



# ‘I am the word

I'm standing behind a stage in one of Rio's most dangerous slums. The murder rate here rivals a war zone, and I can hear the crowd of 500 people in front of the curtain screaming and shouting my name. My dad is on stage introducing me. I close my eyes. It's wilder than a Bieber concert out there. I'm ready. I've rehearsed for this. Dad is whipping the crowd into a frenzy. It's time. Dad yells my name and I run onto the stage gripping my mic... And I preach.

My name is Ana, I'm 16, and I am God's voice on earth. I am the most famous preacher in Brazil and I travel the world spreading God's word. People travel for miles to hear me speak. I've preached to crowds of 20,000 people before. They raise their hands, close their eyes, shout, cry and hug each other. Sometimes they collapse on the floor, overwhelmed by the power of my prayers.

## She's mine

It all started when I was three years old. You probably don't remember being three, but I do, because that's when I first started talking to God. I had a virus and the doctors had given me just ten days to live. I was in *agony*. I can actually still remember the pain. My dad cuddled me on the tenth day, as he prayed and waited for me to die. That was the moment when God spoke to him. He heard a voice, which said: "Why are you asking me to save *your* daughter when she's *mine*?" He knew it was God, and so he apologised out loud for being selfish. As soon as he did, I opened my eyes and said, "I'm hungry, Dad," and that was that. God saved me. I was *His*.

After that, I started talking to God properly. I realised He was telling me

Ana Carolina Dias, 16, from Rio in Brazil, tells us how she:

- » Has conversations with God
- » Preaches to crowds of 20,000 weeping fans
- » Visits murderers and rapists in prison

"I'm just a normal girl who speaks to God"



# of God'

things so I could pass them onto other people. I know it sounds strange as I was only three, but I just started preaching. It was *easy*. I was too young to realise that it was unusual. It just seemed natural. And people *listened* to me.

I hear Him like I hear anyone else – we talk out loud to each other, or I'll hear His voice in my head. It's a two-way conversation. I ask Him things and He answers. We're in constant contact, but *always* on His terms. He talks to me when *He* wants to. He'll come to me in dreams, or I'll be praying and I'll hear His voice.

I've been on TV and radio all over the world, so I get recognised a lot, which I like. People tell me I've changed their lives – I'm *really* helping people. Once, when I was in a very violent slum, a drug dealer came up to me and said he respected what I do, as his family are religious. It made me feel amazing.

But it's a *huge* responsibility, too. I get nervous before a show, with all of these people who have turned up to hear God. They're not there to listen to *me*, it's not like I can just make stuff up. What if I don't say what He wants me to? What if I get it wrong? He's entrusted me to get it right, and that's scary.

I often have to take time off school when I'm travelling, but the teachers are fine with it. Everyone at school knows what I do – they think it's cool. I've never

been bullied because of it. I have lots of friends, but they're not all religious. Whether they are or not doesn't bother me, but if they are, sometimes they'll come along to listen to me preach and that's always great.

I don't have time for hobbies. If I'm not preaching, I'm studying. I don't play sports or go to movies, but I find what I do really fun. I don't have a boyfriend, but I would like to get married and have

a family. I'm just a normal girl who sometimes speaks to God.

I'm not interested in fashion because I'm not allowed to be – no girls who belong to my church are. We all have to keep our hair long and wear skirts below the knees. I can't wear trousers. We dress how

God wants us to: modestly and decently. Fashion changes so much, it actually takes the pressure off me not having to worry about it.

## Jailhouse rock

Rio is a dangerous city to live in. There's a big problem with drugs. But one of my favourite things is speaking to murderers and drug addicts, on the streets or in jails. It's amazing seeing these grown men crying when they hear me speak. In the prisons, I'll go into a special room and the men are all uncuffed, they sit in rows and they pray with me. Some of them end up



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kneeling on the floor, with their heads touching the ground while I walk among them, still preaching. I touch their heads and hold their hands. Some of them have killed lots of people, but they're just sad and humble in front of me. They're really lonely and I know I'm helping. I don't care what they've done – it's not my place to judge, it's God's.

I don't get frightened, because I'm not scared of dying. Even when I'm walking down dark streets surrounded by violent people in the most dangerous slum in Rio, I'm not afraid. If someone wants to hurt me or shoot me, it's OK because it's God's decision. I'll be happy to die, as I'll be going to Him. I'm looking forward to death, in a way. It'll be incredible.

I get *millions* of emails asking for help. Just today, I got an email from a lady saying her daughter is dying of cancer. While normally that would be depressing, I'm quite happy about it because if a child dies, it's going to God. Some people think I can perform miracles. I can't – only God can.

People call me a prophet... I am the word of God. I am his instrument on earth. I want to carry on talking to God forever, but that's up to Him.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF ANA'S AMAZING STORY? EMAIL US NOW AT [SUGARREADERS@SugarScape.com](mailto:SUGARREADERS@SugarScape.com)