READY TO USE PARABLE

# Ali and the astonishing announcement

“What are you watching?” Ali asked his brother.

“What?” said Amir, looking up from his phone. “Oh, nothing, it’s just on.”

Ali sat down on the sofa and began to watch the TV. It was one of those programmes where they talk about whoever the prime minister is at the moment, and then go on to a story about custard creams. A *Strictly* professional – Ali didn’t know which one – was sitting under a massive logo with *The Two Show* written on it and trying to appear interested in Scottish pig farming.

Ali turned back to Amir. “What are you looking at?” he asked and grabbed the phone from his brother.

“Give me that back!” Amir shouted and punched his brother hard on the arm. Ali dropped the phone in surprise and swore loudly.

“Alright, loser, no need to smack me,” he said, rubbing his arm and turning back to the TV. They were no longer in a studio, but in a street. An overexcited presenter was talking the camera, while trying not to fall over.

“We’re on this ordinary-looking street in Manchesterford, ready to give away a fabulous prize to the lucky winner of our competition!”

“Hey, look,” Ali said. “That bloke’s in Manchesterford. Someone’s won something! No one ever wins anything in Manchesterford.”

Amir didn’t look up from his phone. “Big deal,” he said.

The presenter rounded a corner and almost walked straight into a post box. Ali stared. It looked exactly like the post box at the end of his street. Then he saw a newsagents and a chippy. The newsagents and chippy that were almost opposite his house. He couldn’t believe it. His street was on TV!

“Amir! Amir! Look! That’s our house!”

Amir finally tore himself away from YouTube. “You’re joking!”

“No, man, it is! He’s outside our house!”

On screen, the presenter was standing by their front door about to knock. Then Ali and Amir heard him knocking. Ali rushed into the hallway and grabbed the door handle. He opened the door to be greeted by the TV presenter, camerawoman and a very bright light.

From the living room, Amir shouted: “Hey! Ali! You’re on TV!”

The presenter looked at Ali and then back at the camera: “Here he is, our competition winner, Ali Al-Saadi! Ali, I bring you very good news!”

Ali was stunned: “What competition?”

“*The Two Show*’s amazing Christmas competition!” said the presenter, his showbiz grin firmly fixed on his face. “You’ve won!”

“But that’s impossible,” said Ali. “I didn’t enter any competition.”

The presenter laughed. It seemed that nothing could derail his positivity. “Nothing’s impossible for *The Two Show*! And you have won…a year’s supply of Lovely Lashes make-up! And be the star of the next Lovely Lashes ad campaign!”

“What? What am I going to do with that? I’ll get laughed out of school! I’m not being part of that stupid plan.”

And with that, Ali shut the door.

## Discussion questions

* How do you think Ali ended up winning a competition he never entered?
* Why do you think Ali turned down the prize?
* What would you do in Ali’s position?
* What kind of prize would have tempted you to take part?

This story is based on Luke 1:26-38. Read this passage to the group and compare the story to this one. You may want to chat about the story using these questions:

* What would you have done if you were Mary?
* Why do you think Mary decides that she will take part in God’s plan?
* Women who had children outside of marriage at Mary’s time were in real danger. What might lie ahead for her?
* Why do you think God chose Mary – an unlikely person to play this part?
* How easy is it to trust God when doing something or going somewhere that’s new and potentially scary? Have you got an example of when you’ve done this? What happened?

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