

Junior Soldiers

Unit 11 : Lesson 2



Including Others

PURPOSE : For the children to explore and understand that even though we are all different, we all seek to belong and be included; and to reflect on how they show love, inclusion and acceptance to others even when it is difficult to do so.

'When others are happy, be happy with them, and when they are sad, be sad. Be friendly with everyone. Don't be proud and feel that you are smarter than others. Make friends with ordinary people. Don't mistreat someone who has mistreated you but try to earn the respect of others and do your best to live at peace with everyone.'

Romans 12:15-18

Consider & Prepare

Read:

Romans 12:15-18

Galatians 3:26-29

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

1 Samuel 16:7

2 Samuel 9:1-13

Jemima's Lullaby

Today's lesson has a social justice focus and looks specifically at social inclusion; it has been based around the book *Jemima's Lullaby* which has been put together by Salvo Publishing and our Just Salvos department.

As humans, we have all been created in God's image and to live as part of community. Because of this we all seek to belong in many different sorts of groups and situations. We are all seeking to be included, and lots of our children will struggle at times with this at school, sporting groups, churches, home and extended family activities etc.

It is important that prior to the session you reflect on times that you might have been excluded and how you felt and dealt with these situations as well as some times when you might have been the one that was excluding others. While it can be difficult to admit when you might have wronged or been wronged, it is important for the children to hear about examples of how you have been able to work through these tough times that might help them with situations they are currently experiencing.

Below is the 'Understanding the story' text from the back of Jemima's Lullaby which I am sure that you will find helpful in preparation for the session on social inclusion. It will also give you a clear picture of the story and how this story will help to connect the children with the topic.

If you imagine a jungle, an ocean, a desert or a city filled with people, you will notice one thing in common—they are all completely different! The world is filled with unique and wonderful animals, plants, landscapes and people. Sometimes, instead of enjoying the amazing and different things around us, we look at certain things and say they are better than others. We might say a monkey is better than a fish, or that trees are better than oceans, or that some types of people are more special than others. We sometimes judge others on the way they look or speak, or on what they wear, or how well they can do things.

If this happens, people may be left out, or treated meanly. Instead of seeing a person as better or worse because they are different, we should try to see what is special about their differences.

In the story, Jemima thought her singing was better than most others, and she excluded them, or tried to get them to change how they sang the lullaby. It was good that Gus could teach her that things go better when we work together and use the talents and skills that make us unique and special. And it was great that the excluded animals could forgive Jemima and come back to the group once she had learned from her mistake. Now everyone was included in singing the song.

We all have the choice to make others feel special, or to push them away and tell them they are not welcome. We hope you choose to accept everyone for who they are, and include them in your games and playtime, no matter how different they may seem. So let's take some time to get to know what is special about those we think are different.

The verses above, from Romans 12, remind us how important it is to include others and work at getting along with each other in all circumstances; through the tough times and the times of fun and celebration, when others have new things and we just have an old version, when we are starting at a new school or have new children starting in our class at school, when people look at us differently because of the way we talk or the clothes we wear and the list can go on and on. In every way possible, we need to work at including and being accepting of one another.

Throughout this lesson, we are encouraging the children to think about and explore ways that they might include others even when they might find others different to them or challenging. If you are looking for more activities or some ideas for projects or extending beyond the session, the website found in the back of the book, www.harmony.gov.au, has a terrific range of lesson plans, crafts, activities and information that we are sure you will find helpful.

It is important to know your kids and to be sensitive to those that may have experienced hurtful situations of being excluded from groups and activities.



What you will need:

For 'Connecting In'

- Blank jigsaw puzzle templates
- Pencils, coloured pens or extra fine textas
- Sheets of small stickers
- Prize
- List of exclusion statements

For 'The Main Thing'

- A copy of *Jemima's Lullaby* (can be ordered at www.salvationarmy.org.au/supplies)
- Lemons (enough for each child)
- A container to hold all the lemons

For 'Tying In'

- Paper
- Textas
- Pens
- Pencils
- Pastels

For 'Home & Beyond'

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



Connecting In

Puzzle...

For this activity, you will need a blank jigsaw puzzle template that can be written on, you can purchase these from most craft shops and even cheap variety stores. Each child for this activity will need a piece of the puzzle—depending on the size of your group you might need to give the children a couple of pieces of the puzzle or you may need to break up into smaller groups and have two or three puzzles on the go. While the puzzle is still together, on the reverse side, draw a large heart in black permanent texta.

