

Junior Soldiers

Unit 9 : Lesson 4



Always Involved!

PURPOSE : For the children to explore and understand that God is still involved in and in charge over all creation.

‘We believe that there is only one God, who is infinitely perfect, the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of all things, and who is the only proper object of religious worship.’

Doctrine 2

‘There is only one God, and he is altogether perfect in every way. He is the Creator, Preserver and Governor of all things. We should not worship anyone or anything else.’

Doctrine 2 (simplified version)

Consider & Prepare

Read:

Psalm 33:6–9

John 1:1–3

Genesis 1:23–31

Psalms 8 and 121

Handbook of Doctrine, chapter 2, in particular pages 32–33

This is part two of a two-part lesson on the second doctrine of The Salvation Army. The first lesson is about God being the only proper object of religious worship and this lesson explores God’s continued involvement with His creation and how he is still in charge.

The *Handbook of Doctrine*:

- reminds us of Genesis 1:1, ‘In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth’;
- it also says that ‘God has not ceased his creative activity. Creation is changing and the universe is developing. God is creatively sustaining his creation’ (p.32);
- and it adds, ‘God’s authority over the created order does not mean rigid and overbearing control but rather a caring, dynamic, interactive relationship with his creation. He works in co-operation with his creation to fulfill his purposes for it. He is in control, but invites us to share responsibility for his world’ (p.33).

That is: God created the world, He sustains or preserves it, and he governs over it. This doctrine, while based in the Bible and taught in one way or another throughout Church history, became vital for the Church in the 18th century. Prior to that, in the age known as the 'Enlightenment', the explosion of scientific research and methods (led by Isaac Newton) had seen many people decide that 'now we can understand how the world works ourselves; we don't need God'.

What became popular was a 'mechanistic' view of God: the universe was really like a big glorified machine, it was made by God and set 'running', but God had no ongoing role in the universe. Natural laws were in place, and they now dictated how the world worked.

To counter this, the Church began to emphasize that God created the universe but also sustains it and rules over it. That is: God is still active in His creation.

This is an important lesson for allowing your children to see and explore that God is still active and present—he did not create the world and then just abandon it.

What you will need:

For 'Connecting In'

- Large serving tray/board or a large slab cake
- Ingredients listed below to tell the creation story

For 'The Main Thing'

- Computer, laptop, smartphone and tablet device
- Images of an elephant, alligator and orangutan

For 'Tying In'

- Bibles (NLT) or sheets with Psalm 121 printed on them.
- Craft supplies that the children can choose from, e.g. clay, playdough, paper magiclay, large sheets of paper, textas, crayons, pastels, paint, pencils etc.

For 'Home & Beyond'

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



Connecting In

Creating the 'Creation Story'...

NOTE: You will need to be aware of any children in your group who have food allergies and make changes as appropriate so that they can be involved.

You will need: large serving tray/board or a large slab cake; blue icing and chocolate icing or blue sprinkles and chocolate sprinkles; white marshmallows; blue jelly; coconut coloured with green food colouring; yellow jelly crystals or sugar coloured with yellow food colouring; chocolate sultanas or honeycomb; chocolate malt finger biscuits or musk/fruit sticks; M&Ms or Smarties, small jubes or freckles; caramel buds and yellow fruit sticks; 100s & 1000s or star-shaped sprinkles; snakes or sour worms (some cut into small pieces); Tiny Teddies biscuits

Assemble the items on a clean serving tray/chopping board/iced large slab cake as listed below to tell the creation story. Divide the space in half so you can have daytime and night time. Remember to use wondering statements to engage the children in the activity, e.g. 'I wonder why God made daytime first...!', 'I wonder what was the very first animal God made.'

- Day one – day and night (add blue icing/sprinkles/coloured sugar and chocolate sprinkles/chocolate icing)
- Day two – sky and atmosphere (add a marshmallows for clouds, blue jelly for sea)
- Day three – land (add green coconut for grass, yellow jelly crystals for sand, choc sultanas or honeycomb for rocks), plants (add trees: choc malt fingers or fruit sticks with mint leaves, flowers: mini M&Ms/Smarties, jubes, freckles).
- Day four – sun, moon, and stars (sun: caramel bud with fruit sticks as sun-rays, moon: white marshmallow, stars: 100s&1000s or star-shaped sprinkles).
- Day five – birds and fish (add snakes/sour worms; the smaller pieces of snake are the fish).
- Day six – animals (add Tiny Teddies)

Once the story has been told, encourage the children to retell the story to you as you eat it together!

Link... 'Well that was a fun way to look at how God created the world.

