

Junior Soldiers

Unit 6 : Lesson 5



All messed up!

PURPOSE : For the children to explore and understand that God's intention was, and still is, that we would live in love and harmony with him and others. They will explore how the choice that Adam and Eve made impacts our world and relationships today.

'We believe that we were created in the image of God to live in harmony with God and creation, a state which was broken by disobedience and sin and, as a result, we live under the compulsion of sin.'

Doctrine Five, simplified version

'We believe that our first parents were created in a state of innocency, but by their disobedience they lost their purity and happiness, and that in consequence of their fall all men have become sinners, totally depraved, and as such are justly exposed to the wrath of God.'

Doctrine Five

Consider & Prepare

Read:

Genesis 3:1–3

Genesis 2 and 3

The Salvation Army Handbook of Doctrine (p 109) – 'God's intention was that we would live in a state of love and harmony with him, with one another, and with the rest of creation. He also made us free, wanting us to love him voluntarily, not as puppets.'

Romans 3:23 and 6:16–23

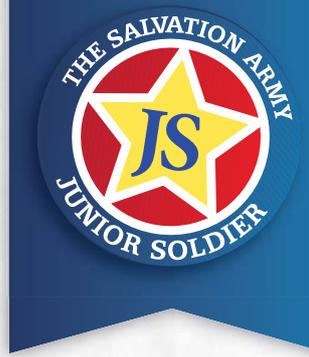
The Jesus Storybook Bible – 'The terrible lie' (p 28–36) This is a great account of 'the fall' and uses helpful language to communicate this difficult topic; this is a good resource to use with kids.

The doctrine of original sin has captivated theological minds for centuries and continues to be a topic of keen debate among Christians and between branches of the Church, so it is, undoubtedly, a difficult topic to teach to children. It can be hard to have a child admit to a wrong they've very obviously done (!) so how do you convince them that they carry a weight of sin because of something Adam and Eve did in a different country many, many years ago?

While the notion of original sin needs to be taught, the focus, however, should be on something more easily understood by the children—namely, the consequences of their choices and God’s desire to live in harmony with humanity.

According to the biblical account of ‘the fall’, Adam and Eve knew what was the right and wrong thing to do, but they intentionally disobeyed God and broke the perfect relationship between God and us. They created a division that was only resolved when Jesus acted as mediator between humanity and God and allowed us to, once again, enter into close relationship with Him.

As you teach this lesson, you don’t want to give the kids a ‘guilt trip’ that they’ve done something wrong—the human condition is the human condition and we’re all sinners in need of a saviour. Rather, you want them to finish this lesson knowing that God loves them and that entering into and maintaining a personal relationship with Jesus is the best thing they can do in response to God’s love.



What you will need:

For ‘Connecting In’

- Pile of money (real or Monopoly)
- Special item (see activity)
- A packet of M&Ms or Smarties per small group
- Sheets of A3 paper or large sheets of butchers paper
- Latex gloves (if this activity is the option you choose)

For ‘The Main Thing’

- *The Jesus Storybook Bible*
- Bibles
- Two large sheets of butchers paper—one white and one black (the black sheet can be smaller pieces that make up the same size as the larger one)
- Textas, pencils or drawing utensils or craft supplies, depending on which option you choose
- White crayons, chalk or gel pens

For ‘Tying In’

- Journals or sheets of A4/A3 paper
- Textas, pencils or drawing utensils

For ‘Home & Beyond’

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



Connecting In

Connecting in Illustration...

For this illustration you will need to have a pile of money (you can use Monopoly money if you like for this) and a special item that you might have saved money to buy.

‘I want you to think about something that you would really love to buy but, at this stage, you would need to save for it as it is too expensive.’

- Do you all have something in mind?
- How much would it cost?
- How long do you think it would take you to save for this?

