**Islamic story: The boy who threw stones at  trees**

There was a boy who lived in the city of Madinah, who loved the taste of dates. He would do almost anything to enjoy dates fresh from the tree.

Just outside the city was a beautiful pool, an oasis. Round the pool there were many palm trees. And on the palm trees grew the dates which the boy loved so much.

Each day the boy slipped away from his friends and went by himself to the oasis. There he took out a handful of stones which he had collected during the day. He chose a tree where he could see the dates hanging, ready to eat.

Selecting a stone with care, the boy took aim and threw it hard at the tree. With luck he would hit the tree just right, and a date would fall to the floor, ripe and juicy. Then he would choose another stone, and another, until lots of dates lay in the sand; sometimes the dates were not event ripe. He never thought about the damage he had caused to the trees. He never imagined that the trees might never grow fruit again, or that they might even die.

One day, the farmer who owned the trees, came to check the fruit. He was very surprised to see that each day there were fewer dates to be seen. Each day the trees looked less and less healthy. He decided to watch the trees for a whole day, to see what was happening.

The farmer was curious when the boy arrived to throw his stones and eat his dates. He was angry when he saw what he was doing to the beautiful trees. No wonder they did not look healthy. The farmer stepped out of his hiding place. The boy was surprised, and a little frightened. The farmer was angry, and a little confused. He did not know what to do, so he decided to take him to Prophet Muhammad (phuh).

Standing in front of The Prophet (pbuh) the boy was afraid. He was usually very well behaved and had never been in serious trouble before. But he did love fresh dates. And it was easy to knock them out of the branches with stones. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) looked at the boy. He spoke very quietly, because he was not angry.

He could tell that the boy loved dates so much that he did not think about the damage he had caused to the trees.

“Why do you throw stones at trees? Don’t you know it hurts them?” The boy said he was sorry. He had not thought about the trees. He only thought about the delicious taste of the dates.

“Why don’t you wait,” said Prophet Muhammad, (pbuh) “until the dates are really ripe and fall from the trees themselves. They will taste even better.”

The boy smiled. He could still enjoy his dates. The trees would stay healthy and would grow more dates the following year. And sure enough, that is exactly what happened. The boy was very happy to be forgiven and learned to be patient.

**Key Ideas:** Respect for nature. Respect for other people’s wealth and property. The importance of saying sorry and being forgiven.

**The creative storytelling process: step by step**

**Step 1:** Opening the story box.

The storyteller opens the box and reveals it contents, one at a time. For this story it might include the following:

* Coloured fabric to represent the field
* A plant to represent the date tree
* Stones
* Dates
* Model figures to represent the boy and the farmer

**Step 2: Setting the scene.**

A simple discussion is held to set the story scene.

* What do you think the fabric might represent?
* In what way might these stones be used in the story?
* I wonder who these people might be?

Affirm the pupils’ suggestions and then explain what each object is/represents.

**Step 3: Telling the story**

During the telling of the story the objects are used sensitively to bring the story to life, being moved into position as the story unfolds.

**To note:** The prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is represented by the movement of the storyteller’s hand rather than using a figure which would not be appropriate to do.