

September 2021

Welcome back to school! We hope that you've had a happy and restful summer, and have recharged your batteries in time for all the changes that the new school year will bring. Whether your child is new to the school or old hat, we hope you and they will enjoy faith-journeying with us this term.

'Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves'

You might be surprised to see that title. 'Isn't this a Christian resource?!' you might ask. Absolutely - and God teaches us in many and varied ways! In the week commencing 6th September, we shared with pupils a retelling of 'Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves' and compared the similarities and differences between it and the Gospel passage for that week in order to learn more about Jesus.

Before we read the Gospel, here is the version of 'Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves' which children will experience in school. You might like to read it again with them now – and can choose whether or not to use the actions!

When you say...	Children should...
Ali Baba	Say 'chop chop chop' and mime chopping a tree with an axe
horses	Make hoof sounds with hands on legs
stretched his arms out wide and said: "Open Sesame!"	Stretch their arms out wide and say: "Open Sesame!"
cave	Echo 'cave cave cave' after you.
pulled his arms in to his chest and said: "Close Sesame!"	Pull their arms in to their chest and say: "Close Sesame!"
poured boiling oil into each of the jars	Wince and say "Ouch that's hot!"
stabbed him	Clutch stomach and say 'bleughhh'

Ali Baba was a woodcutter with little money to his name, who lived with his wife Morgiana.

One day **Ali Baba** was in the forest when he saw forty thieves riding forty **horses**. **Ali Baba** saw the forty thieves stop in front of a **cave**. The leader **stretched his arms out wide and said: "Open Sesame!"**

To Ali Baba's amazed eyes, a huge door appeared in the rock and opened! The forty thieves and forty **horses** went inside the **cave**.

A few minutes later, they came back out. The leader **pulled his arms in to his chest and said: "Close Sesame!"** The huge door in the rock closed and then disappeared.

Trembling with excitement, **Ali Baba** waited until the forty thieves and forty **horses** had gone from his sight, then he went to stand in front of the **cave**.

He **stretched his arms out wide and said: "Open Sesame!"** The huge door appeared in the rock just as he had seen before, and **Ali Baba** went inside. To his delight, he found lots of treasure! He filled his pockets with as much as he could carry and went home.

But the forty thieves were selfish and greedy, and noticed some of their treasure was missing! Realising that someone else knew about their **cave**, they tracked down **Ali Baba**.

The leader disguised himself as an oil seller and brought with him forty large oil jars containing the other thieves.

But clever Morgiana knew who the oil seller really was. Whilst the leader was talking to her husband, she **poured boiling oil into each of the jars**, killing all of the other thieves.

Then she went to the oil seller and **stabbed him**.

So **Ali Baba** was saved, and he and Morgiana were the only people who knew about the treasure in the **cave**. They were rich! And **Ali Baba** never had to cut down another tree again.

Keep reading to find out how this helped children to think about Jesus!

Be Opened

Like Ali Baba, Jesus once told something to open up...

‘A deaf man who also had a speech impediment was brought to Jesus, and they asked Him to lay His hand on him.

Jesus took him away from the crowd and put His fingers on the man’s ears and on his tongue.

Then looking up to heaven He said to him, “Ephphatha”, which means, ‘Be opened.’

Immediately, the man’s ears were opened: he could hear! And his mouth was opened: he could talk!

Jesus told them not to tell anyone, but the man and his friends couldn’t keep quiet, telling more and more people about how amazing Jesus was.’

Paraphrased from Mark 7: 31 - 37

There are some things that are similar in the two stories children heard, and some things that are very different.

‘Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves’	Jesus Heals a Deaf Man
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The story of ‘Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves’ is made up. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Gospel story is real!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The treasure in the cave was stolen by the 40 thieves, and then Ali Baba stole it from them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jesus gave the man in the Gospel a precious treasure – his hearing and power of speech! He also tells us that He is storing up treasure for us in Heaven. But we don’t have to steal that treasure – Jesus gives it to us for free!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lots of bad things happened because of the treasure in the cave. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The treasure Jesus offers brings us new life.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ali Baba and the 40 thieves open the cave through the magic words ‘Open Sesame’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jesus uses a word too, ‘Ephphatha’, which means ‘be opened’.

Children heard how ‘Ephphatha’ isn’t a magic word: it’s just an ordinary word in the language Jesus spoke – Aramaic. But Jesus spoke this ordinary word with extraordinary power – because He is the Son of God! It is His command which is special, not the word itself.

The man was healed because he allowed Jesus to open his ears and mouth.
If we allow Him, Jesus will do the same for us, so we can hear and share the Good News!

The assembly explored how we are surrounded by lots of different voices, telling us to do this, buy that, dress like this, support that etc. So many of these voices pretend to be telling us the truth, but are actually lies.

Children learned that when we allow Jesus to open our ears, it means we learn to turn down the noise of all those other voices and can tune in to God's voice guiding us. Our ears become opened to hearing and understanding the Good News: the truth about who Jesus is and how He died to save us!

Likewise, they learned that when we allow Jesus to open our mouths, like the man in the Gospel, we won't be able to stop telling everyone else about how amazing Jesus is!

Prayer

The start of the school year is always a busy time for all the family. Why not take some time, as a household, to pause and 'tune in' to God.

Our top tips:

- Sit down together. Light a candle if you want to. Play some gentle music if that's your thing.
- Make the Sign of the Cross together and invite Jesus to open your ears so you can hear His guiding voice.
- Take a few moments of quiet, to listen and be still.
- Invite Jesus to open your mouth.
- Finish with the Sign of the Cross and then share how it felt to 'tune in' to God. (*Peaceful? Calming? Empowering?*)
- If you like it, why not make it a regular family practise 😊