

# Junior Soldiers

Unit 10 : Lesson 4



## Homelessness!

**PURPOSE :** For the children to explore and understand that there are people in distress who don't have a place to live, and how God wants us to respond to this.

*'When I was hungry, you gave me something to eat, and when I was thirsty, you gave me something to drink. When I was a stranger, you welcomed me, and when I was naked, you gave me clothes to wear. When I was sick, you took care of me, and when I was in jail, you visited me.'*

**Matthew 25:35-36 (CEV)**

## Consider & Prepare

### Read:

Matthew 25:31-46 (CEV)

Luke 9:58 (CEV)

The above passage gives us clear guidance on our responsibility to assist, support and care for those without a home. Luke 9:58 also reminds us that Jesus did not have a place to lay his head, in fact Jesus never owned his own home.

Homelessness has many faces. In our society we have many stereotypes of what a homeless person looks like, but it affects a wide range of people, young, old and in between. Homelessness occurs regardless of a person's education level and cultural background. Homelessness affects many people in many different ways.

There are three levels of homelessness:

- primary homelessness: living on the street, living in parks, squatting in derelict buildings or using cars or railway carriages for temporary shelter;
- secondary homelessness: people who move frequently from one temporary form of accommodation/shelter to another;
- tertiary homelessness: people who live on a medium to long term basis in boarding houses, where their housing is considered to be below the minimum community housing standards.

You may like to check out some of the resources listed below as an extra focal/discussion point for your lesson, even just to use screen shots from films that you couldn't show in their entirety.

Movies depicting homelessness: *The Pursuit of Happiness, The Blind Side, The Fisher King, The Terminal.*

Picture books depicting homelessness:

- *Mr Bow Tie* by Daren Barbour
- *Fly Away Home* by Eve Bunting
- *Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen* by DyAnne Disalvo-Ryan
- *A Rose for Abby* by Donna Guthrie

To discuss homelessness further or seek further resources, contact your divisional social programme secretary.

### What you will need:

#### For 'Connecting In'

- Assortment of clothes for two or more groups (pants, dress, vest, jacket, pyjamas, socks, handbags etc.)
- Can of baked beans
- Post-it notes or butchers paper or whiteboard
- Pens or markers

#### For 'The Main Thing'

- Pictures of people depicting homelessness (attached appendix) or you can source your own pictures
- Bibles
- A list of local political representatives and church/government agencies that provide homeless support

#### For 'Tying In'

- Masking tape to mark out area of a motor vehicle, or cardboard taped together to approximately the size of the car.

#### For 'Home & Beyond'

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



## Connecting In

### What makes a great home...

Start by asking the children, 'What makes a great home?'. Have the answers written onto post-it notes or a large piece of butchers paper or a whiteboard (whatever works for your group). Discuss how each home will look different. There is no 'perfect' example of a great home but it is important for the children to share their thoughts on this matter.

Ask the children once the list is complete:

- What are some similarities you see in this list?
- What are the obvious differences?
- I wonder if there are some items that you could do without that would still make it a home.
- I wonder what items you think are essential to make it a home.

### 'Hobo Joe' game...

Explain to the children that some people who have no home also have nowhere to keep all the things that they own (even if this is a very small amount of stuff). Some of these people will wear *all* their clothing at one time, layer upon layer. Today we are going to play a game so that you can have the opportunity to experience this sensation.

You will need an assortment of clothing and items divided into two piles. Divide the children into two even teams near each pile of items. Each child takes turns to put on all the items of clothing etc. and

run down to the end of the room and back, remove the items and then the next child in line suits up and repeats the run. Do this until all children in each team have had their turn and then the first team to sit on the ground wins the prize: a can of baked beans (with no can opener and no way of heating it).

Note: Don't use too many layers or thick clothing so that the children don't pass out while they're running!

- How was that experience for you, putting on all those layers of clothing?
- Imagine if you had to do that every day!
- How do you think others might feel that live like this every day?

