

Junior Soldiers

Unit 5 : Lesson 4



Only One Church!

PURPOSE : For children to explore and understand that as followers of Jesus we are part of a larger church body; to help the children develop an affirming response to the difference in denominational practices, which leads to a healthy respect for these differences.

'Some of us are Jews, and others are Gentiles. Some of us are slaves, and others are free. But God's Spirit baptized each of us and made us part of the body of Christ. Now we each drink from that same Spirit.'

1 Corinthians 12:13(CEV)

Consider & Prepare

Read:

1 Corinthians 12:1–31 (CEV)

Psalms 133 (CEV)

God calls his church his 'body' or 'family' and we are called to be part of his body (1 Corinthians 12:27).

It's important that Junior Soldiers understand that as Christians they are part of something far larger than just The Salvation Army—as big as it is! Somewhere in the mix of denominations, independent churches, para-church bodies, church councils, ecumenical bodies and Christian welfare agencies...is The Salvation Army.

We should always be wary that someone called William Booth didn't just wake up one day and say, 'I think I'll start a church,' The Salvation Army grew out of Booth's Methodist background, Methodism was an off-shoot of the Anglican Church and the Anglicans were part of the Protestant Reformation that came from Catholicism. We are part of the family of God and should encourage and pray for our Christian brothers and sisters when the opportunity arises.

What you will need:

For 'Connecting In'

- Butchers paper or white board and appropriate markers
- Props for sharing during the family celebrations activity
- Purchase a range of cracker biscuits or a box of Favourites chocolates

For 'The Main Thing'

- A computer with internet connection and a projector

- Print out pictures of different church buildings/altars/crosses/church under a tree/ different country/different minister robes

For 'Tying In'

- Print song sheets for 'Jesus Loves Me' in English and Spanish
- Print at least four copies of the liturgical prayer, 'Prayers of the Faithful'
- Organise a guest speaker from another local congregation
- Organise for your group to visit another local congregation and work together on a practical service project for that congregation.

For 'Home & Beyond'

- Print off the Home & Beyond cards for each child.



Connecting In

Family Celebrations...

We all share experiences/events/traditions in life that may differ from family to family – birthdays, Christmas, holidays.

Choose one of these events and explore with the children the amount of different ways that people celebrate during these times. You might like to brainstorm and write these up on a whiteboard/butchers paper for everyone to see. You might also like to bring a couple of props to help share what you and your family like to do as they celebrate during one of these occasions.

Some examples you might like to highlight with the children:

Christmas – some families open presents on Christmas Eve, some do it first thing Christmas morning and others wait to unwrap their presents till after going to church.

Birthdays – some people have friends over for a party while others have a family dinner

(If you choose to explore what families do at birthdays then you might like to play a game of pass the parcel. At each stop, the child could remove the paper and take a turn sharing a different way birthdays are celebrated in their family).

Holidays – some families have a special place that they go to every year whereas others like to try out a new location *(camping, at home, a relative's house, overseas)*

Link: We have just been exploring how your family celebrates at Christmas/birthdays or traditions around taking holidays.

→ What were some of the things we have in common?

→ What were some of the things that stood out as being different?

Even though there might be some things that we do differently around these times, we are all part of families that are celebrating birthdays/Christmas or choosing what we do on our holidays. We are all the same but different! There is no right or wrong way—there are just things that we do that are similar to others and things that we do that are different.

Today we are going to look at the part of the church known as The Salvation Army. We are only one type of church in the world. We are going to explore how The Salvation Army fits into the whole worldwide Church.



The same but different...

For this activity you will need a range of different packets of rice crackers, e.g. different brands as well as a range of different flavours *(plain, salt and vinegar, wasabi, seaweed, barbecue)* or you might like to use a box of Favourites *(a big enough box to get a good variety of chocolates).*

Crackers

- Place random crackers on one plate
- Ask the children to take a couple of crackers each and taste
- What did they notice about the crackers?

- Did all the crackers look the same?
- Did they all taste the same?
- Do different tastes or looks mean that they are not all crackers? Why/why not?

