

Junior Soldiers

Unit 10 : Lesson 5



Part of the conversation!

PURPOSE : For the children to explore and understand how they might recognise an opportunity to introduce God into a conversation.

'He went to the Jewish meeting place to speak to the Jews and to anyone who worshiped with them. Day after day he also spoke to everyone he met in the market.'

Acts 17:17 (CEV)

Consider & Prepare

Read:

Acts 17:16–34

Acts 8:26–40

John 4: 1–42

In Acts 17 we read about Paul in Athens, where he spoke on Mar's Hill to the Areopagus (a group of wise thinkers in a high court sort of forum). Paul had done his research during the day and noted that amongst the many idols on display in the city was an idol to 'the unknown god'; the Greeks had so many gods that they had erected this statue just in case they forgot to make an idol for one of their gods!

Paul—always the opportunist—said, 'I know that God, let me tell you about him...'. He gave a very clever speech that was aimed exactly at this group of people in this setting.

This is a key passage for teaching us the value of having a strategy and approach when it comes to evangelising, and it highlights, too, that Paul had thought in advance exactly what he wanted to say in the time he was given to talk to the Areopagus. He didn't waste his opportunity; he didn't waste time; he didn't waste words.

In the Acts 8 passage, we read about Philip also grasping an opportunity to talk about God. The important thing in this passage is that Philip was so ready and willing to obey God. God tells him to go to a certain road—so he does. God tells him to approach a specific vehicle—and he does. Sure enough, an opportunity comes to talk about God to someone, and Philip is on the spot!

Note, also, verse 35 and Philip's knowledge of scripture. It's one thing to have an opportunity to talk to someone about God, but it's another thing to know what to say!

Jesus was the master of that. In the John story (the woman at the well in Samaria), Jesus has an opportunity to talk to someone: like Paul, Jesus uses what is at hand (in this case not idols but water) and, like Philip, Jesus knows what to say about God.

It's important for leaders to have thought about how they might communicate their faith to others and be ready to share and set a good example for the children; we can't really tell our children to be ready to witness if we're not!

What you will need:

For 'Connecting In'

- Shopping catalogues (enough for one page of the catalogue per child)

For 'The Main Thing'

- Bibles
- Butchers paper and textas

For 'Tying In'

- Bibles
- A basket or container of everyday items, e.g wooden spoon, candle, photo frame, cup, box of tissues, book, highlighter, teddy bear, bouncy ball etc.

For 'Home & Beyond'

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



Connecting In

Let's spruik...

For this activity you will need some shopping catalogues, enough so there is one page of the catalogue per child. Tear or cut the catalogues into single sheets, enough for one per child or small group.

Hand out a sheet of a catalogue per child or small group. Give them a small amount of time to look at the page they have and choose one item they want to 'spruik' about.

Explain to the children that they will need to tell everyone, in 30 seconds, why they should buy the particular item they have chosen, e.g. it's a great bargain, a great product, tastes really great etc.

Link... 'I am not sure about you, but sometimes after I have been reading through the catalogues and found a great bargain or a groovy new product I want to tell others about it. I wonder if we ever get as excited about Jesus and want to tell others about something that we have learnt or know about Him. Today we are going to explore some parts of the Bible that help us to understand how we might recognise opportunities or times when we can share some of the cool stuff we know and understand about Jesus with others.'



The Main Thing

It's fantastic...

Just like the 'Connecting In' activity for this section, the children will need to talk about something they think is fantastic. Give them a couple of minutes to think about something they think is fantastic and that they could talk about non-stop for 30 seconds. Once the children have come up with their topic (it can be anything) get them to take turns in talking about what they think is fantastic.

'Well, there are lots of things that we think are fantastic, that we are excited and passionate about, and can tell others lots about that particular topic, item or person.

- I wonder if you have the same excitement or passion when it comes to talking about Jesus.
- I wonder what you would say. *(Allow some of the children to have a go if they would like to see what they would come up with.)*
- I wonder if you had to choose between the first topic or Jesus to talk about with a friend, which topic you would choose. Why?

Have a leader read Acts 8:26–40

- What stood out for you in this passage about Philip?
- Was he willing to talk about God and things of faith?

