

# Junior Soldiers

Unit 6 : Lesson 9

## Never too small or young!



**PURPOSE :** For the children to explore and understand that they are important and of value to God and His work in the world now and not just in the future, and that they don't have to be an adult to do great things for God.

*'Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.'*

1 Timothy 4:12 (NIV)

## Consider & Prepare

### Read:

Judges 6:12, 6:1–16, 6:23, 6:34, 7:11–12

1 Timothy 4:12

Gideon and Timothy were just two leaders in the Bible who held positions of responsibility despite their relative youth. They flew in the face of a culture that equated wisdom with age (i.e. the older you are, the wiser you are) and they achieved this because of their faith and trust in God.

Adults today—including church leaders—need to recognize that children are not merely the future of the church, they are the church. They can worship and pray and read Scripture and witness and care for others every bit as well as a grown-up. In some instances, they'll even do it better—a child's prayer can often be far more honest and heartfelt than the rehearsed, clichéd words of an adult.

If, as a leader, you came to faith as a child, it may be helpful to share some of your own story with your children. For them to hear that you found faith as a child, not an adult, can be a powerful real-life illustration for them.

Also, read through The Main Thing material in this lesson and get familiar with it; if you can lead it without reading it, it will have a better impact on the children.

### What you will need:

#### For 'Connecting In'

- Chairs
- Oreo biscuits
- Timer

#### For 'The Main Thing'

- Two large cans of food (with 'crowns' around them)

- Bag of cotton balls
- Diamond prop or picture

#### For 'Tying In'

- Various sizes of the same chocolate or foods (*see instructions in Tying In*)
- For 'Home & Beyond'
- Print off the Home & Beyond cards for each child.

## Connecting In

### Bite the Bickie...

For this activity you will need some Oreo biscuits, a timer and some great facial muscles. You might like to have a camera on hand as you can capture some amazing facial expressions. Test your control of your facial muscles with this simple *Minute To Win It* game!

### The Goal

Move a cookie from your forehead to your mouth without using your hands.

### How to Play

Bite the bickie is extremely simple, at least in theory. Sit in a chair with a plate of Oreo biscuits beside you. Lean your head back and place a biscuit in the center of your forehead. When the one-minute timer begins, use only your face to move the biscuit from your forehead to your mouth.

### The Rules

Biscuits must be placed in the middle of your forehead, not touching your eyebrows.

You can tilt your head and move your face, but you cannot touch the biscuit with your hands.

The biscuit must remain in contact with your face, so you can't try to toss it from your forehead and catch it in your mouth. If a biscuit falls before reaching your mouth, you must start over with a fresh one.

The biscuit must actually go in your mouth, held securely by your lips and/or teeth, to count.

### Tips and Tricks

Tilt your head in the opposite direction from the way you want the biscuit to go, to provide stability.

Use repetitive motions with your face muscles to slowly but steadily move the biscuit along.

When you get the biscuit close to your mouth, slowly and gently tilt your head to get it to its final destination.



**Link...** God created us with a great purpose in mind. When we look at some of the more simpler things in life and look at the detail that went into their creation and what their purpose is, we can appreciate how much greater our purpose in life is.

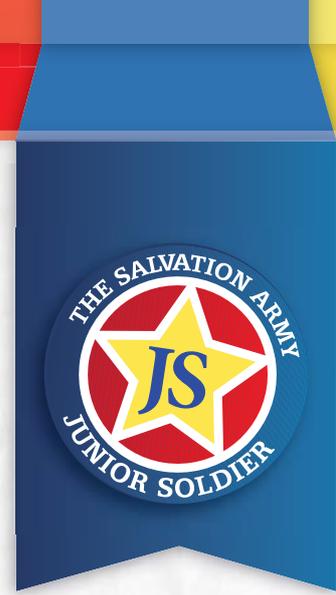
- Make sure each child has an Oreo in their hand.
- Do you think this Oreo came from nowhere?
- Do you think that some accident in a food factory created this Oreo?
- Are there trees that grow Oreos? Wouldn't that be nice!

