderful,” he said. “This is better than anything I had planned!” And the trees on the hillside clapped their hands because their brother’s dream had come true.



Weeks went by, and men came to the forest to cut down the third little tree. This was the tree that wanted to stand on the hillside and point people to God. He was most unhappy as the axe cut into him. "I do not want to go into the valley," he said. "Why couldn't men leave me alone?"

But the men did not leave the little tree alone. They cut off his branches and cut into his bark. They sawed his wood into a large cross. He knew what this meant, because in his country, bad people were put to death by being hung on a cross.

"This is terrible," he whispered. "They are going to hang someone on me and the person will die. Oh, I never wanted this to happen. I only wanted to point people to God."

One day, outside Jerusalem, a great crowd gathered. There was Jesus, and beside Him was a cross. As they led him away, they forced him to carry the cross until He could carry it no longer. Then a man called Simon carried it for Him. And when they came to the place called Calvary, they nailed Jesus to the cross.



Jesus had done nothing wrong. He did not deserve this treatment, but He allowed His enemies to kill him, because He knew that it was part of His Father's plan. Every one of us has done wrong. This stops us from being a friend of Father God, because God is perfect. But God made a way for us to become friends with Him. Because Jesus loves us so much, He died instead of us. He took the punishment that we deserve. To become a friend of God we can ask Jesus to forgive us for the wrong we have done, and become a follower of Jesus.

If those trees could talk, they would say, "Thank you God, that even though we couldn't see it at the time, your way turned out to be best."

The tree that became the cross said, "This is wonderful. In all my dreams I never thought I would point people to God in this way. This is better than all I planned."

When Jesus is in charge of your life, the things He shows you to do will always be best for you.



Cave rescue

This is the true story of the rescue of thirteen members of a boys' soccer team, who were trapped in a flooded cave in Thailand.

On June 23rd 2018, twelve boys went exploring in Thailand's Chiang Rai province with their football coach. They all found themselves trapped deep inside a cave underneath a mountain.

What happened over those two weeks is a remarkable story of friendship, and human endurance, and shows the lengths some people will go to save someone else's life. Here's how it happened.

It all began with a birthday. On Saturday June 23rd, one of the members of the Wild Boars soccer team turned seventeen. His family had prepared a bright yellow birthday cake in football colours, and several colourfully wrapped presents, at their home in a rural village in Mae Sai district.

When their football practice ended, the boys raced through the rice paddies on their bicycles and up into the hills. They were heading for their favourite spot, the Tham Luang caves. The boys loved exploring the nooks and crannies of the mountain range towering over Mae Sai.

When they reached the entrance of Tham Luang caves, they left their bikes and bags. The team and their coach had often ventured deep into Tham Luang, sometimes as far as 8 km. With excitement, they clambered into the cave with just their torches. They didn't need much else. After all, they were only planning to be there for an hour. However, this time, they would not come out again until two weeks later.

Back at the seventeen-year-olds home, his family began to worry. His birthday cake sat untouched. Where were the Wild Boars?

The caves were popular for exploring, but there were dangers. People had gone missing in Tham Luang before. And once monsoon season starts in July, the caves become extremely dangerous. When water fills the caves, you cannot see under the water because it so muddy. Once the caves flood, it's risky even for experienced divers.

Almost everyone in Mae Sai knows this. So when the parents of the Wild Boars began to worry about their missing boys, they headed straight to the caves. The boys' plans to visit Tham Luang had been discussed in a group chat on a

messaging app with other friends. They found the bikes, the bags, and some football shoes outside. They raised the alarm.

Deep in the caves, the Wild Boars found themselves in trouble. It had been raining for the last few days, and all that water falling on the mountain had to go somewhere. That somewhere was the Tham Luang cave system, which was fast filling up. The boys needed to get out, but instead had no choice but to scramble even deeper into the caves.

The Wild Boars eventually found themselves marooned on a small rocky shelf about 4km from the entrance. Surrounded by darkness, the boys and the coach lost all sense of time. Fear, perhaps even terror, would no doubt have crept in. But they were determined to survive. The group used rocks to dig 5m deeper into the shelf, to create a cavern where they could huddle together and keep warm.