- Are there any things that you 'wonder' about creation and how God went about things? There are plenty of things that come to mind for me, e.g. I wonder how He came up with all the ideas for the animals or I wonder what made Him think to create a person like Adam and Eve. (*Give the children some time to share their questions and wonderings, it would be great for you to have a few, too, and ask the children what they think.*)

Well, as part of The Salvation Army and the Christian Church, we believe that God created the world just like we have been looking at again today. Do you think that once God created everything He just forgot about His wonderful creation? I think that God is still very much involved with His world and His creation, and today we are going to check this out a little bit more.'



The Main Thing

Still in control...

For this part of the lesson you might like to have a computer, laptop, smartphone and tablet device available to help in engaging the children with the topic.

- Hands up if you have ever used a computer before?
- Do you have a computer at home?
- What about at school?
- I wonder if you can imagine what life without a computer would be like. (*I am sure that you will have some very interesting responses from the kids.*)

Well, it wasn't that long ago that nobody had access to a computer at home and even less time ago that we had access to computers that we took everywhere, like a laptop, or even less time ago, access on a smartphone or tablet device.



Computers were used in businesses, manufacturing, the defence forces, research facilities, universities and government, but they were not accessible for people to have in their homes. Computers that were used in these other places were very big and expensive. In the 1970s there were a number of people that worked at the idea of creating a computer that everyone could have and use in their homes, a personal computer.

Bill Gates—someone that you might have heard of—is one of the people who was very influential in this personal computer revolution. He was a student at Harvard University in America when he started working on an operating system that would help to make computers in homes a reality.

He developed the first popular personal computer (or PC) and launched his company, known as Microsoft, which quickly grew to be the world leader in providing computers to people. He ran the company and continued to develop more and more changes to the home computer, including the introduction of an easy operating system called 'Windows'.

After many years, and after making billions of dollars, Bill Gates is still involved in the Microsoft company, currently as non-executive chairman.

He was a part of creating something very special and is still involved today in what happens with all the changes in computers and technology within the company. He didn't just create this great thing and then sell it to someone else and walk away—he created Microsoft and is still involved with it and cares about what happens to it.

I think that looking at someone's story—about how they created something and are still involved with it because they care about it—can help us a little when we try to understand how God is still involved in His world.

We believe that God created the world, just like we explored earlier in the lesson, but what we know and understand about God doesn't just stop there. We also believe that God cares for us, loves us and wants to be a part of our lives. This is not a God that just created the universe and everything in it and then just stepped aside; this is a God that is still involved with, cares for and provides for His creation.

Let's stop and think about mothers and their babies, more specifically let's stop and think about animal mothers and their babies. Elephants, alligators and orangutans (*you might like to have some images of these animals to help connect the children with the topic*) are all animal species where the mothers love and care for their young. Once the babies are born they don't just stand by and leave them to grow alone; they nurture them, provide for them, watch over them and train them so that they will develop the skills needed to be a full-grown elephant, alligator or orangutan.

The way that some animal mothers care and look over their babies can help us also to see something of our relationship and connection with God. He is continually connected with His creation and cares about what happens to it.



Tying In

Psalm 121...

For this 'Tying In' segment you will need some Bibles (NLT) or sheets with the following Psalm printed on them. You will also need some craft supplies that the children can choose from, e.g. clay, playdough, paper magiclay, large sheets of paper, textas, crayons, pastels, paint, pencils etc.

Have one of the leaders share Psalm 121 (NLT):

*I look up to the mountains—does my help come from there?
My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth!
He will not let you stumble; the one who watches over you
will not slumber.*

Indeed, he who watches over Israel never slumbers or sleeps.

The Lord himself watches over you!

The Lord stands beside you as your protective shade.

The sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon at night.

The Lord keeps you from all harm and watches over your life.

The Lord keeps watch over you as you come and go, both now and forever.

- I wonder how you feel when you hear these words about God watching over us. (*Give the children and opportunity to share how these verses make them feel.*)
- Read the Psalm again.
- Today we have looked at how God has not stepped away from His creation but is still involved in and cares about all He has created.
- Thinking about these verses from Psalm 121 and God caring for you, take some time to create an image or model to show God looking over and caring for you as part of His creation. (*Give the children some time to do this.*)



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.

Investigation...

During our lesson we have been exploring about how God is the creator of the world and all that is in it but we also checked out how He is still involved with all of creation including us.

- I wonder where you see God at work in His world.
 - Maybe it is in nature.
 - Maybe it is in words spoken or written by someone else.
 - Maybe it is through other people and the way they show God's love.
 - Maybe it is a special way that He shows you that He loves you.
- Think about it this week. You may like to write or draw some of the things that you find out about how God is active in creation, or chat to someone in your family or your Big Bud about it.



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