

Junior Soldiers

Unit 3 : Lesson 8



Talking to God about myself & others

PURPOSE : To help Junior Soldiers understand prayers of confession in their daily life and that they can bring their needs and the needs of others to God.

*'Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything.
Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done.'*

Philippians 4:6 (NLT)

Consider & Prepare

Read:

Ephesians 6:18

Colossians 1:9–12

Prayer habits that last a lifetime are most often formed in childhood. That's why it is really important to teach children how to pray. As with most spiritual disciplines, prayer is 'caught' more than it's taught - as teachers model meaningful prayer lives, kids will learn how they, too, can talk to God. Providing a variety of opportunities to pray when you are together with the Junior Soldiers is also a key way that they will learn and practice prayer in many different formats.

Making prayers relevant to children's lives help them to grow in prayer. Because children have a strong tendency to view the world in terms of 'me, my, and mine', use this very normal stage of development by focusing prayer on kids' everyday concerns and people who impact and influence them.

In this lesson we will focus on 'Sorry' prayers for themselves and 'Please' prayers for others. Although we will explain some ways to pray these types of prayers it is important not send the message that this is the only way. Prayer is never wrong, especially when it comes straight from the heart. In the end, that's all you really need to teach children to help them communicate with our God who is always listening: to talk to Him from your heart.

What you'll need:

For 'Connecting In'

- Props for 'human robot game' (a glass, bottle of water, pen and paper, skipping rope, etc.)

For 'The Main Thing'

- Bible
- A4 Paper (enough for two sheets per child)
- Pencils and textas
- Playdough, plasticine or paper magiclay

For 'Tying In'

- Butchers paper
- 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.
- Hand cutouts



Connecting In

Robot Game:

Ask one of your adult helpers or leaders to act as a robot. Tell the children that they can get the robot to do a simple task by giving it simple, clear and direct instructions. Encourage them to use some of the items that are available in the room.

Have a few props available such as a glass and a bottle of water, pen and paper or a skipping rope. You may like to give some suggestions such as 'ask the robot to pour a small amount of water from the bottle into the cup and then take a sip'.

The robot must only listen to the children and they must only do what the children say. If the children give vague instructions the robot should look confused. Only very detailed instructions will work to get the job done. Have a bit of fun with this activity and the children will love it.

Link: Today we have had some fun giving simple tasks to the robot. Robots and machines (computers) need to have the right information to follow when we ask them/it to do a task. With a computer you need to push the same buttons or click on the right sequence to achieve the task. Things need to be done a particular way.

Explain to the children that God doesn't want us to pray like human robots. When we pray to God he wants us to pray from the heart, to share things that are happening for us and to pray about the things that we and others might need and situations where we might have made a wrong choice.

Just repeating prayers that we know, words that we always use, or feeling that prayer has to fit one particular format, isn't really talking to God but more like being a prayer robot!

The Main Thing

Brain time:

Understanding 'sorry' prayers:

Ask the children to share with you some things that they do that are not good or some choices that they have made that are not wise. (e.g. fighting with a brother or sister, not doing as they are asked by a parent or teacher, going somewhere without permission etc.) Offer some of your own examples and explain that from time to time everyone does things that are not right and makes unwise choices, even grown-ups.

- I wonder how you feel when you know that you have done the wrong thing or made a choice that perhaps wasn't so wise.

→ I wonder how God feels when His children do the wrong thing.

When we are sorry for what we do and ask God for forgiveness, it is called **CONFESSION**. Confession is just a really big word for when we know we have done something wrong and we want to say sorry for that.

- Read together 1 John 1:9 **'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.'**
 - So that means if we admit our sins to God and genuinely ask for His forgiveness, He will forgive us.
- I wonder how this promise from God makes you feel.

Understanding 'please' prayers:

When we pray, we also need to pray for others. Ask the children to yell out different people that they could pray for. Each of the people mentioned have different needs that we could pray for too. Explain to the children that they can pray for family and friends, for those who are sick or sad and for those who might have special events or situations coming up. They can also pray for people they know who are not yet Christians and for those who are but want to see their relationship with God grown.

