

Junior Soldiers

Unit 3 : Lesson 7



Talking to God!

PURPOSE : To help the Junior Soldier discover and explore prayer, focusing specifically on adoration and thanksgiving.

*'Always give thanks to God the Father for everything.
Give thanks to him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.'*

Ephesians 5:20 (NIRV)

Consider & Prepare

Read:

Adoration: 2 Samuel 22:50, Psalm 8:1, Psalm 34:3, Psalm 145:1–2, Proverbs 18:10, Isaiah 47:4 and Jeremiah 10:6. Perhaps find some more for yourself.

Thanksgiving: Philippians 4:6–7, Psalm 100:4–6, Ephesians 5:20 and 1 Thessalonians 5:18. Check out more for yourself.

This lesson will be one that the children will learn more by doing. So throughout the lesson they will be given opportunity to pray and understand that it is a natural thing, not a strict formula or something that they need to be scared about.

The concept of talking to a God they can't see or audibly hear from may be new to some of the children, especially those raised in non-church going families where prayer is not part of daily life. However, the children need to understand the importance of an active prayer life to a faithful Christian and it's also important that - from the start - they learn that prayer shouldn't be formulaic and 'tired' but natural and comfortable and 'active' - just like talking to a friend.

What you will need:

For 'Connecting In'

- A3 sheets of paper
- Textas
- Pairs of clean tin cans (clean and dry with no sharp edges)
- String (such as kite string or nylon string), cut into about 4-metre lengths
- Something that can punch a hole in the bottom of a tin can safely

For 'The Main Thing'

- Squishy ball

For 'Tying In'

- Pre-prepared prayer box and pieces of cardboard
- Notebook
- Piece of paper or fabric
- Brightly 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

Communication Pictionary...

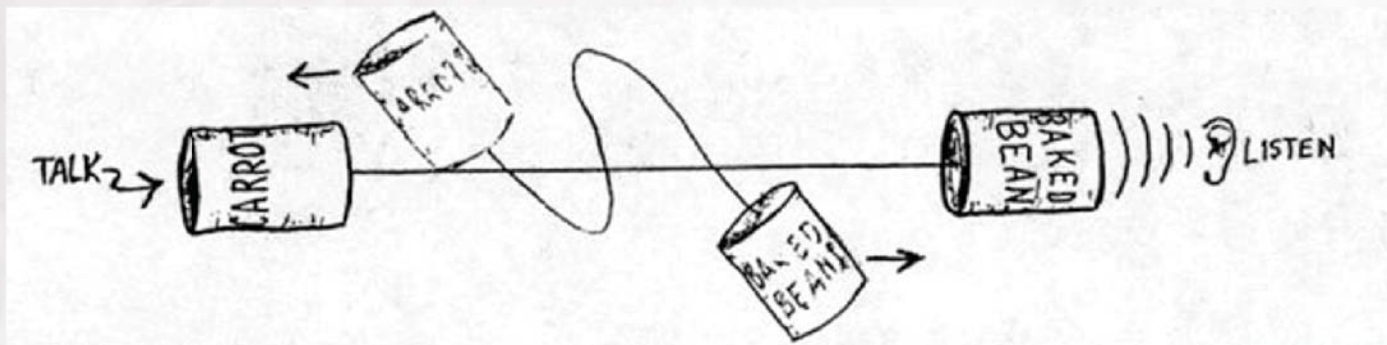
- Divide your group into at least two teams
- You will need some sheets of A3 paper and textas for this activity
- Get the children to take it in turns to be the person who draws for their group. When they have chosen their first person to draw, get them to come and wait out the front with you.
- When both groups are ready tell both the 'drawers' the first item they will have to draw from the list below.
- The winner is the first group to guess the right item that is being drawn (*telephone, newspaper, letters, a road map, radio, television, mobile phone, computer, pen or pencil, etc.*).
- Keep playing until you have worked your way through the above list, trying to let each person have a turn at drawing.

Link: For our game of Pictionary today we have been drawing items that all have something in common, I wonder if you can guess what that is (*communication*).

All the items can be used to communicate with each other, to pass on a message that you want the other person to know. There are lots of ways to communicate with others. In this lesson and the next one we will look at prayer and talking with God - in particular today our focus is going to be on giving thanks and showing love.

Tin Can Telephone...

- Do you get in trouble for spending too much time talking to friends on the telephone? Here is a fun way to find out how sound travels and talk to friends at the same time.
- Make a 'tin can telephone' by punching a small hole in the bottom of each can. Each hole should be just large enough so that the string will go through.
- From the outside, insert one end of the string into the hole in one can. Tie a couple of knots in the end of the string so that it will not slip back through when pulled tight. Do the same with the other end of the string using the other can.
- With one person holding each can, stretch the string so that it is tight. One person talking into one can sends vibrations through the tightened string to the other can. The person with their ear to the other can will be able to hear what was said.



Link: Today we have been looking at using tin cans to communicate with each other. There are lots of ways that we can convey a message to someone else, how many can we name?

We are going to look at how we communicate with God today, how many ways can you name for this?

The Main Thing

Talking with God...

