

Junior Soldiers

Unit 9 : Lesson 5



Following Instructions

PURPOSE : For the children to explore and understand how they might honour their dads or other significant men who have a positive influence in their lives.

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord for this is right. “Honour your father and mother” –which is the first commandment with a promise– “that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

Ephesians 6:1-3 (CEV)

Consider & Prepare

Read:

Exodus 20:12

Proverbs 31:10-31

Watch *Evan Almighty*

This is a special occasion lesson; the key event the lesson is written for is Father’s Day. It is important to remember that not all children have a dad at home that they have an ‘ideal’ relationship with, and some children may not even know their dad. However, there are, hopefully, men in the lives of the children that present a positive role model/influence. It would probably be good to get the children to identify who these people are at the beginning of the lesson if you are not familiar with this information.

God is the best example of a positive parent that we can have in our lives. God has instructed us as followers of Jesus to honour and love our parents regardless of their shortcomings. This—as all of us know—is not always the easiest thing to do but an important thing to explore with our children.

If there are children in the group with a parent(s) who is not a great role model for them, maybe they can be encouraged to consider God as an example of someone who loves and cares for them and wants the best for them. It may be easier for them to identify this sort of persona with a loving grandparent, uncle or aunt, their Big Bud or a family friend.

The third doctrine of The Salvation Army talks of our belief in the triune Godhead, including ‘the Father’. Sometimes, as an evangelical church, we can become so focussed on preaching and teaching about Jesus and salvation and the cross and Christ-centred New Testament passages that we forget about the Father and the Holy Spirit! Yet our doctrine says they are ‘undivided in essence and co-equal in power and glory’. This lesson is a good one to help redress that imbalance and talk about our heavenly Father.

Before this lesson, you may like to watch the movie *Evan Almighty*. It is referenced in the lesson and has some great ideas and thoughts that will be helpful when teaching this lesson. This gives you permission to go and sit down for a while and do some research while taking some time out too!

What you will need:

For 'Connecting In'

- Newspaper
- Popsicle sticks
- Sticky tape
- Straws
- Five dolls
- Tub of water, big enough to try and float some boats

For 'The Main Thing'

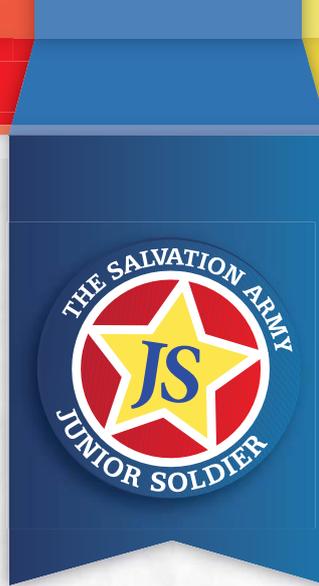
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=lkes4yPulml or DVD of *Evan Almighty*
- Bibles

For 'Tying In'

- Paddle pop sticks
- Sticky tape or glue
- Paper

For 'Home & Beyond'

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



Connecting In

Build a boat...

For this activity you will need to provide each child or group with the same amount of materials. This might be some newspaper, icy-pole sticks, sticky tape, straws, cardboard etc. If you have a large group, you may like to get the children to work in small groups on this activity.

Explain to the children that they need to build a boat using only the materials provided and that it needs to be able to float on water. Give them the materials and let them get started. After they have been working for about a minute, stop them and explain that you forgot that you had some extra instructions to give them.

At this point, you can start to give them instructions that are almost impossible and ridiculous. Some examples you might like to use are:

- Your boat needs to have a one metre tall mast
- Your boat needs to be able to turn into a submarine
- Your boat needs to be able to fit these five dolls in it (*have these with you*)

The children might not go any further once you give them the unrealistic instructions! Once they have expressed their frustrations have a go at testing what they have done so far on the water.

Link... 'Well done for trying so hard to build your boat with all those crazy instructions you had to try and follow! I am sure that building that boat seemed fairly easy and straightforward at the start when all you had to do was make it float, but with all of those ridiculous instructions, the task became almost impossible, especially with the resources that you were given!

