Story Assemblies
for the School Year
Volume 2

36 assemblies with five-minute stories, teacher’s notes and RE follow-up

Edward J Carter

Ideas for classroom follow-up by Jo Fageant
Preface

Children love stories, and I’ve really enjoyed telling the stories in this book when leading assemblies. I wanted to keep my assemblies broadly Christian by telling the big story of God’s love for the world, and I’ve tried to make it fun by helping the children imagine themselves as part of the story as well. It encourages them to think about their own values and behaviour, not by learning the right answers to give but by making a leap of imagination and identifying themselves with the characters in the stories.

My stories are in the tradition of great Christian storytellers such as C.S. Lewis and his Narnia Chronicles, but designed for school assemblies. Jesus himself taught using parables and, in a similar way, the stories in this book are essentially parables about God and the events in the Bible. If you use them all, they take you through the whole school year.

The first collection of my stories was published under the title *Story Assemblies for the School Year* (BRF/Barnabas, 2010), and was very well received. I’m delighted to be sharing this next set of stories with you as well.

Edward Carter
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Introduction

There are many ways you could use the material in this book, but it has been designed so that the main story episodes are told once a week. At the end of each set of six episodes there is a final celebration, which connects to a seasonal theme such as Christmas or Easter.

Before the first assembly you will need to:

- Choose someone (or several people to take it in turns) to be the storyteller.
- Make the storyteller’s prop for the story in question, using the instructions.
- Quickly run through the first story episode so that it is familiar.

Extra things that you could do to increase the impact of the stories include:

- Make a badge for the storyteller to wear (the wording on the badge could be ‘God’s Storyteller’).
- Make a display board on which children’s work, connected to the stories, can be displayed.
- Choose suitable music to be played before and after the assembly.
- Choose a song to sing at the assembly that links to the story episode.
- Use your classroom-based follow-up time to connect to the stories.
- Keep the teaching staff informed about the stories and advise them about good curriculum links.

Suggestions are given throughout the book on how these ideas can best be put into practice.
There are two ways of telling the stories. You can either read them in full from this book, as you would from any book you are using for a story, or you can tell the story without a script, using notes as prompts. A storyteller’s notes card for each episode is available to download from the website www.barnabasinschools.org.uk/extra-resources/. You can also download the key Bible verse card for each story from this website. The storyteller’s prop helps to illustrate the story and acts as a good prompt in itself.

Although the material in this book has been designed for use in school assemblies, it can also be used as the basis for an RE course focused on Christianity.

**Year Outline**

*Story Assemblies for the School Year Volume 2* includes material for one school year. The year is divided into six sections, corresponding to the six blocks of teaching time.

**Section One:** The exodus  
**Values:** Freedom and courage  
**Story:** Grandad’s cereal box  
**Key Bible verse:** ‘God said, “I have seen the cruel suffering of my people in Egypt. I have heard their groans, and I have come down to set them free”’ (Acts 7:34).  
**Concluding celebration:** Harvest

**Section Two:** The promised land  
**Values:** Cooperation and perseverance  
**Story:** The game of block-blast  
**Key Bible verses:** ‘Obey all the laws that I have given you today. Then you will be able to cross the river and occupy the land that you are about to enter’ (Deuteronomy 11:8–9).  
**Concluding celebration:** Christmas
Section Three: The disciples of Jesus  
Values: Friendship and exploration  
Story: The pioneer’s drum  
Key Bible verse: ‘Jesus said, “Whoever wants to serve me must follow me”’ (John 12:26).  
Concluding celebration: Lent

Section Four: The judgment parables  
Values: Pride and forgiveness  
Story: The chef’s weighing scales  
Key Bible verses: ‘God has weighed you on his balance scales, and you fall short of what it takes’ (Daniel 5:27, CEV); ‘Christ himself carried our sins in his body to the cross, so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness. It is by his wounds that you have been healed’ (1 Peter 2:24); ‘Those who win the victory will be clothed like this in white, and I will not remove their names from the book of the living’ (Revelation 3:5).  
Concluding celebration: Holy Week or Easter

Section Five: The first Christians  
Values: Happiness and unity  
Story: Pavlov’s power-suit  
Key Bible verse: ‘All of you are Christ’s body, and each one is a part of it’ (1 Corinthians 12:27).  
Concluding celebration: Pentecost

Section Six: Paul’s letters  
Values: Loyalty and self-discovery  
Story: Hyperlink Harita  
Key Bible verse: ‘We who have this spiritual treasure are like common clay pots, in order to show that the supreme power belongs to God, not to us’ (2 Corinthians 4:7).  
Concluding celebration: Leavers’ farewell
Section One

The exodus

Key Bible verse

God said, ‘I have seen the cruel suffering of my people in Egypt. I have heard their groans, and I have come down to set them free.’

ACTS 7:34

Values

Freedom and courage

This section is designed to run from the start of the school year in September through to the October break. The theme is ‘The exodus’ and, in the big story of God’s love for the world, we are remembering the time when he set his chosen people free from slavery in Egypt. When we imagine ourselves within this part of the story, we discover what it feels like to be set free from things that worry us or prevent us from being ourselves. We also realise that sometimes we have to show courage.

