

The Lost Camel

A folktale from Egypt

Recommended Key Stage: KS2

Synopsis

A merchant loses his camel. He asks three strangers whether they have seen it and when they describe its unique traits without having seen it, the merchant accuses each of them of having stolen it. Brought before the Sultan, the strangers explain how they deduced the camel's features through their keen observation. The Sultan is impressed by their wisdom and scolds the merchant for his hasty accusations.

Part 1: Share the Story

Share the video of **The Lost Camel** from The Story Museum website or tell the story yourself.

Top storytelling tips:

- Learn the story beforehand so that you can be expressive and maintain eye contact with the students.
- Use actions and sound effects and encourage the students to join in.

Find one or two moments in the story to stop and ask the students to predict what is going to happen next, or how they would feel if they were the characters.

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?
- How would you feel if you lost something special?
- How would you describe the merchant?
- Which character are you most like? Why?
- What could the merchant have done differently? What would you have done?
- Was the Merchant right to accuse the strangers?
- Have you ever been accused of something you didn't do? How did it feel?
- What if the strangers had stolen the camel?

Part 3: Play the Story

Activities	
Quickfire Class Tableau Have the children mill around the room in neutral. Call out 'freeze' then a word or phrase for them to show in freeze. Give them a short countdown to get into position and then freeze again. • Astonished • Looking for clues • Frustrated • Accusing (in pairs or small groups) • Ashamed You might choose any other emotions/ moments from the story that you want to explore deeper with the children. Extend the activity by tapping someone on the head when they are in freeze, and asking them to share their character's thoughts in that moment.	Descriptions The Merchant loves his Camel very much; it is very special to him! Imagine you have a special object in your pocket. It could be anything, real or imaginary. It could be big or small. Take the object out of your pocket and take a peek – don't show anyone! Think about: • How it looks • How it smells • How it sounds • What is special about it? Does it have a story behind it? Describe your object to your partner without telling them what it is. Tell them the story behind it, what makes it so special.
Drama/ oracy • In groups of three, children come up with a scene where the three strangers are talking about the Merchant, after he has accused them. • Discuss how they feel. Have them deciding what to do now and how to prove their innocence to the Sultan. • End with them going to speak to the Sultan. • Present your short scene to the rest of the class – make sure it is no longer than 5 minutes.	Freeze Frames • In pairs, show a conversation between the Merchant and the first stranger. Encourage the children to show how each character is feeling in that moment. • Ask the other children to suggest words or phrases to describe the characters and how they are feeling. • Choose a different pair to show a conversation between the merchant and the Sultan at the end. • Compare the two freeze frames and suggest more words and phrases to describe the scene.

Part 4: Story Stimulus

Activities	
Emotion Graphs Create an emotion graph showing how one characters' emotions change during the story. Come up with key moments from the story, that show how the Merchant is feeling. Along the X axis, label these moments, for example: • The Merchant loves his camel. • The Merchant realises his camel is missing. • He asks the first stranger if he's seen him. • He asks the second stranger... On the Y axis, children label the emotions – they could use an emotion wheel to help them find varied vocabulary. Children can consider how emotions can change and build – e.g. if the Merchant was annoyed after he spoke to the first stranger, how did he feel after he spoke to the third? Mark with dots to show how the Merchant feels at each moment in the story. Join the dots to show his emotional journey throughout the story. Share graphs and discuss any differences between the students' interpretations.	Court Room Debate Imagine that this story took place today, and that the Merchant decided to take the strangers to court! Split the class in half – one half is acting on the side of the Merchant, and the other on the side of the strangers. Take it in turns arguing for and against in character. Here are some questions to think about: • How does the Merchant know that the strangers did it? • What evidence is there that they did/ didn't steal the camel? • Should the Merchant have accused them? Why/ why not? • How has this made the strangers feel? Come to a conclusion, with a child or adult acting as the Judge. What is the verdict? What can be learned from this?
Persuasion Write a letter from the Merchant to the Sultan, persuading him to forgive him for his accusations against the three strangers. This letter should persuade the Sultan that the character did the right and fair thing, so you should think carefully about what will convince them. • What arguments could be made? • What language will you use to persuade the Sultan? • What persuasive techniques will be used? (e.g. bribery, nagging, pleading) Share the letters. Were there different arguments used?	

Part 5: Taking it Further

Similar Stories

Stories with a mystery or puzzle:

The Three Dolls

Zeus and The Poplar

Anansi and The Magic Stools

Wider Curriculum Links

PSHE

- *how to discuss and debate topical issues, respect other people's point of view and constructively challenge those they disagree with*
- *respecting others*
- *recognising and describing different emotions and feelings*