Junior Soldiers

Unit 1 : Lesson 1

Rules, Rules, Rules!

PURPOSE : For the children to explore and understand the importance of rules and guidelines, and why God has outlined some for us.

Jesus said:

"'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind.' This is the first and most important commandment. The second most important commandment is like this one, and it is, 'Love others as much as you love yourself.'"

Matthew 22:37–39

Consider & Prepare

In the next lesson we'll be focusing on the Ten Commandments and other rules for Christian living, so it's important that the children first have an understanding of why we need rules for both our individual benefit and also for society to function properly. Children need to learn that rules don't have to be heavy-handed or imposing, but can be helpful and sensible, especially when it comes to respecting other people, other people's possessions and other people's rights.

Once children can see the value of having some rules in place, they'll have a greater appreciation (i.e. in the next lesson) for why God also needs to provide some rules for how we should live.

What you will need:

For 'Connecting In'

- Collect a range of board games that you are going to use for 'Rules of the Game'
- Cardboard boxes, big enough for a child to use as a cardboard box car; you could get the children to each bring one along to the lesson.
- Items to be used as obstacles in the driving game (e.g. chairs, indoor plants, etc)
- Collect items that will be used in the challenge in the driving game
- Masking tape
- Butchers paper or whiteboard

For 'The Main Thing'

- 'The Game Of Life' board game (optional)
- Collect items for the children to make their own game of life: cardboard, magazines, sticky letters, glue, tape, dice, textas, small cards etc.

For 'Home & Beyond'

- Print off a Home & Beyond card for each child.

Connecting In

Rules of the Game ...

- Have a range of board games for the children to choose from.
- This activity can be done in pairs, small groups or as a whole group.
- For each of t he games that you put out, make sure that you have taken away the rules sheet or if the rules are on the back of the box then take the game out of the box.
- As a whole group, get two children to come out and choose a game to play in a challenge.
- When they start playing, add some comments: 'No, you don't do it that way, this is how you move that piece', 'How do you know how to play?', 'But there are no rules', 'How do you know the rules?' (Been told them, read them, have played before and someone helped me to understand the rules).

- **Link:** For all the games we play (indoors or outdoors), we have rules. Rules help us all to be on the same page, have fun, keep safe and know what we are doing in order to try and win the game. There are some games where people have taught us the rules, sometimes we have read the rules when learning a new game, and there are games that we have played lots and know to follow the rules.
- What if someone plays by different rules?
- 'Just like the rules in the games that we play, there are rules in our society for the same reasons. There are also rules, guidelines or commandments that come from God. Today we are going to explore what some of those rules are and why we have them. Any ideas?' *(Let the kids make some suggestions, you might like to write them down and then come back to them at the end of the lesson).*

Driving with no rules ...

- For this activity you will need cardboard boxes for children to use as a 'cardboard box car' (open the top and bottom of the box so that the children can step into it and hold it up around their waist)
- Use some masking tape to mark out some roads for the children to drive on.
- Around the room also places some other obstacles, e.g. something to represent a tree, traffic lights, chairs could be used for park benches etc.
- This driving game has no rules.
- Give a short time frame for this activity , possibly two minutes. As there are no rules in this driving game, you will find that if the activity goes for too long, children will get silly and then you might have accidents (exactly why we have rules!).
- In their cars, the children can do whatever they like, there are no rules, however, they do have a challenge along the way. They must collect three items that you nominate before their time is up (this needs to be the same three items for each child, you might deliberately not have enough of each item in the room, making it more difficult for the children to complete the challenge). Examples of objects to collect might be a ball, a book and a pencil.
- It is important in order to do this activity that you have some extra supervision. Those helping to supervise might also be throwing balloons or scrunched up paper to distract the drivers. They need to be listening to the children and their comments for reflection after the activity has finished.
- Play the game. Time the game. Stop the game.

Link: It is important to debrief this activity well. There are some children that will find this form of chaos very challenging; participating in an activity without any structure or rules can be very difficult and uncomfortable.

- What happened when two people wanted to collect the same item?
- What happened when two people were trying to turn the same direction? Did anyone give way?
- How did you get to where you wanted to go with no rules?
- How did you feel participating in this activity with no rules? Did you like it? Why? Why not?
- I wonder if there were any rules that you would have found helpful in this activity?

- Just like in this game, we need rules to help us in our everyday lives, without any rules what happens?
- Just like the rules in the games that we play, there are rules in our society for the same reasons, there are also rules, guidelines or commandments that you might know from God. Today we are going to explore what some of those rules are and why we have them.
- What rules has God given us?
- Brainstorm these rules on a large sheet of butchers paper or a whiteboard. Include general guidelines for Chrisitan living that are outlined in the Bible not just the Ten Commandments. Make a list. Leave the list up for the rest of the lesson and refer back to it during the 'Tying In'.

The Main Thing

Our own game of life ...

- If you are able to get hold of a 'Game of Life' board game, bring that in for the kids to look at (there is also an iPhone application of this game). If you don't, then you can just use the game as an example. In this game, players get to make choices about what they are going to do in relation to work, relationships and leisure. Sometimes the choices can impact what happens but, at times, things just come out of the blue and can be exciting or challenging.
  - Some choices are – do you want to buy a car, a bigger car, a new house, get married, have a baby, go to school, change jobs, go on adventures.
  - Some things can't be done until you have done something else, e.g. if you have the opportunity for a promotion in some professions, you can't go to a higher level unless you have done some study first.
- The kids will have the opportunity to make their own 'Game of life'. Depending on the size of your group, you can do this activity all together or you can work in small groups. It is essential for the kids to be able to negotiate what the rules of the game are going to be and why, e.g. what do you need to do first before you can do/achieve something else?
- You will need some supplies:
  - Cardboard for game board
  - Textas
  - Letter stickers
  - Items for markers/game pieces
  - Magazines, newspapers or printed images (access to the internet or computer to print our some symbols or images might be handy for this activity)
  - Coloured paper or cardboard
  - Small cards to make a card pile with random things on them that just happen, e.g. you are given a holiday to Hawaii from some great friends, or your car has four flat tyres and it will cost you $200 to get new ones etc.
- Play the game together or, if more than one game was made, you might like to mix the groups up and play a few games.

Tying In

Questions ...

- Why do you take it in turns when playing the game? (To make it fair and equal.)
- In Australia and New Zealand, why do we drive on the left-hand side of the road? (For safety and no crashes, hopefully.)
- Why do we have the rule about 'no put downs' at Junior Soldiers? (Shows respect, caring for others.)
- Why did God give us rules like those we talked about and listed before?
- I wonder if there are any rules that you don't like? Why? Why not?
- I wonder why we have them? Why is it important? Why we can't just do what we want, like going and hitting someone just because we want to?

Reinforce with the children the importance of having rules in all the different areas of our lives, at home, at work, at school, on the roads, in the sports or recreationac tivi ti es that we do, at special events, in our churches and in our lives as followers of Jesus. Sometimes we might struggle with some of the rules but they are generally put in place to help keep us safe and keep things in some sort of order (not chaos) - they are not just made up to annoy you or make life difficult.

Pray with the Junior Soldiers for the rules that they have trouble with and that are not so easy to always respect and follow.

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.

House Rules ...

- What are the rules of your house? What can or can't you do? See if you can list them all.
- Why do you have those rules in your house?
- When you have listed them, check them out with the other members of your family - are there any others that you need to add?

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