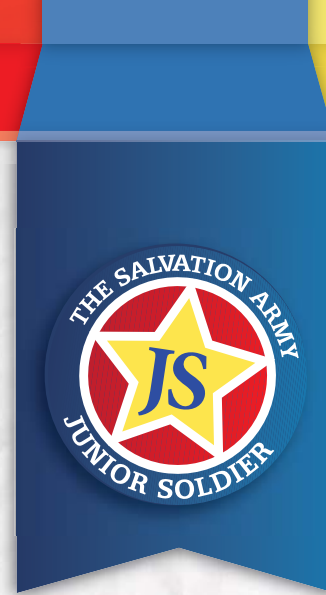


Junior Soldiers

Unit 12 : Lesson 4

Through the eyes of a child



PURPOSE : For the children to explore and understand that each of us will see and experience God differently and how it is important for us to share and celebrate our stories of what God has done for us.

'You must be very careful not to forget the things you have seen God do for you. Keep reminding yourselves, and tell your children and grandchildren as well.'

Deuteronomy 4:9

Consider & Prepare

Read:

Deuteronomy 4:9

A key element of Christian ethos is empathy—understanding how life looks from someone else's perspective and being both tolerant and respectful of someone else's viewpoint. When we accept that people may differ from us and have their own opinions and their own insights into life, we have gone a long way to understanding them and having empathy for them. Amazingly, as we broaden our outlook on life in this way, we can also gain a broader understanding of who God is and how he works in the world.

So, if our children can start to develop empathy early in life—along with tolerance and respect—they can accelerate their own faith development. By seeing the world through others' eyes, they also see God better.

The theme of today's lesson helps us to explore looking at God's kingdom through the eyes of a child—how they might see things that happen around them and taking into account their perspective. In order for us to fully understand a child's perspective we will have to listen: listen to children speak about their faith and how they see the things that God has done for them. Some of the activities today will include looking at pictures that children have taken that represent the things they have seen God do for them; we will look at the struggles that children face around the world as well as thinking about what the world might look like through the eyes of a child.

Our lesson today is based on prayer so, as we explore how other children may view and experience the kingdom of God, we will be engaging in a range of activities that will include prayer and prayer stations.

What you will need:

For 'Connecting In'

- Three pairs of old glasses or cardboard 3D glasses
- Yellow, green and red cellophane
- Colorful pictures from magazines or children's books
- A variety of books suitable for teenagers or adults. You may like to borrow some from your local library.
- Children's Bible with a catchy colourful front cover.

For 'The Main Thing'

- A range of fun eye glasses
- Magiclay, magazines and newspapers (collage), coloring pencils, textas or crayons, matchsticks, straws, off cuts of fabric, wool or patterned paper etc.
- Butchers paper
- A large map of the world
- Sticky Notes
- Blu-Tack

For 'Tying In'

- Bibles
- A large cut out of a tree on butchers paper
- Cardboard of paper people (usually available in a craft store)
- Textas
- Glue

For 'Home & Beyond'

- A4 template of a family tree
- Print off the 'Home & Beyond' cards for each child.



Connecting In

Cellophane eyes...

Use some different coloured cellophane to look through some old glasses. Have three pairs of old glasses with the glass taken out or purchase some cardboard 3D glasses and take the lenses out. Have one pair covered in yellow cellophane, one pair covered in green cellophane and one pair covered in red cellophane. Allow the children to play with the glasses exploring what it is like to look like through the different colored lenses. Show them some colourful pictures or take them outside and have them compare what they see.

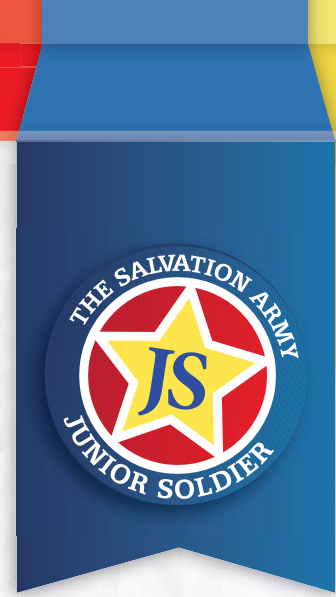
Link... 'Wow, didn't things look different as we looked through different coloured lenses?'

- Did any of you have a favourite colour that you looked through?
- I wonder how much the pictures or things we looked at outside changed when you looked through the different coloured lenses.