- Give each child a puzzle piece
- Using a pencil, coloured pens or extra fine textas, on the front, write or draw on their piece some of their gifts, talents and characteristics that make them unique. *(Please note, if a child is struggling with what they could write, this might be a great time as a group to share what we like about other people's uniqueness.)*
- If they turn over the puzzle piece they might see part of a black line. Ask them to colour one side of the line in one colour and then the other side of the line another colour. If a child does not have a black line on their piece then they can just colour their piece in one colour.
- Once they have finished their piece, get them to connect the pieces together as a group to create the puzzle with everyone's gifts and talents facing upwards.

Link:

- 'I wonder if there are times when you wish some people were more like you.'
- 'I wonder if there are times when you wish you were more like another person.'

'We can see from all the puzzle pieces joined together that no two pieces are the same; they are not the same shape or filled with the same information; we are all very different. God made each one of us to be unique and who have much to share and contribute to different situations. I am sure there are times when you might get frustrated at others for not being as good as you or as good as you want them to be at something and I am sure that there are times when you are sad and frustrated because you want to be good at something like someone else you know.'

'God gave us our gifts, talents and unique characteristics so that we all have something different to share and bring to groups and situations. Can you imagine if we were all like (*choose a leader in your group*) and we all could (*choose a talent*) as wonderfully as them. While it is fantastic that they are great at that, if we all did it, it wouldn't be so exciting and we wouldn't be able to experience the wonderful talents of everyone else in this room. It is good to have variety and to all have something that we can bring to a group situation.

'It can be difficult, at times, to always want to include everyone, especially when they are different or think differently to us. But if we look at Romans 12:15–18 (*get someone to read this from CEV*) we are reminded on how to work together and include others. Let's turn over the puzzle and see if it has something else to remind us about how we should treat others. What do you think? (*Wait for responses.*) It's all about love. Including others even when it is hard, is showing love.'



Exclusion...

For this activity you will need some small stickers and a prize for the winning child.

Encourage the idea that because someone has a certain characteristic they are better than others. While, of course, this lesson is about teaching the complete opposite, we want children to feel uncomfortable with this situation so that they can better understand the idea of inclusion for everyone. Encourage children to question the fairness of this activity, however, be cautious of children pushing this too far; also be sensitive to those that may have had negative experiences of being excluded.

Have all the children and leaders stand in a group in the centre of the room. Explain to them that you are going to make some statements that will divide the group and that they need to move to the side of the room that best describes them. Each time you divide the group, one of the groups will get stickers. The child with the most stickers at the end of the game will win a prize. Below are some statements that you might like to use for this activity and you might like to add some of your own that will help to divide the group.

Some examples of statements are:

- If you have brown hair go to the left, everyone else go to the right. (*The people with brown hair get a sticker.*)
- If you have blue eyes go to the left, everyone else go to the right. (*The people with blue eyes get a sticker.*)
- If you are a boy, go to the left, all the girls go to the right. (*The boys get a sticker.*)
- If you have your ears pierced go to the left, all the others go to the right. (*The people with their ears pierced get a sticker.*)
- If you play netball go to the left, all the others go to the right. (*The people who play netball get a sticker.*)
- If you walk to school go to the left, all the others go to the right. (*The people who walk to school get a sticker.*)
- If you have your own mobile phone go to the left, all the others go to the right. (*The people who own their own mobile phone get a sticker.*)

Link:

- How did you feel when you were separated from your friends?
- How did it feel to see other people getting rewarded for something you will never have, e.g. blue eyes etc.?
- How did it feel to be rewarded?
- Do you think it's fair that (*name the winning child*) received a prize and no one else did? Why?
- I wonder how you could have made this activity fairer.

'Well, some of us might have had fun playing this game today but I am sure that some of us will have felt that it was unfair that people have received prizes just from having certain characteristics. It can be hurtful to be excluded from a group or activity because you might be different or not fit in and none of us like it when this happens to us.

'It can be difficult, at times, to always want to include everyone, especially when they are different or think differently to us. But if we look at Romans 12:15–18 (*get someone to read this from CEV*) we are reminded of how important it is to work together and include others and treat each other with love. Today we are going to explore further this idea of including others even when it is hard to do so.'

The Main Thing

Jemima's Lullaby...

'Let's find out some more about including others even when it is difficult by reading together *Jemima's Lullaby*. (Read the book.)

- I wonder if you have ever felt like Jemima—you wanted everyone to be more like you.
- I wonder if you have ever felt like the hippos—like you were not wanted because you weren't good at something specific.

