

# Junior Soldiers

Unit 10 : Lesson 1



## Heavenly Treasures!

**PURPOSE :** For the children to explore and understand why it is important to focus our time and energy on our relationship with God, rather than on things, items or objects.

*‘Stop collecting treasures for your own benefit on earth, where moth and rust eat them and where thieves break in and steal them. Instead, collect treasures for yourselves in heaven, where moth and rust don’t eat them and where thieves don’t break in and steal them. Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.’*

Matthew 6:19–21 (CEV)

## Consider & Prepare

### Read:

Luke 12:13–21

Matthew 6:19–23

Luke 12:33

‘What’s in it for me? What do I get out of it? How much can I make of this?’ These are common questions being asked around the world right now. They place great value on your money, your time and yourself above anything else—even God. The world is a place filled with greed where people are striving to gather up as much treasure or ‘things’ that they can: before and above anyone else. But this isn’t a new concept. In the Bible, Jesus speaks to this issue of greed and accumulation by using an illustration of a man who wants to store up as much as he can so that he is well off for years to come. But God tells him that he will die that night and lose all the treasure he has stored up.

This parable reinforces the importance of putting our time and effort into eternal matters such as our relationship with God rather than building up a store of ‘things’ that don’t last and don’t make a difference to eternity. He tells us this to promote the idea that if we are worried only about our treasures on earth, then we are not focused on God and the life he wants us to lead.

This is a key issue we need to explore with our children as we are in a world where we are surrounded by advertising and companies that are continually telling us that we ‘need’ more stuff and where a culture tells us that the more we have the more important we are. This is a topic that might be hard for some children to fully understand and engage in because of the peer group that they spend time with—please be aware of the children in your group and the pressures to fit in they might be under from others around them. We really want to help our children explore the eternal value of their connection with God, over and above greed and building up a store of earthly things.

## What you will need:

### For 'Connecting In'

- Small cardboard squares with either printed or drawn coins, hearts and crosses (see activity)

### For 'The Main Thing'

- Some items that have started to rust
- Paper
- Textas
- Pencils
- Bibles
- Magiclay

### For 'Tying In'

- Small boxes for each child (this might be a small gift box or paper mache boxes you can get from craft shops)
- Textas
- Paper—bright colours preferably
- Decorating Items (stickers, jewels, pompoms, bright coloured paper etc.)
- Scissors
- Glue and sticky tape

### For 'Home & Beyond'

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



# Connecting In

## Treasure hunt...

For this treasure hunt you will need to have enough items to hide—this will depend on the number of children you have and how many items you would like them each to find. You will need some small pieces of cardboard with the following either printed or drawn on (you might like to print off some pictures of the following or perhaps even use some items such as chocolate coins and hearts etc.): coins—1 point, cross—10 points, heart—5 points.

For this activity, you will need to hide the objects around the room (or the space you plan to use for the treasure hunt). Hide enough pictures of coins, crosses and hearts to ensure that all children will be able to participate fully. To help the children understand that heavenly treasures are more precious, it would be best to hide less of the crosses and hearts, and more of the coins.

'Today we are going to have a treasure hunt. There are lots of pieces of treasure hidden around the room for you to find. Each treasure is worth a different amount of points. The coins that are hidden are worth 1 point each, the hearts that are hidden are worth 5 points each and the crosses that are hidden are worth 10 points each (show the children a sample of what each of the items looks like). The aim of this treasure hunt in the allotted time is to collect the most amount of points. Off you go, you have three minutes!'

**Link** – 'Well done to...(name of child) for getting the most points. That was a fun treasure hunt!'

- I wonder what your plan was at the start of the hunt.
- Did you just go and see what you could find or were you looking carefully for the treasure that had the most points on it?

'The treasure you have collected was a mix of coins and hearts and crosses. You might have noticed that there were more coins and not as many hearts and even less crosses. The coins represent all the things that we like to buy or have or get—I wonder what some of those things might be. The hearts and crosses represent the things that connect us to God and the benefits from being friends with him. The hearts and crosses had a higher point value because they are more valuable—I wonder why you might think that being connected with God is more valuable than having or getting cool stuff. Well, today we are going to explore that together; we are going to explore the things that we value and treasure and love, and see if we can decide which is more valuable.'

# The Main Thing

## Rust and stuff...

For this section you will need some old items that have started to rust to show the children. You will also need some paper and textas for the children to use to make lists of their stuff.

'I wonder if any of you have ever been exploring in an old shed or garage. What sorts of things did you or might you find if you were exploring in there? (*Allow some time for responses to this question.*)

'I'm not sure about your shed or garage but mine seems to be a place where things are stored or items that are unwanted or unused build up. Some of you might have seen a TV show called *American Pickers*, it has a couple of guys going around and searching through sheds and garages and a whole heap of stuff that just builds up over the years. They search for things that might be able to be restored and that somebody else might want to own.

