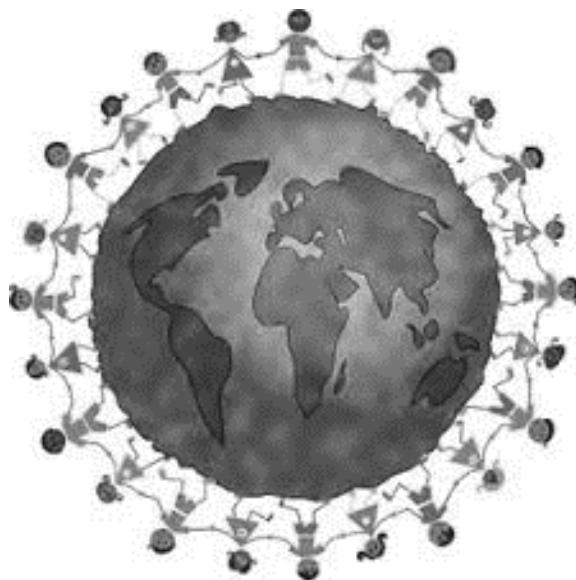


Stories from around the world

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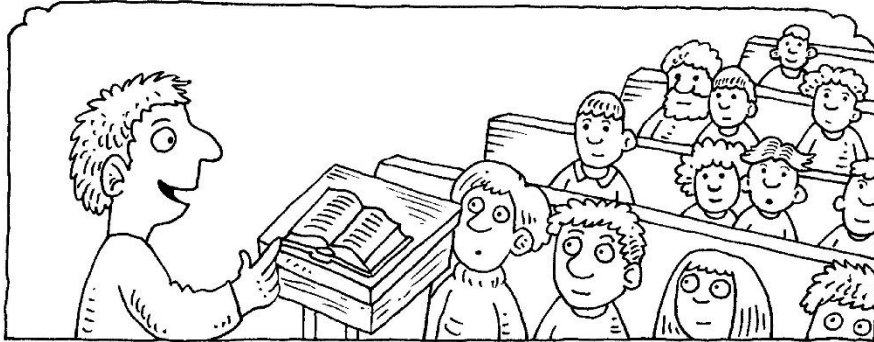
Levels 20 – 25

The man who shared his jumper

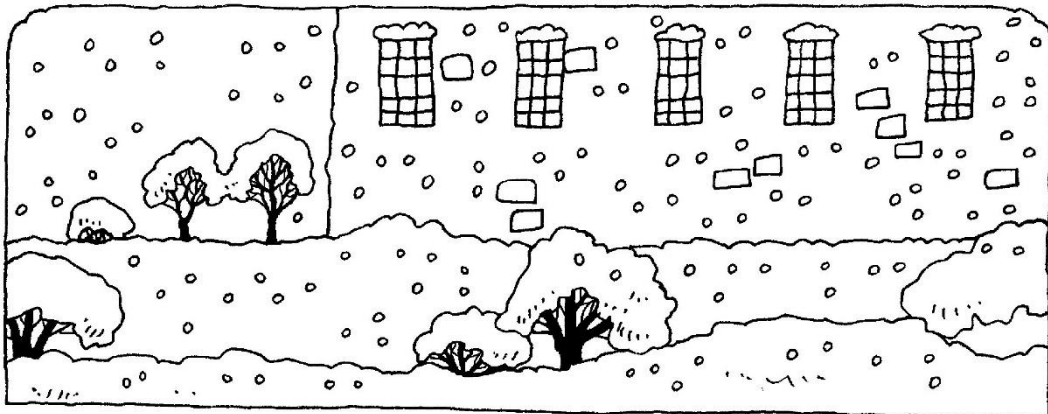
You don't have to be rich to help others. Just give out of what you have in your hand.