I wonder how you would feel if you spent a lot of time saving your money, bought the item and then, when you open the box, you found that it was broken or damaged in some way... *(Allow some time for the children to respond with some suggestions of how they might feel.)*

Link: I am sure that you have all had a similar situation to the one that we have talked about together, it might not have been something that you have saved for, but I am sure there has been a time where you have been really looking forward to something and then been disappointed because it was broken or messed up or somehow spoilt or ruined.

Today we have been talking about how disappointed we might be in this situation but we are going to explore further how God felt when something that He loved and created to be wonderful and perfect got spoilt and all messed up. God wasn't only disappointed but it broke His heart and our relationship with Him.



Don't eat the M&Ms...

For this activity you will need a packet of M&Ms or Smarties per small group. Divide the children into small groups of 2–4 children depending on the size of your group. They will also need a few sheets of A3 paper or a large sheet of butchers paper each. (It would be good before you start this activity to get the children to wash their hands or if you like they could wear some latex gloves.)

- Give each group some paper and their packet of M&Ms
- In your group, divide the M&Ms by colour
- Each group needs to make a picture using the M&Ms of 'nature' or 'God's world'
- Before we start I am going to give you some rules: in fact, there is only one rule... **DON'T EAT THE M&Ms.** You can do whatever you like, but don't eat the M&Ms

Give the children some time to complete this activity, but not too long as it is just a Connecting In activity to the main part of the story.

Link... Ask the children to tell others in the larger group about the pictures they have made.

'Well, that was a fun activity. Let's pack up the M&Ms and put them away and move onto exploring our topic for today.' *(I am sure you will have lots of children that will complain and ask to eat the M&Ms.)*

- Discuss – what were you hoping we were going to do after we had made the pictures?
- What was the one rule that we spoke about at the start? (Don't eat the M&Ms.)
- This rule didn't say don't eat them just while you are doing the activity—it said don't eat the M&Ms.
- I wonder if anyone can tell me what they think the topic might be about today *(allow the children opportunity to give suggestions as to what this might be—Adam and Eve eating the apple from the tree in the Garden of Eden)*

When we started we talked about one rule: don't eat the M&Ms. This activity reminds me a little about the story in the Bible that tells us how Adam and Eve were given only one rule, just like us. There came a time when they chose not to follow this rule anymore and ate from the tree that God had asked them not to. Their choice is something that changed the wonderful creation that God had made; it was perfect but got spoilt and messed up. God was disappointed and, more so, it broke His heart and our relationship with Him. No we are not going to eat the M&Ms!

The Main Thing

The Jesus Storybook Bible...

It would be really great at this point to read the section from *The Jesus Storybook Bible* that looks at the fall. It has great language to help the children to engage with this difficult topic. This Bible is widely available and a fantastic resource that it well worth having on the shelf.

Read for the children 'The terrible lie' (p 28–36). If you can't obtain the book, you could read Genesis 2:4–3:24 from the CEV version.

'This story is the foundation for our activity today, let's explore this together.'

Love and Harmony...

For this activity you will need two large sheets of butcher's paper—one white and one black (the black sheet can be smaller pieces that make up the same size as the larger one), textas, pencils or drawing utensils or if you choose to make a collage then you will need a range of craft materials, e.g. foil, fabric, sticks, leaves, glue, cotton balls etc. You will also need some white crayons, chalk or gel pens to write on the black paper/card.

'God created the world for us to live in, a wonderful perfect world for us to live in and enjoy.'

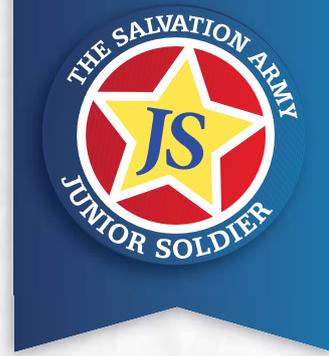
- As a whole group, create a big picture or collage of what God's perfect world would be. (Use the large white sheet of butchers paper for this)
 - What are some of the good things in God's world? (*love/harmony/friends*)
 - In the story that we read earlier, what happened to change the perfect world that God had created for us to live in? (*Adam and Eve were told not to eat fruit from the tree at the centre of the garden but they chose to do this and disobey God.*)
 - Because of that bad choice we have _____ (black pieces of paper) in the world. This picture doesn't represent what our world is like today, it is not God's ideal world.
 - What are some things in our world today that aren't represented in this picture of God's perfect world? (*Negative words and people, hurtful things, hard and challenging times, sad situations, bad thoughts, jealousy, greed etc.*)

You will now need your black sheet of butcher's paper (if it is a large sheet cut it up into smaller sections or have your black pieces of card ready).

