

## TOYBOX – A STORY ABOUT FAITH TODAY (KS2)

### Concept – How belief guides people’s lives

Find out more information about the story’s background (in this instance, <http://www.toyboxcharity.org.uk/>) and similar organisations motivated by religious belief.

Explore and research other real life stories of people who have done things because of their faith.

*Toybox charity was established in 1992 by Christians wanting to take God’s love to the street children of Guatemala. The story underlines belief that God’s love is for everyone and is shown through his people.*

On Monday, Denis helped his mother stuff plastic bags inside the holes in the roof to keep the rain out before going to the bus terminal to earn a few centavos cleaning buses.

On Tuesday, Denis’s dad beat him up. Denis didn’t know why. It wasn’t the first time, either.

“Get out of this house and don’t ever come back!” his dad yelled at him. Two of his five brothers had gone already. There as only one place to go. The bus terminal. And as he ran Denis wondered why he had ever been born. His head hurt and his back throbbed where he had been hit yet he did not feel like crying. He was too numb inside.

On Wednesday Denis begged enough money to buy a coke and a hot dog. He was so tired. He had tried to sleep under a bus with some other kids but the rain and the fireworks that were exploding above the city kept him awake. So did the hunger.

On a Thursday a few weeks later some older boys dared Denis to steal some money from a shop. He knew stealing was wrong but he was scared of the boys. They were in a street gang. So

he ran, laughter and taunts following him. That night instead of sleeping underneath a bus he slept in a shop doorway.

The next day, a Friday, the shop keeper found Denis still there. He called the police who bundled him in to their car, drove to a part of the city he had never been to before and dumped him. Homeless, hungry, tired and dirty, he sat on the street staring ahead.

And that part of the city became his home. It was where he learned how to steal, to laugh at other children, to bully them and most important to Denis, hide his own feelings. He joined a gang. It was the only way to survive.

It was a Saturday. The gang did not need to go out stealing today because Jacqueline and Manuel from Toybox charity would visit them with soup and bread and fruit. The gang played football instead. Denis scored a goal. That day Manuel talked again to Denis, asked him why he was on the streets, told him that Toybox had homes for street children like himself, that there was a different way to live if he wanted.

On a Sunday a few months later Denis woke up in a place called The Tower. It was one of Toybox charity’s homes. For the first time for years he felt safe enough to cry and let go of some of the deep pain he felt inside. He had a shower, ate breakfast, went to his lessons in the school.

Denis had a new home, brought to him by people who believed they were taking God’s love to the shadowy streets of Guatemala City. It was their faith in God that kept them there. It was their faith in God that gave Denis a second chance and a new life.

Discuss what pupils think Toybox charity has achieved. Could Duncan and Jenni Dyason who founded the charity have achieved the same without a religious faith? Would pupils themselves like to do something to raise money for a charity in response to hearing the story?

Write poems, prayers or a diary entry in response to Denis’s life.

