

The spider and the cave

A Muslim story

The words in blue are words that may be new to you. Check out the glossary at the end of the story to check their meaning.

Muhammad awoke with a start. What was that noise? He pulled his cloak tightly round him for warmth, sat still, and listened. Here in Mecca he knew he had many enemies. When Muhammad began preaching about Allah and telling people to get rid of the idols they worshipped many people became very angry. They had worshipped their idols for a long time, and besides that, the **idols** in the Ka'aba brought trade and money to Mecca. People would not change their ways just because Muhammad said they should. Who did he think he was anyway?

Everyone *knew* there were people plotting to kill Muhammad, but no one knew *when*. Muhammad and his friends made plans to leave Mecca for Medina, where the people there were keen to have him as their leader. On hearing the noise, a quick prayer came from Muhammad's lips and then he awoke his young follower, **Ali**, who was sleeping close by. 'It is time,' said the Prophet. Muhammad and **Abu Bakr**, his great friend and supporter, were to escape at the dead of night. Ali would take Muhammad's cloak and pretend to be asleep in the Prophet's bed. That would give them more time to get away. It was all important to make sure Muhammad reached Medina alive.

Ali lay down on Muhammad's mat, the sweat glistening on his forehead. His eyes were wide open, and he was listening for the slightest sound. The Prophet slipped away quietly, while Ali heard voices saying, 'Muhammad is there, asleep. At dawn, when he steps out of the door, we will silence him forever.'

By dawn the escape party was long gone. The group of **assassins** crept quietly around the house where Ali was sleeping. They flung open the door, **scimitars** flashing, but stopped, astonished to find that only Ali was there. He was too young to be of any importance. The assassins howled with disappointment and were so surprised that they allowed Ali to push past them and walk out of the house towards the Ka'aba.

Meanwhile Muhammad and Abu Bakr had avoided the road from Mecca to Medina, where they would have been seen and caught for certain. They were on foot, climbing the rocky slopes to the caves near Mecca. They were covered in dust, exhausted and thirsty. Abu Bakr was, by turns, angry and afraid. He could not believe a **Messenger of God** would have to hide like this. He called to God for help. Muhammad reassured him. 'God will hear you,' he said.

By nightfall they reached the caves, but they could hear the hooves of their enemies' horses close behind. Abu Bakr began to despair. 'What shall we do,' he said, 'there are only two of us?'

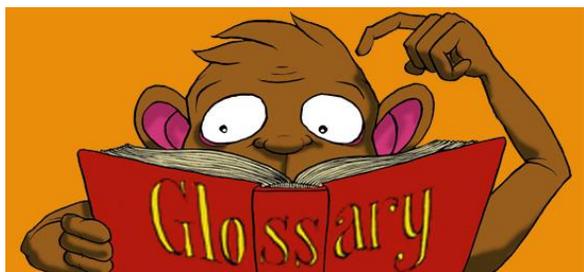


Muhammad pulled him inside the nearest cave. 'You are mistaken,' he said. 'There are three of us.'

Footsteps could be heard at the mouth of the cave. Abu Bakr held his breath. Then a voice was heard. 'No, they can't be in here. It's covered with spider's webs and nests and branches. No one has been here since Muhammad was born.' There was the sound of people moving away, horses' hooves fading in the distance. Abu Bakr let out a long sigh. He praised God but was too terrified to move. And what did they mean...spiders' webs and nests and branches?

He opened his eyes. The cave did not look the same. Over the entrance there was indeed a beautiful, silver spider's web, and above it, a low branch with a nest where a dove sat, cooing gently. 'How did that happen?' asked Abu Bakr, but the prophet simply turned to his friend and smiled.

When the two were certain the enemy had gone, they left the cave that had protected them, and continued their journey safely to Medina.



Idols = objects that people set up and worship like little gods. In this time period, people had little statues of gods made of stone & clay that they worshipped.

Assassins = people who are sent to kill someone

Scimitars = a kind of curved sword that people used in this time in the Middle East. It's also known as a backword or sabre.