- Read together Matthew 7:7 'Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.'
- I wonder what God means by this verse?
- Do you think that it might be if we ask for a new computer that that will happen?
- *(Explore this topic with your kids. It is important that they understand that the things we ask for need to be in line with the sort of things God would like e.g. not praying to get stuff for ourselves, not to be greedy but to pray for good things for others and the way that they interact with others)*

It is important that children understand the benefits of praying for others especially for those who cannot pray for themselves. It is also good for the children to understand that whilst they can pray for others and their needs it is also important to pray for the things that they need too, just like they talk to their mum or dad.

Creative time:

Give each child two pieces of paper. Have them write 'SORRY' on the top of one and 'PLEASE' on top of the other.

'Sorry' sheet:

- On the 'sorry' sheet ask the children to write or draw some things that they want to say sorry for on that piece of paper. Get them to write/draw each thing in a list down the page with a space between each one to help with the next part of the activity.
- When they have finished with their first sheet, get the group to make a circle and place a rubbish bin in the middle before you start. Encourage the children to share a couple of the things that they have on their sheet (this should not be a mandatory thing). 'God, I am sorry for...'
- When they have read out an item, encourage them to tear this section of the sheet of paper and place it in the rubbish bin. For the items that they don't share with the group ask them to pray quietly about this and then to do the same, tear it off the sheet and scrunch it up and place it in the bin.

'Please' sheet:

- In this part of the activity the children will be asked to think about and pray for others.
- On the 'please' sheet ask the children to make some small models from the plasticine/paper magiclay or playdough and provided, of people that they would like to pray for today. They could make just faces or whole bodies to place on the paper.
- **Or** if they like they can just draw faces or people that they would like to pray for on their sheet.
- Again in a circle, encourage the children to share who they would like to pray for today and why.
- Those who have made the clay models can place their sheets in the centre of the circle while those who have drawn their people can make a paper plane out of their sheet of paper.



- You may need a quick demo to help the children who might be struggling with making their sheet into a paper plane.
- When ready ask the children to say 'God I am sending these people to you in prayer today'. Have them launch the plane as they say it!

As the leader it would be good for you to close this segment in prayer and affirm the children as they have prayed today.

Tying In

Over the last couple of sessions we have looked at different ways to pray. Last time we looked at prayers of 'Thanksgiving' and 'Adoration' and today at 'Sorry' and 'Please' prayers. If every time you talked to your friend they said the same thing to you, it would get really boring wouldn't it? It is the same when we talk to God. He doesn't want 'robot' prayers from us or only prayers that we say over and over again. He wants us to pray from our hearts about:

- All the things that we are thankful and happy for;
- How much we love Him;
- The things/choices that we are truly sorry for;
- All the people that we love and care about and the things we want and hope for them;
- And all the things that we need and hope for.

By remembering to use the above four ways to pray, we will be praying from the heart and God will be listening to our every word.

As a group, brainstorm and plan a prayer station that can be set up for others in the church to use. This could be during a special prayer weekend that might include a 24/7 prayer focus, it might be included in a prayer room that you have or it might be something that the children can set up and invite people to participate in either before or after church.

It would be great to see what the children come up with but if you are stuck for ideas then you might like to download the children's prayer resource from the 24/7 prayer website:

→ www.salvationarmy.org.au/corps_prog/24/KidsPrayerManual2010_2011.pdf



Home & Beyond

Give each child a hand cut-out to take home. *(These can be purchased or you can give the children some cardboard to trace around their own hand and cut it out.)*

- Encourage the children to read Philippians 4:6 every day.
- Ask the children to write these words on each of the fingers: Thanks, Praise, Sorry, Please and Read.
- Encourage the children to use this hand throughout the week to remind them of some of the things that we can pray for and do.
- Challenge the children to also show others in their family or their Big Bud and ask them to share a prayer with them on one of the areas.



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- Show your hand cut-out to others in your family or your Big Bud and ask them to share a prayer with you on one of the areas.

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