READY TO USE PARABLE

# Sam and the sailboat success

For 30 minutes, Sam had pulled on ropes, fought with the rudder, hoisted the sail and wiped water from his face. And now the finish line was in sight. He was in the lead!

Before the race, Boris, the sailor from rival school, Harreton, had boasted that he was going to win, and win easily. He had looked at Sam, with his secondhand life jacket and worn-out trainers, and laughed.

“You’ve got no chance!” he taunted, pulling on his obviously brand-new sailing gear. “What a loser, look at the state of you.”

But now Boris was nowhere in sight. His nearest challenger was almost 100m behind him. The horn sounded as he crossed the line in first place.

On the jetty, Sam was engulfed in a hug from the head of Manchesterford Sailing Club, Shirley. “You did it!” she cried. Sam was exhausted, but he managed a smile. He had won.

In the hour that followed, there were selfies and videos and voice notes and celebratory hot chocolates. It wasn’t long before posts appeared online, filled with Sam’s beaming face. But then, the trolls started.

“He must have cheated.”

“There’s no way someone from Manchesterford could have won.”

“Look at that idiot face. You just want to punch it.”

As Sam scrolled through the comments, they got worse and worse. After the happiness of winning the race, he felt rubbish. He walked through the lakeside hotel that the sailors were all staying at, but he couldn’t find anyone from Manchesterford. He tried calling his dad, but he wasn’t picking up. He couldn’t stand it – he had to get outside.

He ran out of the doors and around the back of the hotel. He picked up a trail that led up a hill, and half-climbed, half-stumbled over the rocky path. Eventually, he got to a kind of cave. He sat down in its mouth and looked down to the hotel and the lake where he had experienced such a triumph just a few hours earlier. He started to cry.

## Discussion questions

* Have you ever experienced highs and then lows like Sam did here? What was it like?
* Why do you think people think it’s OK to post hate online?
* What do you think Sam should do next?

This story is based on 1 Kings 19. Elijah had experienced a great victory over his enemies, but now his enemies wanted to kill him. Recap what had happened in chapter 18 and then read chapter 19 to the group Compare Elijah’s story to Sam’s. You may want to chat about the story using these questions:

* How would you describe the way Elijah was feeling?
* Why do you think Elijah felt so alone?
* What do you make of how God looked after Elijah?
* What is God saying to you through Elijah’s story?
* What difference does exploring this story about Elijah make to your life?

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