‘Grandad’s cereal box’ is a story told in six parts plus a final harvest time episode, which illustrates the biblical account of the escape of Moses and the Israelites from slavery under Pharaoh in Egypt. It is found mainly in the book of Exodus.

• Week One: Genesis 41:53–57; 45:7–8
• Week Two: Exodus 1:8–14
• Week Three: Exodus 8:1–6, 16–17, 20–24; 10:12–15
• Week Four: Exodus 12:1–11; 14:19–29
• Week Five: Exodus 16:2–18
• Week Six: Exodus 19:16–20; 20:1–17
The storyteller’s prop consists of a large cereal box labelled ‘Doctor Dan’s Extremely Crumbly & Crunchy Cereal Cubes’ and a smaller box containing dried pasta, which makes a rattling noise. The smaller box should fit tightly inside the main cereal box.

**Suggested music**

Suggestions for pre-recorded music that could be used at the start and end of assemblies include:

- ‘Go down, Moses’ (*Famous Spirituals*, Philips B0000060BG)
- Music from *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (Polydor B000001DUI)

Suggestions for songs that could be sung at assemblies include:

- Father, I place into your hands
- Give me joy in my heart
- How did Moses cross the Red Sea?
- I, the Lord of sea and sky
- Thank you, Lord, for this new day
- We are marching in the light of God
Grandad’s cereal box: Week One

Bible link

This week’s Bible passage link is Genesis 41:53–57 and 45:7–8, which recounts the famine that struck when Joseph was in Egypt and the way in which God used Joseph to provide food for his chosen people.

Key theme

This week’s key theme is ‘being alone and being lonely’. Consider the positive and negative aspects of being alone. Being lonely can be like imprisonment in oneself. The story talks about feelings of imprisonment. Explore different meanings of this word and different ways of being imprisoned. What do they all have in common?

Episode One

(Prepare the cereal box so that it rattles when shaken.)

I wonder if any of you went away from home this summer holiday. Maybe you even went somewhere new and strange, where you’d never been before. Today I want to start telling you a story about two children who went to stay with their grandad one summer. It’s a very special story, because it also tells us about God and about something very important that happened in the Bible.

Once upon a time, two children called Pip and Polly, who lived in a big city, went to stay with their old grandad, who lived
by the sea. One day it was so wet that they couldn’t go out at all. Grandad always needed his afternoon rest, so, while he was asleep, Pip and Polly decided to explore the house. When they got to the kitchen, they opened every cupboard and found all sorts of knives and forks and plates and saucepans. But the best cupboard was the larder, where Grandad kept his food. Right at the back, covered in dust, was a very old cereal box. *(Show the cereal box.)*

Pip and Polly read the name of the cereal: ‘Doctor Dan’s Extremely Crumbly & Crunchy Cereal Cubes’. The box seemed so old, they wondered if there was anything left inside and if it was still safe to eat. So they gave the box a shake. *(Shake the box to make a rattling noise.)* Just then, they heard Grandad coming downstairs. They didn’t have time to put everything back, but Grandad wasn’t cross when he saw them with the cereal box. ‘There’s quite a story that goes with this,’ he said. ‘Would you like to hear it?’ Pip and Polly nodded their heads excitedly, so Grandad began.

‘Many years ago, I was on a ship on a faraway ocean. The ship got caught in a storm and it hit some rocks. Everyone else managed to escape on a lifeboat, but I was knocked out and nobody remembered to rescue me. When I woke up again, I was all alone on the wreck, but I could see an island, so I swam to it. It was horrible being completely alone. It felt like a prison. I can remember what I said: “I don’t like it here. When will I ever be free?”

‘I didn’t have anything to eat but, luckily, on the beach there was a big case of food that had washed up from the wreck. When I looked inside, it had loads of delicious things, so I tucked in. The food in the case lasted seven whole weeks, but
no one came to rescue me. In the end there was no food left, and then I started to get really hungry. I can remember what I said: “I don’t like it here. When will I ever be free?”

‘Luckily, I had one last look inside the case of food. Hidden at the bottom was the cereal box, full of Doctor Dan’s Extremely Crumbly & Crunchy Cereal Cubes. So I gave the box a shake (shake the box) and poured out some cereal. There wasn’t anything else at all to eat, so I was very lucky to have that box. The amazing thing was, it kept on pouring out cereal cubes day after day. In fact, it lasted for another seven whole weeks.

‘I can remember what I said to myself then: “It’s quite nice on this island. Maybe I’ll be happy to stay here for ever!” But that’s not the whole of the story. That’s just when things started to go badly wrong…’

Pip and Polly were listening eagerly, but I haven’t got time to tell any more of the story about Grandad and his mysterious cereal box today. Next time I’ll tell you some more, and maybe we’ll discover what went wrong. But it’s a very special story, because it reminds us about some people in the Bible and how God helped them.

There was a man called Jacob, but God gave him another name: ‘Israel’. His children and their families were called the Israelites, and God knew he had to take care of them. One of Jacob’s sons was called Joseph. Joseph had a coat of many colours, but he lost his coat and ended up in the land of Egypt. God helped him so much that when seven years of famine came, he could help the other Israelites survive.