**Link...** 'We're going to be exploring different ways that people deal with homelessness today and what that might look like. Some people may live on the streets yet others experience homelessness very differently. We're also going to look at The Salvation Army's response to this issue and how we can help our community support those who are homeless.'



## The Main Thing

### Stereotypes of homelessness...

Cut out, photocopy larger and display the photographs from the end of this lesson. Have them placed around the room and ask the children to go and look at each photo and place a tick on the photo that best describes homelessness. Hint that there may be more than one photo that describes homelessness, and more than one homeless person in each picture! Ask the children to choose which picture best describes a homeless person (see appendix below). Explore the following with the children.

- Why did you choose the pictures that you did?
- Which photo had the most ticks? I wonder why that is the case.
- Which photos had no/least ticks? I wonder why that is the case.

Explain to the children what each of the photos represents...

1. Family in car because they were squatting in old factory
2. Lawyer whose mortgage has defaulted and is living with a friend temporarily
3. Childcare worker who moved to the city and lives in a cheap boarding house
4. Old man on trolley
5. Modern interpretation of Jesus
6. Daniel Craig, before he 'made it' acting in the movies
7. Lady on the street, evicted because she couldn't pay her back-rent
8. Bolivian girls in refugee camp
9. Officer talking to man on street (officers can be regarded as having no permanent home)
10. Muslim ladies in a human trafficking safe house due to domestic violence
11. Sikh truck driver who lives in his truck
12. Accountant who has separated from his wife and been kicked out
13. Female soldier on overseas deployment

Homelessness affects a wide age range of people, young, old and in between. People find themselves without a permanent home for many reasons. I wonder how you think people might become homeless.

Explore some of the following causes of homelessness with the children and examples of what that might look like:

- Relationship breakdown—parent and child, husband and wife
- Loss of employment
- Eviction from rental property
- Mental health
- Gambling, drug and alcohol addiction
- Domestic violence
- Political/religious persecution
- Refugees
- Default on a mortgage
- Job requires constant moving



Some famous people who have been homeless for a period of time include:

- Jesus, Jim Carey, Haley Berry, Dr Phil, Colonel Sanders (KFC), Daniel Craig, Kelly Clarkson

It is helpful to put the number of people who find themselves homeless each night into context for the children. Choose which country you represent and read to them the figures on homelessness. You might like to represent this figure in some way, e.g. drawing a rough map of the country and dividing it up to represent the number of people that find themselves homeless each night in relation to the whole population.

**Australia** population: 23.7 million people

On any given night, 105,000 Australians are homeless. A quarter of those are families with children and just under half (43%) are under the age of 25 (Hanover Housing Support and Research 2011).

Numbers of homeless in Australia:

42 people per 10,000 in ACT, NSW and VIC

69 per 10,000 QLD

248 per 10,000 in NT

53 per 10,000 SA & TAS

**New Zealand** population: 4.5 million people

Sleeping rough or in impoverished dwellings: 300 urban, 500–1,000 rural or impoverished housing

Caravans, campgrounds, boarding houses: 800–2,000

**Fiji** population: 880,000 people

In June 2003, a survey revealed a disturbingly high percentage of squatters: about one in ten Fijian citizens.

An estimated 82,350 individuals in 13,725 households lived in 182 squatter settlements, with Suva and Nausori being the worst-affected areas. The number of squatter settlements had increased 14% since January 2001, and 73% since 1996.

Urban migration, unemployment, the expiry of land leases, and the breakdown of nuclear and extended families were among the factors blamed for the trend. The report projected the population of squatters to grow to 90,000 in the Suva-Nausori corridor by 2006, putting increasing strain on supplies of water, electricity, sewage, and road services.

**Tonga** population: 104,000 people

Tonga Bureau of Statistics does not record homeless figures.

What does homelessness look like in Tonga?

Discuss examples: living with other family members or friends; living in a car or truck; building a shelter on someone else's property.



### What does the Bible say...

Look up and read together Matthew 25:31–46.

Now ask the children to read it a second time, and make a list together of the things that Jesus says are ways to help Him.

