

Junior Soldiers

Unit 8 : Lesson 4



Courageous Mums!

PURPOSE : For the children to recognise and appreciate what the significant women in their lives have done to support and encourage them.

“Sir,” Hannah said, “a few years ago I stood here beside you and asked the Lord to give me a child. Here he is! The Lord gave me just what I asked for. Now I am giving him to the Lord, and he will be the Lord’s servant for as long as he lives?”

1 Samuel 1:26–28 (CEV)

Consider & Prepare

Read:

The story of the widow in 1 Kings 17:8–14

The story of Jochebed, the mother of Moses, in Exodus 1:1–2:10

The story of Hannah in 1 Samuel 1:1–28

If you have an older group of children, you might like to consider reading each of the stories out of the Bible, otherwise, concentrate on reading 1 Kings 17:8–14 together. There are summarised retellings of the stories of Jochebed and Hannah within the lesson.

During discussions about mothers, be aware that some children may be without mothers or may have very negative experiences of mothers. Acknowledge that there are often other significant women in our lives who provide for us, and that there may be children with an unfulfilled longing for a significant woman in their life.

NOTE: The ‘Tying in’ activity requires the children to use a painted handprint. These need to be prepared during the ‘Connecting in’ time and left to dry. By using a paintbrush to apply the paint to the children’s hand you can use a minimum amount of paint so that the print will dry more quickly. If you do not think your handprints will dry in time you could prepare them the week before or simply trace around their hands instead of using paint.



What you will need:

For 'Connecting In'

- An A5 sheet of cardboard for each child
- Poster paints
- Paintbrushes
- Baby wipes for cleaning hands
- Two large sheets of paper
- Post-it notes (eight per child)
- Pens or markers

For 'The Main Thing'

- Bibles
- A nice gift box with a bow
- A bag of chocolates or lollies (ideally enough for the whole group)
- Place one chocolate (e.g. a Freddo frog) in the gift box
- A range of small plastic containers and craft materials (for example, yoghurt containers, takeaway containers, empty water bottles, paddle pop sticks)
- Glue, staplers, string, tape
- A large tub containing water (for floating baskets in)
- Optional: jelly babies

For 'Tying In'

- Markers
- Magnetic tape (this is available from craft suppliers and some discount stores)
- Strong scissors for cutting pieces of tape

For 'Home & Beyond'

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

Connecting In

Preparation for the 'Tying in' section...

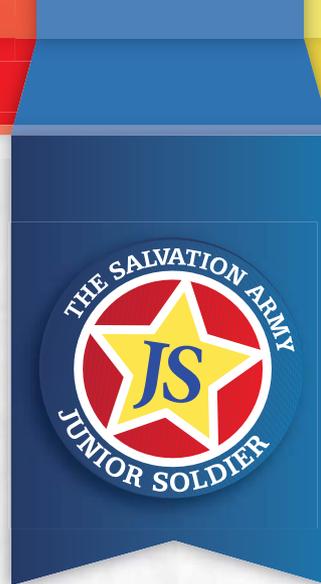
Give each child an A5 piece of cardboard. Ask the children to write their name on the back of their cardboard. Allow each child to apply paint to the palm of their hand with a paintbrush then make a handprint on the cardboard. Set these aside to dry during the lesson ready for the 'Tying in' section.

Courageous or Cowardly?

Put two large sheets of paper on opposite walls. Write the word 'COURAGEOUS' on one and 'COWARDLY' on the other. Give each child a set of post-it notes and a pen or marker. Ask them to sit in the centre of the room.

Read each of the scenarios given. Ask the children to write the highlighted word from each one on a post-it, decide whether it is a brave or cowardly thing to do and race to put their post-it on the correct poster (you might like to have the words written up on a white board or have leaders available for children that might need help with writing).

- Is it courageous or cowardly to **share** with someone else even when you don't have much yourself?
- Is it courageous or cowardly to **give up** something you have really looked forward to getting because God asked you to?
- Is it courageous or cowardly to let someone be **bullied** because you don't want to risk being picked on yourself?
- Is it courageous or cowardly to **tease** someone who is smaller or weaker than you?
- Is it courageous or cowardly to **walk away** from someone who is trying to start a fight?
- Is it courageous or cowardly to give your **pet** away if you are moving somewhere that is not suitable for your pet? For example, if you have a horse and are leaving your farm to live in town or you have a large dog but you are moving to an apartment.
- Is it courageous or cowardly to **join in** if you are at a friend's house and they are doing something you know isn't right? (Give some examples you think will be relevant for your group. Watching MA15+ movies, playing MA15+ games, drinking alcohol, smoking.)



Link...

I think you all know what it means to do brave and courageous things. Did you know that mums are often very brave? They will often do courageous things for their kids.

- I wonder if you can think of some brave things that mums might do.
- Today in our lesson we are going to meet three mothers who did courageous things for their kids.

The Main Thing

The widow in Zarephath...

For this section you will need: A nice gift box with a bow and a bag of chocolates or lollies (ideally enough for the whole group). Place one chocolate (e.g. a Freddo frog) in the gift box ready to share the story.

'Today I have a gift for one of you. I am choosing to give the gift to...' (Randomly choose a child and give them the prepared gift box.)

Before you open the lid, I want you to promise me that you will share what is inside with someone else before you have any for yourself.