But an extraordinary set of circumstances also worked in their favour. They had no food, but they did have a supply of drinkable water in the form of moisture dripping from the cave walls. It was dark, but they had their torches. There was also enough air for a while, because the porous limestone and cracks in the rocks meant air could come through. They had the right conditions to survive, at least for a little while. And most importantly, the Wild Boars had one another.

Outside the cave entrance, a full-blown rescue operation was quickly unfolding. Authorities called in the Thai Navy Seals, the national police, and other rescue teams. Local volunteers also pitched in to help. Initial investigations found footprints at one of the chambers in the cave, but no other sign the boys were still alive. The Wild Boars were somewhere in the depths of the Tham Luang Caves, but where exactly? And more importantly, how could rescuers get to them?

Exploring the cave system was a challenge. Most of the Navy divers had little cave diving experience, and the heavy rain meant the water level was still rising, flooding chambers and cutting off rescuers from parts of the cave. Engineers desperately tried to pump water out of the cave, but struggled, at least at first.

Rescuers brought whatever equipment they could think of: small water pumps, long pipes, knives and shovels, but much of it was unsuitable. They even tried drilling into the mountainside, desperate to find cracks into the cave system

which they could squeeze into. They also used drones with thermal sensors to try to locate the boys.

While the rescue operations were going on, a small group stood at the mouth of the cave. These were the boys' families, praying for the lives of the boys. The group gradually expanded to include concerned teachers from the schools the Wild Boars attended. Classmates of the Wild Boars held group prayers, sang songs of encouragement into the cave, folded paper cranes, and posted messages of hope on school noticeboards. Village people donated money and hundreds of packages of food to the relatives of the boys and their coach. News of the boys quickly spread all around the world. People all around the world were praying for the boys.

The first international rescuers arrived on Thursday 28 June. These were US air force rescue specialists, and cave divers from the UK, Belgium, Australia, Scandinavia, and many other countries. Some had volunteered, and some were called in by Thai authorities.

Over the next few days, they and the Thai divers would fight a constant battle with the forces of nature. They had to swim against a strong current, and were often forced back by rising floodwaters.

On Sunday July 1st, just over a week after the boys went missing, the rescuers made some progress. They reached a large cavern that would be later called "chamber three". This cavern would serve as a key base for the divers.

The very next day, two British divers, John and Rick, made an incredible discovery. As they continued onwards into the darkness, they found an air pocket. John shone his torch into the air pocket and there was one of the boys, coming down the ledge towards him.

Rick started counting the boys, while John asked: "How many of you?"

"Thirteen!" came the reply in English.

"Thirteen? Brilliant!"

Rick and John couldn't quite believe what they were seeing. "They're all alive!"

The lost Wild Boars had been found. The two divers spent some time with the boys, encouraging them. Then, they left lights with the boys, and promised to return later with food.

Rescuers set to work to figure out how to extract thirteen people, some of whom couldn't swim, from a winding, flooded 4km-long stretch of caves that even experienced divers would struggle with. Time was not on their side because of the heavy rains.

Food stalls were set up. Some were staffed by members of the Thai royal kitchen, serving free drinks, hot noodles, chicken rice, and even ice lollies.

Former Navy Seal diver Saman Gunan was one of many volunteers who had rushed to help in the rescue. On July 6th, while on a routine run to deliver air tanks to the boys, he lost consciousness after running out of air for himself. His dive buddy pulled him out and tried to revive him, but sadly, he died.

The death showed the danger of the rescue mission, and the risks facing the boys. Saman was a fit and healthy diver who had also represented Thailand in triathlons in the Olympics.

There was another thing to worry about too. Despite efforts to replenish the air, oxygen levels in the chamber had fallen to 15%, lower than the usual 21%. Time was running out.

Rescuers worked out three possible options:

1. Training the boys to dive through flooded areas of the cave, - a very dangerous process. so considered a last resort.
2. Pumping water from the cave and waiting for water levels to recede naturally - but this could take up to four months.
3. Finding or drilling alternative passages into the cave.

The divers started practicing with some local boys at a swimming pool, trying to work out how to transport a child safely underwater.

