

Junior Soldiers

Unit 3 : Lesson 6



What are you thinking?

PURPOSE : For the children to understand the impact of the things they think about on who they are, and to explore what sorts of things God wants us to focus on.

'I promise to pray, to read my Bible, and to lead a life that is clean in thought, word and deed.'

'Finally, my friends, keep your minds on whatever is true, pure, right, holy, friendly, and proper.'

Don't ever stop thinking about what is truly worthwhile and worthy of praise.'

Philippians 4:8

Consider & Prepare

Read:

The Junior Soldier promise

Philippians 4:4–9

This lesson is part of a three-lesson focus on the part of the Junior Soldier promise that says 'to lead a life that is clean in thought, word and deed'. Unit 2, Lesson 1 focuses on the tongue and the words that we use, and there will be a lesson in Unit 4 on the things we do. Today's lesson is about our thoughts and what we allow to impact them, and how this shows in our behaviour and attitudes.

Researchers tell us that each day we see, on average, more than 1,000 images from advertising, the media, the internet and television that all have some—even minor—impact on us. I guarantee, if you see 50 ads for Coke in one day, you're going to feel like having a Coke before the day's out! And with declining standards in advertising and media, it can be a daily struggle to focus on things that are pure and right and holy and true.

In an age where the adultification and sexualisation of children has become a major social issue, we need to be wary of the pressure on our children to want to 'be', look or behave like someone that is not

really who God wants them to be. We need to provide our Junior Soldiers with a safe place where they can talk about the challenges they face in keeping their promise and in leading a life 'clean in thought, word and deed'.

Computer boffins say that you can't make a computer do miracles; it can only work with the data that is entered. If you put garbage in, you get garbage out (they use the acronym GIGO). We want to make sure our Junior Soldiers aren't 'feeding' themselves with 'garbage' that will affect their behaviour and attitudes.

You will need:

For 'Connecting In'

- Whiteboard or large sheet of butchers paper
- Bright coloured textas.

For 'The Main Thing'

- Two basic cake mix packets from the supermarket already mixed together.
- Yummy 'add ins' for one cake (milk, white and dark chocolate bits, M&Ms, coconut, bananas, frozen berries, etc.)
- Not so yummy 'add ins' for the other cake (chopped olives, spoonful of garlic or chilli, frozen spinach or peas, tuna, etc.)
- Cake tins for two cakes, bowls and mixing utensils.
- Oven for baking the cakes.
- Large sheets of butchers paper and textas for tracing body outlines or small cardboard people cutouts (these can be purchased at many craft shops).
- Bibles

For 'Tying In'

- Bright coloured sticky notes.

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

Mind Games...

- Ask one of the children to say 'Blue, blue, blue, blue, blue, blue, blue, blue' (*eight times*). Ask them straight after they have finished, 'What colour is grass?' (*most people will say 'blue'*)
- Next: Ask one of the children to yell the word 'shop' three times. Ask them straight after they have finished, 'What do you do when you come to a green light?' (*most people will say 'stop'*)
- Next: Ask one of the children to yell 'silk' five times. Ask them straight after they have finished, 'What does a cow drink?' (*most people will say 'milk'*)
- Next: Ask one of the children 'What is it called when you do this?' (*you poke the child*), they will answer 'poke' and then ask them 'What is a funny thing that you tell that has a punch line?', they will say 'joke', then ask them quickly 'What is the white part of the egg called?' (*most people will say 'yolk'*)
- Next: Ask one of the children to say 'roast' five times. Ask them straight after they have finished, 'What do you put in the toaster?' (*most people will say 'toast'*)
- This might be enough for this activity to make your point but, if you like, you could do the following—on a whiteboard or large sheet of butchers paper, write the word 'yellow' but write it in any colour other than yellow. Ask one of the children to tell you what colour is written on the board or the paper. (*Most people will tell you the colour that the word is written in and not the actual word i.e. yellow*). You can repeat this a number of times; try writing ten colours in ten different colours and see how quickly they can say the colour that's written, rather than the colour of the text.

- **Link:** Today we have had fun with some mind games but they can highlight an important point for us about the things that we focus on and spend our time thinking about. In the activity/riddle the word that you focused on at the start impacted what you said in response to the question e.g. when you 'silk' and focused on that word your response to the question would most likely have been 'milk' even though cows produce milk not drink it. The things we focus on—spend our time doing, spend time thinking about or even the people we hang around with—can impact our thinking and our behaviour. So basically, 'what we put in – is what we get out'. If we were to spend all our time watching a particular television show then our behaviour or language might start to reflect the characters in it.
- Today we are going to look at the part of our Junior Soldier promise that talks about being 'clean in thought' and explore in the Bible what it teaches about how the things we think about can impact who we are and how we behave.



The Main Thing

What cake is this?

- For this activity you will need two basic cake mixes already made up, one group of yummy things to add into a cake and one group of not so yummy things to add into another cake.
- Have one bowl and the yummy items up one end of the table and the other bowl and the not so yummy items up the other end of the table.
- Ask the children to choose what (yummy) items you are going to add to the cake mix. They can help to add them and mix them together and pour cake mix into prepared baking tin.
- Then ask the children to choose what (not so yummy) items you are going to add to the second cake mix. They again can help to add, mix and pour into prepared tin.
- When these cakes are cooked:
 - Which one do you think you will decide to have for morning/afternoon tea?
 - Why did you choose that one?
 - Why didn't you choose the other one?

