

# Growing Together

## Inspired by the Christian Faith

### CAN GOD FIX US WHEN WE FEEL BROKEN?

#### Read together

A retelling of a traditional Japanese folk tale

Far, far away in the East, in a Kingdom filled with the most beautiful things, lived a great Emperor. As winter passed gradually to spring everyone looked forward to the crowning of the Emperor's son. It would be a great day of celebrating and feasting. Beautiful treasures made in the kingdom would be on display for all to admire. In pride of place next to the prince's crown there was already an exquisite bowl made of the finest materials.

Several days before the ceremony, the Emperor woke suddenly to the sound of his servants crying in alarm. To his horror he discovered the bowl had been broken and lay in pieces. The King was desolate and, despite trying for many hours, not even his son, the prince, could console him. Everyone realised there was not enough time to make another.

The following day the Emperor awoke again to commotion.

This time the news was even worse.

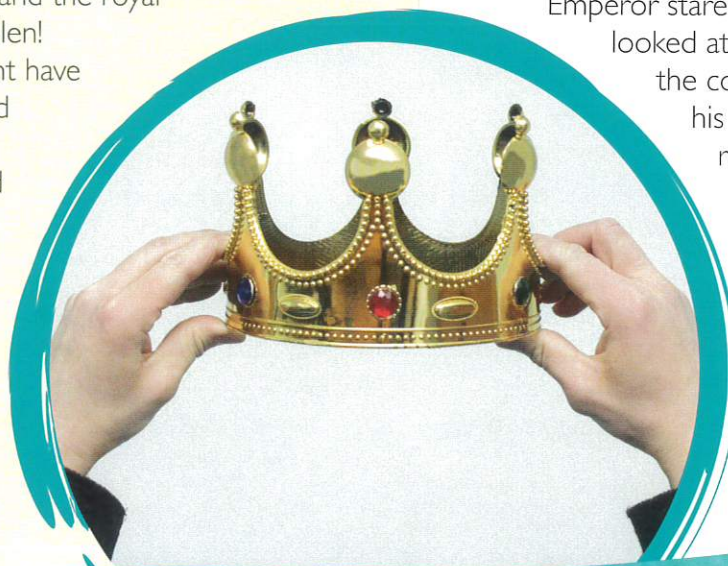
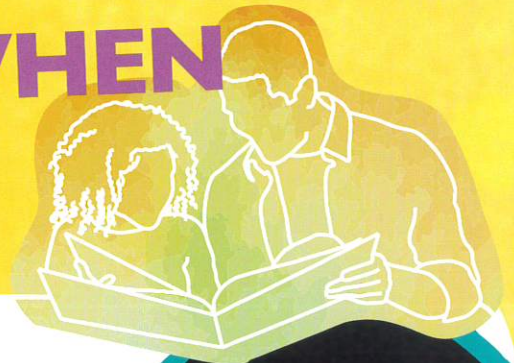
The pieces of bowl and the royal crown had been stolen! Someone, who might have been the robber, had been seen running away. They appeared to be a homeless person and dressed like many of the homeless people who visited the palace. The Emperor cared for all his people and

insisted that anyone without a home was always fed. One of the servants saw this person run towards the prince's rooms, but all the rooms were locked and there was no sign of the prince.

A long day passed with no news.

The coronation day dawned, and the downhearted Emperor awoke to servants shouting yet again. As he pushed through the crowd to the cabinet where the crown and bowl had once been, he couldn't believe his eyes. There was the crown, but it was simpler and smaller than it had been, attractive and strong in its simplicity. Next to it, the bowl had been repaired, every crack had been filled with a strand of gold,

making it even more beautiful than before. The Emperor stared in amazement and then looked at his son, the prince. From the corner of his eye he noticed his son's hands, they looked rough like a workman's hands. Hands that could melt down a crown and mend a broken bowl with gold. The old man smiled to himself, his son was going to be a wonderful Emperor.



## Did you know



There's a special artistic skill in Japan called Kintsugi. Pots and crockery are mended using a special golden glue that can make the pots even more beautiful than they were at first.

Pottery is an ancient craft form which began in the oldest part of the stone age (Palaeolithic era) when people first made tools from stone. The oldest example found is from Eastern Europe, dating to 25,000 years ago or earlier

What things around your house, school or church are made from clay?



## Create & make



Take something ordinary and make it beautiful. If you've nothing to mend, you could paint pebbles or make kintsugi pictures.

## Family Fun



Make a jigsaw together – look at how well the pieces fit together.

## Idea for Pre-schoolers



Build a tower out of bricks, then have fun knocking it down! Talk about and explore how it's possible to mend it and build it again differently.

## Courageous Advocacy



Bravely making the world better

In the story the Emperor insisted that anyone without a home was fed. Jesus said whenever we help people, we help him too (Matthew 25:31-40). Find out how you can help a local charity that supports homeless people, for example Emmaus or Gloucester City Mission.

## Prayer space ideas



You can find stories about pots and jars in the Bible (Jeremiah 18:2-4, Isaiah 64:8, 2 Corinthians 4:7). Print off a picture of a kintsugi vase and take it into a quiet comfortable space.

As you look at it, use the following questions to help you to reflect...

I wonder who took the time and trouble to mend it...

I wonder how it feels to have taken something broken and to make it more beautiful?

Does it remind you of anything or anyone?

Follow the broken lines with your finger and think about God as the golden glue in your life...



## Web Links & Extended Ideas



Look on the Diocese of Gloucester's website to find out more about kintsugi and spirituality. Find a video of how kintsugi is done, you may also find video clips of songs on the theme of God being the potter and his people being the clay that you could watch together.