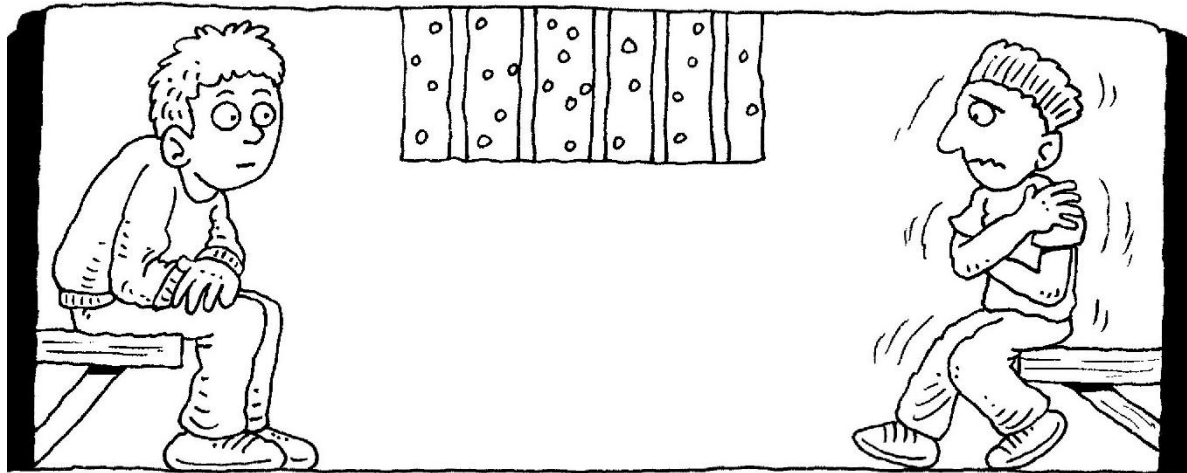
A long time ago, in the country of Romania, there was a good Pastor who told the people in his church how much God loved them.



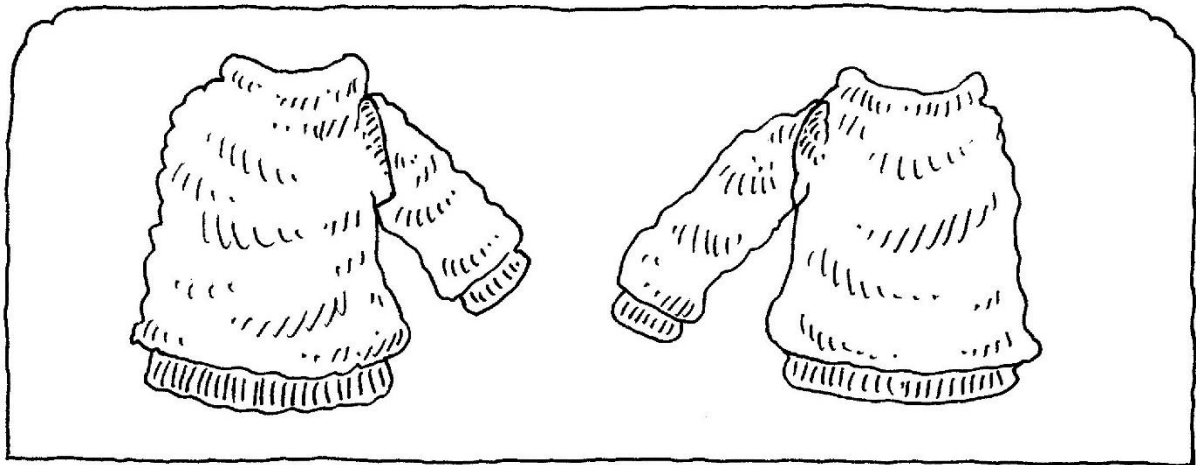
But the government made a new rule. Anyone telling people about God would go to jail. It was snowing the day the good Pastor was sent to prison.



