

Angels (1)

A Jewish story

Key ideas: saying sorry, forgiveness, compassion

There was a man who was living a bad life. He was unkind to his family. He beat his children however they behaved. He didn't feed his animals properly. He stole from his neighbours. He told lies about people and could never admit he had done anything wrong. Nobody liked him or had a kind thing to say about him.

The angels said to God 'You will have to do something about this man.' 'Tell me about him,' said God. 'Well,' said one angel, 'Yesterday he ate all the supper his wife had cooked and left none for anyone else.' 'Yes,' said another angel, 'And he hit his children when they cried because they were hungry.' Another angel said, 'He went out last night and broke into a shop and stole the safe with the money in it.' 'Then he left the safe in his neighbour's garden and told the police his neighbour was a thief,' said another angel. And so it went on. Angel after angel had a story of the terrible things the man had done.

When he had heard nine hundred and ninety-nine angels tell how wicked the man had been God turned to the thousandth angel and said, 'I suppose you are going to tell me about some other wrong thing he has done.' 'Well, no,' said the thousandth angel a little nervously, 'but I did see him say sorry to his wife before he went to sleep. I don't know if he meant it but at least he said it.' 'I shall be so glad if he is really sorry,' said God, 'because then I shall not have to punish him. I will give him one more chance. Even though there is only one good thing to be said for him against nine hundred and ninety-nine bad things I want to forgive him if I can.'

Angels (2)

A Jewish story

Key ideas: compassion, God's relationship with people

When the Israelites escaped from Egypt God made a path for them through the sea. They all passed over on dry land.

When the pursuing Egyptian army followed them, the sea came back and drowned them. The Israelites were so happy to have escaped that they had a great party and sang songs of thanks to God.

The angels wanted to sing a song to God too, but God stopped them. 'I made the Egyptians as well as the Israelites,' God said. 'Do you want me to be happy when so many people have been destroyed? It is one thing for the Israelites to be happy, because they have been rescued. It is another thing for you to praise me when I have had to drown people.'