

Junior Soldiers

Unit 3 : Lesson 1



'Keeping our Promise'

PURPOSE : To help children to review their Junior Soldier promise and explore what it means to them, and to identify some of the things they might find helpful in keeping their promise.

'Two people are better than one. They can help each other in everything they do.

Suppose someone falls down. Then his friend can help him up.

But suppose the man who falls down doesn't have anyone to help him up.

Then feel sorry for him!'

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 (NIRV)

Consider & Prepare

Read:

Acts 2 (specifically verses 42-47)

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Have you ever broken a promise? It is hard for any of us to keep every promise we make, and experience tells us that when we have support, encouragement or someone holding us accountable, we are more likely to keep our promises.

This lesson is about helping the Junior Soldiers to be able to talk about how they are going with keeping their Junior Soldier promise, and to remind them that they have support structures in place within their family and church community. There is also opportunity for them to discuss what is hard/easy about keeping the promise and what challenges they are facing that they need help to address.

This would be a great session to have the Big Buds attend with the Junior Soldiers so that the kids feel supported and so that the Big Buds understand some of the challenges their Little Bud is facing.

What you will need:

For 'Connecting In'

- Blocks (Lego, Duplo, wooden blocks, etc.)
- Water pistol for the leader
- Eggs
- Craft construction materials (cardboard, sticky tape, cotton balls or wool, icy pole sticks, straws, foil, tissues, egg carton bottoms, etc.)

For 'The Main Thing'

- A plastic softdrink bottle filled with water to approximately half-way for each group
- Bucket of soft balls
- Bats, shields, racquets, pool noodles or other such items.
- Junior Soldier Promise
- Textas
- Journal

For 'Tying In'

- Butchers paper
- Bibles
- Textas

For 'Home & Beyond'

- Print of cards for the Junior Soldiers with the 'Home & Beyond' information on them for each of the Junior Soldiers to place them in their notepad or journal for this weeks challenge.



Connecting In

Support or Not ...

You might like to choose one of the options below for this activity:

Block version

- Divide the children into at least two groups (if you have a large group you can split into more).
- Provide each group with tub full of blocks (you can use Lego, Duplo, wooden or another type of blocks), you might also like to add some other construction bits and pieces, e.g. icy pole sticks etc
- The task for each group is to set up two scenarios. Both scenarios are to have a single block set up in the middle. The first one is to stay on its own but the second one is to have a support structure built around it in order to protect it. That might include a base, walls and roof.
- The support structures are to protect the block from being swept away by the stream of water that will come from the leader's water pistol.
- When the groups are finished, the structures will be judged on how well they can protect their block.
- The leader will then go around using the water pistol to try to sweep the block off the table, both the block set out on its own and also the one that has the support structure around it.

Egg version

(if any of your children have egg allergies then it would be wise to choose the block option above)

- Again divide into two or more groups for this activity.
- Each group should be given two eggs and a bunch of craft construction materials including cardboard, sticky tape, cotton balls or wool, icy pole sticks, straws, foil, tissues, egg carton bottoms, etc.
- Again they are to set up two scenarios. One where the egg is on its own and another where the egg is surrounded by items that are going to protect it when it is dropped. The children are to use their craft materials to create something that will protect the egg.

- Give the groups a time limit to create the best protective structure that they can for their egg. When finished, each group is to choose a volunteer that will stand on a chair, holding both eggs, one in each hand and then drop them.
- The groups will be judged on their protective egg structure and the leader will be looking to see if the egg is either broken or cracked.

Link:

- What happened to the block/egg that was on its own today?
- What happened to the block/egg that had a supportive/protective structure around it?
- In isolation it is hard to stand firm when you come up against temptation, opposition and tough times. When you've got protection, support structures and help, there is a higher chance that you will be able to stand firm against these things.
- Today we are going to explore our promise, the things that we find important and the things that we might struggle with. We are also going to look at how those in our families and church community can help to build a supportive, protective structure around us to help with keeping our promise.



The Main Thing

Two are better than one...

Divide your group into two groups (*if your group is large enough*) or do the activity twice.

You will need an empty plastic softdrink bottle, filled with water to about half way, and a bucket of soft balls for each group. (*This activity is probably best done outside or on a floor space that is able to get wet.*)

- **#1** – one person is to stand in the middle of an outlined circle/area and protect the bottle.
- The rest of the group has the bucket of soft balls that they are going to use to try and knock the target over.
- Give the group a set time limit to try and knock over the bottle. Only one person is defending the object.
- **#2** – This time the activity is set up with one person specifically designated to defend the object from being knocked over, but this person will have 'support' team members (probably another three people would work best) to help. They will have an item that can assist them in defending the target, e.g. bats, shields, racquets, pool noodles or other such items.
- The rest of the group will again have the bucket of soft balls and a time limit in which to try and knock over the bottle.

When the groups are finished it would be good for the children to sit in their groups for debriefing on this activity.

- How did it feel/do you think it would feel doing this on your own?
- How did it feel/do you think it would feel when you had others to help defend the target?
- It certainly is a lot easier when we have other people to help us with achieving our goal. There are times when we think we will be able to do it all by ourselves but it really does take the pressure off when there are others around to help encourage us, support us and give us a hand.

Read the Junior Soldier Promise together...

(*You might like to get the children to write the promise out onto a big piece of paper to have in the middle of their group as you discuss the next part of the lesson; it would also be good to provide the children with some textas to help them as they express themselves in response to the following questions. You could also get the children to respond in their journal.*)

- I wonder if there are any parts of the promise that you find difficult. Why/Why not?
- I wonder what types of temptations or struggles you might encounter?
- I wonder what might make it hard?
- I wonder what sorts of things you might be worried about?
- Do you think there is something that might make it easier? (*Just touch on this question briefly as they will explore it in more detail in the 'Tying in' section.*)

Tying In

Help is at hand...

Read the Bible passages together, Acts 2:42–47 and Ecclesiastes 4:9–12

- I wonder what you think God's important message is from these verses.
- What parts of these verses are important and stand out to you?

We see from all the activities that we have done today that if we are trying to do something on our own it can be more difficult than if we have other people or things to help us. It can be easier to achieve a goal when others are there to help and support us or there are particular structures or process in place that will also help to achieve your goals.

- How can we help and support each other to achieve our goals and especially help in keeping our Junior Soldier promise?
- I wonder what you might find helpful or what you might need to help you keep your Junior Soldier promise.
(*You might like to share some of the things that you find helpful from friends and the church community in keeping your promise to Jesus.*)

Get the children to rewrite their Junior Soldier promise either in their journal, notebook or on a sheet of paper. Ask them to add a section on the bottom that starts with **'I am going to get my friends to help me by...'** When the children have finished this activity get them to share their extra text with the group. Get the children to sit in pairs and pray for the other person and the things they would like help with and encourage them to continue to pray throughout the week for that person.



Home & Beyond

Print off the Home & Beyond cards attached. The children might like to keep these in their journal or notebook where they could write or stick the challenges, reflect, answer questions or complete activities each week.

Reinforce our promise...

This week encourage the Junior Soldiers to read over their promise a number of times, along with the additional piece (as above) that they have added about how they are going to get their friends, family and church to support them. It would be helpful to display it in their room or place it somewhere where they will see it and be able to go over it easily during the week.

Share the additional part that they have added to their promise with their Big Bud/family or significant people in their church so that they will be aware of how they can help the Junior Soldier keep their promise.

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