

Junior Soldiers

Unit 9 : Lesson 2



I will be his loving and obedient child

PURPOSE : For the children to explore and understand the decision they have made to be loving and obedient to Jesus.

'Love means that we do what God tells us. And from the beginning, he told you to love him.'

2 John 1:6 (CEV)

'We love because God loved us first'

1 John 4:19 (CEV)

Consider & Prepare

Read:

John 14:15–23

Psalm 139:13–18

1 John 4:7–21

1 John 5:3

John 15:10–14

Throughout the Bible we read of God's love; how he loved us each before we were even born, and how he showed us love in the way he has created each of us. He showed us love in the promise he gave through the rainbow. He showed us love through giving his son to come and live amongst us and be a sacrifice for us all. Throughout the scriptures and history, his love is everywhere for us to see.

Today we will be looking at the Junior Soldier promise and the section that says 'I will be his loving and obedient child'. This part of the promise talks about our love and obedience to Jesus and, today, the children have the opportunity to explore what that means for them.

We know that God loves us and that he wants us to love him. However, he doesn't force us to do this—he leaves it as our choice. Naturally, if we choose to love God, we will also want to trust and obey him. After all, if we love God, why would we want to disobey him?

The children will also explore how love can be shown through action. God asks us to show our love and obedience for him by showing love to others around us. But he does not just expect us to know how to do this, instead he sent his son Jesus as an example of how to love others. Jesus showed us love in action during the time he spent interacting with others.

What you will need:

For 'Connecting In'

- *You Are Mine* by Max Lucado (this book is available in many libraries if you do not have a copy yourself).

For 'The Main Thing'

- Answers for the Jeopardy game written out on pieces of card and divided into their topic area
- Bibles

For 'Tying In'

- Coloured paper squares (approximately A5 cut in half)
- Pencils/extas or pens
- Small boxes or round containers for the children to keep their vouchers in
- Items for decorating the boxes if you choose

For 'Home & Beyond'

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



Connecting In

The detective's game...

Gather all the children in a circle and appoint one child as the detective for this game. The child chosen to be the detective needs to go aside with a leader away from the rest of the group. When the child and leader have left the main group, another leader should appoint one child in the circle to be the 'group leader'. The group leader will need to select and start doing some actions which the other children in the circle should follow, e.g. tapping their head, waving their arms in the air, nodding head or clapping their hands.

The detective's role in the game is to try and work out who the group leader is. This will be an easy task if all the children in the circle are looking directly at the leader. Encourage the children to think of ways to disguise who the leader is while they are playing the game.

Once the group leader has been chosen and everyone in the circle is ready to begin following the actions, ask the detective to return to stand inside the circle. They need to try and work out who the leader is and will have three guesses to do so. The game is finished once the detective has either used up all three guesses or has guessed the leader of the group correctly. The group leader then becomes the detective and leaves the group while another group leader is chosen and the game continues. Play as many rounds as you have time to fit into your session. If you have a large group, you may like to have two games being played at the same time to allow more children to have a go.

Link...

'Well, today we have had some fun playing the detective game. For most of you playing the game, the main thing that you needed to do was to follow the actions of the leader.

- I wonder if the game would have worked or been as much fun if we didn't follow the group leader and the actions they were doing.
- Why did we follow the group leader today? (*They were the instructions given for the game and we wanted to play, have fun and participate, if we didn't, then the game wouldn't have worked.*)
- Who are some other people that you might follow and obey the instructions they give?

Today we are going to explore how following and obeying Jesus might look for each of us.

- I wonder if this is something we do just because people tell us we should, or if it is something we want to do because we love Jesus.'

You are mine...

Read to the group the story *You Are Mine* by Max Lucado.

Link...

- I wonder what parts of the story you liked. Why?
- I wonder what God might be saying to you from the story.
- Who do you think Punchinello is like?
- Who do you think Eli is like?



This is a special book that helps us to remember how special we are to God and how much he loves us. He has created us each in a special way and loves all the unique things about us.

- I wonder how being loved like this makes you feel.

I don't know about you, but when I know that God loves me that much for who I am, I feel I want to love him back.

- I wonder what that 'love back to God' might look like.
- Do you think that will include obeying him?



The Main Thing

Before you start this section, you will need to have the Jeopardy game set up. This will involve writing the names of the people we follow (outlined below) on a piece of card and sticking them facedown to the whiteboard or wall so that you cannot see what is written. On the front write the amount of points that each sheet is worth. It is important to have the names under the correct heading/section.

Exploring Scripture...

Look up the scripture 1 John 4:7–21 together. Ask one or a few children (or a leader) to read the verses out to the group. Explain that someone will read the verses again, but this time, as certain words are read we will do the actions outlined below to help us to remember some of the important message. Outline and practice these before you read the passage again. You may even like to get some of the children to come up with the actions that you are going to do or see what other words and actions the children might like to add.

- Love - Act out that their heart is beating
- God - Point upwards
- We - Arms around each other's shoulders
- Son - Pretend you are holding a baby

'These are very powerful words - I wonder if others will see something of God because of the way you live and love others. Let's leave them here for now as we play an interactive game about love and come back to these verses again later.'

Jeopardy...

Jeopardy is a fun quiz game that has a unique answer-and-question format in which players are presented with clues in the form of answers, and must phrase their responses in question form e.g. Question - 'A movie that has characters who belong to Andy.' Answer - 'What is *Toy Story*?'

Divide the group into two teams (this can also be played as individuals if needed).

'Today we are going to be playing a game of Jeopardy. The instructions are:

- People in each team will take it in turns to choose which topic and number of points they are going to play for e.g. 'Our team selects the Family topic and the 200 point question.'
- Once they have been given their question from the chosen category, everyone in the team can work together to discover the answer, however, only the child who chose the topic can answer.
- Let the children know that the answers will be people who we follow, listen to instructions from and obey.

