

Junior Soldiers

Unit 4 : Lesson 7



I can trust God no matter what!

PURPOSE : For children to explore and understand that through the happy and the challenging days, they have a God they can trust in.

'Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.'

Joshua 1:9

Consider & Prepare

Read:

1 Samuel 17:32–58
1 Samuel 18:1–16
1 Samuel 22:1–10
2 Samuel 2:1–11
2 Samuel 11:1–13
Matthew 1:1–17
Psalm 56:3–4
Jeremiah 29:11–14

Trusting in God is something that older or experienced Christians can sometime take for granted; it becomes a cliché to say we 'trust in God'. But what does it really mean and how often do you fully trust in God rather than relying on your own wit, abilities and resources?

In this lesson we will explore the notion of trust and, especially, the impact it had on King David's spiritual journey. David had his ups and downs with God and trust became a key factor in their relationship - even in the Psalms, for example, David mentions trust more than 60 times.

Be aware, during this lesson, that dealing with children in regards to trust is not a black and white thing; you may have children in your group who will struggle with trust because of personal relationships and situations. There will be people who have really let them down and abused their trust. This means that we need to be gentle in helping them to explore how they can trust God and others.

You should also stress that trusting God does not mean everything will be okay and fun and happiness all the time. It means, rather, that you can trust God will be with you no matter what - in the good times and in the bad times and in the sticky situations. It is important that we don't paint a picture for

children that just because they believe in God, everything is going to be good and go well in life.

Finally, leaders should be willing to share openly and honestly about times they have had to trust God; but always share sensibly (within the appropriate boundaries) and don't make up stories - don't embellish or exaggerate.

What you will need:

For 'The Main Thing'

- Plank of wood (on average, the width of a fence paling)
- 2 bricks to prop up the plank or something equivalent
- Blindfold
- 6 large sheets of butchers paper or A3/A2 sized paper
- Textas
- Bible
- Print outs of the 'Mona Lisa'
- An example of a cross-stitch picture

For 'Tying In'

- A range of materials for prayer response, e.g. paper, textas, pastels, playdough, paper magiclay, etc.

For 'Home & Beyond'

- Print off the Home and Beyond cards for each child



Connecting In

Do you trust me?

This is a common trust illustration/activity but needs to be set up well so that children are safe as they participate. Get the children to break off into groups of three for this activity making sure that they are of similar height and build. (*Illustrate out the front first, with other leaders or adults, what the children are going to do in their groups.*)

Taking turns (within the group), get children to fall back into their partners hands/arms. One child will fall back into the hands of their partners and the 'catchers' (*one step behind, one on each side – make sure that this is not too far*) will catch the child falling back.

Link: After everyone that wants to has had a go at being caught, ask them:

- How did you feel when you were falling back?
- Did you think that your partners would catch you?
- Even if you thought they would catch you, did you feel confident and secure falling back?
- Trust at times can be a difficult thing, why?

Today we are going to explore how we can trust God no matter what. God doesn't leave us in the hard times, and though life can be unfair, things change all the time and people and situations can be unreliable - God never changes. We often forget God in the hard times, but can read in the Bible all the stories where God has shown us that he comes through. God - the creator of the universe - knows every little detail about us, so we can trust Him with anything and everything.

True & False...

For this activity or game you will need a leader to give an illustration of how to play the game and then have some children to have a turn.

You will need to have three statements that include facts about yourself: two statements that are true and one statement that is false. Tell the children that you are going to share three statements with them and that they need to have a guess at which statement is not true. You can get the children to either have a show of hands as to which one they think is not true (*if children are putting up their hands they may be swayed by those around them and not make their own choice*) or get them to write it down on a slip of paper. After each of the children have had a guess, share with them which statement is not true.



Play a few rounds, either using other leaders or some children, before moving on to the link and the next activity.

Link: Ask the following:

- Even though I, and others, told you something untrue, do you still trust me? Why/why not? (*They will know that this was just a fun game and the person out the front was not really trying to lie and get away with an untruth.*)
- Do you always believe what people say to you or can people sometimes lie to you? Does this make it easy or hard to trust people?
- Can people trust you when you say something to them?

In the Bible there are many thousands of words said by God and Jesus, and not once did they ever lie. You can always trust what they say. This is a good challenge for us: can people always trust you to be telling the truth? The falling game was about trusting someone's actions, the 'true & false' game was about trusting what someone says. We want people to trust us every time we say or do something.

The Main Thing

The plank of trust...

You will need a plank of wood for this activity (*on average the width of a fence paling*), a couple of bricks to prop up the plank off the ground (*or something equivalent*), a blindfold and a couple of reasonably strong leaders/helpers.

- Have the plank set up out the front sitting on the bricks (*one near each end*).
- Ask for a volunteer that would like to participate in the activity - someone who trusts you.
- Explain to the volunteer that they will be standing on the plank that will be lifted up by the helpers but that you will be there to hold their hand and encourage them as they are lifted up.
- Take out the blindfold and tell them that they will need to wear it for the activity. 'Do you still trust me?'
- Put the blindfold on the volunteer - hold their hand or let them put their hand on your shoulder. Get the helpers to lift the plank off the bricks so that they are holding it.
- The helpers are to move the plank (*wobble it slightly*) as if they are lifting the plank higher (*without actually taking it any higher*), you need to keep the volunteer informed and feeling okay as if they were being lifted higher but making sure that they are trusting you that everything is alright. When the helpers are pretending to move the plank higher, you need to bend your knees a little each time so that it appears to the person on the plank that they are higher off the ground from you. Continue this for a little while, creating the illusion that they are quite a bit off the ground. (*You may need to make silent motions to the rest of the group so that they don't let on to the blindfolded volunteer.*)
- Explain to the volunteer that you are going to get them to jump off the plank and that if needed you will catch them, do they trust you, are they okay?
- Count to three for them to jump (*You will find that the volunteer will jump as if they are high off the ground but in reality they are only a short space in the air, one foot high at most.*)

- Take their blindfold off and ask them:
 - How did it feel being blindfolded and what seemed to be high off the ground?
 - Were you worried?
 - Did you trust me? Why/why not?
 - Trust can be a difficult thing at times. Why?
 - What makes trusting someone easier?