Grandad reminds us of the Israelites. He was shipwrecked on a strange island, just as the Israelites had to go to Egypt, a strange land. When Grandad found the mysterious cereal box
that kept him alive, it was just like the food that the Israelites got from Joseph. But although the cereal cubes kept Grandad alive, he knew that the island wasn’t really a nice place to be. The Israelites were the same. They found food in Egypt but they knew it wasn’t really their home. They knew they weren’t really free.

If you’d been Grandad, stuck on the island, I wonder how you’d have felt. Would you have enjoyed Doctor Dan’s Extremely Crumbly & Crunchy Cereal Cubes? *(Shake the box.*) Would you have wanted to stay on the island or escape from it? And if you’d been one of the Israelites, stuck in Egypt, I wonder how you’d have felt. Would you have been happy to stay or would you have asked God to help you escape? I wonder.

**Possible concluding prayer**

*Lord God, you help people when they’re in danger, and you promise to set your people free. When the Israelites were starving, you kept them safe by feeding them in Egypt. Help us to be filled with courage when things aren’t going well, and help us to trust you each and every day.*

*Amen*
Bible link

This week’s Bible passage link is Exodus 1:8–14, which recounts the way in which the Egyptian rulers persecuted the Israelites while they lived in Egypt.

Key theme

This week’s key theme is ‘hunger’. Consider the importance of good and varied food for a healthy lifestyle, and aspects of a healthy diet.

Episode Two

(Prepare the cereal box so that it rattles when shaken.)

Do you remember the story we began hearing last week? Who was stuck on an island? What did Grandad use to help him survive when he was hungry? (Produce the cereal box and rattle it.)

Do you remember how this story about Grandad’s cereal box reminds us of the Israelites in Egypt and how God gave them food when they were starving?

Pip and Polly were still listening to Grandad and he carried on telling his story.

‘I’d been on the island for 14 weeks, but I wanted to be free again because it felt like a prison. The only food left was the box
of Doctor Dan’s Extremely Crumbly & Crunchy Cereal Cubes (shake the box), which always gave me enough to eat. But then things started going badly wrong.

‘There were animals on the island—mice and snakes and a dog and lizards, and even some small monkeys—and they were all getting hungry too. They knew that the cereal box was the easiest way of getting food. Each morning they watched me as I shook the box (shake the box) and ate some more cereal cubes.

‘One day, when I was having a wash in the sea, I noticed one of the monkeys trying to pick up the box of Doctor Dan’s Extremely Crumbly & Crunchy Cereal Cubes. The monkey was quite small, so it wasn’t easy for him to carry it, but I was horrified! The cereal box held my only supply of food, so I ran back up the beach, shouting at the monkey at the top of my voice. Luckily I got the cereal box back, but I could see it wouldn’t be long before another animal tried to steal it.

‘My first idea was to hide the cereal box up a tree, so I found a palm tree and I hid the box up in the leaves where no one could see it. But the monkeys noticed it, and they climbed up to try and grab it. I scared them away just in time, but I could see I needed a better idea.

‘Next I tried using one of the wooden cases lying on the beach, washed up from the wreck. I put the cereal box carefully inside the case and fixed the lid on tight. But I noticed some mice nibbling away at the wood. Their teeth were very sharp and before long they’d made a hole. I had to frighten them away, but the cereal box wasn’t safe in the wooden case any more.

‘Then I had a brilliant idea. I put the cereal box on a big wooden plank and I let the plank float out to sea, with a rope
tied to it so that I could pull it back in. To start with, everything was fine, but then the dog saw the plank and swam out to try to get it. I only just managed to pull it back in time!

‘I was growing desperate by then. Where would the box of Doctor Dan’s Extremely Crumbly & Crunchy Cereal Cubes be safe? Then suddenly I knew the answer. I dug a big hole in the ground, put the cereal box in, and covered it over with earth and sand (hide the box). None of the animals could possibly get it now.

‘At the next meal-time, with no cereal box, there was nothing for me to eat. Gradually I got hungrier and hungrier, and I got weaker and weaker. I can remember what I said: “I don’t like it here. When will I ever be free?” So then I knew there was only one thing I could do…’

Pip and Polly were still listening eagerly, but I haven’t got time to tell any more of the story about Grandad and his mysterious cereal box today. Next time I’ll tell you some more and we’ll discover what Grandad did. But it’s a very special story, because it reminds us about the Israelites and how God helped them.

The Israelites were living in Egypt and God had helped them in the past, when Joseph was Pharaoh’s friend. But now a new Pharaoh was ruler and he hated the Israelites. He wanted to finish them off once and for all, so he did horrible things to them.

Grandad, who was shipwrecked on the strange island, reminds us of the Israelites, who were in Egypt, a strange land. Although the Israelites had been all right in the past, just like Grandad getting food from the cereal box, the time came when they didn’t have enough food and their enemies oppressed them. It was just like Grandad, who was pestered by the animals
on the island so much that he had to bury the cereal box. Then he began to get hungrier and hungrier. Just as Grandad wanted to escape, to be free again, so the Israelites also wanted to be free, to escape from Egypt.