Now open the lid...

Please share what you have. It's not much is it? The mum in our story today was asked to share what she had even though it was only a small amount she had to live on. But when she did as God asked her to she received more and more and more and more... (Each time you say 'more' place another chocolate in the box. Continue until the box is overflowing.)

Let me tell you her story...

Elijah was a man that lived long ago. One day God sent Elijah to give a message to the King of Israel. He told him that God would send a long drought on the land, until the people of Israel returned to living the way God wanted them to.

Because of the drought, no crops would grow and people began to run out of food. There was one woman in particular whose husband had died. She had a son to look after and they were in desperate trouble.

Let's open our Bibles to 1 Kings 17:8–24 to find out what happened.

- What brave things can you see that this mum did?
- How did her brave actions help her son?

Jochebed, the mother of Moses...

For this section you will need: a range of small plastic containers and craft materials (for example, yoghurt containers, takeaway containers, empty water bottles, paddle pop sticks), glue, staplers, string, tape and a large tub containing water (for floating baskets in). Optional: jelly babies

While I'm telling you about our second mother for today, I want you to use these materials to try and make a basket that you think will float.

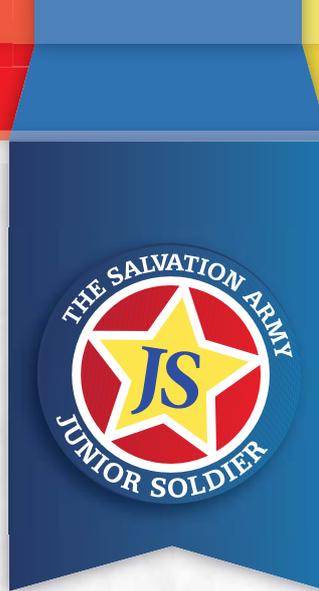
At the time of this story, the people of Israel had become slaves to the Egyptians. But God was still right there with them, helping them to stay healthy and strong. The number of Israelites grew so big that the leader of Egypt, the Pharaoh, began to worry that they might try to break free from being slaves.

Eventually he ordered that every time a baby boy was born in an Israelite family, they had to throw him into the river. Sadly, lots of baby boys drowned.

But one mother, one very cunning and courageous mother, decided on a different plan. She knew that she had to obey the law but before she threw her baby into the river she placed him into a basket that she had specially made; a basket that would float and protect her baby boy from drowning.

- What brave things do you think this mum did?
- How did her brave actions help her son?

Give the children an opportunity to see if their 'baskets' will float. You might like to give them a jelly baby to place in their basket. Challenge the children to keep their 'babies' safe and dry.



Hannah, the mother of Samuel...

Think for a minute about a gift that you have received. I don't want you to think of any old present. I want you to think about something that you have desperately wanted, something that you had to wait for, something that you thought you might not ever get.

- How did you feel when you finally got it?
- How do you think you would feel if you were then asked to give it up almost right away?

Hannah was a married woman who had not been able to have any children. She desperately wanted to have a baby. She prayed and prayed that God would give her a baby. Finally, she made a promise that if God gave her a baby she would give the child back to work for God.

So what do you think happened? Hannah became pregnant and she had a baby boy, Samuel. When Samuel was about three years old Hannah kept the promise that she had made to God. She took him to the temple and left him with the priests to grow up and learn how to do God's work in the temple.

- What brave things do you think this mum did?
- How did her brave actions help her son?

Tying In

Each of these mothers did courageous things that helped their children. They were bold and brave women that believed in God.

- Return the dried handprints to the children.

I would like you to think about an important woman in your life. It might be your mum. It might be your grandmother, an aunt, your Big Bud, a teacher or a friend.

Think about some of the things they have done to help or encourage you. Along each of the fingers on your handprint write or draw something that you are thankful for about them. As you are adding these things, take time to pray by thanking God for letting this person to be a special part of your life.

- Attach a piece of magnetic tape to the back of your handprint. Give it as a gift to the person you have been thinking of.

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.

Have a chat with your mum or another important woman in your life.

Ask them these questions:

- What is something you've done that you are proud of?
- Can you think of something tough that you have had to give up for one of your children?
- What is something courageous that you have done?

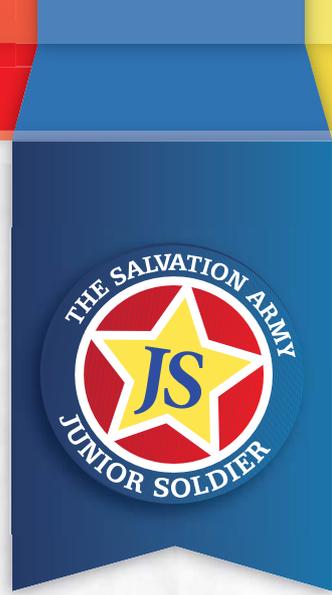
Remember to let them know how much you appreciate them!

You might also like to read the stories of these three courageous mums in the Bible:

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The story of Jochebed, the mother of Moses, in Exodus 1:1–2:10

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Home & Beyond

Have a chat with your mum or another important woman in your life.

Ask them these questions:

- What is something you've done that you have had to give up for one of your children?
- Can you think of something courageous that you have done?
- What is something courageous that you appreciate them!

Remember to let them know how much you appreciate them!
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