'These spaces—either on the show or some that you have been to—have items that sit there and gather dust, start to get old and fall apart, and those items that are made from metal start to rust. Have you seen an item that is starting to rust? (*Take some time to show the children some items that are beginning to rust.*)

'Lots of these items—that end up in a shed or garage or junk room—are items that are not used anymore, or sometimes you update something and get a newer model or purchase something that you think is better and add it to your 'stuff' and you put the old one away in the shed. I think many people have a lot of stuff and maybe even stuff that we don't use any more but still hang on to.

'Take a few minutes (*children and leaders*) to write a list of 'stuff' that you have, that might include toys, books, games, DVDs, clothes, sports equipment, computers or technology stuff etc. See how much you can write down on your list in two minutes: GO!'

- Who filled up their page?
- Wow, what a lot of stuff we each have!
- Let's have a look at the Bible and see what it might say to us about collecting a lot of 'stuff'



## What does the Bible say?

For the Bible reading, you will need to provide the children with a piece of paper and textas or pencils.

'While the Bible is being read about Jesus and a parable that he told, I want you to think carefully about the things you hear and the things that stand out for you. I want you to write or draw some of those things.'

Read Luke 12:13–21, and Matthew 6:19–21 (*it would be good to read the passages at least twice to help the children think about what they are hearing and what stands out for them*). Once you have finished reading, allow children to share what they have drawn/written. As they are sharing, you can ask them some of the following questions:

- I wonder what you think 'earthly treasure' is.
- I wonder what you think 'heavenly treasure' looks like; how would you describe it?
- After talking about and looking at all the stuff we have, I wonder why you think Jesus has told this story.

'Earthly treasures are things that we have already been talking about: our 'stuff'. We collect lots of things along the way and our pile of 'stuff' builds up and up. It is made up of objects and items that people want to get more and more of, even if sometimes—like the stuff sitting in the shed going rusty—we can't use them!



'Heavenly treasures are not necessarily items that you can see or touch. They include things like God loving us and being with us wherever we go, they also include spiritual gifts God has given us and the fruits of the spirit that we display. These heavenly treasures and our connection with God are things that don't go rusty or out of date—not like our 'stuff' that will eventually rust or rot or breakdown, and doesn't come with us when we go to heaven.

'Earthly treasures don't last; heavenly treasures are eternal. You won't have an iPod or a football or a jewellery box forever, but you will be loved by God forever.'

Lay out two pieces of butchers paper on the floor with the headings 'earthly treasure' and 'heavenly treasure' and get the children to brainstorm briefly for different things they think could go under each heading.

Once they have completed this, give each child a small amount of paper magiclay (clay etc.).

- Use the paper magiclay to make one thing each that we have spoken about today that represents an earthly treasure or 'stuff' (*this might be from the list on the butchers paper or our stuff lists earlier*).
- Once they have finished, read Matthew 6:19 out loud.
- 'Okay everyone: squash your earthly treasure!' (*They can squash what they have made.*)
- 'This time I want you to make something that represents a heavenly treasure' (*this might be from the list on the butchers paper or from other things that have been mentioned throughout the lesson*).
- This time when they have finished, read out Matthew 6:19–21.
- 'We are going to keep this item to remind us that putting our time and effort into our relationship with God produces something that will last—it is a heavenly treasure.'
- Spend some time in prayer together, thanking God that his love and his presence don't rust but last forever!



## Tying In

### Heavenly treasures...

For this activity, you will need to have either a small box for each child, or get them to make a box out of paper using origami. Instructions for an origami box can be found at [www.origami-instructions.com/origami-box.html](http://www.origami-instructions.com/origami-box.html)

'Today we are going to be making a treasure box each to help us with our 'Home & Beyond' this week.'

- Either give them the box, or work through the origami instructions with them to make a box.
- Allow them to decorate the outside.

'We are going to use our treasure box to collect some treasures that remind us of God and our relationship with him. Think about some of the things that we put on the heavenly treasures list or perhaps some other things that remind you of God's love and how special he is to you. I wonder what you might collect.'

- You might like to start by adding your paper magiclay item to your treasure box.



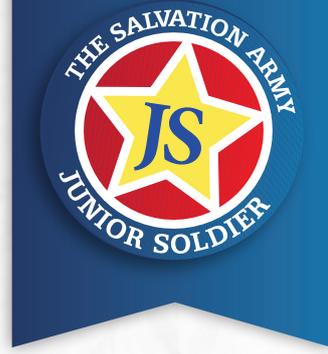
# Home & Beyond

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.

## Heavenly treasures...

This week, using the heavenly treasures box you have made:

- Think about and collect some things that remind you of heavenly treasures. This might be some of the things that we listed or spoke about during our lesson or some other items that help to remind you of God's love and how special he is to you.
- You might like to look at the items that you have collected at the end of the week and thank God that his love and his presence don't rust but last forever.
- It would be good to share the items you have collected with your Big Bud and bring your heavenly treasures box back to our next session.



**Home & Beyond**

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**Home & Beyond**

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