

March 15<sup>th</sup>

### Memory verse

**There is no God like thee**, in heaven above or on earth beneath. I Kings 8:23

These are the words of Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived,<sup>1</sup> and they are worth learning. Very small children can learn the words in bold and understand that “thee” is like the word “you” but only means one person, never more than one.

### Something to read from history<sup>2</sup>

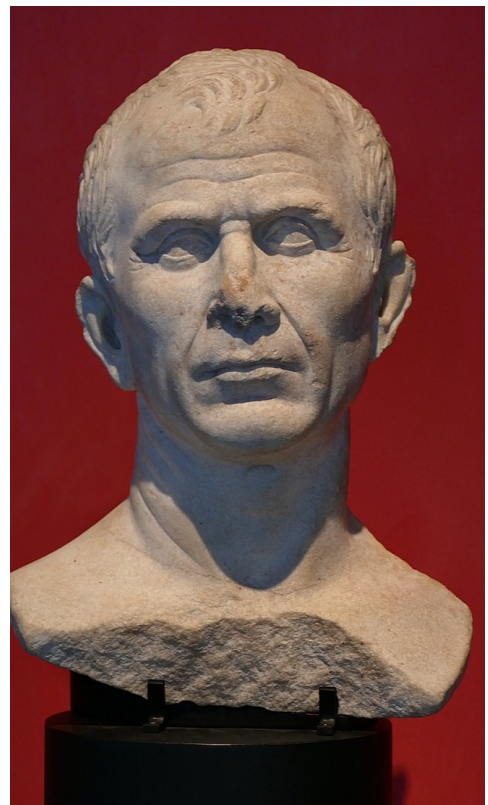
Today is the Ides of March, according to the calendar of the ancient Romans. In Roman times the days of the month were not just numbered from 1 to the end. Instead there were three fixed points in the month called the *Nones*, the *Ides* and the *Calends*. The Ides was the 13<sup>th</sup> day in most months but in **March** May, July and October the Ides fell on the **15<sup>th</sup>** day. The Nones fell nine days (inclusive) before the Ides. The *Calends* was the first day of the next month. The Roman calendar months were originally determined by the moon and the Ides was the day when the full moon occurred. Since March was the first month of the year, the Ides of March was originally the first full moon of the new year. The Romans counted backwards inclusively from the next *Calends*, *Ides*, or *Nones*. For example, the 11th of March would be known as “Five Ides”, because it is the fifth day *before* the Ides of March. The Romans originally had only 10 months, *Martius*, *Aprilis*, *Maius*, *Junius*, *Quintilis*, *Sextilis*, *September*, *October*, *November*, and *December*, and their year was 304 days. The remaining 61 days, which fell in midwinter seem to have been just ignored and had no month assigned to them. The last six month names were taken from the words for numbers. Can you guess what they are? <sup>3</sup>

### Something to act and some lines to learn

“Beware the Ides of March”

It was on the Ides, **15<sup>th</sup> of March** 44 BC, that Julius Caesar was assassinated. Julius Caesar was suspected of wanting to become a king. This was an idea that revolted the republican Romans. Some sixty Romans were involved in the plot to kill him, including Decius, Cassius and Brutus. They had to act at once as Caesar was about to leave to fight a war in the East. They wanted to kill him in the Senate because that would make their action look rather public spirited and not like a private act of vengeance.

The assassination did not prevent the republic from rule by an individual. Mark Anthony gave an emotional speech at Caesar's funeral and his wife Fulvia stirred up riots. Rome filled with soldiers who were worried that they would lose the lands and money promised to them by Caesar. The assassins tried to reassure them but Caesar's nephew and heir, Mark Anthony, arrived on the scene. He rallied the soldiers and paid them well. He defeated the forces of Brutus, Cassius and Decius and went on later to become Augustus Caesar, the first Emperor of Rome.



The speech that Shakespeare put into the mouth of Mark Anthony is one of the most famous pieces of English literature and is well worth learning:

<sup>1</sup> Apart from the Lord Jesus Christ himself, of course.

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from Owen, Evan, *What Happened Today* Volume 1, available on the *Mothers' Companion* Flashdrive. <https://motherscompanion.weebly.com>.

<sup>3</sup> Five, six, seven, eight, nine, and ten.

Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears!  
I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.  
The evil that men do lives after them,  
The good is oft interred with their bones;  
So let it be with Caesar. The noble Brutus  
Hath told you Caesar was ambitious;  
If it were so, it was a grievous fault,  
And grievously hath Caesar answer'd it.  
Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest –  
(For Brutus is an honourable man;  
So are they all, all honourable men)  
Come I to speak in Caesar's funeral.  
He was my friend, faithful and just to me;  
But Brutus says he was ambitious,  
And Brutus is an honourable man.  
He hath brought many captives home to Rome,  
Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill.  
Did this in Caesar seem ambitious?  
When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept;  
Ambition should be made of sterner stuff:  
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious,  
And Brutus is an honourable man.  
You all did see that on the Lupercal  
I thrice presented him a kingly crown,  
Which he did thrice refuse: was this ambition?  
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious,  
And sure he is an honourable man.  
I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke,  
But here I am to speak what I do know.  
You all did love him once, not without cause;  
What cause withholds you then to mourn for him?  
O judgement, thou art fled to brutish beasts,  
And men have lost their reason. Bear with me;  
My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar,  
And I must pause till it come back to me.<sup>4</sup>

Also included in today's Optional Resources Files is the assassination scene itself from the play for you to act out yourselves.

#### Something to sing

There has been a bridge over the Thames in or near the spot where the present London Bridge stands since Roman times. Old London Bridge dated right back to 1209 and was crowded with buildings. By Victorian times this bridge had undergone many changes, repairs and alterations. It was an obstruction to shipping and in need of



<sup>4</sup> From The Children's Shakespeare which can be found on the Mothers' Companion Flashdrive available here: <https://motherscompanion.weebly.com>

constant and expensive repairs. Work on a new bridge began on **15<sup>th</sup> March** 1824 after a competition for its design had been won by a Scottish engineer John Rennie (1761-1821). Rennie had already designed bridges across the Thames at Southwark and Vauxhall as well as Waterloo Bridge. He died before work began on the new London Bridge but the project was carried out by his sons. The old bridge remained until the new one was opened and was then demolished. You can see Rennie's bridge alongside the remains of the old bridge (which is being demolished) in the picture<sup>5</sup> above.



Then Rennie's bridge in its turn began to sink (very slowly!) and need repair. It was replaced by the present bridge in 1972. But the Rennie bridge is still standing, not over the Thames, but in Arizona, USA! It was carefully transported and re-erected as a tourist attraction and now spans a lake.

**LONDON BRIDGE**

Lon - don Bridge is bro - ken down, Dance o - ver my La - dye Lea ;

Lon - don Bridge is bro - ken down : With a gay la - - dye....

2 How shall we build it up again ?  
Dance over my Ladye Lea ;  
How shall we build it up again ?  
With a gay ladye.

3 Silver and gold will be stole away,  
Dance over my Ladye Lea ;  
Silver and gold will be stole away :  
With a gay ladye.

4 Iron and steel will bend and bow,  
Dance over my Ladye Lea ;

Iron and steel will bend and bow :  
With a gay ladye.

5 Wood and clay will wash away,  
Dance over my Ladye Lea ;  
Wood and clay will wash away :  
With a gay ladye.

6 Build it up with stone so strong,  
Dance over my Ladye Lea ;  
Huzza ! 'twill last for ages long.  
With a gay ladye.

Above is a version of the old nursery rhyme “London Bridge is Falling Down” and you can see what Rennie's bridge was like in the illustrations.<sup>6</sup> Old Father Thames and Britannia are looking on and you can just see St. Paul's in the background The workmen are all busy building in the various materials and the thief is quietly removing the silver and gold!

This song is great fun for family singing and a more common version is included in the Optional Resources files for today. Everyone should take turns at making up something improbable with which to build up the bridge (“build it up with bread and cheese...”) with the next person suggesting what disadvantages would make it unsuitable (“bread and cheese would be eaten up...)! When everyone has had their turn you can round it off with the final verse as printed.

### Something to make

This is an excellent opportunity to get out your Lego or other construction toys and build a bridge. You can test you bridge to see how strong it is. If you have a set of kitchen scale weights you can measure in grams and kilograms exactly how much the bridge will take before it collapses. If you do not have weights you can measure using toy wooden blocks or Lego bricks. So long as the measuring bricks are all the same weight you can describe the strength of you bridge design in terms of how many bricks-worth of load it will carry. For more information on making your own bridge and testing it see the lesson for April 9<sup>th</sup>.

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6 From the *Baby's Bouquet* available on the Mothers' Companion Flashdrive. <https://motherscompanion.weebly.com>.