If you’d been Grandad, stuck on the island, I wonder how you’d have felt. Would you have buried the box like he did, when all the animals pestered him? And if you’d been one of the Israelites, stuck in Egypt, I wonder how you’d have felt when Pharaoh was your enemy. Would you have asked God to help you break free? I wonder.

Possible concluding prayer

Lord God, you help people when they’re in danger and you promise to set your people free. When the Israelites were persecuted in Egypt, you never forgot them. Help us to be filled with courage when things aren’t going well, and help us to trust you each and every day. Amen
Grandad’s cereal box: Week Three

Bible link

This week’s Bible passage link is Exodus 8:1–6, 16–17 and 20–24, and 10:12–15, which recounts the plagues that were sent against the land of Egypt when Pharaoh refused to let the Israelites go.

Key theme

This week’s key theme is ‘perseverance’. Sometimes we have to persevere at something even when times are hard, things go wrong and we want to give up. Think about how it feels to stick something out and get through, as well as how it feels to give up and not succeed.

Episode Three

(Prepare the cereal box so that it does not rattle when shaken. Keep it hidden to start with.)

Do you remember our story from last time? What was the name of the cereal that Grandad had found? Why was he so hungry again?

Do you remember how this story about Grandad’s cereal box reminds us of the Israelites in Egypt, and how Pharaoh was horrible to them and treated them like slaves?

Pip and Polly were still listening to Grandad and he carried on telling his story.
‘I was getting hungrier and hungrier and I wanted to escape from the island more and more each day. I wanted to be free! But I knew I needed food from the cereal box. I needed Doctor Dan’s Extremely Crumbly & Crunchy Cereal Cubes more than anything else in the world. So I decided to dig the box up again, even though the animals were all watching me still.

‘In the end, I found the place where the box was buried. I was so weak, it took me ages to dig down into the ground, but finally I reached the cereal box. (Carefully produce the cereal box and put it on the floor.) I was so pleased to have it in my hands again, even though it was very damp. I decided to shake it, to make sure everything was all right (shake the box vigorously), but it didn’t make any noise at all.

‘I couldn’t understand why the box didn’t rattle properly, so I carefully opened the lid and looked inside. What I saw made my insides squirm. There were horrible little insects crawling everywhere inside the box, and even some tiny frogs that must have burrowed down underground. The special cereal cubes were all spoilt! No wonder they didn’t rattle nicely any more. All the food was ruined and even the animals didn’t seem to be interested.

‘Then I knew I would have to try to escape from the island. I was desperate to be free. So I started building a raft out of bits of wood on the beach. It was very difficult because the pieces of wood were all different shapes and sizes, and I had to use vines from the jungle to tie them together. I was feeling very weak and, even worse, as soon as I’d tied one bit of the raft properly, the monkeys would run up and untie the knot! Making a raft was impossible.

‘Luckily, I’d noticed that one of the jungle plants had massive
leaves, perfect for making a little sailing boat. It took ages to finish, but in the end I managed to float the boat on the sea and the wind carried it out nicely. I was about to start celebrating my escape when the dog came swimming along and barged straight into the boat. It was so flimsy that the water came rushing in, and I had to swim quickly back to the beach.

‘I thought I’d never escape from the island, especially with all the animals ruining everything I tried. After a bit, though, I decided to try making a big glider, using bamboo poles and more of the big leaves, all tied together with the vines. I worked on the glider for days and finally it was ready. I climbed in and started flapping the wings, but the glider didn’t take off. I couldn’t understand why it wasn’t working, but suddenly I noticed lots of little holes in the wings. The mice had nibbled through them.

‘After that, I was so exhausted, I just fell down on the sand, ready to cry. I was desperate to escape from the island, but every time something had gone wrong. The animals hadn’t let me go. As I looked around, I knew there was only one thing left I could do…’

Pip and Polly were still listening eagerly, but I haven’t got time to tell any more of the story about Grandad and his mysterious cereal box today. Next time I’ll tell you some more and we’ll discover what Grandad did. But it’s a very special story, because it reminds us about the Israelites and how God helped them.

The Israelites were living in Egypt, but it was a horrible place. They were Pharaoh’s slaves and he wouldn’t let them go. So God sent plagues of insects and frogs and other nasty things to frighten Pharaoh and the Egyptians. But whenever the Israelites were about to escape, Pharaoh stopped them at the last minute.
Grandad, who was shipwrecked on the strange island, reminds us of the Israelites, who were in Egypt, a strange land. The Israelites didn’t have enough food because Pharaoh was being horrible to them and because of all the plagues, just as Grandad was hungry because his cereal box had become useless. And just as Grandad tried to escape from the island to be free again, so the Israelites also tried to escape from Egypt, but Pharaoh stopped them each time.

If you’d been Grandad, stuck on the island, I wonder how you’d have felt when the cereal box was ruined. How would you have tried to escape? I bet the animals would have stopped you as well. And if you’d been one of the Israelites in Egypt, how would you have felt when Pharaoh persecuted you and wouldn’t let you go free? I wonder if you’d have asked God for help. I wonder.

