

Junior Soldiers

Preparation Lesson Notes



Format

LESSON TITLE

(There are five Junior Soldier preparation lessons; each has its own title.)

PURPOSE

(Why are we doing this lesson? What is the key phrase or understanding that you want a Junior Soldier to go away with from this lesson?)

CONSIDER & PREPARE

(This section includes any background information or reading for leaders, to help them prepare for the lesson, as well as a list of the things you need to obtain, organise and plan in preparation for the lesson.)

CONNECTING IN

(This is the fun time when you might play a game or have an activity that makes the link/connection into the topic. This will also include a link into 'The main thing', the focus for the lesson.)

THE MAIN THING

(This is the main teaching time when you will engage with the children in a creative, hands-on way of exploring the topic and the key message to understand. There might be a variety of ways that this is communicated or a number of elements to explore on the topic. This might include one activity or several that reinforce the same key point.)

TYING IN

(This section is about making the connection from the key understanding back into the world of the child; it's the 'So what?' section. 'What does this mean for me and how will I be different because I know and understand this?')

HOME & BEYOND

(This section helps the children to take what they have learnt and continue the conversation at home. How can we help and equip children and their parents to continue these faith conversations at home and help to make such conversations a normal part of everyday life? There might be a question to be discussed, a challenge, an activity, some scripture or sharing something together. This might not be a big task but just something to help make a link into the home and make 'faith talk' become a part of a family's natural language and conversations.)

Lessons

Belonging : Discipleship : Mission

There are five lessons in this preparation material that can be delivered in a variety of ways—be creative.

You can run the lessons weekly, fortnightly or even once a month as you prepare your children to be enrolled as Junior Soldiers.

You might like to think about the possibility of a 'boot camp'. This might be a divisional event, perhaps over a weekend or just a full day option. It might be a couple of corps combining together to make the most effective use of leaders, time and space. Being able to sit with the kids over a meal and connect while playing games etc. in a 'boot camp' style is a really special opportunity to engage and connect on a deeper level with the kids relationally.

The preparation lessons could be run by a corps officer or by a divisional rep or you could advertise with the corps around you so that you might be able to join together. While it is nice to start out with the person who will be discipling the kids in the program, it is not essential. For corps that have just one child needing to do preparation classes, it can be helpful to join together with others, not only for the leader (time effective) but also for the child's enjoyment level.

Below you will see the outline for each of the five lessons. The topics explored in each of the lessons are essential to the kids as they prepare to be Junior Soldiers, however, it is important to remember that this is just an introduction. The topics in this setting will not be able to be dealt with exhaustively but will be something that connects them to the message and something that can be built upon in other lessons and discussions.

1. Let's Get Started

- *PURPOSE: For children to understand God's overall plan for us including the gospel message. During this lesson, children will be given the opportunity to make a decision about being a follower of God.*
- *Promise Focus: I know that Jesus is my Saviour from sin.
I have asked him to forgive my sins, and I will trust him to keep me good.*

2. Holy Living

- *PURPOSE: For children to understand what it looks like to be a friend of Jesus/follower of Jesus in the things we say, think and do. They will explore what it looks like to have God with them on the journey as they make wise choices.*
- *Promise Focus: By his help, I will be his loving and obedient child, and will help others to follow him.
I will not use anything that may injure my body or my mind, including harmful drugs, alcohol and tobacco.*



3. Bible & Prayer

- *PURPOSE: For children to understand that reading the Bible and praying are the key ways of staying connected to God. The children will be given the opportunity to explore a variety of ways to engage with the Bible and prayer.*
- *Promise Focus: I promise to pray to read my Bible and to lead a life that is clean in thought word and deed.*



4. Service/Mission/Worship

- *PURPOSE: For the children to understand meaningful expressions of service and worship. They will reflect and explore how their love for God and others looks in what we do, say and think.*
- *Promise Focus: By his help, I will be his loving and obedient child, and will help others to follow him.*

5. A Junior Soldier In The Salvation Army

- *PURPOSE: For the children to be able to reflect on the last four sessions and how those key areas fit into and connect to the Junior Soldier promise. They will explore what a Junior Soldier looks like in The Salvation Army.*
- *Promise Focus: I know that Jesus is my Saviour from sin.
I have asked him to forgive my sins, and I will trust him to keep me good.
By his help, I will be his loving and obedient child, and will help others to follow him.
I promise to pray, to read my Bible and to lead a life that is clean in thought word and deed.
I will not use anything that may injure my body or my mind, including harmful drugs, alcohol and tobacco.*



Journal

A journal will need to be ordered from Salvationist Supplies for each of the kids participating in preparation lessons.

Why a journal? We believe that it is important for kids to have an opportunity to reflect on the things that they are learning and exploring. It is also important to give them opportunity to solidify some of the thoughts that they have learnt that day or the things that God and others are teaching them. This journal will give kids that opportunity in a variety of ways as well as being a visual reminder of the exciting process that they have gone through during these sessions. It will also hopefully set into place a spiritual discipline that might be a helpful tool in their faith journey.

The journal includes: scripture that has been the focus for the lesson; a space for an activity or reflection on the key message for the lesson; spaces for including photos from some of the activities the kids have participated in, and 'Home and Beyond' sections that will provide conversation starters, challenges and activities that will hopefully continue the conversation at home.

