READY TO USE PARABLE

# Tonya and the towering Year-12s

“There’s no way I’m going there. I mean, have you *seen* the size of them?” asked Fatima.

“But it’s what we campaigned for!” said Tonya. “Did you or did you not say that you couldn’t stand spending lunchtimes with the Year-7s any longer? Did you or did you not say that you weren’t going to be called a ‘big, stinking poo bag’ one more time?”

“Ah,” Charlie mused. “Those Year-7s are so creative in their insults.”

Fatima was momentarily put off by having her own words quoted back to her. But then she gathered steam once more.

“Well, yes, but I didn’t expect this. You saw what they were like. That Freddie Clifford is a flippin’ giant! And all his mates too.”

“Yes,” said Tonya. “Freddie Clifford is a bit big—”

“A bit?” Fatima interrupted. “He makes Dwayne ‘the Rock’ Johnson look like Chris Rock.”

“Clever,” said Charlie. “She’s right, though,” he continued to Tonya. “Now we’re here, I’m not sure I want to go through with it.”

For years, the grounds of Manchesterford High School had been split into areas for Years 7 to 10 and Years 11 to 13. But the younger area had grown increasingly crowded and Tonya had been instrumental in campaigning for the Year-10s to be moved into the older section. She and her friends had had enough of spending time with kids who had barely grown out of skipping games and calling each other ‘poo bags’.

And yet, now the school had agreed to make the change, Fatima, Charlie and loads of others were starting to get cold feet. Tonya decided to play her trump card.

“But if we go there, we’ll be able to use the Latte Lounge.”

Tonya could see Fatima falter in her resolve. In the younger section, they’d been forced to make do with whatever the canteen offered. At the Latte Lounge, they could get milkshakes, Frappuccinos and kombucha. Fatima didn’t even know what kombucha was, but she wanted to try.

But then the creamy, creamy Frappuccino dreamy look disappeared from her face. “Nope,” said Fatima. “I don’t care if I have to eat a bucket of semolina while little Derek McKellen from 7G calls me an ‘ugly bog breath’. I am not trying to battle past Freddie ‘bigger than Thor’ Clifford and all of his giant mates just to get a caramel mochaccino. They’ll eat me for breakfast!”

## Discussion questions

* Whose side would you be on? Tonya’s or Fatima’s?
* Why do you think Fatima and Charlie were scared about moving, when it was what they wanted and had been promised?
* What do you think happened next?
* Have you ever been in this situation, when you got what you wanted but then were scared to take it? What happened?
* How do you deal with feelings of fear and nerves when heading into something that is a bit (or a lot) new and different?

This story is based on Numbers 13. 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 do you think of the report that the spies brought back? Does it sound like a place you’d like to go?
* The people of God had been travelling through the desert towards this land that God had promised them. Why do you think they were scared? What does that tell you about their attitude to God?
* If you were one of the people of God, would you have sided with Caleb or the other spies? Why?
* 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?
* God had promised the people this land as their new home (v2), but the people refused to go and live there. What do you make of this? What might it mean in your own relationship with God?

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