

King Midas

A myth from Ancient Greece

Recommended Key Stage: KS2

Synopsis

King Midas is granted a wish by the god Dionysus, after he returns his faithful follower Silenus. Midas, full of greed, wishes that everything he touches be turned to gold. But Midas learns very quickly that you must be careful what you wish for. After turning everything, including his own daughter, into gold, he begs Dionysus to take the gift away.

Part 1: Share the Story

Listen to the audio of **King Midas** told by Hugh Lupton.
Show a world map and point out Greece. Discuss what the children know already about Ancient Greece/ Greek mythology.

Part 2: Discuss the story

Use the questions below to begin a discussion about the story

Questions

- What did you think of the story? What was your favourite part?
- What do you think of Midas' character? How would you describe him?
- If Dionysus offered you a wish, what would you wish for?
- If you met a Greek God/Goddess, what would you say? How would you feel?
- [Before the end of the story] What do you predict will happen as a result of Midas' wish?
- Can you infer anything about Dionysus' character from this story?
- What can we learn from this story?

Part 3: Play the Story

Activities	
Conscience Alley • King Midas has been offered a wish by Dionysus and has to make a choice. Can you help him make his decision? • On the one hand, he wants to wish for gold, on the other, this could be a mistake and there could be more sensible things to wish for. • Discuss both sides of the argument in pairs/table groups. • Create a pathway, with the children standing in two lines parallel to each other. • Nominate a child to be Midas and walk through the middle. • As they walk through the alley, each side will take it in turns to argue their point. One side will tell him why he should wish for gold. The other side will tell him why this is a bad idea (if you are doing this activity after they've heard the whole story, they can pretend they don't know the ending). • What does King Midas decide when he reaches the end of the alley?	Summarise the story • Draw 9 boxes on a piece of large paper. • Retell the story from start to finish using only these 9 boxes. • You can draw and write – plan what you are going to put in each box so that you don't run out of room. • Which do you think are the key moments of the story? Can you miss bits out while still maintaining the storyline? • Turn your summarised story into a comic strip or storyboard. Add speech, captions, sound effects. • Focus on emotions – how will Midas' face look when he is given his power? Will it be different when he turns his daughter to gold?

Part 4: Story Stimulus

Activities	
Creative Challenge: Design a new gift for Midas. His greed meant that he was given more than he could handle – can you design a more appropriate gift? Questions to consider: • What might a King desire? • Is there a gift with no consequences? • Is there a gift that could make him a better King to his people? • Might Midas have a problem as King, that this gift could solve? Present your idea for a gift to King Midas himself (this could be played by an adult or a child in the class). Be as persuasive as you can, to stop him from wishing for gold!	Emotions graph • Midas went through many different emotions during this story. • Use an emotion wheel to identify some of the emotions he might have felt – encourage students to be brave with their vocabulary choices. Share ideas as a group. • Draw a graph of these emotions, showing how Midas’ feelings changed throughout the story. • Discuss as a group, or ask children to label the x axis with key moments from the story, e.g. - Midas meeting Dionysus - Being told he can wish for anything - Turning something to gold for the first time - Turning his food to gold - Turning his daughter to gold - Going back to Dionysus - Washing his powers away in the river Ask the students to label the y axis with their chosen emotions: happiest at top to despair at the bottom. The x axis line represents time. Mark on dots to show how Midas feels at each moment in the story. Can they join the dots to show his emotional journey through the story?
Innovate the story Make a change to the story and present your new myth in groups, pairs or independently. Think carefully about which part you’d like to change; here are some ideas to get you started: • What if Midas met a different Greek God/Goddess? Would the interaction be different? What might they do for Midas? • What if Midas wished for something else? What would the consequences be? • What if Dionysus refused to get rid of Midas’ power at the end? • What if Midas had enjoyed turning everything to gold? • What if Dionysus wanted to become King? Present your new myth as a written story, or a performance with a narrator and actors.	

Part 5: Taking it Further

Similar Stories

Greek myths:

Dionysus and the Pirates

Zeus and the Poplar

Theseus and the Minotaur

Stories about being careful what you wish for:

The Foolish Wishes (Europe)

Misery and Honey (Haiti)

The Unlucky Man (England)

Wider Curriculum Links

KS2 PSHE

- to recognise that feelings can change over time and range in intensity
- a varied vocabulary to use when talking about feelings; about how to express feelings in different ways

KS2 History

- Ancient Greece – a study of Greek life and achievements and their influence on the western world