On the black paper/card use white crayon/chalk or gel pens and write down some of the 'sins', 'bad choices' that have entered God's world (violence, anger, greed, lying, selfishness, bullying, jealousy, horrible words, disobedience etc.). Take some time with the children to decide what they are going to add to the black paper.

When you have finished putting these things onto the black card, place the cards one by one over 'God's picture' (see note below) while reiterating how, because of the choice that Adam and Eve made to disobey God, things changed in God's world: it became spoilt and all messed up, letting in all these nasty, yucky things that impact who we are and how we treat each other.

NOTE: It is important to ensure that when you are placing the black card over God's perfect creation that you leave some white or good spaces. This shows hope and that everything is not totally black, and that we can still see God's goodness in some people and places in our world.



But the story does not stop there. God wanted people to live in right relationship with Him but—importantly—He wanted it to be our choice, He didn't want to force us to love and obey Him. So throughout the Old Testament, you can read stories of God sending people called prophets to remind people that they should love, honour, respect and obey God.

Sometimes people would do this, but then they would forget again. So finally—and we read about this in the New Testament—God sent his own Son, Jesus, to not just tell people but show them how to live in a way that pleases God.

So to close the gap between us and God, to get us back into right relationship with God, we simply have to accept Jesus as our Saviour. In 1 Timothy 2:5 it says that 'there is one God and one mediator (or 'middle man') between God and humanity, Christ Jesus.'

Read John 3:16–17.

Why do we call Jesus our 'Saviour'? Because we needed to be saved from our broken relationship with God. God didn't save us by making us do a program or getting a special license or passing a test or developing a special ability, he saved us by sending Jesus and inviting us to accept Jesus as our Saviour.

Move the black pieces of card as you are talking to show more of the original picture. With Jesus in our lives, He helps us to make better choices in relation to: greed, anger, lies (list of sins and negative choices etc.). We can also reflect God's image—His original world and design of love and harmony. The good and wonderful parts of God shine (white), through the black even though the black is still around us. God helps us deal with black, He helps us to deal with all the things that we have written on the black cards.

Because we live amid sin (black card) we are still affected by it, but Jesus helps us make better choices and is always with us, helping us when we are affected by other people bad choices.



Tying In

It's our choice...

We need to make a choice whether we want to be connected with God; if we want to be connected to and follow Jesus and lessen the impact of our bad choices. If you are a Junior Soldier you will have already made this choice to be connected with God and follow Jesus but is something that many Christians like to do again to show their commitment. *(There may be some children in your group who have not made this choice so make sure that you are sensitive at this point and give opportunity for those that would like to make that choice/commitment for the first time or as a reinforcement.)*

You will need to divide your group into small groups for this activity and get the children to use their journal or a sheet of A4/A3 paper.

- Ask the children to turn the journal/paper so that the page is landscape. *(You might like to have a large sheet out the front to show the children how to make up their page.)*
- Ask the children on the left hand side of the page to draw an outline of themselves and on the left-hand side of that outline as them to write/draw the things that say 'Who I am'. (If you have a child that only writes positive words then you might like to create a discussion around this e.g. 'Are you friendly all the time?' We don't want this to be a negative activity but one that creates a true picture of who they are and how they interact with others etc.)
- On the far right-hand side of the page ask them to put a heading and write/draw the way that God wants them to be, the words, thoughts and actions that He would want them to do.