No, someone created this Oreo. Someone thought of a recipe that would be the chocolate biscuits on the outside and the cream filling, and they probably had to change their recipe several times in order to get it just right. Not only did they have to come up with a recipe, but they also had to design a machine that would make the biscuits exactly the same size and make the design on the top and then to pipe the correct amount of filling for the middle. Let me ask you a question.

→ What was the purpose of creating the Oreo? (We wanted to have something sweet to eat!)



You know, we are things that are a thousand times more complicated and detailed than an Oreo. God spent a lot of time making us. He took a lot of thought in creating the way we would look and how our bodies would work. The purpose of an Oreo is for us to have something sweet and yummy to eat. Our purpose is much greater than that. God has created us with a specific purpose for our lives, things that we can do to change and impact the world for Him—and not just in the future and days to come, but right now, too.



## The Main Thing

### Small and mighty...

You might ask: 'But how can I, a child, change this world?'

Let's look up in the Bible together 1 Timothy 4:12. It says, 'Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.'

→ How do you think that we can do that? (*Give the children some time to respond and share what they think.*)

We can't change how people see us, but we can be an example to others in how we live, speak and serve God. God wouldn't want to hear us say, 'But I'm only a child, I can't do anything for God.' We need to understand that God made us so that we can impact this world for Him, starting right now, not only when we have grown into an adult. We are going to have a look at someone in the Bible that thought he couldn't do something because he was too small, but God used him for a BIG job.

Has anyone heard the story of Gideon before?

Gideon did not think that he could do what God wanted him to do. There were two kings of the Midianites who were the worst, and they had really big armies.

Let's imagine that these two cans of food are the two kings of the Midianites. These were some really bad people! And this was our hero, Gideon (*show cotton ball*). Now God told Gideon that he was going to be able to defeat these two kings. What do you think...seems a little crazy, right? I mean, a cotton ball could not defeat these big full tin cans! This can could squish this cotton ball! And that was what Gideon thought. Gideon could not imagine any way that he could go up against these kings.

But then, God gave Gideon an army! (*Dump out cotton balls*). Now that Gideon had an army, was there a possibility that he might be able to defeat these kings? What do you think? But God told Gideon that Gideon did not need this many people in his army...he just needed a few. (*Get rid of most of the cotton balls, just leave a couple*).

I wonder what happened next... Well, it was with only these few men that little Gideon defeated the two big kings (*knock the cans to fall onto the floor while you're holding cotton balls*).

Now, did the cotton balls knock the cans onto the floor? No, not really, it was really me, just with the cotton balls in my hands. Because this is my table/stage, and I'm the biggest one here, and I can do what I want. And that is how God used Gideon. God took Gideon, and with God's hands and God's power, Gideon got the job done.

Gideon used to feel powerless, like he could not do anything, especially what God had asked Him to do with the big kings. But when he realized that God was with him and that he could trust God, Gideon literally changed the world. And it's the same with you...no matter the challenge; never think you are too young or too small. God sees a mighty warrior inside of you, and you can—with God—change the world!

Gideon was not a very big person or an old person or an important person. But God used Gideon in a very, very big way, and God can do the same with us, believing in God and trusting Him can help us to do amazing things, things that we probably don't think that we could possibly do. (*You might have a situation that you can share with the children of a time when God helped you to do something that you did not think that you could possibly do*).

## Diamonds...

I have here the strongest material in the whole entire world. This rock that I have behind my back is so strong; people can't even make anything as strong as it. There is no rock anywhere in the entire world that could possibly, ever, ever be as strong and awesome as this rock that I have behind my back. Other rocks try to be as strong as this rock, but they fail. Would you like to see the strongest, most awesome-est rock in the whole entire world?

