



**STORY  
TENT**



## Story Day at Coventry Cathedral

### Advice for Faith Guides

#### Learning outcomes:

- Faith guides will feel comfortable with the overview of the storytelling day and familiar with the guidelines for dialogue.
- Faith guides will feel confident about choosing a story and how they should conduct themselves when talking with children.
- Faith guides will feel confident about the story as a vehicle for sharing from their lived experiences of faith.

#### Session outline:

1. Brief overview of the day
2. Brief overview of the sessions
3. How to choose a story that helps them to live well.
4. What to do when you don't know what to say...
5. Why is the story a helpful vehicle for reflecting on differences?

#### How to choose a story that is meaningful?

We would ask you to choose a story that will take about 5 minutes to read or retell from your sacred scriptures or significant carrier of meaning. It would be good if it could be a story that has personal significance for you and one that helps you to remember how to live well.

We will have three sessions of about 25 minutes for story telling in your tent space. We would ask you to briefly introduce your sacred text or significant carrier of meaning in a way that helps pupils to remember the name of the text, how old the text is and whether it is written in a different language. (If this is the case you may wish to read a sentence or two in the original language -I have found this to be very helpful and the pupils find it inspiring.)

Once you have introduced the text, read the story once and ask the pupils what they noticed and if they have any questions. You may want to point out things that are significant to you. After about 15 minutes it is time to pause



and re-read the story again. The second time pupils may discover something new.

### **What to do if you don't know what to say?**

It is important to remember that your role during the day is that of a faith guide. You are a representative of your faith tradition and not an expert theologian. Be honest about your understanding using phrases in the first person, for example *“When I read this story it helps me to remember how important it is to be kind to people I meet.”* or *“This book is special to me because I believe that it is the inspired word of God and it helps me to know what God is like.”* Speak from your own experience and don't try to present difficult theological ideas. If you are not sure how to answer the question, don't be afraid to be honest and say that you don't know the answer. Remember to speak positively from your own experiences and not negatively about those of other people.

### **Why is story a helpful vehicle for dialogue?**

There is something about the human condition that is wired for story. From an early age children practise telling stories about themselves in order to make sense of their environment, develop language but also develop a sense of their identity and insights about how they fit into the world.

A story invites us into a world where we find ourselves exploring what is happening through the eyes of the characters. The very fact that most story arcs include a problem to be solved and a new meaning to be found enables the reader to expect a change in their own understanding as part of the process of the encounter. These encounters when experienced with others can allow internal narratives to be challenged as new information is incorporated through the voices of others, both those in the story and those telling the story.

Sacred texts are a powerful example of group stories because they bring together historical memories that have been used to pass on meaning and they are laden with significance. Sacred texts come with authority because they are considered to contain wisdom from God which can be relevant across time and cultures. Faith communities can approach them with confidence as a



way of finding meaning and significance within their own faith groups, but these texts can also be helpful for all those of no faith looking to learn from the history of wisdom literature.