

# Junior Soldiers

Unit 6 : Lesson 1

## FAITH!



**PURPOSE :** For the children to discuss faith and to explore what faith looks like in relation to the story of Abraham.

*'Faith makes us sure of what we hope for and gives us proof of what we cannot see.'*

Hebrews 11:1

## Consider & Prepare

### Read:

Hebrews 11:1–3, 8–16, 17–19

Genesis 12

Genesis 22

One of the greatest figures in religious history is Abraham; he is honoured in the Christian faith, Judaism and Islam. Abraham is particularly respected for his faith—simple but strong—that flowed through every aspect of his living.

Note, however, that this does not mean he was perfect. Like all of us, Abraham made mistakes and sometimes strayed from a close relationship with God. His story is a very 'human' story of faith and, in many ways, a very humble one.

Abraham was not a king or politician, he was not an academic or famous author, he did not win wars or perform miracles... yet his faith and willingness to obey God changed history and affected the destiny of millions. God can use individuals and single decisions to impact many people.

Even in our own lives, helping a neighbour with a simple task one day may lead to a closer relationship, an enquiry about faith and, with time, their own conversion and possibly that of their whole family. A simple act of kindness with eternal ramifications.

To have faith doesn't suggest or imply the end of a Christian journey—it signifies a start. Once we claim Christ as our own, we are then called by scripture to live lives of faith. We must act in the world. We must impact people for God. We must take numerous 'leaps of faith' in our lifestyle, relationships and behaviour.

This lesson will help the children to explore what a life of faith looks like.

### What you will need:

#### For 'Connecting In'

- Check the activities for the 'things don't make sense' section. When you have made your choice about which activity you will do, make sure that you have identified any items you may need.
- A range of seeds and bulbs.
- A pot with some soil in it, a container of water and a plant or flower.

### For 'The Main Thing'

- A copy of *Horton Hears a Who* (optional)
- Bible
- Butchers paper
- Textas

### For 'Tying In'

- A range of holiday brochures (*pay a visit to a travel agent and ask if there are any out-of-date ones that you can have or put a note out to the members of your church asking for ones they have finished with*)
- A3 white paper
- Glue sticks
- Scissors
- Textas
- You may also like to have a computer or iPad available with internet access

### For 'Home & Beyond'

- Print off the Home & Beyond cards for each child.



## Connecting In

### Things that don't make sense...

Below are some suggestions of things that don't make sense, this includes some images that you could use or some experiments that you can do with the children. Depending on what you choose to use will depend on what items that you will need so check the activity for all the materials that you will need prior.

Use some optical illusions that don't make sense. If you Google for images with the title 'impossible optical illusions' you will find plenty to choose from. Print some out A4 size (or A3, even better, if the image can be used that big without distortion) to show the children. For example:



There are two links below of things that 'don't make sense'—sucking an egg into a bottle and piercing a balloon without popping it:

<http://www.videojug.com/film/how-to-pierce-a-balloon-without-it-popping?sourcelink=verticalrecommendation>

<http://www.videojug.com/film/how-to-suck-an-egg-into-a-bottle>

**Link...** We have been looking at some pictures or experiments of things that we would say don't make sense. Who would have thought that we could suck an egg into a bottle without cutting it up into little pieces? There are often things that happen in our world that don't make sense, some of those things are in relation to God and the plan that He has for us. Today we are going to explore the story of Abraham and how he had faith in God to be obedient to what God had planned for him even if it didn't make sense to Abraham.

### What a lot of seeds...

For this activity you will need a range of seeds and bulbs. It would also be good to have a pot with some soil in it, a container of water and a plant or flower.

- Show the seeds/bulbs to the children on a table or large sheet of paper.
- Ask the children to guess what they think that each seed/bulb might grow into.
- If we leave the seed in the packet on the bench what would happen to it?
- What does a seed/bulb need to grow? (*soil, water, sun*)
- How do we know that?
- We need to be active; we need to do things for the seeds to help them grow.
- But how does the seed actually grow? Is it anything that we do?
- We believe that when we plant the seeds that they will become plants.