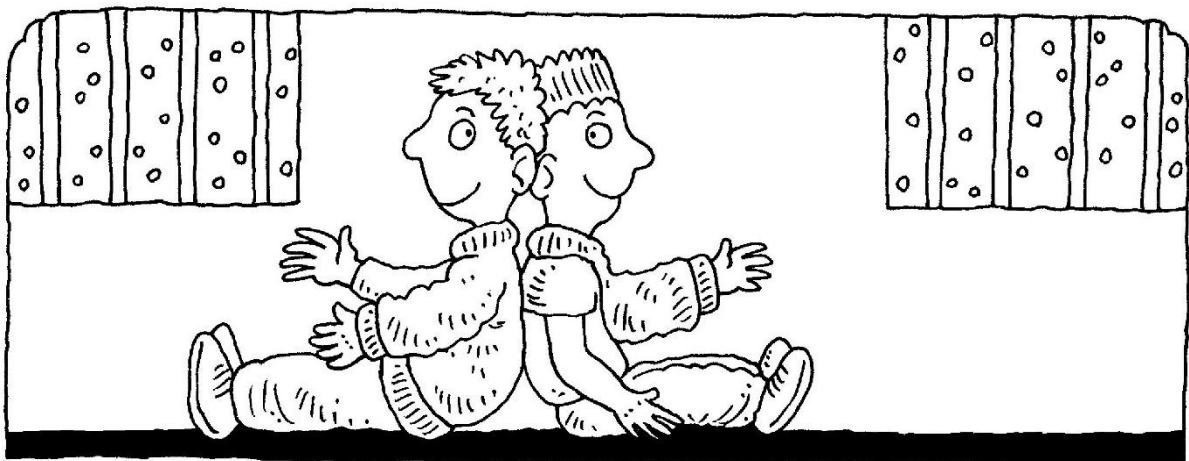
He thanked God that he was wearing his jumper but the other prisoner in his cell was cold and hungry. "We will freeze, or starve to death here," he said.



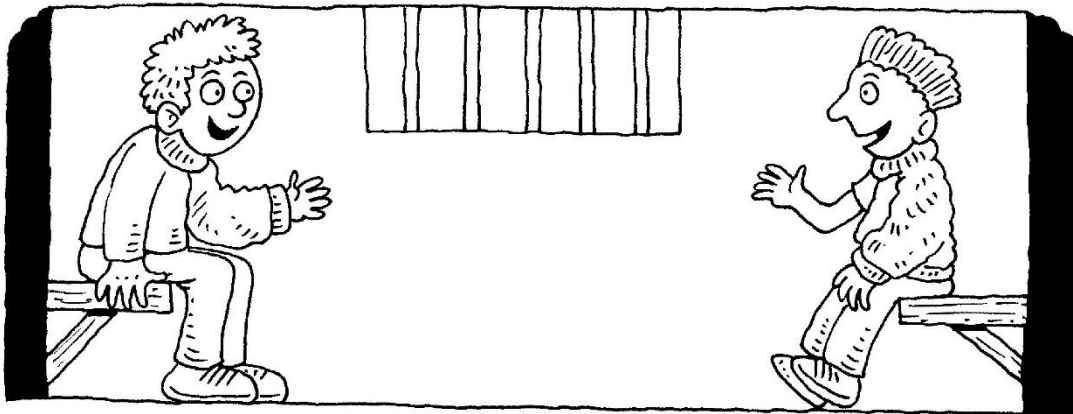
"How can God be with you in this awful place?" he asked. The Pastor carefully unpicked his jumper. He gave one half of his jumper to the other man.



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.



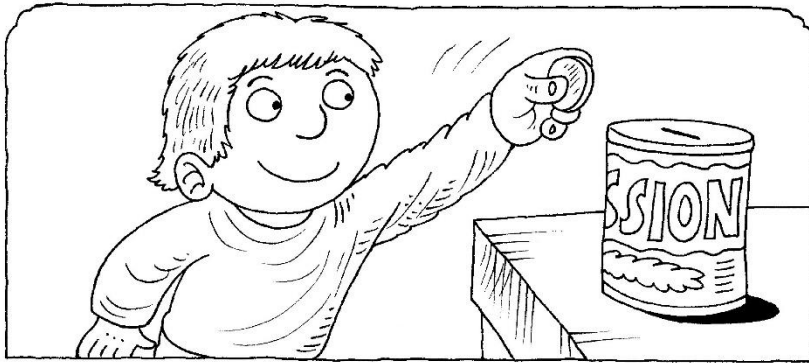
They each began to share a piece of their bread with sick and hungry prisoners. You don't have to be rich to help others.