Chocolates

- What is your favourite chocolate from the box? Why?
- Do you like all of them? Why/Why not?
- What are the things that are the same or similar for the chocolates?
- What are the things that are different for the chocolates?
- Just because they might look or taste different does that mean that they are not a chocolate?
- Does that mean they are not a Favourites chocolate? Why/why not?



Link: Today we have been looking at crackers/chocolates and the things that are the same or similar and the things that are different about them. We have identified that even though they might look or taste different, they are still either a cracker or a chocolate. Even if there was a flavour, colour or shape that you did not like, it does not take away from the fact that it is still either a cracker or a chocolate.

Today we are going to look at The Salvation Army; we are all part of The Salvation Army church but also part of the world-wide Christian Church. The Salvation Army is what's called a 'denomination', this word means that there are many individual Salvation Army churches but they are all related in what they teach and preach and how they 'do' church. They are one organization with many locations.

The Main Thing

Brainstorming...

All churches and followers of Christ across the world are a part of the one Church. I wonder what sorts of churches you know of that are different from the ones you attend. I wonder if there are other ways of worshipping God that you have seen or been a part of.

Brainstorm together about churches or ways of worship that the children might know about or have experienced. What might be some of the things that are the same between The Salvation Army and the other denominations/churches that you have spoken about? What are some of the things that stand out as being different?

(Below are two options that you might like to choose from to help the children to explore a variety of worship from other settings.)

Worship options 1 ...

You will need: links for the worship examples below, access to the internet, a computer and depending on the size of your group you might like to use a projector or sit around the computer to view the clips.

Share with the children some different worship from around the world using the clips below:

- Cowboy church - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5A1GCbtUV9Y>
- African Worship - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_chTmTJFKns
- Chinese House Church - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ctEjw425Yps>
- Hillsong Church - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D1MPv9pt1vc>
- Salvation Army open air meeting - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VxARw-7Zgxc&feature=related>
- Salvation Army worship service - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_cYZ4_yND9Q
- You might also like to find some other appropriate clips show other types of Christian worship.

As you explore some of these clips keep in mind and ask along the way the questions from above about the things that are similar but also the things that stand out as being different.

Worship options 2 ...

You will need: Printout of photos to show and talk about the following, a sample is included at the end of this lesson.

Use pictures of different church buildings/altars/crosses/church under a tree/different country/different minister robes etc.

Look up 1 Corinthians 12:12–31 (CEV) and read it together. This is a fairly large chunk of scripture so it would be good to share it around a number of readers.

As you explore some of the images showing different types of worship/churches/items etc. keep in mind and ask along the way the questions from above about the things that are similar but also the things that stand out as being different.



Exploring the Bible...

Explore the following scripture with the children to highlight what God has to say about His Church. You might like to have a competition to see who can be the first to find the scripture before you read it together. Depending on the number of children you have you might like to break into smaller groups to explore this section.

Read Ephesians 4:4–6

'All of you are part of the same body. There is only one Spirit of God, just as you were given one hope when you were chosen to be God's people.' CEV

Questions to explore

- How many bodies of Christ are there? (*There is only one church and although there is variety in the ways church is expressed, we are all part of the same body of Christ*)

Read 1 Corinthians 12:27

'Together you are the body of Christ. Each of you is a part of the body.' CEV

Questions to explore

- Do we (*as part of our church*) make up the body on our own? (*No we are only one part of the whole.*)
- Who is a part of the body of Christ? (*All of the churches that we have explored today are a part of the Body of Christ—His Church.*)
- What happens when we are not together (*All parts of the body of Christ are to work together. Resolving conflict is a necessary part of living as the body of Christ.*)

Read 1 Corinthians 12:18

'But God has put all parts of our body together in the ways he has decided is best.'

Questions to explore

- I wonder who has decided what is best for each expression of the body of Christ. (*Every church is important and in its correct place in the body.*)

Read 1 Corinthians 12: 22

'In fact, we cannot get along without the parts of the body that seem to be the weakest.'

Questions to explore:

- Do we need the parts of the body of Christ that seem to be weak?
- How is the body of Christ impacted with even (*what we think of*) as weak parts missing? (*We cannot get along; our capacity to move together is hindered. Even if we think another church is not as important, we need to realise that they are important and we need them.*)

Thought to share: Although we are different we should not feel threatened by these differences but celebrate the diversity that God has made in His Church.

