

Junior Soldiers

Unit 4 : Lesson 6



How much is enough?

PURPOSE: For children to explore and understand that they don't always need to have more, and that they can be content with what they have.

'Don't Fall in love with money. Be satisfied with what you have. The Lord has promised that he will not leave us or desert us.' Hebrews 13:5

Consider & Prepare

Read:

Exodus 16:15–20

Matthew 6:9–13

Acts 2:42–47

Acts 4:32–37

This lesson is the key focus for Junior Soldier Renewal Day, so it would be good to be done in close proximity to that day. It can, however, still be done as a stand-alone lesson.

It can be difficult - and overwhelming - to wrap our heads around the injustice that is in the world and how 'big' and unsolvable it all appears. It is also very easy for us to fall into the trap of forgetting how people around the world live in such extreme poverty when we live in a country that has such wealth. However, the only way to begin addressing the needs of those living in poverty is to start by being informed.

Each of us can make a difference by simply thinking about the choices we make each day. We need to start thinking ethically about what we buy and how we spend our money. This doesn't mean we need to stop purchasing the items we love or use every day, but instead we can 'swap it' for something that was made ethically. Simply by switching to a brand or product that was ethically made, we can begin to make a difference to those who are forced to work for little or no pay and make a real difference in our world.

We need to change our culture, and how we think about and use our money. This change can only happen by individuals becoming informed and making choices with how and what they spend their money on. By helping our children to make these choices, we will raise a generation who think not only about the country that they live in, but how their choices affect those around the world.

Children should also leave this lesson being more aware of the problem of greed and the value of contentment: we all need to better recognise when we have enough, and understand that the more we have - the less someone else has.

What you will need:

For 'Connecting In'

- A large tub of Duplo (or similar joining blocks)

For 'The Main Thing'

- Butchers paper
- Permanent or whiteboard marker
- Bibles

For 'Tying In' –

- Bibles
- Access to a computer (with internet) or a couple of computers to work in small groups or on a rotational basis

For 'Home & Beyond'

- Print off the Home and Beyond cards for each child



Connecting In

I went to the market...

For this activity it would be good for everyone to be sitting in a circle and then take turns moving around the circle so that everyone gets to have a turn. Start with a leader saying, 'I went to the market and I bought a ...' (*the leader can choose an item, e.g. some donuts*) and then turn to the next person in the circle. They then have their turn and say 'I went to the market and I bought some donuts and...' (*then add your item, e.g. and a basketball*). Continue around the circle until someone can't remember all the items that were bought at the market.

You can play this a few times if you like and then make the link into the lesson.

Link: If you went to the market today what would be on your list? (*Give opportunity for some suggestions.*)

- Why do we want all these things?
- Do we need them?
- Is there a difference between want and need?
- Today we are going to explore 'how much is enough?' and what Jesus thinks about being fair and sharing what we have.



80/20...

For this activity you will need a large tub of Duplo (*or similar joining blocks*) and to divide the group into 80% and 20% of your children (*e.g. if you have 10 kids that is a group of 8 and a group of 2*).

Give both the groups the challenge of building the biggest and best construction, using as many blocks that you can, in an allocated time, e.g. two minutes. They will only be able to use the blocks from the same bucket and can only come and take one block at a time.

- How did it feel to be in the small team?
- How did it feel to be in the team that had more people to be able to complete the challenge?
- Identify which team won the challenge. Why do you think this team won? (*Obviously because they had more people power to be able to complete the challenge.*)

Link: Get the children to all sit in a circle, take the tub of Duplo blocks and tip them out onto the floor in the middle of all the children. Get the children to divide the blocks into approx. 80%/20% so they have a visual what this looks like.

‘Did you know that 20% of the people in the world use 80% of the world’s resources, and 80% of people in the world use only 20% of the world’s resources. That is: most of the people in the world don’t use much food or electricity or money or gas or water or things you can buy in shops, and a much smaller number of people do use most of these things.

‘In the activity we did with the blocks, it was easier for the large group to get and use more blocks because they had more people and more power which gave them more opportunity. But just because we can get more, does that mean we should? For example, if you had the money to go to McDonald’s and buy 20 Big Macs for your dinner tonight, does that mean you should?

‘Maybe there’s a better way to use the money - possibly even a way that is both good for you and good for others - rather than just spending it because you can. Today we need to think about how we use our resources, how to share, how to care for those with less than us, and how to live in a way that pleases God.’

The Main Thing

What do we value? What do we buy?

For this activity you will need a large sheet of butchers paper on the wall or a whiteboard where you can display the figures below. Explore these figures below briefly with the children giving them a bit of a picture for the priorities around our world, giving them a sense of the waste of money on things that are not so important as some of the things that are listed in the second table.