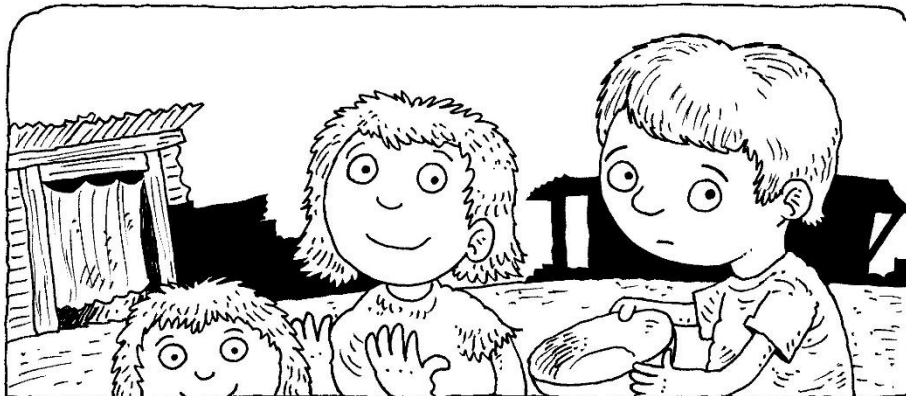
What do missionaries do?

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.



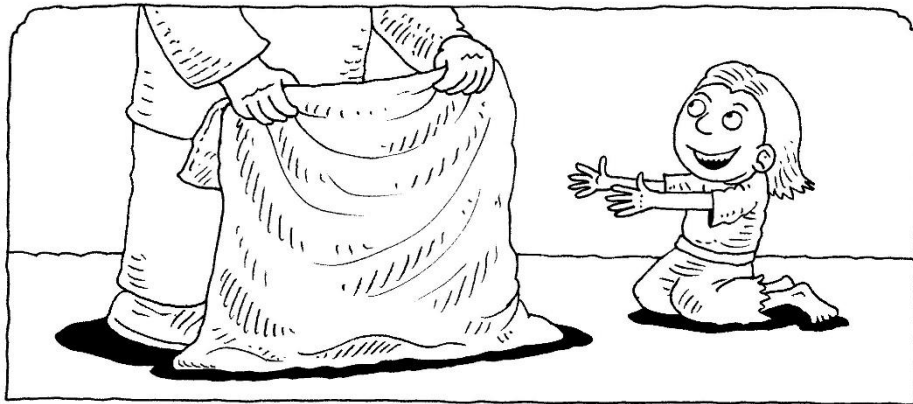
They help to build hospitals, schools, churches, houses.



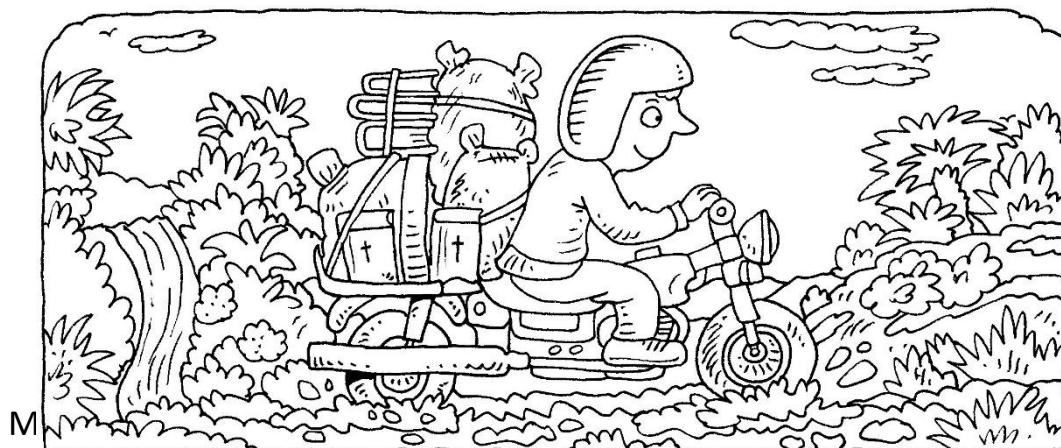
The money we give buys water pumps, so that they have clean water to drink. This will stop the children getting sick.