**Link...** We have been talking about seeds and what they need to grow. Looking at something like this (*hold up a seed/bulb*), we wonder how a tree or a flower or some sort of plant is going to come from it. To look at the seed it doesn't really 'make sense' to think that a flower or tree is going to come out of it; that if you put the seed in the ground and—with a bit of water and sunshine—something amazing can happen.

We know though, from books and experience, that if a seed is put in the soil, watered and if it has some sunshine, that something will grow from it. We believe and have faith that this will happen even though to look at this little seed or bulb it doesn't 'make sense'. There are often things that happen especially in relation to God that don't make sense.

Today we are going to explore the story of Abraham and how he had faith in God to be obedient to what God had planned for him even if it didn't seem to make sense.

## The Main Thing

### Faith...

I wonder if any of you have read the book or seen the movie *Horton Hears a Who?*

*(You may like to watch a clip from the movie or even watch the whole movie the week before you do the lesson. This is a great movie for exploring the topic of faith. Below is a brief outline of the movie for those who might not have seen it. This, along with the questions below, will help the children to engage with the content of the movie and the topic of faith.)*

**Storyline:** One day, Horton the elephant hears a cry from help coming from a speck of dust. Even though he can't see anyone on the speck, he decides to help it. As it turns out, the speck of dust is home to the Whos, who live in their city of Whoville. Horton agrees to help protect the Whos and their home, but this gives him nothing but torment from his neighbors, who refuse to believe that anything could survive on the speck. Still, Horton stands by the motto that, 'After all, a person is a person, no matter how small.' *Written by Griffin84*

- What did you love about the movie?
- How did Horton try to communicate to others what he believed?
- Horton had faith that there was a town on this tiny clover even though he could not see it. I wonder, if Horton or someone else had told you this, would you have believed them or thought they were crazy? What he was saying just didn't make any sense.
- I wonder if there has been something that you believed in and had faith that it was real but you had difficulty trying to tell or convince others about it. *(Give the children an opportunity to share, you might also like to share something from your own journey too.)*





We live in a world where some people won't believe something until they can see it, test it, prove it and take it apart to see how it works. But this is not the only way or reason to believe something. Horton just knew that there were people in Whoville. He couldn't prove it, but he believed it.

In Abraham's story, some things seemed to make sense and some things didn't. For the things that seemed unusual or odd, Abraham had to decide if he would ignore or avoid them, or if he would trust God—after all, if God knew what He was doing, shouldn't Abraham just have faith that everything would work out okay?

Read together: Hebrews 11:1–3, 8–16, 17–19 (*you can do this as a whole group or in three small groups*).

Look at the following questions for the whole reading or just for your section. (*On*

*some butchers paper get the children to divide it down the middle and explore both side in relation to the passage.*)

- What makes sense in this passage?
- What doesn't make sense in this passage?
- (It is important to get the children to think about this story in relation to their lives and what they would do if God asked them to do these things. It is easy to think that all this stuff makes sense in relation to the story of Abraham because that is what we might have grown up hearing, but if it was our lives would it make sense to pack up everything and move to another country just because God told you to?)
- If you have divided into groups and are looking at parts of the passage, come together and share your section with the other groups.

Faith and believing in God doesn't always make sense, especially to others. There are times when things seem clear to us and we have faith that that is exactly what God wants of us and where He is leading us, but to others this can look crazy and not make sense.

Reinforce with the children the first verse from Hebrews chapter 11: 'Faith makes us sure of what we hope for and gives us proof of what we cannot see.'

Mother Teresa was a nun who worked in Calcutta in India for many, many years. She worked with very poor people, sick people, homeless people and people who had no hope or future. Even though Mother Teresa became a very famous person, she was always very humble and knew that she could only do what she did because God was using her. At one stage, she said: 'We can do no great things, only small things with great love.'