Who likes McDonald's? (*hands up*) Who likes KFC? Pizza? Hungry Jacks? Subway? Fish and chips? Imagine if all of these fast food options disappeared except pizza. It might be nice for awhile, but soon you'd be sick of pizza and you'd want something different.

Diversity is nice. Having options is nice. Variety is nice. That way, if you want pizza, you can get it, but if I prefer Subway, I can get that. So it's nice that there are many different churches and different ways of worshipping God and different ways of learning how to be a good follower of God.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:25-26 together

'He did this to make all parts of the body work together smoothly, with each part caring about the others. If one part of our body hurts, we hurt all over. If one part of our body is honoured, the whole will be happy.'



Tying In

Experiencing some differences...

We have talked about lots of things that are similar and lots of things that are different today. We have identified that even though things might look different or people might do things differently, that they are still good if they are worshipping God. It is important that we value and respect the things that are different about other churches and celebrate the fact that such a wide variety of people get to connect with and worship God.

Earlier in the lesson when we looked at the different ways people celebrate special events, we saw how one event can have so many different expressions. It can be easy to say something is not good because we are not familiar with it or don't know too much about it or just because it is different. It is important, though, to remember that God wants His church to love each other even though we might be different; He wants us to remember that we are only one part of the 'whole' Church helping different people to connect with and worship God.

Below are some options for you and the children to experience something different in relation to worshipping God. You might like to choose one or have a go at all of them.

Option 1: Song

Have a go at singing together 'Jesus Loves Me' in English and in Spanish, you might even like to come up with some cool actions too. (The song sheet is attached at the end of the lesson.)

It's okay for this to not be quite right and a bit awkward, but have a go. This is a song that many people sing around the world and by having a go we stand with our fellow believers around the world.

Ask the children:

- How did you feel when singing in English?
- How did you feel singing in Spanish?
- Maybe we could pray for those who worship God in Spanish.



Option 2: Quiet church

In some countries people are not allowed to be seen to be worshipping God, it is illegal and can come with great punishment. People who love God still gather to worship but need to do this quietly to avoid raising alarm with the authorities who seek to stop this from happening.

Read a Bible verse or sing a song quietly. (*You might like to get the children to choose their favourite Bible verse to share or a favourite song that you can sing together.*)

Ask the children:

- How did you feel to be worshipping God in a very quiet way?
- I wonder how you would go if this is the way that you had to worship God all the time.
- Maybe we could pray for those who have to be very quiet about their faith.

Option 3: Liturgy

You will need some copies of the liturgy prayer attached at the end of the lesson for this activity.

The word 'liturgy' refers to a very ordered, planned way of doing church. Often it means you read out prayers (rather than make them up on the spot) and that the whole church service is highly structured—nothing happens that is spontaneous or unplanned.

Choose four children from the group to read a section of the prayer each (or you could divide your group up into four groups and read together) and all of them are to read the 'all' part together after each section.

Read through the liturgical prayer ('prayers of the faithful')

Ask the children:

- How did you feel reading a prayer rather than just praying whatever you feel?
- I wonder how you would go if this is the way that you had to pray all the time? Perhaps it might be something that would be helpful for you in connecting with God.
- Maybe we could pray for those who worship God using liturgy.

Option 4: Guest Visitor

Have someone visit from a local congregation to give your children a blessing and share how they might worship God, especially sharing some of the things that they might do differently. (*It might be nice to have someone who has some form of special dress that they can explain to the children or perhaps if they can bring some props that would be good too. You may need to discuss with them in advance what sort of topics to cover—the last thing you need is someone telling your children they're not even Christians because they haven't been baptised!*)

Read together Psalm 133 (CEV) and explain to the children that when we acknowledge our place in the body of Christ we find unity and that this is blessed by God.

Extra idea: To give children another opportunity to bless a different part of the Christian church you might like to organise a visit to another church congregation in your town/city and do something practical for them or together with a group from there: for example weed their gardens, pray for them, and/or clean their worship area.

