READY TO USE PARABLE

# Alesha and the age-group exclusion

“What are *they* doing in here?”

Alesha pointed a manicured finger at the group of Year-7s that had just come through the door.

“Maybe they’re lost,” said Saskia, absent-mindedly scrolling on her phone.

“Maybe they think this is the way to Amarillo,” Kelly said. Well, that’s what they thought she said. She had a mouth full of crisps, so no one had a clue what she was saying.

“You’re disgusting,” said Alesha, brushing crisp crumbs off her jumper. “Anyway, they’ll get kicked out of here any…moment…now.”

She watched as the Year-7s, looking like tiny children among all the Year-10s and 11s, nervously made their way to the canteen counter.

“Look!” Alesha laughed. “They’re actually trying to get served! Janet will get rid of them. She hates little kids.”

But Janet, the ancient dinner lady behind the counter, didn’t get rid of them. She listened to what they asked for and then started loading plates up with pizza and salad. Alesha and Saskia watched open-mouthed. Kelly even stopped eating crisps.

“You have got to be kidding me,” said Saskia.

“I’m not having this,” said Alesha, getting up out of her seat. She marched over to the counter and elbowed her way past the Year-7s.

“What are you doing, Janet?” she demanded. “This place is only for Year 10 and 11. These…” she jabbed a painted nail at the nearest Year-7, “…can’t be older than five.”

“Alesha, love,” said Janet, handing a terrified Year-7 a plate of food, “did you not hear? Miss Whittaker said that anyone could go to any of the canteens.”

“What? Are you telling me that I have to eat my lunch next to a load of children?”

“Hey!” said one of the Year-7s. “I’m twelve.”

Alesha glared at the twelve-year-old in disgust. She was just about to call them something unpleasant when she noticed someone coming up behind her.

“Is everything OK here, Janet?” It was Miss Whittaker, the head.

“No, Miss,” said Alesha, turning to face the head. “These kids,” with one hand she grabbed one of them by the blazer, “shouldn’t be eating this food. It’s ours.” With the other hand she swiped a slice of pizza and jammed it in her mouth.

“Have you finished?” asked Miss Whittaker. Alesha nodded. Melted cheese was dripping from her chin. “Things change, Alesha. My office. Now.”

## Discussion questions

* If you were in Alesha’s position, how would you react to people invading your space?
* What are the pros and cons of having age group-defined spaces at school?
* Do you have a strong sense of how things should be done? If so, what happens if that is challenged – how do you react? If not, why not?

This story is based on Acts 10. Until now, the good news of what Jesus had done was limited to the Jewish people. This story shows how God wanted everyone to be part of his family – the Jewish people *and* everyone else! You may want to chat about the story using these questions:

* What would you have done if you were Cornelius and you had that vision?
* What would you have done if you were Peter and you had his vision?
* Why do you think it was such a surprise that the Holy Spirit came to people who weren’t Jewish?
* What do you think Cornelius and his household did when Peter left?
* Have you ever had an encounter with God, like Cornelius?
* Has God ever challenged what you believe about him? What was it like?

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