Possible concluding prayer

*Lord God, you help people when they’re in danger and you promise to set your people free. When the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, you heard their prayers. Help us to be filled with courage when things aren’t going well, and help us to trust you each and every day. Amen*
Grandad’s cereal box: Week Four

Bible link

This week’s Bible passage link is Exodus 12:1–11 and 14:19–29, which recounts the Passover meal that the Israelites ate and their escape from Pharaoh’s army through the Red Sea.

Key theme

This week’s key theme is ‘facing danger’. Consider different reactions to being in situations of danger. How do people cope with dangerous situations? How do people find inner strength and resolve? What situations of danger might a person of your age find themselves in? How can you best avoid these situations?

Episode Four

(Prepare the cereal box so that it does rattle again when shaken. At the start, it should be placed in view.)

Do you remember our story from last time? Who was stuck on an island? What had happened to the cereal box? And why couldn’t Grandad manage to escape?

Do you remember how this story about Grandad’s cereal box reminds us of the Israelites in Egypt and how Pharaoh wouldn’t let them go, even though God sent plagues of insects and frogs and other nasty things?

Pip and Polly were still listening to Grandad. His voice was all croaky.
'By now I was so weak, I could hardly even crawl. But as I lay on the beach, I noticed the shipwreck out in the bay. The tall mast was sticking high up in the air, the perfect place from which to signal for help. So I decided to try to swim out through the water to the wreck. I managed to crawl down the beach into the sea but, just when I was out of my depth, those annoying animals—the monkeys, the dog and the mice—came and blocked my way, so I had to splash back to the island. By now I was so weak, I knew I needed food before I could escape.

'So I began searching the island. I could see some bananas up a tree, but they were way out of reach. I even found some nuts, but the shells were too strong for me to break open. I couldn’t find anything to eat, and that evening I crawled back to the beach, still with an empty tummy. The only thing there was the box of Doctor Dan’s Extremely Crumbly & Crunchy Cereal Cubes. I knew that the cereal cubes were all spoilt, but by then I was desperate. I started talking to the box: “Please give me some food! Please! Just one bowlful!” I thought it was hopeless, but, as I gave the box a shake (shake the box so that it rattles noisily), I couldn’t believe my ears! It made a lovely rattling noise and I poured out the cereal cubes, all fresh and delicious. They made a lovely meal.

'Suddenly I was feeling strong and brave again. I took the box and walked quickly down to the sea again, plunged into the water and started swimming out towards the shipwreck, towards freedom. I could swim strongly again now, but, as the wreck drew near, my heart almost stopped beating. Up ahead, blocking my way, were about 20 crocodiles, flashing their teeth at me and twisting about in the water!

'I was about to turn back when I noticed that the sky had
gone dark. A strong wind had started blowing and the water was making bigger and bigger waves. A storm was on its way. The island was too far behind me, so I had to carry on to the wreck, even though the crocodiles were coming. They were snapping their jaws fiercely, but the cereal cubes made me so courageous that I kept going. By now the waves were as tall as houses. The crocodiles were trying to swim towards me, but the water was pushing them back. Even their powerful tails couldn’t stop them being smashed on to the rocks one by one. The waves had saved me and, as I reached the wreck, I scrambled up the side, shouting for joy. But then I saw a very sad sight…’

Pip and Polly were still listening eagerly, but I haven’t got time for any more of the story about Grandad and his mysterious cereal box today. Next time I’ll tell you some more and we’ll discover what Grandad saw. But it’s a very special story, because it reminds us about the Israelites and how God helped them.

The Israelites were living in Egypt and they were desperate to escape. They prayed to God for help and God told Moses that they should all have a special meal, the ‘Passover’ meal. God would strike down the Egyptians but he would ‘pass over’ the Israelites so that they could escape. They escaped by crossing the Red Sea, because God pushed the waves back. Pharaoh couldn’t stop them. Moses and the Israelites were full of courage. They actually managed to escape and to be free from the Egyptians.

Grandad, who was shipwrecked on the island, reminds us of the Israelites, who were stuck in Egypt. Pharaoh was trying to stop the Israelites escaping but, in the end, they prayed to God and they had that special meal, the Passover, just as the cereal box gave Grandad a special bowlful just when he needed
it. After that, Grandad, using all his courage, managed to swim off the island. He escaped from the island, just as Moses and the Israelites escaped from Egypt. The crocodiles couldn’t stop Grandad, and Pharaoh’s chariots couldn’t stop the Israelites.

If you’d been Grandad, stuck on the island, I wonder how you’d have felt when the cereal box rattled again. Would you have been brave enough to swim towards the crocodiles? And if you’d been with the Israelites in Egypt, I wonder how you’d have felt, eating that Passover meal? Would you have been brave enough to go with Moses across the Red Sea, with Pharaoh’s chariots chasing you? I wonder what it felt like, escaping to freedom. I wonder.