Abraham, too, never claimed to be great or famous, he simply wanted to be used by God. His faith in God was stronger than what people without faith may have said about the way he lived. He was a strong man of faith even when the world (i.e. people) thought he was just plain wrong.

**What God said to Abraham**

Pack up and leave  
Have a baby  
Sacrifice your son

**What the world says**

Stay, be comfortable  
That's impossible  
That's wrong

Similarly, for all Christians even today, the world sometimes doesn't understand how Christians live and believe:

**What Christians believe**

Serve others and treat them well  
Jesus' teachings have stood for 2,000 years  
We choose to depend on God  
Church is about community and relationships  
Faith is a way to believe things  
Giving to those in need is good  
Reflection, peace, calm, silence

**What the world says**

Do what's best for yourself; you're number one  
Old stuff is bad, new stuff is best  
Don't depend on anyone, be your own person  
Individualism is the key; you don't need other people  
Only believe what can be scientifically tested  
Wealth wins; the more I have, the better  
Be busy, noisy, occupied, in a hurry



# Tying In

## Planning a holiday...

For this activity you will need a range of holiday brochures (pay a visit to a travel agent and ask if there are any out-of-date ones that you can have or put a note out to the members of your church asking for ones they have finished with), sheets of A3 white paper, textas, scissors and glue sticks. You might also like to have a computer or iPad available with access to the internet so the children can look up locations etc. for their planning.

For this activity you might like each child to plan a holiday for someone else or, depending on the size and make up of your group, you might like to break the children into small groups and they can plan a holiday for one of the other groups.

We have had a look at some of Abraham's story today and how much he trusted God. He knew that God had his best interest at heart and that God's plan would be best. We are now going to plan a holiday for someone else, remembering that we have their best interest at the heart of what we are doing and thinking...

- Plan a holiday for someone else (individual or group).
- I wonder what you will need to consider.
- Think about who is going and the things that they like, some things that might challenge them or some experiences that will build some skills or teach them something.

When the children have finished their holiday plan, get them to share it with the person or group that they did it for, and then ask these questions:

- How did it feel to have someone else making plans for you?
- Did you trust them to make the right choices for you?
- Do you think that they had your best interest at heart in their planning?
- Were you happy with the outcome? Would you take the trip?

I wonder if you trust God with your life and the things that He has planned for you. I wonder how you fit into God's plan.

Give the children some time to reflect on these questions and the activity. Allow them some time to write, draw or express themselves in their journal in response to this topic. Ask them to think about the plan that God might have for them and write some suggestions of what this might be. I wonder what they think may happen in their lives. Ask them to silently pray when they have finished in their journals.



# Home & Beyond

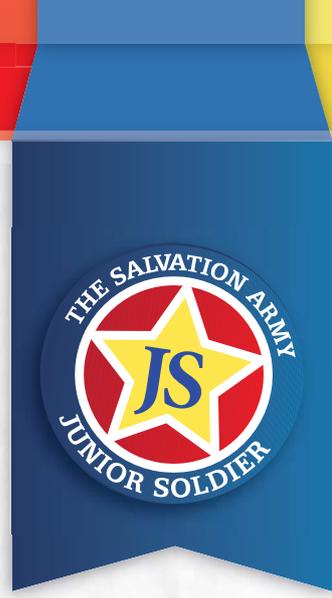
Print off the 'Home & Beyond' cards attached. The children might like to keep these in their journals or notebook where they could write or stick the challenges, reflect, answer questions or complete activities each week.

## Story sharing...

During the week, ask your parents or Big Bud the following:

- When you were younger, what did you think would happen in your life in relation to jobs, family, locations etc.
- What, of these things, happened and what didn't?
- I wonder if there was anything in your life that didn't make sense.
- I wonder where you have seen God in your story.

Pray together that God will use all that you do, even the small things, as part of His plan for your life.



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