

# Junior Soldiers

Unit 6 : Lesson 6



## Stay hooked on God!

**PURPOSE :** For the children to explore and understand there are a number of things in the world which can harm them, and that some things can seem quiet harmless and even be helpful, but when you let those things consume your life and take your focus off God, they will harm you. We will look at ways that the children can protect themselves against such things.

*'I will not use anything that may injure my body or my mind, including harmful drugs, alcohol and tobacco.'*

**Junior Soldier Promise**

*'Dear Friends, God is good. So I beg you to offer your bodies to him as a living sacrifice, pure and pleasing. That's the most sensible way to serve God.*

*Don't be like the people of this world, but let God change the way you think.*

*Then you will know how to do everything that is good and pleasing to him.'*

**Romans 12:1,2 (CEV)**

## Consider & Prepare

**Read:**

Junior Soldier promise

Romans 12

Romans 8

Romans 1:21

1 Corinthians 15:33

1 Corinthians 5:11

Exodus 23:2

This lesson focuses on the last portion of the Junior Soldier promise. Although harmful drugs, alcohol and tobacco are the only things that are mentioned in the promise, there are a lot more things that can be harmful and can injure the body and mind. Think about things that you struggle with and then think about what sort of things a child could struggle with. What cultural things can impact their lives for the negative? What about the internet? Computer? Mobile phones? These can be helpful tools in the lives of individuals, but there are uses of them that can cause harm.

It is important that we talk to the children about the things that are harmful for us, but it is more important to talk to them about resisting the temptation to take part in such things and give them strategies as to how to keep close to God so that it's easier to resist.

It is important also to keep in mind the children that you have in your group and the families that they come from especially in regards to drinking and smoking. You may have children who have parents or older brothers or sisters that drink and smoke and so you need to be prepared for questions that might be asked.

Remember that smoking and drinking alcohol aren't sins, but in The Salvation Army we don't do them because we want to live in a holistically healthy way, that is, not just looking after our thoughts, emotions and spiritual health, but also our physical health. We also seek to avoid smoking and alcohol because they can become addictive and usage can affect our behaviour.



### What you will need:

#### For 'Connecting In'

- Items to form an obstacle course
- Blindfolds
- Several sets of dominoes

#### For 'The Main Thing'

- Twister game in box
- 3–4 children to volunteer
- Octopus straps

#### For 'Tying In'

- Butchers paper or whiteboard and appropriate markers
- Post-it notes
- Pens/textas

#### For 'Home & Beyond'

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



## Connecting In

### Blinded...

Set up an obstacle course using things around your hall/room. Have the children go through it being able to see all the obstacles along the way, talk to them about how hard/easy it may have been for them. Perhaps make it into a competition as to who can get through the fastest (you might like to time them and run a leader board). Get them to go through a few times each, so they get used to the course.

Get the children to go through the course again but, this time, blindfolded. Once you have put the blindfold on, shift some of the things around without letting them know that you have moved things so that the course is different (if they have memorised where everything was, they will be in for a surprise).

### Link... Ask the children:

- When you went through the course blindfolded, did you expect that things would have changed?
- Was it harder going through not being able to see? Why/why not?

Sometimes in life we can be a bit blinded to what is ahead of us, a little bit like wearing a blindfold and not being able to see what is coming. We can make choices that impact the direction we should be going. For some people it has looked a little bit like this—they choose to take a first little drink of alcohol, or watch an adult movie, or look at a bad site on the internet etc. and they soon find themselves caught up in things that they don't want to be doing. There are always plenty of things around to try and slip us up; today we are going to explore how Jesus can help us in these situations. When we pay attention to what Jesus teaches us in the Bible and stay connected to Him in prayer, we can be strong when it gets hard or we are tempted to do things we know are not the wise choice.

OR

### **Domino creations...**

You will need several sets of dominoes for this activity.

Get the children to build some routes with them (i.e. end-on-end rows, designed to topple), making sure you tell them all to be very careful not to knock over anyone else's creation. You might like to get two or three children to work together in small groups to build their creation. You will need to tell the children that you want to see how long the dominoes can stay up during our time together. Set a time limit to get the creations completed.

During the making of the domino creation, go around and knock over the first domino in one of the creations (you will need to be sensitive about this as this could upset some children, so choose wisely whose group you will do this too) and get them to start again.

**Link...** We all have choices in life, and I chose to knock over some of the dominoes. This means that \_\_\_ and their group will be mad at me—hopefully only for a short time...unless I choose to do it again! I wonder if their response will be different then and if the consequences for me will last longer. All our choices have consequences; some will last into eternity (forever), some into next week and others possibly only a short time. You make choices every day about what you will do. Will you get up late and skip breakfast? Will you watch that movie all your friends are going to even though you know it's for adults and that your parents wouldn't approve? Will you check out that adult site on the internet that the kid in school was talking about?

There are always plenty of things around to try and slip us up, today we are going to explore how Jesus can help us in these situations. When we pay attention to what Jesus teaches us in the Bible, we stay connected to Him in prayer and stay close to Him, we can be strong when it gets hard or we are tempted to do things we know are not the wise choice.

