READY TO USE PARABLE

# Nitesh and the netball nightmare

Nitesh looked around him at the hundreds of players in coloured bibs. When he’d first joined the mixed netball team, there had only been a few players, barely enough to put together an actual team. But now look…netball courts stretching right across the all-weather pitches. Netball fever had spread through Manchesterford High and now you couldn’t move for people claiming they were the best Goal Attack.

“Nitesh!”

He looked around to see who had called his name and got a netball right in the face. He collapsed to the ground and his eyes went all blurry. As he refocused, he saw the face of the netball coach, Gracie Breville, swimming into view.

“Nitesh, are you OK?” she asked, helping him back on his feet.

“Yeah, I think so.” He shook his head groggily. “Thanks, coach.”

“Listen, Nitesh, I need to talk to you,” said Gracie. She paused as she looked at the sea of netball washing around in front of them. “It’s all got too much. There are so many people playing that it’s impossible to coach everyone. I mean, look at that group over there.”

Nitesh followed where Gracie was pointing and saw a netball court full of players wearing Goal Defence bibs, playing wherever they felt like.

“And as for that lot…” added Gracie. She pointed at a different group who were dribbling the ball and trying to slam-dunk it in the netball hoop, basketball-style. “And them…” Right in the far corner, a netball game was in progress using a 10kg medicine ball. The players could barely lift it above their heads.

Dotted around the all-weather pitches were examples of players getting it all wrong. Some were playing something like netball-rugby, others were using a frisbee and one group had even lowered the netball hoops to just below waist height.

“I’m going to have to slim it all right down,” Gracie said sadly. “So, Nitesh, I want you to choose the best two players for each position and we’ll start again from there. I’ve got some money from the council, so we can go away for a training camp. Then we’ll see where we can go from there.”

Nitesh walked through the different netball pitches, gathering the two best Centres and Goal Shooters, the two most skilful Wing Attacks and the finest two Goal Keepers. Finally, 14 players stood in front of Gracie Breville.

“Right, team,” she said. “We’re starting netball club again, with you as the core team. Let’s do it!”

And as this select group of players hugged and high-fived each other, it started to rain.

## Discussion questions

* Do you think the coach, Gracie, handled the situation in the best way? Why? Why not?
* How would you have chosen people if you were in Nitesh’s position?
* Have you ever been part of something that got too big and was spoiled by too many people, some who didn’t follow the rules? What was that like?
* Why do some people not follow the rules, but go their own way? Are you one of those people?
* Do you think the team would have been more successful with the larger group? Or the smaller team they finished with? Why?

This story is based on Genesis 6-8. Read this passage to the group and compare the story to this one. You may want to chat about the story using these questions:

* How is the Bible story like Nitesh’s story? How is it different?
* Why do you think God chose Noah?
* What do you think of what God did?
* What do you think happened to Noah next?

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