- How did you feel at the start of the activity?
- I wonder how those feelings changed when I started to give you more and more instructions.

I wonder if you have had a time when your dad or another adult told you to do something that you thought was crazy or unfair or even perhaps silly. Maybe you even thought that you didn't need to follow the instructions because you knew better. Well, today we are going to explore a little bit about Noah and his family who were given many instructions to follow, and even though Noah's children might have thought that they were ridiculous, they followed them anyway to show honour to their father (Noah) and honour to God (their heavenly Father).'

Simon Says...

Explain to the children that you are going to play Simon Says and they need to follow your instructions. When you are playing, start off with easy instruction such as 'Simon says put your hands on head' and 'Simon says stand on one foot'. Then start to give out silly and ridiculous instructions. Some examples you might like to use are below; 'Simon says':

- Hop on one leg while poking out your tongue
- Touch your head to your feet
- Make one ear touch the other
- Put your nose on your elbow
- Make all the hairs on your head stand straight up in the air

Link... 'They were some very silly instructions that you had to follow. Well done for giving them a try without hurting yourself!

- I wonder how you felt when I started to give you harder and crazier instructions.

Sometimes our dads and other adults can give us instructions and we think they sound really hard and sometimes even a little crazy, just like the ones we had to follow during the game. Well, today we are going to explore a little bit about Noah and his family who were given many instructions to follow, and even though Noah's children might have thought that they were ridiculous, they followed them anyway to show honour to their father (Noah) and honour to God (their heavenly Father).



The Main Thing

Evan Almighty...

- I wonder if any of you have even seen the movie *Evan Almighty*. (Give the children time to respond.)
- What did you like about the movie?
- My favourite part was... (it would be really good for you to have your personal favourite spot to put into the lesson at this point.)

The movie is a modern take on parts of the Noah story that we find in the Bible in the book of Exodus. I am sure that most of you will be familiar with the story and how Noah followed some crazy instructions from God. Today we are going to watch a small segment from the movie as we explore how Noah showed his love for God by following what God asked of him even though it might seem crazy.'

The website www.thesource4ym.com/movieclipdiscussions/discussion.aspx?id=185 provides the following explanation about the clip as well as some helpful thinking around the selected section.

'The clip that we are using is a major transition in the movie. At this point in the story Joan (Evan's wife) and their three boys have been feeling that Evan is irrational and ruining the family by building the ark. They've left Evan to build the ark by himself and are on their way to stay with Joan's parents. Stopping at a diner on the way, Joan meets God but doesn't realize who she's talking to. God encourages Joan and gives her some insight on life and prayer.'

Introducing the clip:

'Today we are going to watch a short clip from the movie *Evan Almighty*. This movie is about a man named Evan who wants to 'change the world'. God visits Evan and tells him to build an ark that is just like the one from the story of Noah in the Bible. Evan eventually listens to God's instructions and starts to build an ark.'

- I wonder what you would do if your dad said he had to build an ark because God told him to.
- I wonder what you would do if he asked you to help him
- What if it was you that God asked to build the ark?

Evan's family, Joan (his wife) and three sons, start to think that he has gone crazy and decide to go and stay at their grandma's. The clip starts at a cafe that they have stopped at on the way. Listen carefully to what God (the character) says to Joan when the boys go to the bathroom.'

Play clip starting at around 59:54 and stop it at around 1:02:15 (or play YouTube clip).

'Joan stopped and thought a lot about how she needed to act in her situation after her conversation with God.

- I wonder what you think she came to understand.
- How do you think this clip might show us how we should act with our fathers or other adults in our lives?

Let's open up our Bibles for a moment and read out something else that God has told us.'

Read Ephesians 6:1-3 to the children; you might even like to read it twice or have someone else read it from a different version.

- What do you think God is asking us to do?
- I wonder why you think God has asked us to honour our dads (and mums or other important adults in our lives.)