'At the end of the story Jemima realised that the best choir was when everyone was involved and doing what they were good at. It wasn't any good to try to have everyone doing the same thing—this just wasn't the best. The animals all had different gifts and talents, just like each of us. God created us each in a special and unique way and it is great when we can all work together using all that God has created us to be.

'The Bible also reminds us that the church is like a body, made up of many different parts. Let have a look to see how all parts are important and need to be included. Read together 1 Corinthians 12:12–31.

- What stands out for you in this passage?
- I wonder what God wants us to remember from these verses.'

Lemons

For this activity you will need a lemon for each child. (*If it is easier you can use apples, potatoes or any other food item that can look different on the outside, but similar on the inside*).

Allow the children to choose a lemon from the container and ask them to study it. Tell them to look for the bruises, dents, marks, shape or anything else that might help them to remember which is their lemon and what it looks like. After you have given them time for this, collect all of their lemons back into the container.

- I wonder if you can pick your lemon out of the container. (*Most children should be able to do this; give them some time if needed*).
- How were you able to tell which of the lemons was yours?

'You might have been able to identify which was your lemon due to the size, shape, marks or dints etc. that were on the outside of the fruit. Even though the lemons were similar there were certain characteristics that helped to identify each one. Well, there are lots of things that are similar between each of you and even the leaders that are here, but just like the lemons, we all come in different shapes and sizes: there are different colours of hair or eyes or skin and we will each have different features that help us to identify certain people. This can be much more difficult when you have a set of identical twins but even then there are certain things that will help you to tell them apart.'

- I wonder what some of the features or characteristics are that might make you different from other people here. (*As they are discussing this, have a leader collect their lemons and begin to peel them and place them into the container again.*)
- I wonder if you can pick out your lemon again.
- What is the difference between trying to find your lemon now and trying to find it before?

'If we think about ourselves, we are similar to these lemons—even though on the outside we might look different and have certain things that others will be able to identify us by, on the inside we are very similar. We are all created in God's image and to be in community or relationship with others. We are all looking to belong and be included as a part of many different sorts of groups and situations, and when we are excluded this can hurt. I am sure there have been times, just like the hippos from the story, that you have been excluded and have felt left out and not valued for who you are. This is not unique to you, we are all like this, it hurts when we are not included in what is happening, especially when people don't want us to be a part of things because we are not the same as them.'



- Let's look at Romans 12:15–18 (CEV) together.
- Think about how you feel when others don't include you in what is happening.
- From reading these verses, what does the Bible encourage us to do to help include others?
- What can you do at home, school or church to help others feel included?
- Will this be easy?
- I wonder if anyone can help you with that.



Tying In

Prayer...

This may be a sensitive time for children who either have struggled with being excluded, or who might have excluded others. You may like to have some calming reflective music on in the background to help the children focus during this time of prayer.

'Today we are going to pray for others in a variety of different settings, e.g. school, church, home, sporting groups etc. As we think about the passage from Romans 12 and the words that remind us about how we are to treat others, and the passage from 1 Corinthians 12 that reminds us that the church is a body made up of many different parts and that they are all important, I want you to reflect on how you might include or exclude others.

'You are now going to have the opportunity to pray both for those people that you might have excluded, and also for those that might have excluded you. To help you think about and talk to God about these people and situations, you are going to 'pray in colour'. (*Praying in colour is a technique that helps children to use paper and drawing implements and colour to think about and focus on what they are praying about.*)

- Give each of the children some A3 sheets of paper (*they may also like to use their journal for this prayer activity*)
- Provide a range of drawing implements for the children to choose from, e.g. pencils, textas, crayons, pastels, coloured pens etc.
- On your paper, draw a shape and write someone's name inside it who you would like to pray for.
- Once you have written their name, reflect on why you are praying for them as you decorate their shape with patterns and colours.
- Once you feel you are finished praying for that person and situation, create a new shape and write another person's name in there. Continue this until you feel you have thought of all the people you would like to pray for today.
- You might like to take this sheet home as a prayer guide during the week.

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.

Praying for others in colour...

- Throughout the week, take some time as a family to 'pray in colour'.
- Use a sheet of paper and some coloured drawing implements.
- Think about a person you know that might be feeling excluded. This could be a person at church, school or a social group that you belong too.
- Create a shape and write a name inside of someone you would like to pray for.
- Once you have written their name, pray for them as you decorate their shape with patterns and colours.
- Once you feel you are finished praying for that person and situation, create a new shape and write another person's name in there. Continue this until you feel that you have thought of all the people you would like to pray for.
- You might like to hang this sheet up to remind you of these people at other times in the week.