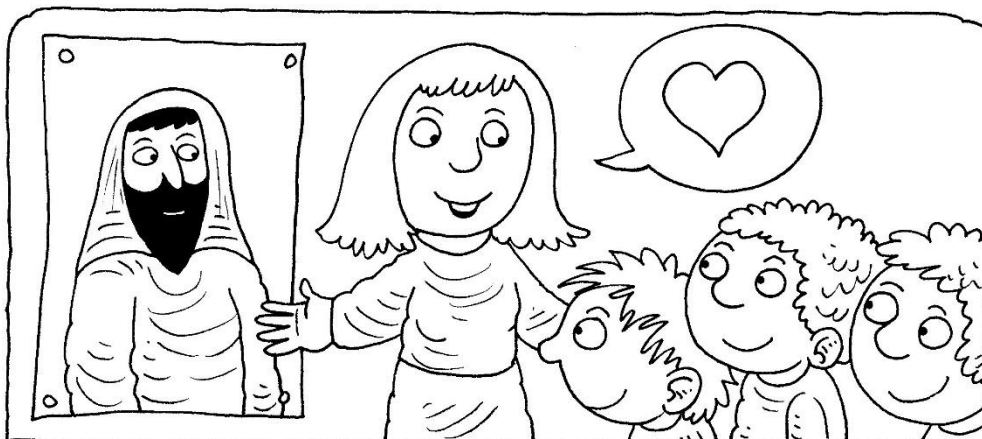
Missionaries help people to grow their own food for the children and they will have some vegetables to sell.



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

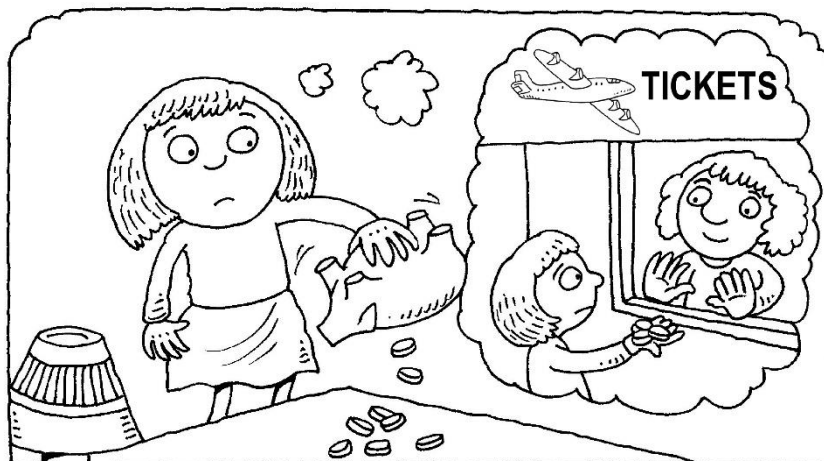
Missionaries leave their home, jobs and families to help people in other countries who are sick and hungry.



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



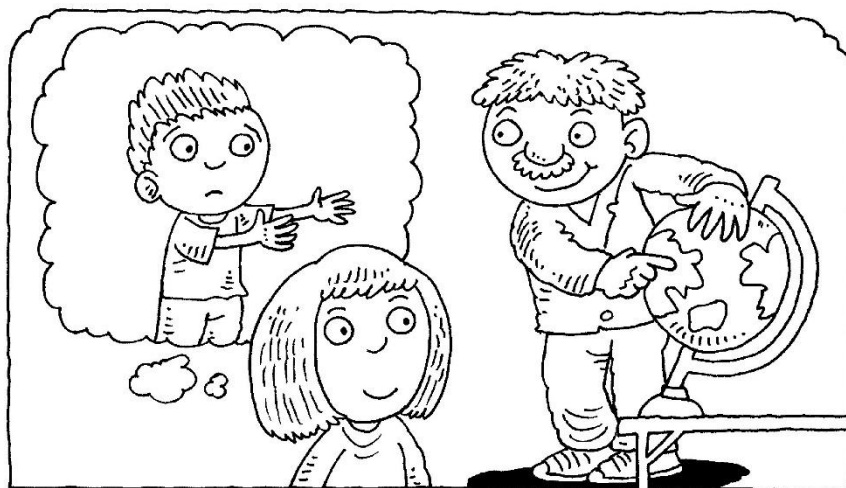
Even if I saved all of my pocket money, I wouldn't have enough to pay for a plane ticket.



