



# Cumbria Bible Challenge

## Finding Hope Collective Worship

Props needed if possible- treasure chest-, sailing ship, tall tree, animal feeding trough, simple fishing boat, planks of wood.  
Large images/ projector—Jesus in a manger, Jesus in a boat in a storm, Jesus on the cross.

“Today we are going to be thinking about our hopes and plans for the future. Do you know what you would like to be when you grow up? “Take a couple of answers

Tell the children what you wanted to be as a child and if that is what you ended up doing.

“Our story today is a traditional folk tale about three trees that had dreams about their future.

### **The Message:**

#### **The Three trees-**

*Once upon a time, there were three trees growing side by side in the forest. They were friends and they used to spend their time chatting together. Even though they were more or less the same height and they were all growing in the same place, they were very different.*

*The first tree loved beauty.*

*The second tree loved adventure.*

*The third tree loved God.*

*One day, the trees were talking about what they wanted to be when they grew up.*

*‘When I grow up, I want to be a carved treasure chest, filled with sparkling jewels’, said the first tree.*

*‘When I grow up, I want to be a strong ship and my captain will be a great explorer who will discover new lands’, said the second tree.*

*‘I don’t want to be made into anything. I want to stay right here, growing taller every year until I am the tallest tree in the forest. Then, when people look at me, they will see that I’m pointing them to God’, said the third tree.*

*The years went by and, one day, three woodcutters arrived in the forest and cut the three trees down.*

*‘At last! My dream of becoming a treasure chest is about to come true’, shouted the first tree.*

*‘Brilliant! My dream of becoming a sailing boat is about to come true’, yelled the second tree.*

*‘Oh no! Now I won’t be able to point to God*

*’ whispered the third tree.*



The woodcutters carried the trees away and they knew they had to say goodbye to their hopes and dreams. Instead of being made into a beautiful treasure chest, the first tree was made into a simple animal feeding ox.

Rather than being made into a fine sailing ship, the second tree was made into a simple fishing boat. The third tree wasn't made into anything at all. It was just cut up into planks and left piled up in the builders yard.

Years went by, and one cold winter's night, everything changed for the first tree. A baby was born – clearly no ordinary child. Angels sang. Shepherds and kings came to visit him. Guess which animal feeding box his mother used as a cradle? When the first tree realized what had happened, its heart filled with joy.

'My dreams have come true after all. I may not have been filled with gold and jewels, but I have held the greatest treasure on Earth.'

About 30 more years passed by before everything changed for the second tree.

When it was out in the middle of the lake, a terrible storm blew up and the little tree was sure it was going to sink. Then something incredible happened. One of the men on board stood up.

'Peace! Be still!' he said to the wind and the waves and they obeyed him.

When the second tree realized what had happened, its heart filled with joy.

'My dreams have come true after all. I may not have carried a great explorer, but I have carried the maker of heaven and Earth.'

Not long after that, things changed for the third tree, too. A carpenter came and took it away, but, to the tree's dismay, he did not make it into anything beautiful or even useful. Instead, he made it into a coarse wooden cross.

'Oh no! This is the sort of cross soldiers use to put criminals to death!' thought the third tree.

It should have been the worst day of the tree's life – except for one thing. The man hanging there in agony was no ordinary criminal paying for his crime. He was Jesus – the man Christians now believe to be the Son of God – and he was dying.

When the third tree realized what was happening, its heart thrilled with joy.

'My dreams have come true after all. I may not be the tallest tree in the forest, but, from this day on, as the cross of Christ, I shall always point people towards God.'

### **Reflection:**

In the story, each tree had a plan for its future– but God had a slightly different plan. A plan that filled each of them with great joy. Christians believe that God has a plan for each of them too and they trust God with their hopes and dreams, knowing that God will have a far greater plan than they could dream up for themselves.

### **Prayer:**

Thank you God that you know our hopes and dreams. Thank you that you are a God that has plans for each of us, and that they are plans better than we could possibly dream of ourselves. Thank you for giving us Jesus as a promise that you will love us and be with us always. Amen

**Worship song:** 'May the God of hope'. Doug Horley. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d8IJpiTK9CM>