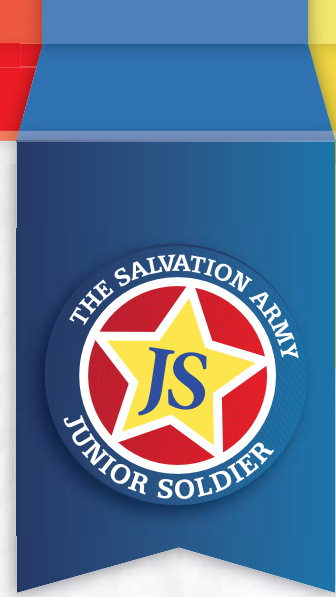
## **The Main Thing**

You will need: A game of Twister, 3–4 volunteers to play the game as you talk and an Octopus strap

Read together: 1 Corinthians 15:33

It tells us, 'Do not be misled: bad company corrupts good character.' This verse reminds me of a game many of you probably have played. It's a popular party game called Twister (*show the Twister game box*). The box says this is a game that ties you up in knots. That's a lot like hanging around people who are not living for or with God. You can get caught up in what they are doing and at times feel like you are tied up in knots. (*Take the game out of the box and set it up while explaining the objective of the game. Have 3–4 children begin playing as you continue.*)

In this game, each player must position their hands and feet from one coloured circle to another as the spinner tells them. Before long, the people playing will get all twisted up with one another and eventually the players will collapse. That's exactly what can happen to us when we are hanging out with the wrong sort of people who are probably not making the wisest choices. (*Play a short game of Twister if you have time, or you might like to say that at the end of the lesson, if there is time, they can play a game or two.*)



Read together: Exodus 23:2

It tells us not to follow the crowd in doing wrong. It can be easy to get tangled up in doing wrong if we are hanging out with the wrong kind of people and making the wrong type of choices. It's one thing if you have friends that are not Christians and you are influencing them and sharing Jesus with them, but it's another thing if your friends begin influencing you to choose things that God doesn't want you to do. If you know you are doing things that God wouldn't approve of because of some friendships you have, then you need to choose whether that friend is the best friend for you. Don't be a people pleaser, be a God pleaser or you will find yourself all twisted up.

The Bible says that you will be blessed if you avoid the wrong that someone might ask you to do, or avoid the things that are wrong that others may do. So be very careful who you choose to be your friends and don't get tangled up with the wrong people.

Read together: 1 Corinthians 5:11

This verse warns us not to hang out with anyone who calls himself a friend or a Christian but is actually evil, greedy, a liar, a thief or someone who puts other things before God. When we hang out with the wrong crowd we will get all twisted up and eventually take on the same habits of those we are hanging out with.

Another way of looking at it is if you take this octopus strap. (*Get two children to carefully pull the cord making sure that they don't let go.*) Like bungee cord, it's made of strong rubber straps but it has hooks on both ends. It is great for strapping things down. The reason it works is that it always wants to snap back into whatever it is hooked to. You can pull and pull, but eventually it will snap back to whatever it is hooked on to—that hook anchors it.

In our life, we need to watch what we are 'hooked' on to. If we are hooked to God, even when sin stretches us away, we will always want to head back to Him BUT if we allow the choices we make to lead us to sin, it can pull us away from God. We may try to run, but we will be pulled back to sin. So we need to make sure we are hooked into God by praying, reading the Bible, going to church and serving God. Don't let sin get a hook into you and drag you away from God.

The other thing is, the closer I stay 'hooked on' to God, the stronger and safer I feel. Imagine if I hooked one end of this strap onto something and then I actually stretched the cord and wound it around an object four or five times before hooking it back near the first hook. That object would not only be closely bound to the other object, but it would be secure and the link would be strong.

The Bible says that the closer and stronger our link to God, the less likely we will be drawn away from Him and the better we will avoid negative influences in our lives.



## Tying In

### Strategies...

For this activity you will need a large sheet of butchers paper or a white board with the outline of a child on it (you may like to trace around one of the children before you hang it up on the wall).

Read together: the Junior Soldier promise

'When we think about the JS promise and the last section: "I will not use anything that may injure my body or my mind, including harmful drugs, alcohol and tobacco", I wonder what sort of other things you think would harm your body?'



Pass out some colourful post-it notes to each child and have them write things that they are often tempted to do, or things they could be tempted to do, that might harm them physically, might harm how their relationships with friends and family, might harm how they think, the words they say, their attitudes or even harm their relationship with God. Ask them to come and stick them inside the outline that you have on the paper/board.

'You guys are a bunch of smart children that know some ways you might be able to help each other to resist the temptation of making the unwise choice.'

Give the children time to discuss and have input into some strategies that they might be able to use in a variety of situations. Once you have a good number of strategies, write them on to some more post-it notes and stick them on top of the temptations that are already on the wall.

Divide the children into pairs and ask them to pray for each other and the things that they might find difficult when it comes to making the wise choice. Also pray that they would depend on God when it comes to resisting the temptations that come their way.



## 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.

For this Home & Beyond activity you will need to give each child some seeds to grown and look after (you choose what kind you want to give, but I would recommend something fast growing like radishes). Before the end of the lesson it would be good to talk to the children about what they need to do and why they are doing it.

- Plant your seeds at home either in a pot or the garden (ask about the best place to plant these first).
- You will need to look after you seed in order for it to grow.
- Talk with your family or Big Bud about
  - What sorts of things you will need to do to look after the seed, e.g. where to plant it, how often you water it etc.
  - What happens if you don't look after the seed?
  - If this is how you look after the seed so that it can grow, how do you look after your life so that you can grow, too?
  - How can your parents or Big Bud help you, especially when it comes to staying close to God?

### Radishes...

As well as their ease of growth, radishes are satisfyingly quick and can be ready for harvest in 6–8 weeks.

Sow seeds direct into a sunny garden bed that's been well dug. As the plants grow, mulch around them with a layer of fluffy organic material. This will hold moisture in the soil, suppress weeds and discourage snails and slugs. Make sure the seeds are kept watered. (The snails and slugs can be seen as the things that tempt us and try and ruin our relationship with God.)