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



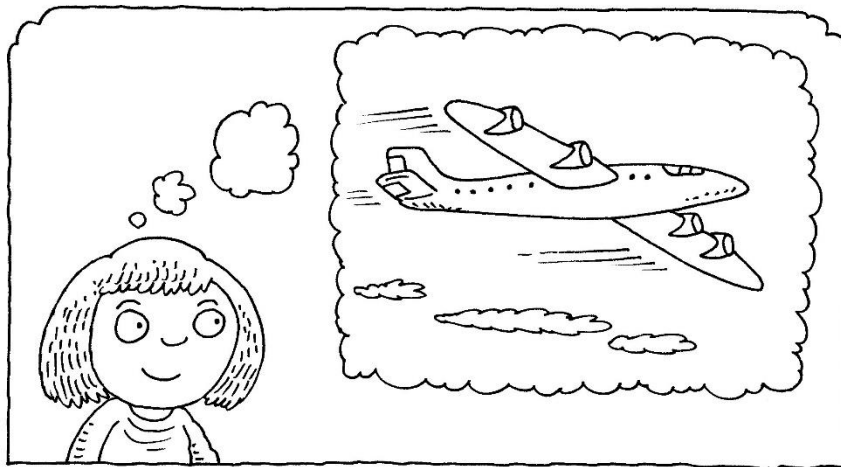
A missionary showed us the places in the world where he looks after children who are sick and hungry and need our help.



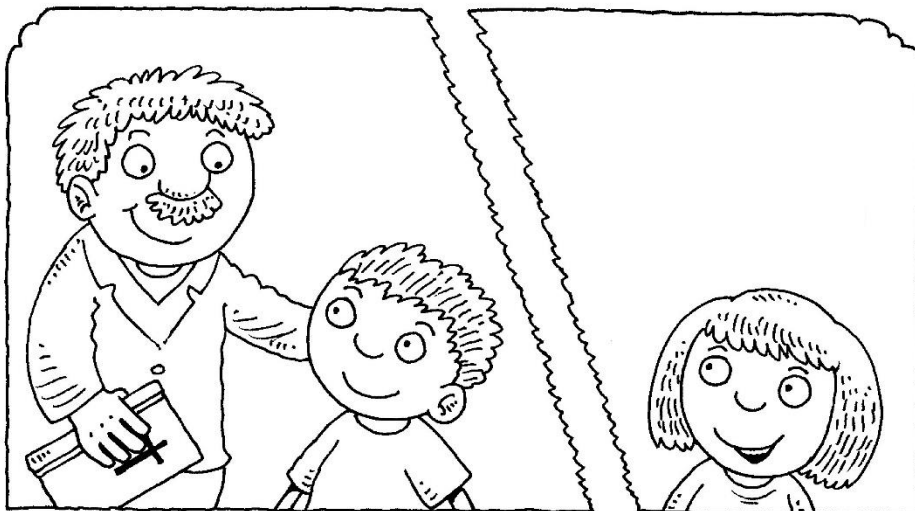
Missionaries need money to buy food and medicine. I will give some of my money to the missionaries who help the children.



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.