Global Priority	\$Billions
Cosmetics in the United States	8
Ice cream in Europe	11
Perfumes in Europe and the United States	12
Pet food in Europe and the United States	17
Business entertainment in Japan	35
Cigarettes in Europe	50
Alcoholic drinks in Europe	105
Narcotics drugs in the world	400
Military spending in the world	780

Global Priority	
Basic education for all	6
Water and sanitation for all	9
Reproductive health for all women	12
Basic health and nutrition	13

‘Half of the children in the world live in poverty, living without adequate food, shelter, sanitation, education and healthcare. This means that more than eight million children die annually before they reach the age of five - from causes that we are capable of stopping. Also, many parents throughout the world will die prematurely, leaving children to fend for themselves.

‘We need to think carefully about how we use our money. For example, the table we’ve looked at shows that more money is spent on make-up and cosmetics in the United States, than is spent on basic education for all children.

‘The way we buy and use things can impact greatly on the poorest people in the world. Before we decide that we ‘need’ to buy something, we should ask ourselves:

1. Why do I need this item? 2. What better way could I spend this money? 3. If I do decide to buy this item, is there something of mine that I can give away to a charity?



Just \$2...

Close to a quarter of the world's population lives below the extreme poverty line, which means they have just AU\$2 a day or less to cover all their daily expenses - housing, education, health, transport and food.

Surviving on such a tiny amount, almost all their income must be spent on food. Even then, they can generally only afford two basic meals a day. They have little to no money left for the other necessities of life - and if anything ever goes wrong they have no safety net to rely on. They are often the victims of broken systems: lacking access to the education, services and the job opportunities they need to break the cycle of poverty.

Compared to the above we are fairly well off, even to the point of being wasteful. How much of what you buy do you just throw away? Have a look at the following clip to see how much the average Australian throws away.



<http://hungrybeast.abc.net.au/stories/beast-file-food-waste>

- I wonder how you would go if you had to live on just \$2 a day, even if that was only to be spent on food?
- What could you buy for that?
- What do you think you would buy?

Just what you need...

In the Bible, in the book of Exodus, we read about Moses leading the Israelite people out of Egypt where they had been held as slaves. Moses had been instructed by God to lead the people to a new home, a 'promised land' that they would own for themselves and where they would establish their nation.

Unfortunately, to get there they had to cross a desert...on foot! Well, after a couple of months of journeying, they started to grumble and complain. In Exodus 16, there is a good message about only taking what we need and about not being greedy and trying to store up excess.

Read Exodus 16:1–5, 13–30

- What do you think God was trying to teach the Israelites?
- What can we learn from this story to apply to how we live, the things that we want and the things we need?

Have you ever eaten so much that you feel sick? Maybe it was after a party or at Christmas or you had a whole bag of lollies at once. Sometimes we don't seem to learn a lesson until we've gone too far or we've experienced something for ourselves. God told the Israelites to take a little, but they took a lot, and then they ended up just looking at maggots!

We all need to learn about doing things in moderation, and when too much of something is not a good thing. God will look after us, but He doesn't like it when we're greedy and disobey Him.

Tying In

Give us this day our daily bread...

The Lord's Prayer includes the phrase (from different translations): 'Give us today our daily bread.' 'Keep us alive with three square meals.' 'Give us our food for today.' 'Give us today the food we need.' 'Give us this day our daily bread.'

- I wonder what Jesus meant when He said this? Do you think it is only relevant to food?
- Read Matthew 6:9–13 together as a group.

We are told to ask God for what we need for the day and not to worry about tomorrow, so I wonder how God would feel if we were always asking for more and more, and eating and taking more than we 'really' need. I wonder if we were able to think this week about the difference between what we really need and the things we want. How much is enough? The more we want...the more we want!

It is important that we think about what we have and what we need before just falling into the trap of wanting more - this can be difficult at times, when our society and advertising and all the media around us are telling us that we need more and that we should have the latest and greatest of everything.

Other ways to give...

For this activity you will need access to a computer (*with internet*) or a couple of computers to work in small groups or on a rotational basis. Take time to have a look at the following web page, 'Other ways to give', that give a variety of ways that your group could give or donate some items that you do not need or some items that you might be able to collect from those within your church that would also like to donate. Having a look at this web page might just start the kids thinking; they may have some other ideas of what they would like to do to make a difference rather than just wanting more.

- <http://www.givenow.com.au/otherways>


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.

Do you need it?

- Go through your wardrobe/toy box looking for some of the items that you might no longer need.
- Are there some things that you have not used or worn in the past 6 - 12 months?
- Think about if you really need this item.
- Ask mum/dad if you can give it away. This might be to someone that you know needs this item or to a charity (like The Salvation Army!) who will make it available to those who will need it. Perhaps as a group you would like to bring your items together and then donate them.
- You might also like to go to www.livebelowtheline.com.au and participate in the \$2 challenge.







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