

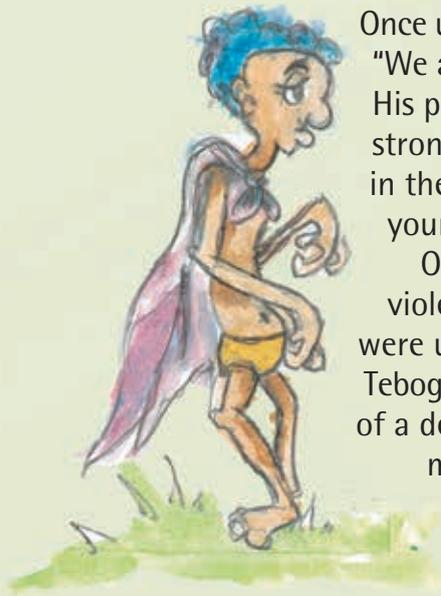
# The earthquake

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*Theme: Not giving up when a task feels impossible, but tackling it one step at a time*

*Appropriate age group: 8 years and older*



Once upon a time there lived a young man named Tebogo, which means "We are thankful" in seTswana, one of the languages of South Africa. His parents were very happy when he was born! He grew up to be strong, kind and handsome. He did many good things for the people in the village where he lived. The people liked him and many of the young children looked up to him and wanted to be just like him.

One day darkness came over the village at noon. The earth shook violently and tore open. People's huts were knocked down and trees were uprooted. Suddenly a huge crack opened in the earth where Tebogo was standing and he fell into it. He found himself at the bottom of a deep dark hole. He was trapped under rocks and there was so much dust he could hardly breathe. He closed his eyes, hoping to make the mess and the chaos disappear – but when he opened his eyes he was still trapped. He lay there for a long time in a state of shock.

Tebogo thought: "I'm a strong man with powerful muscles – surely I can force my way out of this hole." For hours he pushed and shoved, rested a little, then shoved and pushed some more, but the rocks above him barely moved. He ended up exhausted and his arms and legs were bleeding. He lay there thinking: "I am strong but not strong enough to get out of here. I know I'll never see the sunlight again. I will die here."

While Tebogo was lying there waiting for death, he remembered the wise woman from his village and a story she once told him. The moral of the story was: "It's not the physical strength of a man that can move a mountain but the strength of his soul which knows to move the mountain one stone at a time." Tebogo always used his muscles



to get out of difficult situations so when he first heard the story, he thought the woman was mad.

Now, lying deep in the earth, he suddenly understood the message of the story. It was no good trying to move all the rocks at the same time as he'd been doing. No man was strong enough for that task but what if he tackled one rock at a time? And so, Tebogo started using all his energy to move one rock at a time. One rock at a time, on and on he went. Every time he felt he couldn't carry on, he remembered the words of the wise woman.



It took many hours of hard labour before Tebogo saw the sunlight high above his head. He still had many rocks to move, one at a time, but he knew his soul had won this battle. He would live to see the sky again.



? Possible discussion points:

*What are some of the crises that communities and families deal with?*

*What strategies have you seen families and communities use to get through difficult times?*