- What do you think about helping others who have no home?
- Could they be helped? Should they be helped?
- What can be done to help these people?
- Scripture says if we fail or refuse to help those in need we are going to be judged by God for that. How does this make you feel?
- I wonder why you think that the Bible emphasizes this.

God wants us to love others and to not to ignore people who are disadvantaged or having a difficult time. In the Old Testament God gave the law to Moses—it included the need to care for ‘orphans and children and the foreigners in your land’ (Deuteronomy 10:18).

Look up Deuteronomy 10:18, Malachi 3:5, and Isaiah 1:17.

- From these verses, what do you think God clearly want us to do?

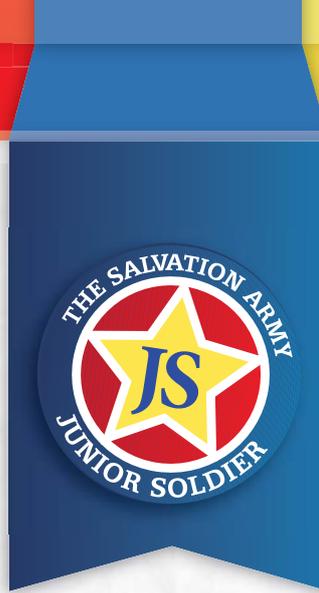
### The Salvation Army’s response to homelessness...

It’s not all bad news, there is hope! In Australia, New Zealand, Fiji & Tonga, The Salvation Army is proactive in assisting those who face homelessness and housing crises. The Army provides services such as hostels, independent living units, and short term crisis accommodation. However, right now in these countries, the majority of these accommodation units are found in metropolitan/city areas and do not assist those facing housing issues in rural and country areas.

People are supported in our social services with more than a roof over their heads. They are provided with case management to help the person improve their current situation. This could include job training, counseling, referral to rehabilitation services, budgeting, referral to health services and life skills. Our services try to apply William Booth’s idea of ‘soup, soap and salvation’ for each person.

William Booth introduced the catchy phrase. ‘Soup’ referred to feeding the poor and also providing other material needs such as shelters, job training and work programs. ‘Soap’ acknowledged a person’s need for good clothing and cleanliness, the essentials for good self-esteem, confidence and dignity. And ‘salvation’ was the primary aim of The Salvation Army.

Booth famously said, ‘No one gets a blessing if they have cold feet and nobody ever got saved while they had toothache!’ This implied that physical needs had to be addressed, but the aim was salvation.



# Tying In

## What does it feel like...

Recap: What does a homeless person look like? (*Homeless people look different, you can't always tell.*)

Mark an area on the floor about 2mx4m with masking tape (about the size of a car). Have your group all try and squeeze into this space. If you have more than six children then you may need to mark two or three areas on the floor (about six people per car space, or mark out a minivan size for a dozen children 2mx6.5m.

Ask the children to name a few things they do in a morning to get ready for school. Then try to act out these suggestions while staying within the marked spaces (get dressed, make and eat breakfast, brush teeth, pack school bags etc.). Once you have finished trying all the suggestions ask the children:

- What did you experience? Was it hard, difficult, funny, easy to do these things?
- What other stresses might kids feel if they lived in a car or a tent for more than two weeks?
- Would they like to live like this for a day, a week, three months?
- What can we do to help people in our community who may be homeless?

## Prayer...

Have the children all pray for our government or aid agencies that deal directly with homeless issues. It may be a good idea to have a list of your local political representatives and any church or government agencies that provide accommodation and support in your area; it would be great for the children to pray for them.

Pray also for all those that might be experiencing homelessness in your local community.