Finally, late on July 6th, rescuers set up an oxygen supply. And in the end the boys communicated with their parents the old-fashioned way - by writing letters. They listed the food they wanted to eat: fried chicken and pork crackling. One even cracked a joke: "Teacher, please don't give us too much homework!"

Sunday July 7th, two weeks had passed since the boys went missing. The Thai authorities announced they were pulling out the boys – now!

Why the snap decision? There had been a break in the heavy rain, giving rescuers a rare opportunity. Locals had also told the Thai Navy Seals that by

around July 10th every year, the Tham Luang cave system would be completely flooded. It was time to launch what would later be described as a "superhuman" rescue effort, one that involved nearly 100 Thai and foreign divers.

The journey out was split into two sections.

The first stage: from the boys' rocky ledge to chamber three. This was the most difficult. Rescuers made their way for hours through pitch dark waters that were extremely cold, feeling their way with guide ropes. At times they had to navigate sections so ridiculously narrow that they could only just about fit a body through. Each boy was given a full-face air mask to ensure they could breathe, and clipped to a diver. Another diver accompanied them. A cylinder was strapped to the front of each child, while a handle was attached to their backs, and they were held face down to ensure water would run away from their faces. At the narrow sections, rescuers had to unstrap their air tanks in order to squeeze through, while also pulling along their precious cargo, their boy.

It would have been terrifying for experienced divers, let alone for children who were not strong swimmers. The boys and the coach were given anti-anxiety medication to relax, to ensure they would not panic.

The second stage: Once they reached chamber three, it was time for the second phase. This took another few hours. Each boy was secured in a stretcher, and carried by a team of at least five men. At one point they had to place the stretcher on a raft and pull it across a chin-high pool of water.

Rescuers had to winch the boys up a steep slope using a pulley system. In some rocky areas they formed a human chain, passing the boys hand to hand, while at others they slid them on top of pipes pumping out water.

One by one, the Wild Boars were brought out of the darkness of Tham Luang. As soon as they were out, they were given oxygen before they were swiftly taken by ambulance to a hospital in Chiang Rai city.

Rescuers took them out in three batches over several days, as they needed time in between to replenish air tanks. But they were cutting it close. By the time the last batch of boys and the coach were out, water levels were starting to rise again, as rapidly as 30cm in one hour.

It was Tuesday July 10th, the day that locals said the cave would become completely flooded. But while the boys were out, there were still rescuers left on the rocky ledge deep inside Tham Luang. These were the Navy SEAL divers and medic who had looked after the Wild Boars, as well as Richard Harris, an Australian cave diving expert and doctor.

They emerged shortly after the last boy was taken out. It was not a moment too soon, as a pump suddenly stopped working. Floodwaters rushed in, sending workers clearing up the site fleeing for their lives.

All around the world, millions of people who had anxiously followed the story celebrated the return of the Wild Boars. Their parents, who had waited so very long to hold their sons again, were not by their side. They were behind a viewing window in the hospital, some sobbing with joy at the sight of their boys.

At the hospital, the boys and coach were put through a series of health checks. Eye shades were a must at first. Their eyes, accustomed to two weeks of darkness, could not bear the light. Hospital authorities said that some had minor lung and eye infections and needed antibiotics. Apart from that, they appeared to be doing OK and all of them recovered.

Eventually, parents were finally allowed to briefly see the boys, although they had to maintain a 2m distance, and put on hospital gowns and masks. At first the boys could only eat small amounts of special food that was easy to digest, but soon they were able to start eating normal food again, after days of craving chocolate and their favourite snacks.



Comprehension activities for Stories from Around the World

Thinking about the story

1. Choose 3 words that you think someone might find difficult to understand. Write the meaning of these words. Use a dictionary if possible.
2. Find three verbs in the story.
3. Find three nouns in the story.
4. Find three adjectives in the story
5. Who were the main characters in this story? Write a sentence about each one.
6. Where did this story take place?
7. Make a list of 4 events in the story. Put the events in order of when they happened, from first to last.
8. What was the most exciting part of the story?
9. How did the story end?
10. How did this story make you feel and why?