Sometimes it can feel like the instructions we are being given, or what we are being told to do by our dads (including our heavenly Father) can be a bit difficult or crazy or perhaps not the right thing to do. Sometimes this can make us feel like we don't want to follow their instructions, do what they say or obey them! But God asks us to honour our fathers, which means following and listening to them (and Him) even when we don't want to.

Those of you with a younger brother or sister or younger friends will know that sometimes you have to teach them something: how to tie a shoelace, how to feed the dog, how to read a hard word, how to use sticky tape, how to make a piece of toast. You have experience and wisdom that they don't have.

Well, think about the experience and wisdom someone much older than you might have. Our parents only want what is best for us, so we should listen to their advice and obey them, even if we don't always know why something should be done. We should honour them and respect their wisdom.

Now think about how much smarter (and older!) God is. So we should honour God even more. He deserves our honour and our respect, even our love.

Tying In

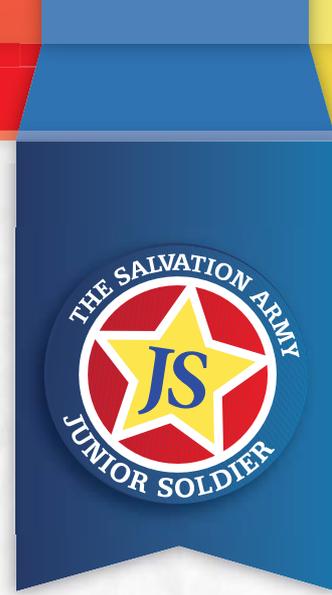
Instructions...

'I wonder if your dad has ever given you an instruction or asked you to do something that didn't make sense; a direction that seemed to be a bit odd or a bit difficult to understand, or perhaps why he might be asking you to do that.

Evan and his family had difficulty at first in following the instruction that God (in the movie) had given him. Evan was not able to see the full picture. Sometime this can be like us where we don't see the full picture of everything that is going on, which can make it difficult when our parents ask us to do certain things.

- Can you remember what Ephesians tells us about following the directions of our dad?

Of course there will be times that our dad (or our parents or other adults) give us instructions that we don't fully understand because we can't always see the big picture.



I want you to think about a time (or maybe you have more than one) when you received an instruction to do something that you didn't fully understand.' (*Get the children to go around and share their examples with each other.*)

As they are sharing, ask these questions:

- Why did you think this was a silly instruction?
- Would it have been hard to follow?
- What do you think God would have wanted you to do?
- After reading Ephesians, what do you think might be a good way to respond to our parents/adults when they ask us to do something that we don't understand? (Ask them to help you to understand.)



Boats...

'As we reflect on Evan and his family who were obedient (eventually) to God's instructions like Noah was with building the ark, we see that even when they didn't see the full picture, they trusted in God (their Father). There are times when we need to follow the instructions of adults and just trust them.'

Provide children with paddlepop sticks and sticky tape or glue and allow them to make a small boat. If you are using glue, you may want some paper to put underneath for them to glue the sticks to.

'As you are making these boats, think about how you can follow the instructions of the adults that care about you. This is just like God caring for us. We want to be obedient and honour him because he loves and cares about us, and sometimes this means being obedient to those around us, even when we don't see the bigger picture.'

After the children have finished making their boats, invite everyone to sit in a circle with them. As the leader, pray for the children that they will honour their dads and other adults in their lives that care for them by following instructions, even when it is hard.



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.

Following Instructions...

Think of some ways that you can honour your father and show him that you love him (or someone important in your life) this week. Perhaps you could:

- Listen to him.
- Help him out with cooking/cleaning etc.
- Ask him to do something with you: play a game, read a book, watch a TV show, go out for a milkshake etc.
- Share some of the good things you have done with your dad (or other person) at school or with your friends.
- Leave a special message/sticky note somewhere he will find it during the day.

Don't forget to honour your Father in heaven as well. Take some time to talk with Him this week.



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- Share some of the good things you will find it during the day.
- Show, go out for the good things you have done with your dad (or other person) during the day.
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