

Junior Soldiers

Unit 10 : Lesson 7



What is Perfect?

PURPOSE : For the children to explore and understand that as someone who believes in and follows Jesus, they can—with the help of the Holy Spirit—experience holiness.

'We believe that it is the privilege of all believers to be wholly sanctified, and that their whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

Doctrine 10

Consider & Prepare

Read:

The Handbook of Doctrine, chapter 10 pages 191–198

1 Thess. 5:23 (it is helpful to read this verse in the CEV, NLT and MSG versions)

1 Thess. 4:1–8

1 Peter 1:14–16

During the experience of salvation, the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit becomes a reality in the life of the believer, enabling us to move from the point of conversion and new life towards mature experience as a Christian. The experience of justification is not a destination, but is the beginning of a journey which should be characterized by growth and development.

This is not an automatic process, but one which requires that we are open to the need for change, so that we begin to live according to God's will and purposes rather than our own, and are willing to allow the Holy Spirit to work within us to achieve this end. In response to the command of God to 'Be holy, because I am holy' (1 Peter 1:16) we are called to holy living as a corollary to our salvation.

Sanctification by grace through faith enables holy living. The terms 'sanctification', 'sanctify' and 'sanctified' are translations of the Hebrew and Greek words of Scripture used to describe the holiness of God and the action by which God's children are made holy and set apart for God's purposes...

...We are called to reflect the holiness of God. God is holy, awesome in his majesty and in the beauty of his character. His children are called to reflect his holiness and be dedicated to his service, becoming like him in character...

*...The life of holiness is not mysterious or overwhelming or too difficult to understand. It is becoming like Christ who is the true image of God... To see him is to understand the nature of holiness, and to follow him is to be marked by it. Holiness is Christlikeness. (*Handbook of Doctrine* p.191–192)*

This is a difficult doctrine to communicate fully to children, because even as adults we can struggle to understand the deep theological truths expressed in this doctrine and, also, there are differing theological 'camps' of teaching on holiness.

For this lesson, however, we really just want to focus on teaching three things to the children:

1. We want to explain/define holiness and what is it to live a holy life.
2. Being holy does not mean we are without sin. As Christians, we seek to live holy lives, but we are also human and imperfect in nature. The fact is, while we breathe, we will sin. The Bible and Christian history have many characters we would call holy, yet they were also sinners.
3. Children should know that becoming a Christian is the starting point of their Christian journey, not the end. With the help of the Holy Spirit we can each become more and more Christlike.



Helping children to have something they can picture and remember about what holiness is will be of great benefit to them, and so this lesson includes some very practical and visual teaching methods and illustrations. When discussing a matter like holiness it can be easy to become too conceptual and abstract, and we need to remember that this lesson is intended as an introduction to holiness, not the last word on doctrinal holiness teaching.

Don't worry if you need to repeat some key teachings in this lesson and invite the children to ask questions if anything is confusing them.

What you will need:

For 'Connecting In'

- Tub or container with a range of items for this activity

For 'The Main Thing'

- Three of each plastic utensil: knife, fork and spoon
- Bread
- Vegemite
- Three snack packs of sultanas
- A bottle of soft drink or you can use cordial if you like
- Plates
- Small bowls
- Props if you choose to use them, cricket gear, guitar and mix-master

For 'Tying In'

- Bibles or sheets with the passage 1 Peter 1:14–16 printed out (you may like to print out a couple of different versions of this passage for children to explore it fully, e.g. CEV, NLT, NIV)
- Large sheets of butchers paper
- Textas

For 'Home & Beyond'

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



Connecting In

It's perfect...

For this activity you will need a container that has a range of items that perform certain tasks, e.g. a wooden spoon that is linked to stirring a pot of soup. Below is a list of tasks and items that you might like to use or you can come up with your own.

- Write in a birthday card – card and pen
- Stir a pot of soup – wooden spoon
- Staple some paper – stapler
- Listen to your own music without anyone else listening – headphones
- Protect your cut finger – Band-Aid
- Help you walk outside in the dark – torch



Divide your group into at least two groups or, if you have a large group, you might like to divide them into more. You will need to have the container with items at one end of the room and the groups assembled at the other end of the room.

'I am going to read out a task for you (e.g. walking in the dark); one person from each team will then try to be the first person to collect the perfect item to match the task from the container. When you're all back in your groups, I'll read another task. The winning team will be the group with the most correct items collected from the container.'

Link... 'In our game today we have had fun trying to be the first team to find the perfect item for the task that you were given. Most of the items in our world have been made for a specific purpose and you might say that a particular item is 'perfect' when it is being used for the task that it is created for, e.g. if you are using a spoon to eat your cereal in the morning you could say that it is being a perfect spoon because it is being used for the purpose that it is created for; it was made to carry food to your mouth, and it is!'

