

Junior Soldiers

Unit 9 : Lesson 10



Standing Strong!

PURPOSE : For the children to explore and understand that it is important to stand strong for what is right, even when it is not popular.

'I've commanded you to be brave and strong, haven't I? Don't be alarmed or terrified, because the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.'

Joshua 1:9 CEV

Consider & Prepare

Read:

Joshua 1:9

Daniel 6

2 Thessalonians 3

1 Corinthians 15:58

1 Peter 3:17

This lesson has been written as part of a two lesson series on 'standing strong', in Lesson 9 Unit 9 ('Fiery Furnace') the children were able to explore that if they stand for what is right, others are able to see God. In this lesson they will be able to explore how important it is to stand up for what is right even when it is unpopular.

There are many trends and fads that society goes through; what is popular one day will be forgotten and replaced the next by something new and different. Some people can spend much of their time and energy trying to keep up with these trends just so that they feel that they belong to the 'in crowd'; when this is our focus the danger is that our faith and belief in God can be pushed aside and choices that are made are contrary to who we really are.

Today we are talking about standing up for our beliefs instead of following the trend of the day, which isn't an easy feat for anyone. This can be especially difficult for children at school due to the amount of peer pressure placed on them to fit in while they are continually wrestling with who they are.

Please take into consideration how difficult this session will be for some children, especially those lacking confidence in social settings. In schools today children have to face bullies, being unpopular and not knowing how to articulate clearly who they are and what they believe in, which can be just as scary as the passage we are going to explore today about Daniel and how he was able to stand up for what he believed even though it was unpopular.

Daniel was a strong man of faith and unable to be corrupted. One of the problems with the government during this time was that it was full of people in powerful positions that had become corrupt and cheated both those they served above and below them. Part of Daniel's incorruptibility was his strong

faith, belief and honesty, and he was fearless and willing to tell the truth even when it is might be dangerous.

What we need to remember and reinforce with the children as you explore this topic today, is that God doesn't just expect us to stand up for our faith in Him and then have to fend off the 'lions' by ourselves: He asks us to be strong and courageous because He will be with us every step of the way even when things can get really scary and help us through.

What you will need:

For 'Connecting In'

- Plate with healthy food (carrot sticks/apple pieces etc.)
- Plate with unhealthy food (chips/chocolate/cake etc.)

For 'The Main Thing'

- Pictures of TV, radio, computer (internet) and people
- Sticky notes
- Textas
- *The Jesus Storybook Bible*
- DVD clips, depending on the option chosen
- Bibles
- Butchers paper

For 'Tying In'

- Butchers paper
- Textas

For 'Home & Beyond'

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



Connecting In

A healthy choice...

For this activity you will need two plates. On one plate, provide healthy snack food such as carrot sticks, apple pieces, sultanas etc. The other plate should contain unhealthy snacks such as chips, cake and chocolate etc. Explain to the children that they are able to choose only one thing to eat today as you get started on the lesson and that you would like them to try to choose something that they think will be good for them. (Please be aware of any food allergies that you might have in the group and provide options as appropriate for them.)

Link...Once they have chosen something and are eating this, chat about the about the following.

'I hope you are enjoying the choice that you have made; it's good to have a range of things to choose from rather than just one thing!

- How did you feel when all of this food was in front of you but you could only take one thing and you had to think about choosing something that was good for you?
- Did any of you wait to see what others did before you made your choice? Why?

→ Was it hard to choose something different to what the others chose?

There are plenty of times where we need to make a choice about the things that we do, say, watch, listen to, eat etc. and sometimes this can be a difficult thing.

→ I wonder what sorts of things influence your choice, what people or things that you think are important.

Today we are going to explore how someone was able to stand strong even when this was not a popular choice. You might have looked at, heard or read the section of the Bible about Daniel and the lions' den, well, today we are going to look at how Daniel standing strong might impact us and the choices that we make.



One of these things is not like the other...

For this game, you will need the children to form groups of three or four, depending on how big your group is. Explain to the children that, in their groups, they will need to come up with either an action each or a word or phrase each, but one of them should have something that—for some reason—doesn't match the others in their group. For instance, one child may be patting their head, another might be waving their hand, another might be clapping and the other child may stomp their feet. The action that would be the odd one out is the stomping off the feet because they are using their feet instead of their hands. Once each group has decided what actions they are going to do, let them show the other groups who need to guess which one of them is the odd one out.

Link... 'Those were some great ideas you came up with to try and stump the other teams! Sometimes the things that we do, wear, listen to, watch, eat, say etc. stand out from those around us. This can be difficult when we all want to be accepted and feel like we are part of 'the' group or 'a' group. Some of the choices that we make in relation to the things we say, think and do are influenced by what or who we love and believe in, e.g. our parents and faith in God.

→ I wonder if you find it hard to do something different from the people you are with.

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The Main Thing

What is popular?

To prepare for this section you will need pictures of a TV, radio, computer (internet) and people, hung up around the room. You will also need some sticky notes and writing implements.