It is important that you give children time to reflect on what they have learnt during the lesson. Make sure that you talk about the activities in the journal, give them time and space to fill in specific parts and alert them to the 'Home and Beyond' sections and the challenges for them.

It is important to remember that not all children are good readers or enjoy writing or come from a culture that values literacy. This journal is not just about writing, make sure that you give kids the opportunity to draw images and pictures to represent their understanding and reflections on what they have learnt. It might be that you also give kids the opportunity to tell you their reflection/response and someone can scribe for them, this is where it is important to know your kids. Within the overall process of the preparation material (and also further into regular session) we must provide a variety of ways that all children can explore and engage with key messages and understanding as well as a variety of ways to express or respond to this.

Some other options in addition to the journal are taking lots of photos or perhaps even mini movies. These can be used in the journal but also as another representation of what they have been learning. The photos and videos would be a great resource to use on the enrolment day and share the journey with the rest of the church community, like a testimony. Questions that you could ask the kids while filming a short clip during the lessons include, 'What did you learn about God today?' and 'How will you be different?'.

Other things you need to know...



PROCESSES

One of the important processes that needs to be done in preparation for enrolling Junior Soldiers is communicating this to your divisional representative (i.e. your divisional children's or youth secretary). Stats are an important part of fully understanding where things are at with the health of the corps, division and territory. So we ask for you to partner with us on this matter and to do two significant things:

- Forward an email to your divisional children's or youth secretary to let them know the exciting news that you are enrolling some Junior Soldiers at your corps
- Enter the Junior Soldiers details into SAMIS into the membership section (this acts as part of your membership roll in regards to Junior Soldiers).

WHERE TO NOW?

Once your kids have completed the five preparation lessons, it is time to plan a date to have them enrolled and celebrate with the family and wider church community. Below is more specific information regarding the arranging of a Big Bud, the enrolment itself and uniform.



BIG BUDS

Each Junior Soldier that is going to be enrolled needs to have a Big Bud (this is a program that builds on the framework of what some may know as a 'prayer pal'). Your corps may already run Big Buds, so your new Junior Soldiers might already have a Big Bud they are connected with.

A Big Bud is someone who is willing to be a part of the overall discipleship process of a child. It requires the adult to make a commitment to be a part of the spiritual development of the Junior Soldier. This includes being willing to pray for the child, connect and engage with them at church and other activities and events, supporting them, remembering significant dates like birthdays and special events and showing encouragement and interest in the things that the child is doing, e.g. at school, at home, at church or outside activities like sport or interest groups.

For more information regarding Big Buds, refer to your corps' Big Bud manual or speak to your divisional children's ministries secretary.

ENROLMENT

For enrolment you will need to obtain an enrolment pack from Salvationist Supplies. This includes the Junior Soldier badge, an official A5 certificate and an A3 poster that includes the Junior Soldier promise they will sign. There is also a certificate for the Big Bud to sign on the day as they promise to be a part of the discipleship process with the child through mentoring, encouragement, support and prayer.

You will need to have arranged a Big Bud for your Junior Soldier. This can be done at the start of the preparation classes so that they can be involved in this process, if you like. This can be a special time for the Big Bud to be involved, to connect with the child and also support them through this exciting time.

Arrange a date and plan the enrolment segment for the special day; co-ordinate this with the Junior Soldiers to be enrolled and the corresponding Big Buds. Plan and organise any special elements that need to be included, e.g. PowerPoints, video, someone to hold the flag, etc. Refer to the official Army ceremonies book and the section specifically for enrolments.

UNIFORM

A sense of belonging is one of the key elements to being a Junior Soldier in The Salvation Army. One of the ways that this happens is by being recognized as a member of the Army by the wearing of a badge and some form of uniform. This will be dependent on what your corps decides to use as their Junior Soldier uniform. It might be wearing the Junior Soldier T-shirt available from Salvationist

Supplies or it might be a polo shirt with The Salvation Army logo on it or it might be a more traditional uniform of navy skirt or trousers with a white shirt. All Junior Soldiers are encouraged to wear some form of uniform along with their Junior Soldier badge.



STEPS TO BECOMING A JUNIOR SOLDIER

As a summary guide, below are the steps to becoming a Junior Soldier:

- Opportunity is given for children to make a decision to be a follower of God at church/kids church or another event. (Some children may not have made this decision but can still participate in the preparation lessons, but they need to have made this decision before being enrolled as a Junior Soldier).
- Child is followed up after decision and given the opportunity to think about becoming a Junior Soldier.
- It is important that contact is made with parents to discuss what is involved in becoming a Junior Soldier and obtain their consent.
- Discuss with the corps officer about the child's readiness to be involved in preparation classes.
- The child participates in the preparation lessons.
- At the same time, connect the child with a Big Bud.
- When the lessons are completed and the decision to be a follower of God and be a Junior Soldier are made, then arrange a time for the enrolment to be held.
- If a child does not make the decision to be a follower of God or to be enrolled at this stage, they can still participate in other lessons. It is important to support and encourage the child whatever their decision.