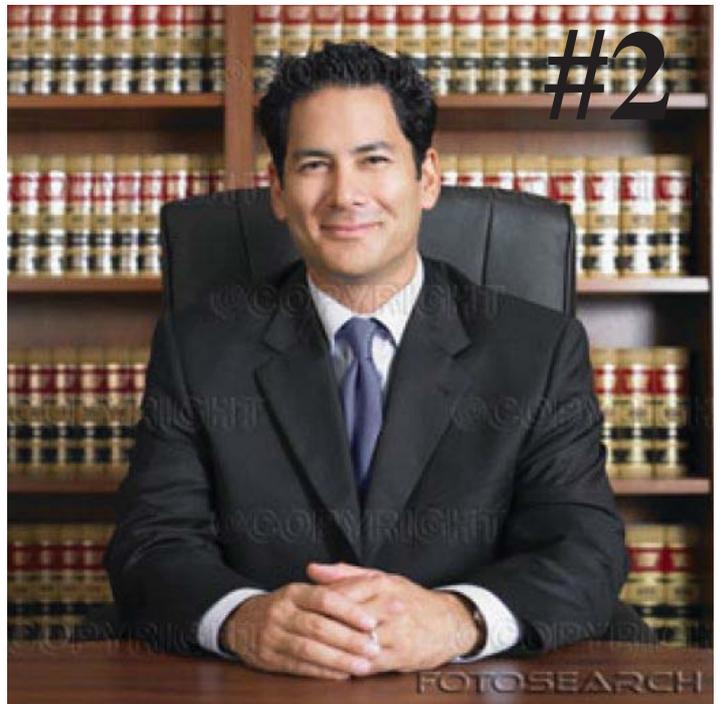
# Home & Beyond

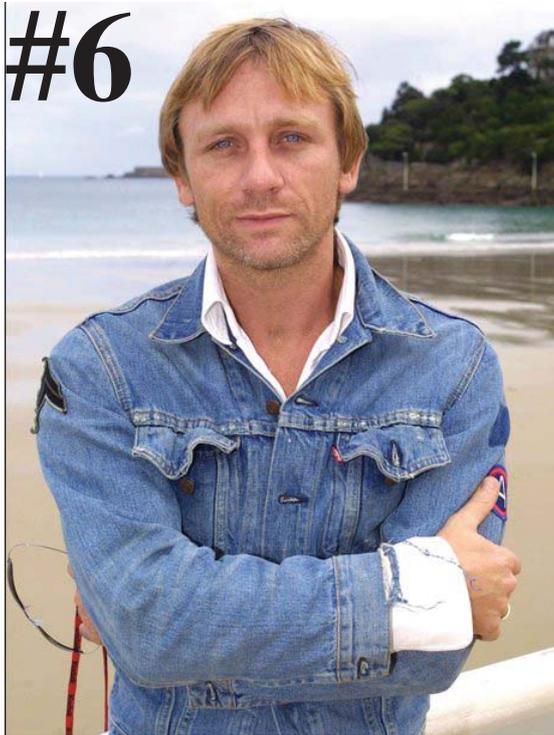
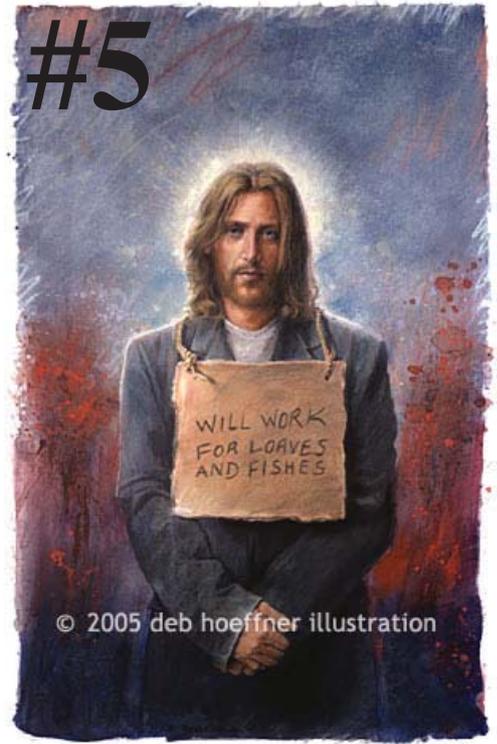
Print off the 'Home & Beyond' cards attached. The children might like to keep these in their journals or notebook where they could write or stick the challenges, reflect, answer questions or complete activities each week.