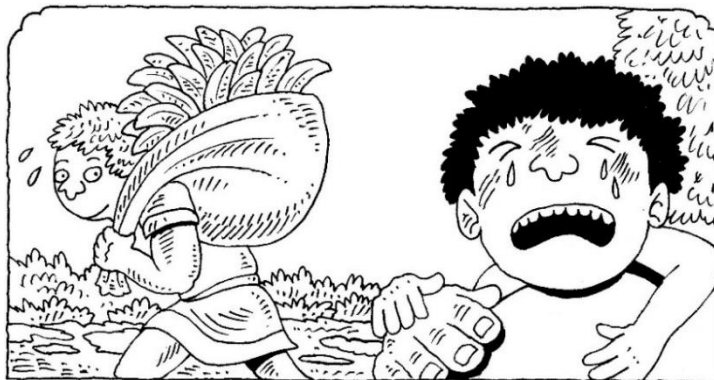
The boy who was different

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.



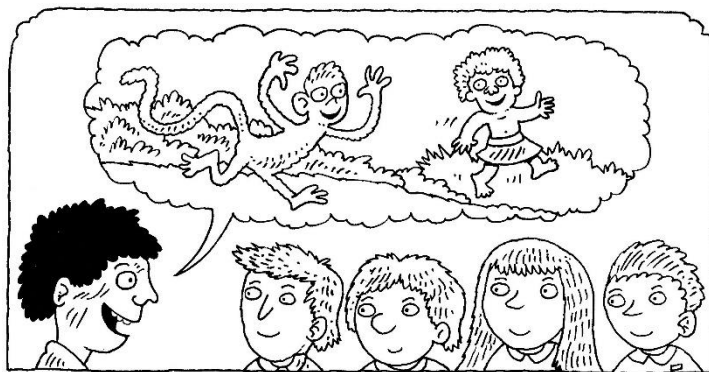
Suli would be going to school in the new country too. But the children were not kind, because he was different. They laughed at him and called him names. "Silly Suli! Ugly face!" they yelled.



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."



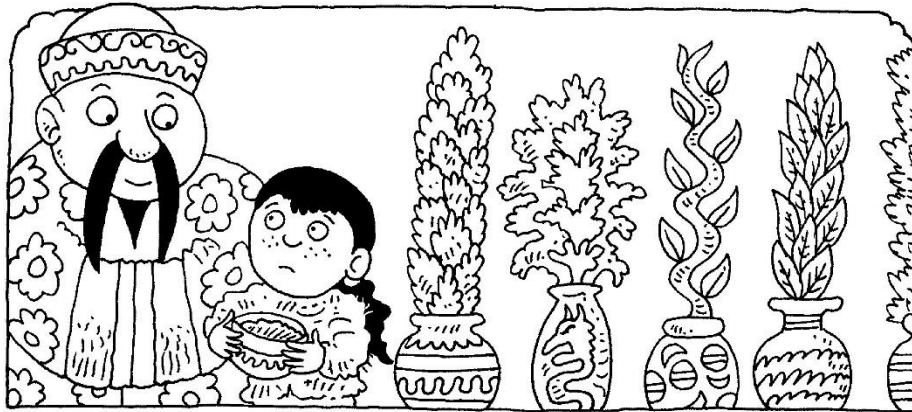
Everyone lined up to get one seed. A little boy lined up too. Holding the special seed carefully as he ran home to show his mother.



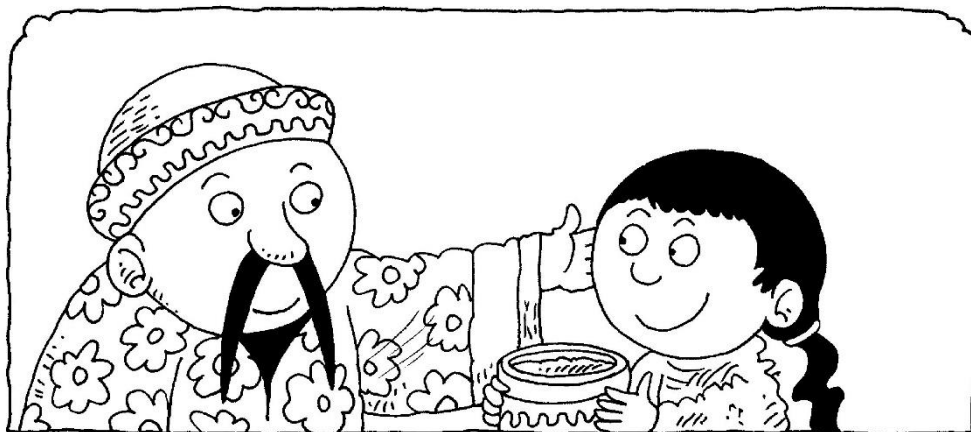
The boy planted the seed in a pot. For one whole year he took good care of it. But that seed did NOT grow!