'Sometimes at school, new things come along that become popular very quickly and everyone feels like they need to look a certain way or have a particular item.

→ I wonder what some of the trends you have seen come and go are. Toys, music, clothes, people etc.

→ Why do you think these things become popular? Where do these trends come from?

Thinking about the questions that we have just explored, I want you to use the sticky notes in front of you to write/draw down different popular trends that you have noticed at school/church/home/community etc. (*You might like to pair a younger child with an older child for this activity*).

Then place that sticky note on one of the pictures that are displayed around the room that best describes where people might have picked up that trend from.' (Give the children about five minutes for this task).

'Well done! Let's have a look at what trends have been added to the pictures. Move around to each picture and read out what has been added. You may like to ask a few questions at each station.

- I wonder why this trend was added to this picture.
- How do you think this trend might have become so popular?

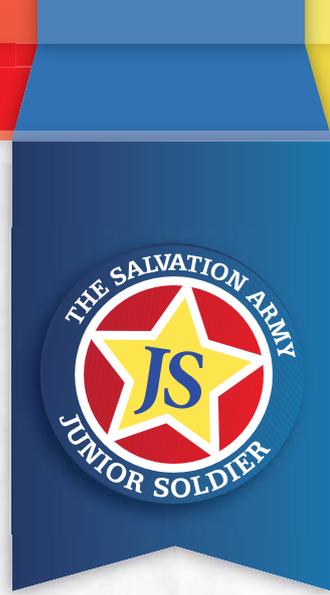
There are a lot of trends that occur every day throughout the world, not just in schools. In our last session together we explored how Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego stood up for their belief in God as recorded in Daniel chapter three. Today we move a little further on to Daniel chapter six and have a look at how Daniel stood strong even when this was not the popular thing or what everyone else was doing.'

Exploring the scripture...

'Let's have a closer look at Daniel's risky situation and explore Daniel 6 together.'

For this section of exploring the scripture you might like to choose one of the following options:

- Use *The Jesus Storybook Bible* by Sally Lloyd-Jones (a fabulous resource to help children engage with God's story of love.). The section of this Bible that you are looking for is 'Daniel and the scary sleepover', pages 152–159
- *The Jesus Storybook Bible* also has a version that comes with CDs that have someone reading the passage or you can also get individual DVD clips of that section from the Bible. If you go to the Zondervan website you can download individual clips for 99c (<http://zondervan.com/9780310738763>).
- There are also other clips that you can access about this passage, such as the following link in YouTube, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I8tXENptCS0>
- Divide your group into smaller groups with a leader assigned to each. The leader can dramatically read the text or have children to help read it. It would be good to give each group some butchers paper and textas to write or draw things that stand out from the text.



Tying In

Going deeper...

Once the groups have finished exploring the passage, divide your group (as appropriate) into small groups and go deeper into the passage with the following questions. They can use the butchers paper to write or draw images for their ideas.

- What was the trend (or popular thing to do) in this story?
- Why did the people follow these trends?
- Why didn't Daniel follow the trend?
- Why is it important for us to read/hear/explore this section of history from the Bible?
- I wonder what Daniel might have been thinking when he was in the den with the lions.
- Who was there to help Daniel when he stood up for his beliefs?
- I wonder if you were Daniel if you would have chosen to stand strong even though it was unpopular and scary.

'Daniel had to stand up for his beliefs even when it was not a popular thing to do so. Those people in powerful positions that were jealous of Daniel used his strong and committed belief in God to bring him down. I am sure this must have been a difficult thing to do knowing what was going to happen to him because of standing up for what he believed.

- What are some things that scare you, worry you or that might take your attention away from standing up for your belief in God?

The Bible contains many stories of people who had to take a stand and be very brave about telling others of their faith in God. But these sorts of people didn't just live in Bible times—throughout the centuries, there have always been Christians who took a brave stand for God. Maybe now it's your time. Maybe God needs you to be brave for Him and you should—inspired by Daniel—let people know that you believe in God and nothing can change or challenge that.'

Ask the children to come and sit in a circle for prayer today. As you go around the circle ask the children if they want to stand strong for God for them to stand up and say, 'I am going to stand strong for God even when it is not the popular thing'. Make sure that the children have a choice to do this or not. Have a leader finish this time in prayer and ask God for strength and courage to stand up for Him in all difficult circumstances that might come our way.



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.

Standing strong

'I've commanded you to be brave and strong, haven't I? Don't be alarmed or terrified, because the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.'

Joshua 1:9 CEV

- Place your 'Home & Beyond' card somewhere where you will be reminded about this verse. It is a great promise that can help us remember we don't have to do it alone but that God is with us, helping us to be strong and brave.
- When you read this verse, say a prayer and ask God to help you stand up for your faith in difficult times.
- Ask some members of your family or Big Bud about a time when God has helped them to be strong and brave even when it was not the popular thing to do.

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