'Today we are going to explore what we were created for and how—when we are doing that—we are 'perfect'. Maybe you've heard of another word used in relation to followers of God which is 'holy'. Let's explore together what 'holy' means for us and how all followers of God have the opportunity to experience this.'

The Main Thing

Imperfect objects...

For this section you will need to have three of each utensil: knives, forks and spoons. Two of each of the items will be left as they are but one of each of the items will need to be altered slightly. With a sharp blade you will need to cut out the middle prong on the fork leaving just a prong on either edge of the fork. With the spoon you will need to drill a hole in the middle of the spoon head. With the knife you will need to place it in a container of boiling water for approximately one minute to soften it, take it out and bend the top of the knife into a curved shape, hold in this position under running cold water until it sets into this position (i.e. a bent knife).

You will also need to have the following items ready for this section – a table, plates, bread, Vegemite, sultanas, a bottle of drink and some small bowls.

You will need three volunteers for this activity. You will also need to be aware of any food allergies that children in your group might have before choosing your volunteers. When handing out the tools for each activity it would be good for each of the volunteers to have a turn with the 'imperfect' tool.

- Have your volunteers stand behind a table at the front of the room. Give each of them a knife, some bread, Vegemite and a plate.
'Okay, the challenge is to be the first one to finish making a thickly-spread Vegemite sandwich, cut in half, using a knife. When the first person finishes that is the end of the challenge.'

- Give each of the volunteers a fork, plate and snack pack of sultanas. Each can pour the sultanas out on their plate.
'Okay, the challenge is to be the first one to finish eating all their sultanas using just the fork. When the first person finishes that is the end of the challenge.'
- Give each of the volunteers a spoon and a small bowl with approximately half a cup of soft drink in it.
'Okay, the challenge is to be the first person to finish all their soft drink using just the spoon (you cannot lift the bowl and drink it). When the first person finishes that is the end of the challenge.'



- I wonder if any of you had difficulties completing the challenges. Why?
(*Because the utensils were 'imperfect'!*)
- How did it feel to have a tool that was not able to do the task well?

'Well, we have had some fun using tools that were not 'perfect'; that were not 'whole' and not quiet what they had originally been created to do because the tools had been altered.'

- What is a chair created to do? (Be sat on.)
- What is a pen created to do? (Write.)
- What is the purpose of a staple? (Hold papers together.)
- Why do we make kites? (To fly.)

'These are just a couple of examples, like in the game we played early, of items and what they were created for. Someone had come up with an idea to make something that would fulfill a specific purpose. They created something that was 'perfect' for that task.'

- I wonder what humans were created to do. What is our purpose? Why did God make people? (*Allow some time for the children to brainstorm and share their ideas around these questions.*)

'We were created to worship God and be in a relationship with him. When we are doing this—when we believe in God and have made a decision to follow him and be closely connected with him—we are doing what we were created to do, we are perfect! A word Christians use for this is the word 'holy'. If we look at the definition of holy we see that it is being 'set aside for God' or if we look at the definition of 'whole' where the word holy comes from, we can see that it means something is 'complete'.

If we have made a decision to follow God you might say that we are 'set aside for God', to follow him and worship him and be connected with him. So as followers of God we are 'holy' or 'whole', we are complete when we are doing what we were created to do and that is to be connected with God and set aside for him.

Just the start of the journey...

For this section it would be good to have some props to help aid what you are talking about, e.g. cricket bat or cricket whites, guitar, mix-master etc.

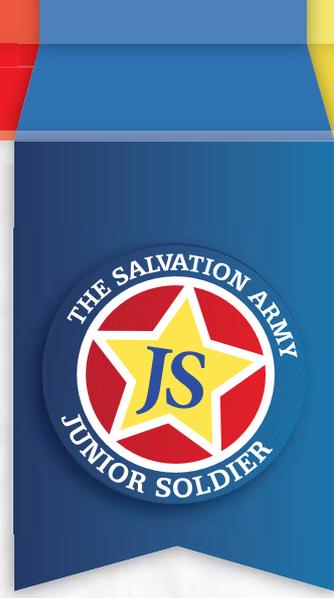
'We have been looking today at some items that you might say were 'perfect' because they were being used for what they were created for. We've also looked at what we were created for, and have decided that when we are following and worshipping God, we are doing exactly what we were created to do—we are 'perfect' or 'holy'.