'Imagine if everybody had a different set of glasses with different coloured lenses, e.g. you had red ones and I had blue ones and ... had green ones etc. We would all be looking at the same thing but it would look a little different for each person. I think this is what it is like when we are all looking at something together—we are all going to look at something slightly different to someone else. So when we think about God and who he is and the wonderful things he has done, it is going to be slightly different for each of us. There will be certain things that stand out for us or things we like or don't like or certain things that we see that someone else might not. I wonder what God looks like through your eyes. Today we are going to explore that together and share the things that we have seen him do for us.'

Guess the story by the cover....

The aim is to allow the children to have a look at a front cover of a book and to tell you what they think that book is about. You will need to use books that the children have not read or seen before, so use books that are suitable for teenagers or adults (be careful and appropriate in your choices) such as *The Lord of the Rings* or *The Book Thief*. Your local library will have some that you could borrow. Make sure you choose interesting titles and front covers to allow the children to really use their imaginations. Encourage the children to tell you what they think the book is about and perhaps a little about a storyline that suits the title of the book. This will allow you to see what they see and interpret the cover through their eyes; you will probably get a range of different scenarios for each book.



- 'I think it is interesting that we all have different opinions of what some of the books were about.
- I wonder if I showed your Big Buds the book covers, if they would see things the same or different to you. Perhaps this is something you might like to try later.'

Link... 'We have just looked at some books and some of us have had different ideas about the book and what the storyline might be. Adults might also have a different scenario in mind for some of these books. This is one of the ways that shows that each of us is unique: we look at things and understand them differently.'

Show the children the cover of a Children's Bible.

- 'Some of you know will know some of the stories and teaching and information included in this particular book.
- I wonder what you think this book is about (allow some time for the children to respond).

'We all see things differently, sometimes in a big way and sometimes in just a few small details. So when we think about God and who he is and the wonderful things he has done, it is going to be different for each of us. There will be certain things that stand out for us or things we like or don't like, or things that we see that someone else might not. I wonder what God looks like through your eyes. Today we are going to explore that together and share the things that we have seen him do for us.'



The Main Thing

Throughout the next two sections you will find six different activities/prayer stations. You might like to set them all up around the room and have the children choose which ones they go to (if you choose this structure it would be good to have a leader or Big Bud at each station to help direct the activity) or work around them as a whole group. If you have a small group, you might like to just choose two or three from 'The Main Thing' and one from the 'Tying In' section for your group to engage in during the lesson.

Through the eyes of a child...

For this activity you will need a range of fun eye glasses: you can get some from a range of cheap gift shops including oversized glasses, ones made from love hearts, ones with lines/slats etc. You will also need to cover the table with some butchers paper and provide some crayons or textas for drawing. Ask the children to place the glasses on and draw what they see or think a world with God in it looks like to them.

- There might be wonderful things...
- There might be scary things...
- There might be beautiful things...
- There might be amazing things...

'As you are adding things to this large picture of what it looks like to live in a world with God—I want you to pray that all your friends and all the children in your community might know what it is like to live in a world with God.'

How I see God...

This activity involves using a variety of craft materials that children can use to create with. Items that would be good to collect for this activity would be paper, magiclay, magazines and newspapers (for collage), coloring pencils, textas or crayons, matchsticks, straws, off cuts of fabric, wool or patterned paper etc. Using some of the items available, encourage the children to create something that shows how they 'see God' or 'where they see God at work'. They should be encouraged to be creative. Once they have completed their artwork, either hang it on a wall with Blu-Tack or leave them presented on the table for everyone to share how God is viewed through another person's eyes.

- 'I wonder how you see God...
- I wonder where you see God at work...

Take some time to pray; thank God for who he is to you and for the things you have seen him do and the way he is present and working in the world.'

Around the world prayers...

For this activity you will need a large map of the world that is stuck to a table or on the floor where all the kids can gather around and see it. You will also need some paper and glue or sticky notes and textas, pencils or crayons for children to write with.

'Today we are going to pray for as many children as we can think of, and some that we may not even know! There are lots and lots of children that we know that live near us and might be our friends, but there are also lots and lots of children that live in all different places around the world (show map). These kids really need our prayers because some of them have very different lives to us.'

Explain some of the reasons these children need prayer, depending on the age and maturity of the group you are working with. For example, for older children you may want to talk about the children having to work whereas with younger children you may just show some pictures of the houses that children live in and compare them to our own.

Encourage the children to write/draw some prayers down on sticky notes that they can add to certain places around the map. They might like to pray for children that they know that live in other parts of the world or they might like to choose a country and think about what life might be like there and pray for the children who live there. See how many prayers you can add to the map, maybe even try to cover the map!

