



Sian and the squad selection

“Right,” said Mr Awoniyi. “We need to sort out the teams for the tutor group challenge. Each tutor group has to split into two teams to compete in this year’s competition. I don’t need to remind you that one of my teams won last year, so...no pressure!”

A murmur arose in the classroom.

“This is so lame.”

“My team came bottom last year, we were so rubbish.”

“I wonder what the challenge is.”

“OK, quieten down,” said Mr Awoniyi. He waited for the hubbub to subside. “So, the challenge is to create the best way to get a message out to the whole school. It could be social media, flyers, podcasts, whatever. I’ve asked the form captains to choose the teams.”

There was a groan from some students as Priya and Pavel got up and walked to the front. Sian got that familiar knot in her stomach. She’d be chosen last, she knew it. She always was, whatever the teams were for: netball, the school’s version of *The Apprentice*, rap battles...There was one time when she thought she’d been chosen first, but it turned out the team captain was just trying to suppress a sneeze.

Priya chose first: “Kofi.”

Someone laughed. It was well-known that Kofi and Priya were seeing each other. They thought it was secret. Everyone knew.

Pavel went next: “Charlie.”

And so it went on – Freddie, Sabiya, Kelly, Jacob, Tia, Kyle, Jayesh, Saskia, Alesha...How could she be picked after Alesha? Sian thought. Alesha was barely ever in school.

Finally, she heard her name; she was the only one left. She walked over to the rest of Pavel’s team and flopped down on a chair.

Later, in the canteen, Pavel sat down next to Sian. He took off his mask and took a huge bite out of his burger.

“You know, I always wanted you on my team,” he said, his words muffled by the bread roll he was chewing.

“What? Way to show it, picking me last,” Sian didn’t look at him. She carried on poking at her macaroni cheese with a fork.

“You hide yourself too much,” replied Pavel. “We were most of the way through before I realised you were even there. You’ve got some great ideas, and I think you’ll be brilliant at getting our message out there!”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Chat about the story, what your family members liked and didn’t like. You could use some of these questions in your discussion:

- How do you think Sian felt during the process? And after?
- Are you part of any teams? What do you think you bring to those teams?
- What does it feel like to be chosen?

This story is based on Mark 3:13-19. If you’d like to add a more explicit faith element to your discussion, then read this passage together. Think about the similarities and differences between the Bible story and this one. Encourage your family to think about this Bible story in a new way.