'Even though holy means that we are doing exactly what we were created to do, it does not mean that we are perfect or without sin. We will still be tempted, we will still make unwise choices, and we will still mess up again and again and feel like we are starting all over with God. When we have made a decision to follow God and our hearts and lives are set aside for him, we have started the journey of faith. Being holy and connected with God is a journey that starts with saying 'yes' to God. It is a journey of becoming more and more like Jesus, by growing to look more like Jesus in what we think, what we say and what we do.

'Let's think about it this way:

- If we make a decision to be a cricketer that does not immediately make us a great cricketer; we need to get the uniform, the equipment, learn the rules of the game and practice, practice, practice.
- If we buy a guitar it doesn't automatically make us great guitarists; we need to learn about music and how to play chords and then practice daily.
- If we buy a mix-master it doesn't make us a master chef overnight; we need some recipes, the ingredients, the implements and appliances, and then practice making the recipe and other recipes to develop as a chef.

'So when we make a decision to be a follower of Jesus, this means that we are starting the journey to be like him—to grow more and more like him in how we think, what we say and what we do. The Holy Spirit is so cool because he is connected with us on this journey, helping us to become more and more like Jesus—a little like someone who would coach or mentor us in any of the examples that we just spoke about.'



Tying In

What does the Bible say about that...

For this section you will need some Bibles or printed out copies of this passage (you may like to print out a number of versions of this passage from different translations so the children can explore it fully or make available a number of different versions of the Bible).

It would be good to divide into small groups for this section, five or six children with a leader would make a great group to facilitate discussion and exploration.

- In your groups read 1 Peter 1:14–16.
- If you have a printed copy or copies of this passage, highlight the sections or words that stand out for you.
- If you are using a Bible, write words or phrases or pictures on the butchers paper that stand out for you.

'I wonder what you think God is saying about being holy in this passage. What do you think being holy looks like? Draw some pictures or images that will help you to share this with your group. I wonder if there is anything that you think you might need help with.

'Pray in your groups for each other: specifically for the way you think, the words you say and the things you do.'

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.

'Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again.'

1Thessalonians 5:23

- Take an item, e.g. spoon, clock, nail clippers etc. and place it in the middle of the table or in a special spot that will help you as a family to remember that when this item is used for the purpose for which it was made, it is perfect.
- We are made to worship God and be in relationship with him, we have the privilege of being 'holy'—whole, complete, perfect—because we are doing what we were created to do.
- Read the verse above and ask God to help you be holy!

Home & Beyond

'Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again.'

1 Thessalonians 5:23
and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. and place it in the middle of the table or in a special spot that will help you as a family to remember that when this item is used for the purpose for which it was made, it is perfect.

Take an item, e.g. spoon, clock, nail clippers etc. and place it in the middle of the table or in a special spot that will help you as a family to remember that when this item is used for the purpose for which it was made, it is perfect.

We are made to worship God and be in relationship with him, we have the privilege of being 'holy'—whole, complete, perfect—because we are doing what we were created to do.

Read the verse above and ask God to help you be holy!


Junior Soldiers

Home & Beyond

'Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again.'

1 Thessalonians 5:23
and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. and place it in the middle of the table or in a special spot that will help you as a family to remember that when this item is used for the purpose for which it was made, it is perfect.

Take an item, e.g. spoon, clock, nail clippers etc. and place it in the middle of the table or in a special spot that will help you as a family to remember that when this item is used for the purpose for which it was made, it is perfect.

We are made to worship God and be in relationship with him, we have the privilege of being 'holy'—whole, complete, perfect—because we are doing what we were created to do.

Read the verse above and ask God to help you be holy!


Junior Soldiers

Home & Beyond

'Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again.'

1 Thessalonians 5:23
and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. and place it in the middle of the table or in a special spot that will help you as a family to remember that when this item is used for the purpose for which it was made, it is perfect.

Take an item, e.g. spoon, clock, nail clippers etc. and place it in the middle of the table or in a special spot that will help you as a family to remember that when this item is used for the purpose for which it was made, it is perfect.

We are made to worship God and be in relationship with him, we have the privilege of being 'holy'—whole, complete, perfect—because we are doing what we were created to do.

Read the verse above and ask God to help you be holy!


Junior Soldiers

Home & Beyond

'Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again.'

1 Thessalonians 5:23
and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. and place it in the middle of the table or in a special spot that will help you as a family to remember that when this item is used for the purpose for which it was made, it is perfect.

Take an item, e.g. spoon, clock, nail clippers etc. and place it in the middle of the table or in a special spot that will help you as a family to remember that when this item is used for the purpose for which it was made, it is perfect.

We are made to worship God and be in relationship with him, we have the privilege of being 'holy'—whole, complete, perfect—because we are doing what we were created to do.

Read the verse above and ask God to help you be holy!


Junior Soldiers