Messenger of God = a prophet

Dove = a kind of white bird that looks a little like a white pigeon

Story Master 3: The Spider & the Cave

KW:

Idols
Assassins
Mecca
Medina
Scimitars
Abu Bakr
Ali
Muhammed
Ka'aba

Starter

1. In the story of the Widow's mite, what does the word mite mean?
2. In the same story, why did 2 coins mean more than the large donations from the rich?
3. What does the Parable of the Sheep and Goats teach us to do more of?
4. What are 'disciples'?
5. In the religion of Islam, Muhammad is the first and most important prophet in Islam. What is a prophet?
6. At the time he was alive, people used to worship statues that represented different God's. What would you call an object that is used in this way?
7. What do you call followers of Islam?
8. What is the name of the main Holy Book in Islam?

Task 1: READ THE STORY

See the story panels below: today's story is slightly longer, but a goodie!

AIM: Read it out loud to a family member

AND...to see the real cave where this story took place, check this out:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-gT6z8BpsQ4>

Task 2 Work your way through the MUST DO questions from the booklet

- a) Who are the main characters? Note: animals can be characters too!
- b) Give three bits of information about the main character.
- c) What is the story about?
- d) What might this mean?
- e) Have you had any similar experiences?
- f) Can you explain why it was important for this story to be told?
- g) Considering society today, why is this story still relevant?
- h) Compared to another religious story, which one is better and why?
- i) Who would you recommend this to?

Task 3 CLIMB THE LADDER

Select **ONE** task from the learning ladder to deepen your knowledge. Aim as high up the ladder as you can but make sure your evidence shows you thought about the answers to your MUST DO questions. Have fun with it, involve family members and remember to take photos of your work or save it as evidence. We will display the incoming work on the CLF blog where you will also find examples

https://learn.clf.uk/year-7/?tx_subjects=religion-and-world-views&cvpwp=s

Task 4 KNOWLEDGE CHECK-IN

1. Why did the Prophet Muhammad have so many enemies?
2. Where were the friends travelling from and to in this story?
3. What job was Ali, Muhammad's young follower, given to do here?
4. On the dry & dusty journey through the mountains, why was Abu Bakr angry and afraid?
5. Abu Bakr was worried as there were only 2 of them on this journey. But Muhammad said he was wrong and that there were 3 of them. What do you think he meant?
6. Muhammad's enemies had found the cave they were hiding in. But why did they not go in?
7. How do you think Muhammad felt after he heard his enemies leave?

ANSWERS: CHECK IN HERE IF YOU NEED SOME HELP

Starter:

Task 2 Answers. (Answers e-i will be your own opinions, but these ones show how someone else might answer them)

- a) Muhammad, Ali, Abu Bakr, the enemies or assassins, the spider and the dove
- b) I am choosing Muhammad as the main character here. He is God's messenger or prophet. He has supporters who want him to get to Medina. He trusts totally that God will protect them on their journey.
- c) This story is about a getaway journey from Mecca to Medina. In it, Muhammad and his supporters need to escape the city of Mecca and get away from his enemies who are trying to kill him. It contains a miracle, in which God covers the mouth of the cave so his enemies cannot find him hiding inside.
- d) This is a story about trusting in God and how God looks after and protects those he cares for. It is also a bit of history too, as Muhammad did make enemies by bringing his message to Mecca and people really did want to try to kill him. This journey was called the Hijrah.
- e) This story makes me think of times when I feel I have been protected by God or by a guardian angel, when something bad was stopped from happening by some kind of luck or coincidence.
- f) I think this story is important because it shows how Allah, or God, was really looking out for Muhammad and wanted his mission to succeed. It also shows the power of Allah to perform miracles to save people.
- g) This story is still relevant today for a few reasons. One, it informs Muslims about the life of the Prophet Muhammad. Secondly, it could give hope to people who are having a bad time and need to feel that Allah is watching out for them.
- h) You could compare this story to the Lost Son because both stories are about people going on journeys. The son in the Lost Son goes away from home and wastes his money. He has to figure out what is important to him. Only then does he realise what matters and then he goes back home. His father welcomes him back even though he has behaved badly. In this story, Muhammad must go on a journey. He travels from Mecca to Medina to get away from people who are trying to kill him. In this story, the thing that is important is God's help on the way and his friendships. Both stories sort of show what is important. God looks after Muhammed in the cave here, and in the Lost Son, the father who welcome shim home represents God welcoming his son home. Both stories are about God's love and care.
- i) I think this is a great story and I like the fact that the spiders get the starring role! I would recommend it to anyone who is frightened of spiders as they may think twice about how important spiders can be!

Task 4 KNOWLEDGE CHECK-IN.