Below are a couple of suggestions on how you might like to make a difference for those who are experiencing homelessness or hardship. You might like to come up with some other ideas with your family and how you can all work together on this. Don't forget to pray for all those in your community who might be experiencing homelessness.

- **Blanket drive:** You could organise a clothes/blanket drive. Ask your parent /Big Bud for blankets and clothes that are no longer in use but still in fair condition. These can be taken to your church or local welfare office so they can be given to those who need them most.
- **Lunch box program:** There may be children in your school whose families are facing difficulties. Make a second sandwich, freeze it, and bring it to school. Have a teacher then hand out these extra sandwiches to children they know don't have a lunch. Or check with your local primary school to see if they already have a Lunchbox Program in place and support them with extra sandwiches.

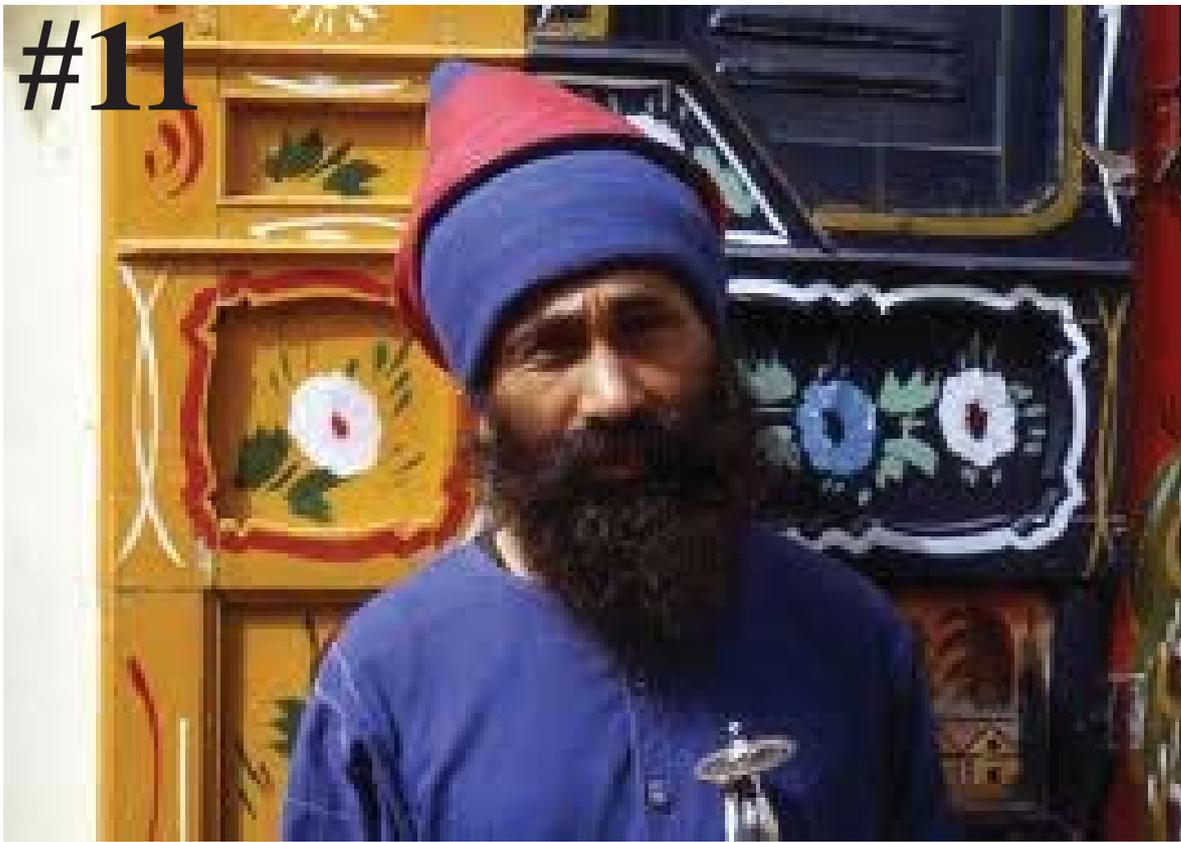








#11



#12



#13

