

Junior Soldiers

Unit 4 : Lesson 1



Let Us Be...

PURPOSE: For children to explore and understand the way that Jesus wants us to live and to be from the 'Beatitudes', and consider the difference between what the world values and what God values.

'When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on the side of a mountain and sat down. Jesus' disciples gathered around him, and he taught them...'

Matthew 5:1-2

Consider & Prepare

Read:

Matthew 5:1-12

Romans 12:2

1 Samuel 16:1-13, especially v.7

The verses of the Bible known as the 'Beatitudes' are recognised even outside the Christian Church as radical, counter-cultural teaching that change how we should consider our priorities, others and God. If Jesus had said only these statements, he would have gone down in history as a brilliant speaker and teacher.

They are statements that challenge the status quo - not only in Jesus' day but even today, 2,000 years later. Blessed are the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, the persecuted... This is madness! How can these people be blessed by God?

Jesus spent much of his teaching trying to convince people that when they are at their weakest, they are most dependent on God and are drawn closer to him. It's when we submit to God that we discover true strength.

This lesson highlights that the way God thinks about us and about life and about what is valued, is different from what most people think. By the end of this lesson, the kids should know that God values them and wants to help them see life through 'God-coloured' glasses.

What you will need:

For 'Connecting In' –

- A range of magazines and newspapers (*be mindful of the magazines that you use and the content before letting the kids flick through them*)
- Scissors
- Sheets of A3 or A4 pieces of paper
- Glue sticks

For 'The Main Thing' –

- Butchers paper
- Markers
- Bibles

For 'Tying In' –

The children will need their journals/notebooks or access to some paper
Pens, pencils or textas

For 'Home & Beyond' –

Print off the Home and Beyond cards for each child



Connecting In

What makes you famous?

For this activity you will need a range of magazines and newspapers where the children can identify some famous people. You will also need some scissors so the children can cut out someone famous for this activity.

- Encourage the children to flick through the magazines and newspapers to find someone famous, it can be someone that they like or just someone that they may know something about. (We are not wanting you to only be looking at this from a negative point of view - it's important to give some balance e.g. they may choose someone who is famous for doing really good things to help others.)
- When they find someone get them to cut it out and stick it on a sheet of paper and write around the outside some of the things that they are famous for.
- When everyone is finished get the children to come and sit together in a circle ready to share about their person.
- Ask these questions:
 - Tell us briefly about you famous person and what you like about them.
 - What makes people famous? Is it always a good things? Why/why not?
 - If you could be famous and in a magazine/newspaper, what would it be for?
 - What sort of magazine would you like to be in?
 - What would you like people to be writing about you?



Link: You know, God isn't impressed that much by fame. In the Old Testament, God gave a wise old man called Samuel the task of picking the next king of Israel. God said to Samuel, 'Don't worry about what he looks like - I look inside a person, at their heart.'

God was saying that outward appearances and what other people saw and thought didn't matter to Him, he wanted to know what a person was like on the inside. He wanted a king with good character and attitudes and, most importantly, who loved God.

Today we're going to explore how what people see and what God sees are sometimes different, and how Jesus tried to explain that to people using a passage in the Bible known as the 'Beatitudes'.

The Main Thing

WORLDS VALUES ≠ GODS VALUES...

For this activity you will need a large sheet of butchers paper and some markers. Divide the butchers paper into a table with three columns titled WORLD, GOD and YOU. This will be a brainstorming activity, try to gather as much information as you can as it will be a good visual for the children to refer back to.

Ask the children to tell you firstly what 'the world' thinks, then what 'God' thinks and then what 'they' think in relation to the following questions as well as listing the evidence they have for holding this view.

- What does think about good looks?
- What does think about money?
- What does think about talents e.g. singing, dancing, drawing?
- What does think about sport?
- What does think about the poor?
- What does think being blessed looks like?

→ Are there any differences between what the world values and what God values?

→ Are there any differences between what the world values and what you value?

Jesus teaches us many things through the way he lived, the stories he told and from the important things that He spoke about. In Matthew chapter 5:1–12 Jesus begins a very long sermon with lots of really important things included in it. The first part, verses 3–12 are called the Beatitudes, let's read them together to see what Jesus has to say about being blessed. It would be good if you could look at a couple of versions at this time, the NIV would give a more traditional sound (that the children probably may have heard before) but the CEV and The Message would help with different language that would help with understanding the passage a little clearer.

The following questions can be done as a whole group or it may be a good opportunity to split into smaller groups and engage deeper.

- What stands out for you in this passage?
- Is there anything that seems a bit upside-down to you?
- What do you think Jesus is teaching us about the values of the Kingdom?
- How do you think these statements measure up against the things that the world values?
- If you were to sit with God now and write some more parts to the beatitudes I wonder what you would come up with?

Silent Prayer ...

- How do you think God has blessed you?
- What events have you learnt something from, even if it wasn't pleasant at the time (this is still a blessing)?

Take some time and reflect on the above two statements. This would be a good opportunity for those children who have a journal or notebook to record some of their reflections by writing a response, jotting some notes or drawing a picture in response. If your children don't have journals/notebooks then make sure that they have access to some paper, pens, pencils or textas for this section. Encourage the children to also refer back to the Beatitudes passage during this reflective time.

Encourage the children to spend some time in prayer when they have finished with their reflection and response.



Tying In

A God Magazine...

The values of the world are often portrayed to us through media, television, magazines, newspapers, advertising and the internet. It is important as Christians that we convey the things that we value too.

For this activity you can choose as a group to make a God magazine, newspaper, filmed news report, website with interviews on it or some poster advertising. Interview each other including the leaders and create a page on each person, including things you like, don't like, stand for and value.

If you were going to do a news show or 'entertainment tonight' type show then you will need to film each other, script the questions and rehearse before filming.

Films or PowerPoint slides can be shown to the congregation and the children can share what they have learnt about God's values and the world's values and the beatitudes.

'The challenge for each of you in this creative process is to include something about the Beatitudes, it might be how God has blessed you in situations that might seem unexpected, perhaps how what you value is more connected to God's values rather than what the world values or some of the qualities that you have or seek that link with those outlined in the passage.'



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.

Interviews...

- Interview someone at home or your Big Bud.
- Ask them questions about the things that they value and how God has blessed them.
- Share the page or information that the group put together about you and the things that you value.
- Read together Matthew 5:1–12

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