Prayer is communicating with God. We may not be able to call God on the telephone or send Him a letter, but talking to Him or sharing with Him how we feel should be just as easy as chatting to your best friend on the phone or sending them a message via email or sms.

- I wonder why we should pray. (*Because it makes our relationship with God stronger.*)
- I also wonder if you think it is important.
- I wonder if you could imagine having a best friend and not communicating with them.



Prayer is seeking God and His direction for our lives. Praying also helps keep us out of trouble. Jesus told us to pray, 'Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation' (Matthew 26:41).

There are different ways of praying and different types of prayers that we can pray so today we are going to look at 'adoration' and 'thanksgiving'.

'Adoration'

- What do you think the word 'adoration' means? (*Allow for some responses.*)
- According to the dictionary, adoration means 'deep love or esteem' and 'the act of worshipping'.
 - Imagine something that you love, something that is special and is important to you (*family member, friend, sporting team, special object/item, etc.*)
 - Think about how you feel about this person, team, object, etc.
 - Describe how you feel about your person/item to the person who is sitting on your right and then swap and get them to share their person/item with you.
- I am sure that there are some things that are pretty special to you or people that you love a lot and really love hanging out with. This is 'adoring' something: a deep and special love.
- Prayers of adoration are prayers of worship to God telling him how much we love and adore Him; how special He is to us and how we love hanging out with Him.

Try that now. Let's all close our eyes and we will go around the room and tell God how much we love him, try using different words to describe how great he is and how you feel about him.
(*Get the leader to close this time with an 'Amen'.*)

'Thanksgiving'

- Think about something that you said 'thank you' for in the last week - share it with another person.
- Think about another time this week when someone has said 'thank you' to you. How did this make you feel?
- It is always nice when someone takes the time to stop and say 'thank you' for something and show their appreciation.
- Another type of prayer is a prayer of 'thanksgiving' or 'giving thanks'.
- To be thankful means 'to express gratitude.' Sometimes we feel glad because someone did something nice for us, but we never get around to telling that person. Thankfulness is being so full of thanks that we can't keep it inside! We just have to tell God 'Thank you!' or we'll burst.
- Some people confuse praising God with thanking Him. What's the difference? Well, when we praise God, we celebrate Him for who He is. When we thank God, we celebrate Him for what He does. For instance, we praise and adore God because He is great. We thank Him for loving us so much that He sent Jesus!

Try that now. Let's have some prayers of thanksgiving now. Thank God for the things He has given to you - anything from your family members or friends, to your house or your favourite book. Also remember to thank God for answered prayers, like helping you to feel calm when you had to give a presentation at school or helping a family member getting a job.

- Pass around a squishy ball, when each person gets the ball they are to share what they are thankful to God for.
- Finish with a prayer about being thankful for all the Junior Soldiers in your church, division and across the territory.

Tying In

The best way to learn about prayer is to practice it. It would be great to set up the activities below and perhaps some others that you might have used before (*that will fit in with 'adoration' and 'thanksgiving'*) to give the children some choice to engage with prayer at this time. Here are a few suggestions that you could try together:

- **Prayer Box.** Have the children put their name on the cards that are provided next to the prayer box. On the other side get the children to either write or draw something that they would like prayed about. When they have finished, place their card into the prayer box (that you have pre-prepared). At the end of the session, have each child pull out one card and have them pray for that person during the week, giving thanks for them too.
- **Open Prayer Journal.** Purchase a special notebook and, each time the Junior Soldiers meet, put the date in the top corner of the next free page. Have the book open and displayed in a prominent place so the children can use it each time they come together. Today with the focus on ad', encourage the children to write prayers that would reflect these things - how much they love God and all the things that they are thankful for. Over time the children can also look at previous pages and what prayers have been answered. The journal can be referred to during the lesson and the requests prayed for by the children before finishing.
- **Wall of prayer.** Hang up a piece of paper or fabric on a wall (you might like to use bright colours for this or you could use just white paper or black fabric and use some bright sticky notes to make an affect). Place the words 'adoration' and 'thanksgiving' somewhere on the wall and encourage the children to place their prayers around them. This time words 'adoration' and 'thanksgiving', however you might like to use this again to continue to encourage prayer with the children and change the focus for the day. This is a faith-building visual reminder of the prayers, and allows for great follow-up on prayers when they get answered.



Home & Beyond

Make an Ebenezer...

The biblical prophet Samuel set up a monument to remind the people of Israel of the things the Lord had done to help them: 'Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and She. He named it Ebenezer (stone of help), saying, "Thus far has the Lord helped us"' (1 Samuel 7:12)

You can make an 'Ebenezer' too. Ask your parents if there is a spot in your yard or garden where you can make a monument of thanksgiving to God. If you live in an apartment, maybe you can use a corner in your room. Find several smooth rocks/stones. Wash them and let them dry. With a permanent marker, write something God has done for you on each rock: food, clothes, friends, family and so on. Be sure to write the date on the rocks. Pile your rocks into a heap. Each time you pass your Ebenezer, be sure to stop and thank God for all He has done for you. Continue to add rocks as you remember to thank God for things.

(You could also provide the children with a small bag of stones for this that you can purchase from stores such as 'The Reject Shop' or 'The \$2 Shop'.)

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