Home & Beyond

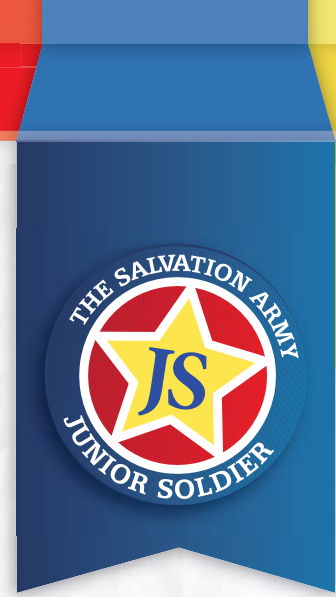
Print off the 'Home & Beyond' cards attached. The children might like to keep these in their journals or notebook where they could write or stick the challenges, reflect, answer questions or complete activities each week.

I thank God for you...

'Every time I think of you, I thank my God. And whenever I mention you in my prayers, it makes me happy. This is because you have taken part with me in spreading the good news from the first day you heard about it. God is the one who began this good work in you, and I am certain that he won't stop before it is complete on the day that Christ Jesus returns.'

Philippians 1:3–6 (CEV)

- Ask your parents/prayer pal/Big Bud what variety of churches they have attended before.
- Read together Philippians 1:3–6
- Pray God's blessing for someone you know who attends another church and write to them to let them know you've prayed for them to encourage them.



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Church of the Holy Spirit in Nairobi, Kenya



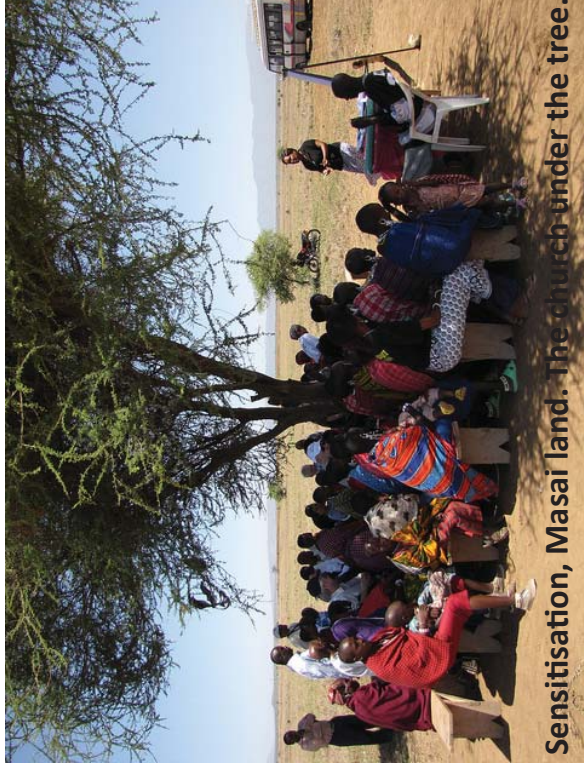
Rila-monastery-church-cross



St Peters Church - Cross in graveyard



North Point Community Church in Georgia, USA



Sensitisation, Masai land. The church under the tree.



Russian Priest vestments



Wells Cathedral in Somerset, England



Rila-monastery-church-cross

Jesus Love Me



English

Verse

Jesus loves me, this I know
For the Bible tells me so
Little ones to Him belong
They are weak but He is strong

Chorus

Yes, Jesus loves me
Yes, Jesus loves me
Yes, Jesus loves me
The Bible tells me so

Spanish

Verse

Cristo me ama, bien lo se
Su palabra me hace ver
Que los niños son de aquel
Quien es nuestro amigo fiel

Chorus

Si, Cristo me ama
Si, Cristo me ama
Si, Cristo me ama
La Biblia dice asi

Liturgy - PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL



(For the needs of the Church)

Reader 1: We pray that the leaders of our Church will work together for peace in the world. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

(For the needs of the world)

Reader 2: We pray for peace in countries where there is fighting. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

(For those in need)

Reader 3: We pray for people who are sick or in need. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

(For the needs of the local community)

Reader 4: We pray that God will help us care and support each other in our local community. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.