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.”

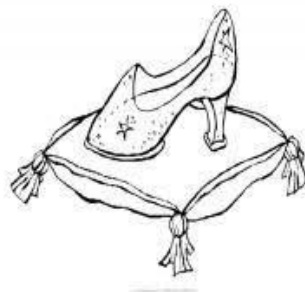
Cinderella went to the ball and danced with the Prince, who thought she was more beautiful than any other lady at the ball. No one knew Cinderella. She looked different in her beautiful clothes.



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.

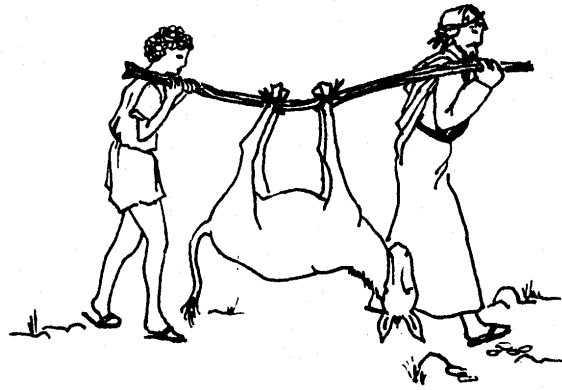
"How cruel of you both!" they said. "You will kill that poor donkey," cried one of the travelers.

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.



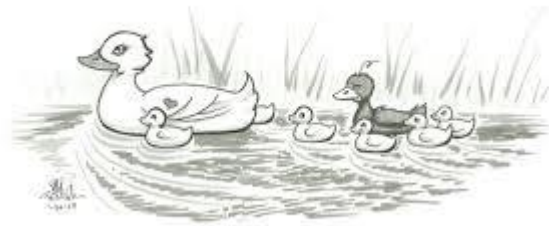
"Did I count the eggs wrongly?" Mother Duck wondered. But before she had time to think about it, the last egg finally hatched. A strange looking duckling with gray feathers that should have been yellow gazed at a worried mother. The ducklings grew quickly, but Mother Duck had a secret worry.

"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.

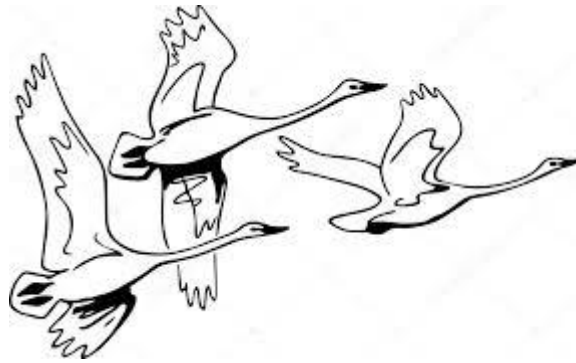
"Just wait! If you don't lay eggs, the old woman will wring your neck and pop you into the pot!"

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!"

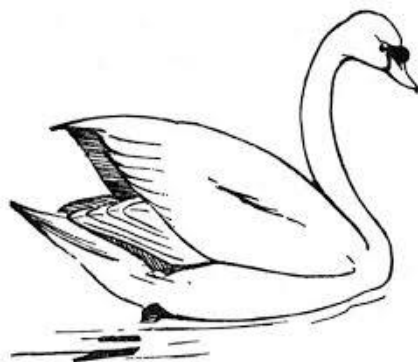
Then one night, finding the hutch door slightly open, he escaped. Once again, he was all alone. He fled as far away as he could, and at dawn, he found himself in a thick bed of reeds. "If nobody wants me, I'll hid here forever." There was plenty a food, and the duckling began to feel a little happier, 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?