'We need to remember that it is important to keep praying for these children. We are going to hang our map and prayers up in our room so that we can remember that we need to be praying for other children around the world not just today but time and time again.'

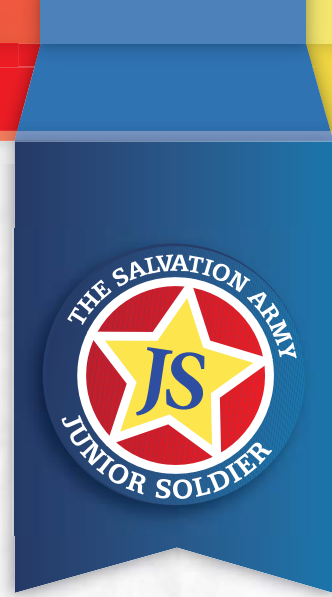
Question Mark...

For this activity you will need some large question mark shapes cut out of paper or card and some textas and pens to write with. It would be great if you could set up a table with some large butchers paper or hang the paper on the wall so you can stick the question marks on it.

Encourage everyone to write or draw a question that they might have for God inside one of the question mark shapes.

'We all see things differently in this world. We all see God differently. This means we will all have different questions for God. There is no right or wrong question. Just write a question that could be on your heart or mind.'

'Spend some time praying and talking to God about your question or perhaps you would also like to pray about someone else's question as you look at life through their eyes.'



Tying In

What we have seen God do for us...

This activity and prayer station can be set up as a small group around a circle mat or rug on the floor with some Bibles.

Ask the children to look up Deuteronomy 4:9. It says, 'You must be very careful not to forget the things you have seen God do for you. Keep reminding yourselves, and tell your children and grandchildren as well.'

Moses spoke these words, asking us to remember what God has done for us, but not just to leave it at that. He was also reinforcing that it is so important to share all the good things we see and know about God with children and grandchildren—so pretty much any children connected with you.

- 'I am curious, how many of you have children?
- How many of you have grandchildren?
- Well if you don't have any children or grandchildren I wonder what this verse means for you then.

'Well, because none of you have children or grandchildren yet, perhaps we could read this verse like this: Moses spoke these words, asking us to remember what God has done for us, but not just to leave it at that. He also was reinforcing that it is so important to share all the good things we see and know about God with our family and friends and other children we know.

- 'I wonder if you can share what God has done for you. (*Give them a moment to respond.*)

'He has forgiven us of our sins/wrongdoings and faults and given us a new chance in life. He has invited us to be special friends with him and to do life with him. Along with all the other things we see God has done for us, we can share this with our family and friends and other children we know.'



Family Prayers...

For this activity you will need to provide a large cut-out of a tree or an outline of a tree on a large sheet of butchers paper. It would be good to have this cut-out/outline displayed on a wall ready for the prayers. You will also need some cardboard people cut outs, glue sticks and pencils, textas and/or crayons.

Explain to the children that today we are going to be praying for our families. Discuss with them about why it is good to pray for our families and ask for suggestions about what they might like to pray for (e.g. health, happiness, love, relationships with each other, things you are thankful for etc.).

Encourage the children to think about the people in their family and to use the cardboard people cut-outs to pray for them in some of the following ways:

- Write the names of all the people in your family and decorate one of the cut-outs.
- Decorate the cardboard people cut-out to look like a member of your family and pray for them.
- Write or draw a prayer for your family on one of the cut-outs.
- Add your cut-outs to the family tree.



Once they have finished with their family prayers, get the children to come back together and look at the family tree they have made. Explain that we are all on the same family tree because we are all God's children, and even though there are so many prayers and people on our tree, he loves every one of them and has heard every one of our prayers. Finish by praying for God's family as a whole.

Home & Beyond

Print off the 'Home and 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, it would be good to provide each family with a fun pair of glasses (these can be ones that you purchase from a cheap gift shop or you could make some out of cardboard adding coloured cellophane.)

Prayer glasses...

The focus of our lesson today is 'Through the eyes of a child.' It would be good if you could continue this focus as you pray together as a family—for the children that you know, children in the community, and children from around the world. To help with this, you have been given a set of fun glasses. As a family, you could take it in turns to pass the glasses around to look 'through the eyes of a child' and make some suggestions as to what you could all pray for.

Talk within your family about things you could pray for and what children you would like to pray for. This might be children from the church, from the community, or children overseas that you have learnt about at church. You may even like to decorate the glasses to remind you of the Bible verse:

**'You must be very careful not to forget the things you have seen God do for you.
Keep reminding yourselves, and tell your children and grandchildren as well.'** (Deuteronomy 4:9 CEV)



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