Possible concluding prayer

Lord God, you help people when they’re in danger and you promise to set your people free. When the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, you brought them safely through the Red Sea and helped them escape from Pharaoh’s chariots. Help us to be filled with courage when things aren’t going well, and help us to trust you each and every day. Amen
Grandad’s cereal box: Week Five

Bible link

This week’s Bible passage link is Exodus 16:2–18, which recounts the way in which the Israelites grumbled in the wilderness because they were hungry, and how God sent them food.

Key theme

This week’s key theme is ‘loss and disappointment’. Everyone loses things or people that are important to them and has to deal with feelings of loss. Talk about how it feels to lose something important. What are the most important things to you, that you would least like to lose? Grandad survived for a long time with almost nothing. What does that say about what is really important in life?

Episode Five

(Prepare the cereal box so that it rattles when shaken.)

Do you remember our story from last time? How did Grandad manage to escape from the island?

Do you remember how this story about Grandad’s cereal box reminds us of the Israelites in Egypt and how they escaped from Pharaoh?

Pip and Polly were still listening to Grandad as he carried on telling his story.

‘I’d made it to the shipwreck, but when I pulled myself on
to the deck, I was horrified. The ship had a great big crack all the way across. The metal bits were rusty and breaking apart, and the glass in all the windows was broken. Just then, a big wave hit the ship and a piece of wood dropped down from the mast. I only just managed to jump out of the way as it crashed to the deck.

‘I was terrified, but I remembered how courageous I’d felt when I was swimming across to the ship to escape from the island, so I tried to be brave again. I wanted to find my cabin, which was down some steps. As I climbed down, I could see a very sad sight. The door of my cabin had disappeared.

‘I peered through the doorway, but the whole cabin had disappeared down into the sea as well. All my clothes, my books, the photographs of my family, my little leather bag of money—it had all gone! I was so upset, I almost started to cry, but then I got angry. I started shouting: “Why did I even bother to swim over from the island? I’d have been better staying there! It’s that stupid cereal box’s fault! Stupid box!” But the box just stood there without making a sound. I was so tired, I collapsed on the deck of the ship, but I knew I still wanted to be free from this place. I knew I wanted to get home.

‘Then I remembered the tall mast in the middle of the ship and my plan to climb to the top and shoot a bright flare into the sky, so that someone would come and rescue me. I was so weak, I needed some energy before I could begin looking. I looked at the cereal box again and read the words: “Doctor Dan’s Extremely Crumbly & Crunchy Cereal Cubes”. I remembered how delicious those cereal cubes were, but I felt bad because I’d shouted, “Stupid box” at it. I was worried it wouldn’t give me any food because of what I’d said.
‘Slowly I picked up the box and then I gave it a shake (shake the box so that it rattles), and it rattled nicely. I poured out a good helping of cereal cubes and had a feast. They tasted like the best food I’d ever had, and there was just the right amount. It made me feel much stronger and I started to search the ship for some flares. To start with, I couldn’t think where to look. I tried looking in the engine room and in the captain’s cabin, but I couldn’t find any flares at all. Then suddenly I remembered about the lifeboat. Inside it was a big box full of special things to help you survive. There were lifejackets and bottles of water and even blankets. Right at the bottom was one flare, so I put it in one of my pockets and walked to the bottom of the mast. Then I started to climb up…’

Pip and Polly were still listening eagerly, but I haven’t got time for any more of the story about Grandad and his mysterious cereal box today. Next time I’ll tell you some more and we’ll discover if Grandad managed to climb up the mast. But it’s a very special story, because it reminds us about the Israelites and how God helped them.

The Israelites had lived in Egypt for ages and they wanted to be free, but, once they’d crossed the Red Sea, they found themselves in a wilderness, a horrible place. So they started grumbling to Moses about how they wished they’d never left Egypt after all. They thought God had let them down, but then God sent them food in the wilderness, called ‘manna’. So the Israelites felt courageous again and kept going.

Grandad, who’d bravely escaped from the island, reminds us of the Israelites who escaped from Egypt to freedom. The Israelites found that after they’d escaped, the wilderness was a horrible place, just as Grandad found that the ship was a horrible
place, all dusty and dangerous. Grandad shouted, ‘Stupid box!’ just like the Israelites, who got angry with Moses and with God. But God sent the Israelites manna in the wilderness, just like the fantastic meal of cereal cubes that Grandad had from the box. It gave him the courage to carry on with his plan to find freedom. The Israelites were the same. They wanted to be free.

If you’d been Grandad on the shipwreck, I wonder how you’d have felt when you saw your cabin had disappeared, along with all your special things. Would you have got angry with the cereal box? And if you’d been with the Israelites as they travelled through the wilderness, would you have been angry with Moses and with God? I wonder how you would have felt when God sent manna to feed you. I wonder.

**Possible concluding prayer**

*Lord God, you help people when they’re in danger and you promise to set your people free. When the Israelites grumbled in the wilderness, you heard them and sent them food from heaven. Help us to be filled with courage when things aren’t going well, and help us to trust you each and every day. Amen*
Grandad’s cereal box: Week Six

Bible link

This week’s Bible passage link is Exodus 19:16–20 and 20:1–17, which recounts how Moses went up Mount Sinai and was given the Ten Commandments from God.