The whole picture...

Sometimes it can be difficult to trust when we don't know what the plan, is what the bigger picture looks like or what you part is in the grand scheme of things.

Show the kids a printout of a picture like this (a portion of the 'Mona Lisa'):

Ask them if they think it's a good picture, attractive, well painted and nice enough to hang up on the wall in their house.

(Most will say, 'No, it's yuck', 'What is it?', 'It's ugly', etc.)

Then show them the back of a cross-stitch picture, with all the loose threads hanging and mess, and asks them if it's pretty enough to hang in their house. *(You should get the same responses as previously.)*

Then show them the whole picture:

'The 'Mona Lisa' is by Leonardo da Vinci and is probably the most famous painting in the world. The original hangs in the Louvre gallery in Paris and is considered priceless. That is, the gallery would not sell it to you for any amount of money.'

(Turn the cross-stitch picture around so they can see the front.)

'When we don't see the full picture, things can look pretty messy. You know, from where we are, sometimes we look at our life and think, "Well, things aren't going too well at the moment. This is wrong and this is wrong and this is wrong." But God sees the full picture of our lives. He can see what's happening around us and he can see what's happening in our future. So if life is a bit like a messy corner of a painting at times, remember that God sees the whole masterpiece and knows what is happening. You just have to trust Him.'

Filmstrip of David...

God never changes. We often forget God in the hard times, but we have the Bible - which includes many stories of people who went through hard times - but God kept His promises and stuck with them through the difficult stuff. We are going to explore this a bit more by looking at David and some of His journey and how God stuck with Him through the good stuff and the not-so-good stuff .

For this activity you will need at least 6 large sheets of butchers paper or A3/A2 sized paper, textas and Bibles. There are 6 sections/stages of David's life that we are going to look at specifically during this time. Divide the group into 6 small groups or pairs (if you have a small group you can give groups a couple of the areas to do or work as a whole). The children will be given a title and a passage of scripture that looks at part of David's life. They need to read the scripture and then draw a picture/freeze frame that will be a part of a filmstrip (the 6 images) showing key sections of David's journey that show God was with David in the good and the not-so-good situations.



1. David and Goliath—1 Samuel 17:32–58
(v.37 David trusted God to deliver him safely)
2. Warrior of Saul / Saul jealous—1 Samuel 18:1–16
(v.12 God was with David, protecting him)
3. David has opportunity to kill Saul—1 Samuel 24:1–12
(v.6 David was led by God and obeyed Him)
4. David becomes the King—2 Samuel 2:1–7 and 7:25–29
(Even though he's king, David knows God is in charge)
5. David & Bathsheba—2 Samuel 11:1–6, 14–17, 26–27
(David sinned and displeased God)
6. Jesus was descended from David—Matthew 1:1–6, 17
(The family tree could have omitted David, but didn't)



David had days when he was close to God and days when he angered God - but God never forgot David. It would have been easy to jump a generation in the family tree (genealogy) in Matthew's gospel and leave David out of it - what an embarrassment to Jesus to have an adulterer and murderer in his family! But even though David had his bad days, he never forgot God and God never forgot him. David trusted God, and even when he let God down, God stuck with him.

Tying In

Story sharing...

It is important at this point for a leader to share a real story, part of their journey of how they have trusted God. (*Be wise in how you share with the children, helping them to see that even adults don't have it all together, but also not disclosing too much personal details or adding embellishments to make a story sound more dramatic.*) Sharing part of our journey helps children to see that they are not alone and there are plenty of other people who have experienced ups and downs and challenges even though they have God by their side.

After sharing divide the group into small groups to discuss the following and then move on to a time of prayer.

- Look over David's life and discuss how you see him trusting God no matter how good or bad things are.
- You have the promise of God being with you wherever you go, look up Joshua 1:9 and read together.
- How does this make you feel?
- Does this mean that because you follow God that things are always going to be good? (*It doesn't mean things are always going to be good, but it does mean that you will always have God with you, you will always have a place to belong and you will always have someone to love and support you in the ups and downs.*)
- What helps to remind you that you can trust God and that He is with you always? (*It would be good for the leader to share some of the things that help them*)
- Take some time either in the group or let the children reflect individually about the last question.
- Provide them with some materials that they might like to use to reflect and express how they feel about this e.g. paper, textas, pastels, playdough, paper magiclay, etc.
- Close this time with a corporate prayer.

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.

God's Promises...

- God's word is full of promises, they help to remind us of His love, His presence and that we can trust Him no matter what.
- Over the week read some of the following promises Psalm 27:14, Proverbs 3:5, Joshua 1:9, Psalm 2:12, 2 Samuel 22:31–33, Isaiah 48:17, Romans 12:2. You might like to see if you can find some more.
- Chose a promise that stands out for you and share it with someone in your family or your Big Bud; they may also have a favourite promise they can share with you.

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