*(Take out diamond).*

Here it is! This is the strongest rock in the whole entire world! There is nothing stronger than this! Oh, I know what you're thinking, that this rock is so small, there's nothing to this rock! But do you want to know something? They take little rocks just like this, and they can grind up metal and even other big, huge rocks. People use this little rock to smash up other huge rock!

This rock is called a diamond. It may be small, but even though it's small, it has huge potential, and can do some really big jobs. And, it's also the most valuable rock in the world. You can pay more for this little diamond than you can for tons and tons of big truckloads of normal rock.

This diamond is small. You know what, you may be young and small right now, but God has a big plan for you. God can do great things even with small objects like diamonds or small people like children! For God, a big plan doesn't mean you have to change the world or win a war or solve an international crisis—it might just mean that you are used by God to encourage someone or challenge someone or introduce someone else to Jesus.

When you do something that you didn't think you could do, you know, that might mean you are in God's hand and He is doing great things with you.

Gideon thought he was too small and unimportant to do anything for God. But Gideon had faith that with God he could do something that he could not do on his own. Read together Judges 6:12 – 'The angel appeared and spoke to Gideon, "The Lord is helping you, and you are a strong warrior."'

Don't be fooled by size or age or ability! With God we can do amazing things if we have faith and trust in Him.



## Tying In

Supplies: Various sizes of the same chocolate bar or certain foods, e.g. tiny tin of baked beans, medium and large or perhaps a mini muffin, medium and a mega-sized muffin etc.

'Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.' (1 Timothy 4:12)

Call several children up to be taste-testers.

Today we are going to have a taste test. Kids, I want you to tell me which tastes better, this miniature Crunchie bar, this regular Crunchie bar or this large Crunchie bar?

Of course they are all going to taste the same, yes, it would be better to have more but the taste is the same. *(Continue this with two or three other chocolate bars, or foods, e.g. muffins, pizza, etc.)*

When we live a life connected with Jesus, no matter our age or our size, the same sorts of things can happen for us. We are friends with Jesus and there is no difference regardless of your age; just like in the small, medium or large versions of these foods, there is no difference in the taste—there is no difference in how we can be friends with God and how He might work through our lives.

We are all saved by the choice that Jesus made on the cross and we are all able to have the Holy Spirit help, support and guide us every day. God doesn't treat children any different from adults. We all have the ability to pray and expect big things from God. We all have the responsibility to share Jesus with others. We all face temptations and tricky choices. We can all be forgiven when we ask for the wrong choices we have made.



Our verse for today says, 'No one should look down on you because you are young.' We don't have to wait until we grow up to live in ways that please God. Everywhere you are, people watch how we live, the words that we choose to say, the way we act, the choices we make and the attitudes we have.

These are the ways we are supposed to show our commitment to God according to this verse:

- In speech: say good things and encourage people
- In conduct: obey His commands, and treat others with kindness, have a good attitude
- In love: God wants us to love others and show His love
- In faith: live your life to please God
- In purity: have good thoughts and actions, keep your life safe from things that can hurt you (scary movies, bad video games, music with bad words, bad websites etc.)

Whether you are a small, a medium, a large or an extra-large, if you have asked Jesus into your heart, your job is love Him with all your heart and soul and mind and strength and to love others as you love yourself.

*(Stand together as a large group and join arms.)* As a group today, we stand together so that we can support and encourage each other so that no one will look down on us because we are young as we strive to follow God in all we do. Go around the circle praying for each other and encouraging and challenging each other to do what God requires of them.

## 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.

Family Bite the Bickie...

- Challenge your family to the minute to win it game you played today, getting the biscuit from your forehead to your mouth.
- When each family member has had their turn (even if they don't get it in their mouth) all the others at the table need to say what they appreciate about them.
- Ask your parents what they wished they could have done as a kid, and was always told they weren't old enough or big enough to do? Did that frustrate them?
- Share what you would like to do, with help from God.