Key theme

This week’s key theme is ‘appreciation’. How do we show appreciation? Do we do it enough? How could we do better? What difference does it make to show appropriate appreciation for things and people?

Episode Six

(Prepare the cereal box so it rattles when shaken.)

Do you remember our story from last week? Who was stuck on an island? Where did Grandad manage to swim to? Can you remember his plan to signal for help?

Do you remember how this story about Grandad’s cereal box reminds us of the Israelites in Egypt and how they managed to escape into the wilderness?

Pip and Polly were still listening to Grandad and he carried on telling his story.

‘The mast was very tall, but I knew I had to climb all the way to the top. Before I started, I felt in my pocket to make sure the
flare was still safely there. I was really hoping the flare was going to save me, because I wanted to be free from that place for ever. Luckily, the meal I’d had from the cereal box made me strong again, so I was feeling courageous.

‘I started climbing and soon I was halfway up, but then a big flock of seagulls came swooping down. The birds started trying to peck me with their big yellow beaks, and their narrow eyes glinted in the sunshine. They seemed to be crying, ‘Go back! Go back!’ but I held on tight. I even shooed them away using my arms and legs, because the cereal cubes had made me so brave.

‘Once the seagulls had gone, I kept on climbing. Soon the crow’s nest, right at the top of the mast, was just above me. I was worried that the flare would fall, but somehow I climbed on to the tiny platform at the top of the mast, with sweat running down my face.

‘Once I’d got my breath back, I reached to my pocket for the flare and pulled it out. It had a piece of special string coming down from it, which you had to light. Carefully I struck a match and held it near the string, but the wind blew it out. I tried another match, and another. Each time, the wind stopped it burning. Then I remembered the cereal box. I stood it upright and sheltered the flare and the match behind it.

‘At last the string caught light! It fizzed and made sparks as the flame raced up towards the flare. Then suddenly there was smoke everywhere and a great noisy roar, and flames shot high into the sky. I looked up in amazement as the flare soared above me. Anyone 50 miles away would have seen it. I searched in every direction, as far as the eye could see, but I knew it would take a day or more for anyone to arrive. All I could do was sit down and wait.
‘As I sat there at the top of the mast in the warm sunshine, I looked at the box of Doctor Dan’s Extremely Crumbly & Crunchy Cereal Cubes. Without that box, I wouldn’t have been able to light the flare. I picked it up and gave it a shake *(shake the box so that it rattles)* and I remembered how the box had helped me every time I was stuck. ‘Thank you, box!’ I said. ‘You’ve given me just what I needed to keep me going. I’ll never forget you.’ Then, just as I was putting the cereal box down again, I heard a noise in the distance…’

Pip and Polly were still listening eagerly, but I haven’t got time for any more of Grandad’s story today. It’s almost finished now, so next time we’ll hear the very last bit. But it’s a very special story, because it reminds us about Moses and the Israelites and how God helped them.

When the Israelites travelled through the wilderness, they came to a mountain called Mount Sinai. The people waited at the bottom of the mountain, but Moses went up to the top, where there was fire and smoke, and there he was very close to God. Moses heard God speaking to him and God explained to him exactly how the people should live their lives. God gave Moses all the commandments that the Israelites needed, so that they could really be God’s people. Moses wrote those commandments down, so that no one would ever forget them.

Grandad reminds us of Moses and the Israelites, who escaped from Egypt to freedom. Just as Grandad bravely climbed up the mast, so Moses bravely went up Mount Sinai. There was fire and smoke at the top of that mountain, where Moses met God, and there was fire and smoke when Grandad let the flare off at the top of the mast. Grandad knew he couldn’t have done it without his cereal box, so he promised he’d never forget how
the box had helped him. And Moses knew that the Israelites must never forget God’s commandments if they wanted to be free.

If you’d been Grandad, climbing up that mast, I wonder how you’d have felt. It must have been great seeing all the smoke and flames as the flare shot into the sky. Would you have thanked the cereal box, like he did? And if you’d been Moses, would you have been brave enough to go up the mountain in the smoke and flames? How would you have felt when God actually spoke to you and gave you his commandments? I wonder if you’d have tried to keep them. I wonder.

Possible concluding prayer

*Lord God, you help people when they’re in danger and you promise to set your people free. When Moses went up the mountain, you met him in the smoke and fire and gave him just what the Israelites needed. Help us to be filled with courage when things aren’t going well, and help us to trust you each and every day. Amen*
Grandad’s cereal box: Concluding celebration

The story of Grandad’s cereal box ends very successfully with a harvest thanksgiving, with suitable songs, poems, readings and prayers. You could also organise a collection of food for a local charity or sheltered housing complex. The concluding episode of the story connects to the harvest theme.

Key theme

This week’s key theme is ‘harvest’. Consider all the things we have that make our lives good.

Concluding episode

(Prepare the box so that it does not rattle when shaken. If possible, hide it somewhere in a display of food that has been collected for harvest. Ask the children what their favourite foods are and search for them in the display, before finally finding the cereal box.)