Let's all have a look at the images that we have drawn of ourselves *(give the children opportunity to share some things about themselves with their group)*. I am sure that there are lots of great things that help to describe who we are but I am sure that there are some things that we all might need to work on to get us to the other side of the page to look exactly like what God would like us to be, the perfect picture that He has for us.

→ Ask the children to put another heading in the middle of the page 'What do I need to choose to do differently?'

Look at the picture of yourself and then at the picture of what God would like us to be and then think about the things that you might need to choose to do differently that will help you to move closer to God's picture. What sorts of things can Jesus help us with to move us from here (*indicate one side of the page*) to here (*i.e. the other side*)? For example, if I choose to watch less television then this might help me find more time to help others or around home, if I choose to read more of my Bible then I might be more loving and kind, if I hang out with my Big Bud then I will be able to learn more about how to live as a Christian, etc.

(It is important as the children reflect on getting 'from here to here' that you and other leaders help them to think through the choices that they might need to make and how Jesus can help them to move closer to the picture that God has for us connected with Him.)

Take time to close in prayer together. Ask all the children to stand on one side of the room and have them pray and ask Jesus to help them with one of the areas that they identified. After they have prayed they can walk to the other side of the room and support the others as they pray. Have a leader close and pray for all those that have taken steps towards Jesus.

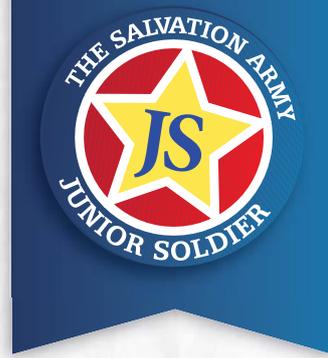


Home & Beyond

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.

Prayer changes things...

- Show the picture that you have created in your journal to your Big Bud/Junior Soldier leader and ask them to pray for some of the choices you want to change.
- Pray at least three times this week thanking God for all the great choices that you have made with Him and for help in changing the things that you have outlined in your picture. You might like to put this up somewhere in your room to remind you throughout the week.



Home & Beyond

Prayer changes things...

Show the picture that you have created in your journal to your Big Bud/Junior Soldier leader and ask them to pray for some of the choices you want to change.

- Pray at least three times this week thanking God for all the great choices that you have made with Him and for help in changing the things that you have outlined in your picture.
- Pray at least three times that you have made outlined in your room to great choices that you have made outlined in your room to changing the things that you have outlined in your room to You might like to put this up somewhere in your room to remind you throughout the week.


Junior Soldiers

Home & Beyond

Prayer changes things...

Show the picture that you have created in your journal to your Big Bud/Junior Soldier leader and ask them to pray for some of the choices you want to change.

- Pray at least three times this week thanking God for all the great choices that you have made with Him and for help in changing the things that you have outlined in your picture.
- Pray at least three times that you have made outlined in your room to great choices that you have made outlined in your room to changing the things that you have outlined in your room to You might like to put this up somewhere in your room to remind you throughout the week.


Junior Soldiers

Home & Beyond

Prayer changes things...

Show the picture that you have created in your journal to your Big Bud/Junior Soldier leader and ask them to pray for some of the choices you want to change.

- Pray at least three times this week thanking God for all the great choices that you have made with Him and for help in changing the things that you have outlined in your picture.
- Pray at least three times that you have made outlined in your room to great choices that you have made outlined in your room to changing the things that you have outlined in your room to You might like to put this up somewhere in your room to remind you throughout the week.


Junior Soldiers

Home & Beyond

Prayer changes things...

Show the picture that you have created in your journal to your Big Bud/Junior Soldier leader and ask them to pray for some of the choices you want to change.

- Pray at least three times this week thanking God for all the great choices that you have made with Him and for help in changing the things that you have outlined in your picture.
- Pray at least three times that you have made outlined in your room to great choices that you have made outlined in your room to changing the things that you have outlined in your room to You might like to put this up somewhere in your room to remind you throughout the week.


Junior Soldiers