'God gave Philip the opportunity to talk about his faith and help someone else understand about being a follower of God. He knew how to explain what the scriptures meant and was ready when the opportunity came up to talk to someone else about these things. God will also give us opportunities to talk to others about God and what following God looks like—we need to be ready to share what we know and also be willing to talk when we see the opportunity.

We are going to do an activity together that might help us to prepare for some of these opportunities. Think about how long it might take you to ride from the top of an average sized building to the bottom in an elevator: a couple of minutes? It is not a big amount of time is it? Imagine you are getting in at the top floor with someone and you have the opportunity to tell them about Jesus, but only until you get to the bottom and get out of the lift. It is not a long amount of time to be able to tell them something that will make them interested in learning more about Jesus, especially if you have not thought about what sorts of things you would say beforehand.'

- Do some brainstorming together on a large sheet of butchers paper.
- What sorts of things do you think would be important to tell someone who doesn't know Jesus?
- When you have a good number of suggestions, get the children to think about what things they would choose from this list that are most important to share with someone who doesn't know Jesus.
- Pair the children up and get them to practice on each other, you might even like to get them to stand and pretend they are getting into a lift.
- Time two minutes and then swap couples and time another two minutes.

'I hope doing some practice of this will help you to be prepared and ready for an opportunity to talk to someone about Jesus and what being a follower of Jesus might look like. Your opportunity might not be in an elevator, but it might be a few minutes on the bus going to school, or during a recess at school, or while walking to school with friends.'



Tying In

Jesus' conversations...

For this section you will need some Bibles and a basket or container of everyday items, e.g wooden spoon, candle, photo frame, cup, box of tissues, book, highlighter, teddy bear, bouncy ball etc.

Read John 4:1–26 together (as this is a long reading it would be good to have a leader read it as if Jesus was having the conversation with the woman at the well, or even use three leaders: a narrator, Jesus, the woman).

'What stands out to you in this conversation with Jesus and the woman at the well? How did Jesus use 'water' to talk about God and spiritual matters with the woman at the well?

Jesus used the situation of the woman going to the well to draw water to talk to her about God and how God is the one who can provide 'living water' that does not run out, unlike the water that the woman has to get from the well every day to drink. Jesus was able to use water as a way to introduce God into the conversation.

We are going to have a bit of fun now but at the same time we are going to see if we can use some everyday items to help talk and think about God.'

For this activity you might like to give the children the challenge (as an individual or in pairs or small groups, depending on the size or make up of your group) and it would also be good to have a couple of leaders or Big Buds available to help the children if they need some help.

- Choose an item from the basket/container.
- Take a couple of minutes to think about how God might be like that item or how that item can be used to explain something about faith.
- For example: 'A cup reminds me of how God can fill me with love until it overflows and I love others', 'God is like a highlighter because He brings things to my attention just like a piece of paper with a key passage highlighted'.
- Go around the group and get the children to share how their item reminds them of God or belief in God.

'We have had some fun with these items today but it is a great way to help us think about how we might bring God into a conversation at the right time. God provides us with plenty of opportunities to share the good news of Jesus with others but we need to be willing to follow his leading at these times. Don't forget that you can use everyday items or situations to talk to others about God.'

Take some time to pray as a group. You may like to use some of the items that you have in the basket to prompt things to pray about, e.g. a box of tissues (pray for those in our church who are sad at the moment), a teddy bear (pray that God will bring comfort to those who are unwell) etc.

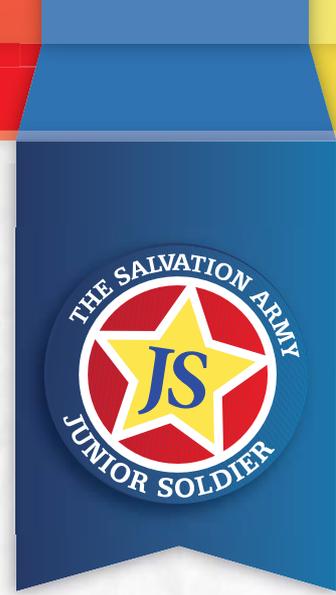
Home & Beyond

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.

Conversation challenge...

During the week, put the challenge out to your parents, other members of the family or Big Bud to see if they can tell you why 'God is like ...' an everyday item of your choosing.

Choose an everyday item like you did during the lesson today and see how your family goes at bringing God into the conversation about an everyday item.



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