Link:

- I am sure that to have a cake that you enjoy to eat today you will pick cake number one. It will be nice because we put nice things in to add to the cake (*mention the items that the children chose for this cake*). The other cake will not be so nice, not because we added items that are not nice but because they are not going to taste so nice in a cake. There are certain things that you will add to a cake and then other items that might be better suited to a pizza or something savoury.
- With the cakes today we 'got what we put in'—the cake was only going to be as nice as the items that we added to it.
- Think about making sausages, what they put into the machine to mince up is what comes out at the other end all minced up inside the sausage skin. It is only going to include what you put in at the start, not change miraculously in the process.
 - How do you think this phrase 'you get what you put in' could relate to us?
 - Ask the children for some examples of what that might look like.
- Today we are going to look at the part of our Junior Soldier promise that talks about being 'clean in thought' and explore in the Bible what it teaches us about how the things we think about can impact who we are and how we behave.
- So the things we think about—'the things we put in'—are going to be the 'things we get out'.

What do we fill our lives with?

For this activity you will need some large sheets of butchers paper so that they can trace around their body outline or some small cardboard people cutouts that can be stuck onto a sheet of A4 paper and textas.

- Using either format, ask the children to think about the things that influence them. Brainstorm briefly all the things that influence them and write/draw them around the outside along with arrows pointing towards the body (*school, television shows, advertising, friends, music, family, parents, internet, books, etc.*)
- When they have finished adding all the influences ask them to make a prediction:
 - If these things are going in, what do you think might come out?
 - How do you think they will impact what you do, say and think?
- If I spend a lot of time with my parents there are certain things that they say, particular phrases or specific words that make their way into the way that I speak to others.
 - Have you ever had this happen to you? (*Maybe you have noticed that you are using a word or phrase that your mum or dad or sister/brother use a lot or perhaps someone else has noticed and mentioned it to you.*)
- If you spend a lot of time watching a particular television show you might find yourself doing some of the things that they do, or speaking the way they speak or thinking about things in a certain way because that is what happens on the show. For example if you spend all your time watching *The Simpsons* you might think that women stay home in the kitchen and that men drink beer and lie around on the couch.
 - Have you ever noticed that a television show is impacting how you behave or speak or think?
 - Give some examples.
- You might like to use some other examples to make this same point, perhaps some that might be very relevant to your group of children.
 - I wonder what sorts of things God would want us to think about or the sorts of things He would want to influence our lives?
 - Does anyone know a verse in the Bible that talks about this?
- Read Philippians 4:4–9 together focusing particularly on verse eight.
 - So what are the things that God wants us to focus on?
 - What does true, pure, right, holy, friendly and proper mean? Can we write some definitions together? (*you might like to have a dictionary there to help with this*)
 - Can you tell me something true, pure, right, holy, friendly or proper that might influence you?
 - If you are spending your time thinking about these things what do you think is going to come out? What will your behavior or language be like?



Tying In

Don't ever stop...

For the 'Tying in' activity the children will come back to the initial activity. They can either use a fresh cardboard people cutout or they can revisit their initial one (either the small or large outline depending on which format you went with). If using the initial outline, encourage the children to use a different colour texta or bright coloured sticky notes to add the following information to their person.

- Get the children to write the following verse on the inside of their people cutout: 'Don't ever stop thinking about what is truly worthwhile and worthy of praise.'
 - What do you want to influence you in a good, true, right, pure, holy, friendly, and proper way? Add some things to your outline using a different coloured texta or some bright coloured sticky notes.
 - If these are the good things that you would like to influence you, what do you hope will come out? Add some things to the inside of the body outline along with the verse.
 - Who is going to be the best example and best influence on who we are? (*Jesus and the example that he has set for us in the way he lived and what he taught us.*)
- Some people we know give us a good example to follow and influence us in a positive way, but Jesus is the perfect example to follow and it is important to base our lives on him.
- Ask the children to sit with their body outline and pray for some of the things that they have just added, the true, right, pure etc. items that they have added that they would like to influence their behaviour, language and thinking. Also ask them to pray the phrase in the middle, 'God please help me to not stop thinking about what is truly worthwhile and worthy of praise.'



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.

Good Influence...

- Think about someone who is a good influence on you, someone who helps you to think about good and pure things (Philippians 4:8)
- Write a note, card, draw a picture or a special sticky note message to say thank you for the positive influence they have on you.
- *Thank you for the way you care for others and the nice words you use in showing this. This helps me to think about caring for others in a good way. From.....*

Home & Beyond

Good Influence...

- Think about someone who is a good influence on you, someone who helps you to think about good and pure things (Philippians 4:8)
- Write a note, card, draw a picture or a special sticky note message to say thank you for the positive influence they have on you.
- Thank you for the way you care for others and the nice words you use in showing this. This helps me to think about caring for others in a good way. From.....

Junior Soldiers

Home & Beyond

Good Influence...

- Think about someone who is a good influence on you, someone who helps you to think about good and pure things (Philippians 4:8)
- Write a note, card, draw a picture or a special sticky note message to say thank you for the positive influence they have on you.
- Thank you for the way you care for others and the nice words you use in showing this. This helps me to think about caring for others in a good way. From.....

Junior Soldiers

Home & Beyond

Good Influence...

- Think about someone who is a good influence on you, someone who helps you to think about good and pure things (Philippians 4:8)
- Write a note, card, draw a picture or a special sticky note message to say thank you for the positive influence they have on you.
- Thank you for the way you care for others and the nice words you use in showing this. This helps me to think about caring for others in a good way. From.....

Junior Soldiers

Home & Beyond

Good Influence...

- Think about someone who is a good influence on you, someone who helps you to think about good and pure things (Philippians 4:8)
- Write a note, card, draw a picture or a special sticky note message to say thank you for the positive influence they have on you.
- Thank you for the way you care for others and the nice words you use in showing this. This helps me to think about caring for others in a good way. From.....

Junior Soldiers