Do you remember the story about Grandad’s cereal box? Where was Grandad trying to escape from? How did the cereal box help him?

Do you remember how this story tells us about Moses and the Israelites and how they escaped from Egypt with God’s help?

Pip and Polly sat on the edge of their seats, waiting for Grandad to finish the story.
As I sat at the top of the mast on the shipwreck, I looked at the box of Doctor Dan’s Extremely Crumbly & Crunchy Cereal Cubes and I remembered all the ways it had helped me. I remembered when I first got stranded on the island and how the cereal box gave me food to survive. I remembered when I had to bury the box and how the cereal cubes got spoilt. I remembered the time when I pleaded with the box and how it fed me again so that I was strong enough to swim past the crocodiles. I remembered when I shouted at the box and said it was stupid, but it still gave me food. Then the cereal box even helped me fire the flare into the sky. “Doctor Dan’s Extremely Crumbly & Crunchy Cereal Cubes are amazing,” I said to myself.

Just then I heard a strange buzzing noise, a bit like a bee. I looked around but I couldn’t see any insects. The buzzing was getting louder and louder, more like a noisy motorbike, and suddenly I noticed a speck high up in the air, moving in a straight line. As I watched, I could see it getting bigger. It had wings. It was an aeroplane! I jumped up and waved my hands in the air. I so wanted to be free from the island and from the wreck. Gradually the plane circled closer. I kept waving my hands and then I scrambled quickly down the mast, shouting all the time. I could see that it was a sea-plane and, before long, it had landed right next to the wreck, on the water, which is what sea-planes can do.

The door of the plane opened and a man dressed in a uniform stepped across on to the wreck. “We saw your flare,” he said. “How did you survive for so long? You must have been here for weeks.” I tried to think what to say. How could I explain? Then I had an idea. I reached down and picked up the box of
Doctor Dan’s Extremely Crumbly & Crunchy Cereal Cubes. “It was this box that saved me,” I replied. “It gave me strength and help whenever I needed it.” The man looked very surprised. He couldn’t understand how a box of cereal cubes could possibly have done all that. So I started explaining everything that had happened.

‘I explained about when I first got stranded on the island, and how the cereal box gave me food to survive. I explained about when I had to bury the box and how the cereal cubes got spoilt. I explained about the time when I pleaded with the box and how it fed me again so that I was strong enough to swim past the crocodiles. I explained about when I shouted at the box and said it was stupid, but it still gave me food. I explained about how the cereal box had even helped me fire the flare into the sky. The man looked amazed, as though he could hardly believe it.

‘I picked up the cereal box. “Listen!” I said, and I shook the box (shake the box vigorously), but it didn’t make any noise at all. A tear came into my eye. I couldn’t believe the box was empty, but then the man started saying something. “You don’t need the cereal cubes any more now,” he said. “All you need to do is to get into my plane and we can fly away. You’ll be free for ever!”

That’s just what Grandad did, but he took the box of Doctor Dan’s Extremely Crumbly & Crunchy Cereal Cubes with him and he never forgot how helpful those cubes had been.

That’s the end of my story—a very special story. It reminds us of how God helped Moses and the Israelites escape from Egypt, by sending them food and helping them in lots of ways. It reminds us of how God helps us, too, by making sure we
have enough food. That’s what we thank God for at harvest time—everything he provides us with, including our favourite cereal. And the best way we can say ‘thank you’ to God is to share what we have, so that everyone can have enough.

We don’t just need food to live, though. In the end, Grandad’s cereal box didn’t rattle any more (shake the box), but he still escaped. It’s the same for us. God makes sure we have other help as well as our food, so that in our hearts we become more and more like the people he wants us to be. We must remember to say ‘thank you’ for that as well, this harvest time.
Grandad’s cereal box:
Ideas for classroom follow-up

RE

• The story of Moses, including the Ten Commandments, linking with NSNRE themes of KS1: story, leaders and teachers; KS2: inspirational people, teachings and authority
• The Jewish festival of Pesach (Passover), its origins and contemporary celebration (KS1: celebration, symbols, believing; KS2: religion, family and community, worship, symbols of religious expression, beliefs and questions)

Geography

• Egypt

History, PSHE, RE, Citizenship

• Slavery and movements working for its abolition in the past and present in Britain, USA and so on: www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/abolition

Science

• The importance of an adequate and varied diet for general health and activity
**English**

- Create and act elements of the story of Moses, focusing on a variety of key characters—for example, Miriam, Pharaoh’s daughter, Pharaoh, Aaron and Moses.
- Read the story of Moses and use it to fulfil elements of the English curriculum:
  - www.topmarks.co.uk/judaism/moses/moses1.htm
  - www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/judaism/history/moses_2.shtml (gives teachers the story and links through to information about Passover, the Ten Commandments and so on)
  - www.primaryresources.co.uk/re/docs/Moses_MB.doc (a fill-in-the-missing-words response to the story)

**Art**

- Look at Lorenzo Costa’s *The Story of Moses (The Dance of Miriam)*:

**PE**

- Inspired by the painting, devise a dance of celebration for freedom.
To purchase this book, visit www.brfonline.org.uk

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