

KIDS PACK

Covenant Renewal 2021



Love God, Love Others

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Notes for Leaders

Welcome to the Kids Pack for Covenant Renewal 2021!

In this pack you will find a story and activity ideas for Covenant Renewal. However, we understand that not all resources work for all groups of children; please, feel free to pick and choose from this pack or use your own curriculum and ideas.

Theme

This year's theme - *Love God, Love Others* – is based on Matthew 22:37-39:

Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'

The ideas in this pack explore that passage through the lens of service, with the story focussing on the 'Light in Darkest England' matches produced by The Salvation Army in the late 1800's.

We want our children to know that as we love God, He calls on us to share His love by loving others. We aren't called to love others because they need help, look different, or are having a hard time, but because God loves them.

Before you begin

We would encourage your team to spend a few minutes praying in your space before the service or programme begins. You could also extend the invitation to your senior leadership team and other members of your corps / centre. If you have time it would be great to pray for each child by name and ask that God speak to them.

Story

For this story you will need a match or an image of a match. **If you use a real match, please ensure the box and match are stored securely before, after and during the storytelling.**

Script

"Did you know that this match is a love story?"

It sounds impossible, doesn't it?

How can a match be a love story?

This story began over a hundred years ago in Darkest England, where winters were bitterly cold, and the cities were full of stone and smoke.

In the dark of the early morning before the sun had risen, the people God loved shuffled through the dark streets, coats and scarves pulled close against the cold. When the factory whistle blew, they hunched over vats of glowing yellow phosphorus dipping thin pieces of wood to make matches.

The people God loved dipped matches hour after hour, day after day. The yellow phosphorus splashed on their fingers, their clothes, and their hair.

And it made them sick.

The people God loved didn't notice it at first, but after a while they got toothache. A little while later their faces started to swell. Soon it was too painful to even eat!

The people God loved were very, very sick.

But matches had to be made! The factories couldn't shut down! Matches were needed by every person in every city and every town!

God loved His people, He cried when they suffered. This was not the life He wanted for them. Matches were not more important than the people He loved.

God built an army and appointed a general. They walked the stony, smoky streets of the cold, dark cities. They saw the people God loved and wanted to help.

No, that's not right. They didn't just want to help.

They loved the people God loved. Not because they were sick. Not because they needed help. And not because they were special. The army loved the people God loved *because God loved them!*

The army found a new way to make matches. They didn't use yellow phosphorus that glowed and made people sick. They used red phosphorus which was safer instead.

The army took out ads in the newspapers and told every person they found. Don't buy the old matches! We have safety matches now!

The army didn't make the people God loved come to work before the sun rose. They didn't make the people God loved work hour after hour, day after day.

The army gave the people God loved a better life. The army gave the people they loved a better life.

Do you see the red top on this match?

This match is made with red phosphorus. It's the same type of match that the army invented over a hundred years ago.

It's a safety match.

It's a love story."

Unpacking the Story

- I wonder what part of the story you like the most?
- I wonder what part of the story is the most important?
- I wonder if there is any part we can leave out and still have all the story we need?
- I wonder where you are in this story or what part of this story is about you?

Covenant Renewal Cards

"Every day we have chances to love God and love the people around us. In a moment you will be given one of these bookmarks [show the commitment card]. It says 'Love God, Love Others'.

Some of you have already said Love God - maybe when you enrolled as a Junior Soldier, at Kids Camp, or here at Kid's church, or at home with your family. When you take a bookmark, it's a special reminder of your relationship with God.

Some of you have heard God asking you to love Him for the first time today! That's so exciting – we want to help you invite God into your heart today. You can ask A leader to pray with you and sign your card to say, 'Yes God, I want to love you and love all the people you love too!'

Maybe you're not sure you've heard God, or you're not sure yet if you love Him just yet. That's okay too. Take a bookmark and keep it. You might like to think about listening to God and saying yes to Him. You might like to pray about it or talk to a leader or your parents about it.

So let's pray. And then you can head to your small group, and have a time listening and talking to God."

Pray with the children –ask them to pray as well if they want to.

Sharing activity

Story sharing is an effective discipleship tool. This activity asks the children to share a moment of their faith journey in 2-3 sentences (or picture). You may choose to collect the stories to look back on or share with the wider church.

You will need:

- Pens or pencils
- Felts or crayons
- 10cm x 15cm pieces of card

Activity

Give your group 5 minutes to write 2-3 sentences or draw a picture about the last time they felt loved. Ask them to use descriptive words and focus on what they felt at that moment. In the bottom corner ask them to sign their first name and their age.

When the group is ready, explain that in a moment you'll ask someone to share their story and when they finish you'd like the group to wait in silence for a few seconds, and then the person who finished sharing can invite someone to share. Ask them to wait until everyone has shared to comment on each other's stories.

Let the children know they are welcome to pass on sharing their story.

After everyone has had the opportunity to share their story let them discuss the stories and ask questions.

You can leave this activity open ended.

Love card craft

You will need:

- Watercolours and Brush
- Construction Paper
- Scissors
- Cut outs of the letters L,O,V,E
- Glue
- Pens / pencils / crayons

On a piece of white construction paper or card stock ask the children to cover it with paint using fingers or brush. Leaving white is fine and then allow to dry.

Trace letters on the dry painted paper.

Cut out letters and allow child to put glue on the back of each letter. Then on a piece of folded construction paper stack letters in a square configuration.

The children can cut the bottom portion of construction paper so it is more of a square card than rectangular. Allow to dry.

Last, ask the children to write a kind message to someone (a neighbour, someone at church, or even a stranger) and give the card to them.

Serving activities

Serving others is one way that we show people that we love them. Not because they are special, or need our help, or because “it’s the right thing to do”, but because God calls us to share the love we receive from Him.

This service is a great time to engage your kids in a service project. We have provided a few simple ideas:

- Tinned food drive
- Plant seedlings in trays to donate to local community gardens
- Hand-made welcome cards for new / visiting families at your corps or centre