NOTE: The correct response from the children should be worded as a question - if your children are having difficulty with this then you might like to start the answer for them, e.g. 'Who are...'

As a leader, if you are having difficulty with the way the game of Jeopardy is played, there are plenty of examples on YouTube that will give you the idea.

- **Family:**

- Q: We are a lot older than you are. We might look after you from time to time. Sometimes we love lots of cuddles and kisses! A: Who are grandparents? (100 points)
- Q: We look after you and raise you. We usually drive you to different places. We love you. A: Who are parents? (200 points)
- Q: Sometimes we can be a bit annoying. We were born before you. We are part of the same family. A: Who are older brothers/sisters? (300 points)

- **Church:**

- Q: I see you every time we have Junior Soldiers. I love to help you explore things about God. I help you with your passport. A: Who is my Junior Soldier Leader? (100 points)
- Q: You might see me up the front during a church service. I look after the church. I am usually in uniform. A: Who is an officer? (200 points)
- Q: I love you unconditionally. I made you. I know all the hairs on your head! A: Who is God? (300 Points)

- **Officers:**

- Q: I look after people's houses or shops. Sometimes I drive around in a car at night on patrol. I will come if your alarm system has gone off. A: Who is a security officer? (100 Points)
- Q: I wear a uniform. I work at a station when I am not out patrolling. I encourage people to follow the law. A: Who is a police officer? (200 Points)
- Q: I drive around in a van. I help people who are sick or injured. You can call me on 000 for help. A: Who is an ambulance officer? (300 Points)

- **School:**

- Q: I only work a few hours a day. I help you cross the road on your way to school. I hold a sign in my hand to stop traffic. A: Who is a crossing supervisor? (100 points)
- Q: I am the head of your school. I need to make important decisions about all the children and their education that are in my care. A: Who is a principal? (200 Points)
- Q: I see you most weekdays. I help you to learn and explore lots of things. I am responsible for your class. A: Who is a teacher? (300 Points)

After all the clues have been given and topics guessed, tally the points to see which is the winning team. Ask the children to come back together as a group and explore the following questions with them:



→ 'There were lots of people in our game today that we follow and need to obey for various reasons. I wonder why you follow or obey some of them.' (Some of the answers you may receive are: because we trust them; because we love them; because we are told to; to keep us safe, or because it's the rules)

'There are some people we follow because we know we can trust them. Because of their job, we know they are asking us to do things or follow them because it is the best thing to help us learn or to keep us safe. Sometimes we follow people like our parents and grandparents because we love them, we know that they love us and want the best for us so we follow their instructions.'

Have a look at 1 John 4:7–21 again. In verse 19 it tells us that God loved us first and that is why we love.

→ I wonder what your love for God looks like. Is it like a loving and obedient child?

Have a look together at 2 John 1:6 and see what it says about loving God.

'Love means that we do what God tells us. And from the beginning, he told you to love him.' 2 John 1:6

This means that God is asking us to be obedient to him because we love him.

→ What do you think it means to be obedient?

'We can trust God no matter what; God knows what is best for us! The most important instruction that God gives us is found in Matthew 22:36–40 and talks about how we need to love God with everything we have and love others as we love ourselves. This means that one way we can show our love and obedience to God is to show love to everyone around us through our words and actions.'



Tying In

'For those of you who are Junior Soldiers, I want you to think about the section of the Junior Soldier promise that says, 'I will be your loving and obedient child', or you might like to reflect on the scripture verses that we have been exploring today.

→ I wonder what this means to you.

→ If you love God and want to follow him, I wonder what your life looks like. How do you think about others? How do you talk to others? What might be some of the things you do for others?'

Give the children some time to think and reflect about the questions above; you might even like to give the children the opportunity to write or draw some responses in their journals. Encourage the children to pray about their responses and thoughts and have a leader pray for all the children at the end of this time of reflection.

Vouchers:

For this activity you will need some small squares of coloured paper (approximately A6 size and enough for at least 10 per child), pencils/textas or pens for writing/drawing and some small boxes or containers for the children to keep their vouchers in (you may also like to have some items to decorate the boxes/containers).

'We have just been reflecting on being Jesus' loving and obedient child and what that might look like in the things we think about, the words we say and the things we do. The way we interact and respond to others can be an important way to show our love as well as our love for God: you might say, 'love in action''



During this activity the children will be making some vouchers that will show 'love in action'. They can be taken and used at home, at church or with some of their friends. To create these vouchers, children should write/draw on the slips of coloured paper provided, how they are going to 'show love' in a variety of settings and situations. They can decorate them if they like and continue until they have made at least 10 vouchers. All the vouchers can then be placed into the small box/ container (if you prefer you might like to staple vouchers together into a small booklet).

Explain to the children that because we show love and obedience to God by the way we love others, today we are going to create a special 'love in action' voucher book. The vouchers will each have different ways that we are going to show love towards people in your home, school or church. For instance, one that you might give to your mum is 'I will make my bed everyday this week.' You could also give her one that says 'I am good anytime for hugs.' Think about different ways that you show your love, care or respect to people in your life. (It might be good to brainstorm some ideas together to help some children that might have difficulty coming up with suggestions for their vouchers.)



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.

Love in action...

This week use your 'love in action' vouchers with a variety of people and situations. As you hand out and use the vouchers, reflect about the following:

- Why you are giving out these vouchers?
- How does this show love to other people?
- How does this show God that you love him and want to follow him?

Remember to tell each person that you are doing this because you love them and want to share God's love with them!

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