

Junior Soldiers

Unit 11 : Lesson 3

The Young Soldier



PURPOSE : For the children to explore and understand that one of the early key developments in The Salvation Army was the commencement of programs and resources for children, including the provision of *The Young Soldier*.

'And then he told them, "Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone."

Mark 16:15

Consider & Prepare

Read:

This lesson focuses on the history and purpose of *The Young Soldier* and the subsequent magazine *Kidzone*. The Salvation Army has always produced periodicals (magazines and newspapers) for its members—as have most Christian denominations—but the Army has been quite unique in also publishing for children.

William and Catherine Booth were ahead of their time in recognizing the value of children and the spiritual needs of children. They knew that even children could be converted and enter a relationship with Jesus, and they knew that children could witness to other children better than adults could. To help with this, the Army realized they had to resource their children with age-appropriate evangelistic material.

The first Army magazine for children was *The Little Soldier*, which began in England in 1881. It was replaced by *The Young Soldier* in 1888 and the first Australian issue was released in 1890. This lasted for 109 years until, in 1999, it was replaced by the full-colour magazine *Kidzone*.

This lesson will familiarize children with the history of *The Young Soldier*, encourage them to read *Kidzone* and challenge them to use *Kidzone* as a resource for witnessing.

For this lesson you will need to make sure you have two copies of the week's *Kidzone* for each child, this may mean getting your corps officer to increase the order for just one week, which they can do by contacting the editorial department at Australia Southern Territory THQ.

Bear in mind, that some corps have the standard practice of providing each child with two copies of *Kidzone* every week, one for themselves and one for a friend—an easy way for your children to do outreach!

What you will need:

For 'Connecting In'

- A copy of that week's *Kidzone* for each child.
- Two sheets of A4 white paper for each child.
- Pencils or textas
- Enough working torches for one to each group of three children.

For 'The Main Thing'

- Butchers paper
- Black texta
- Blu-Tack

For 'Tying In'

- A4 paper
- Pencils and textas

For 'Home & Beyond'

- Print off the Home & Beyond cards for each child.
- Copies of *Kidzone*



Connecting In

Finding Cousin Koala...

Have a current copy of *Kidzone* at hand for each child and then ask them to race to find the information below:

- Find where Cousin Koala is hidden in this week's *Kidzone*
- What is the name of the third person named on the birthday list?
- What is the story title on page four?
- Who is the celebrity having a birthday this week?
- What is the prize for this week's colouring competition?
- Who is the editor of *Kidzone*?
- What is hanging from Cousin Koala's treehouse?

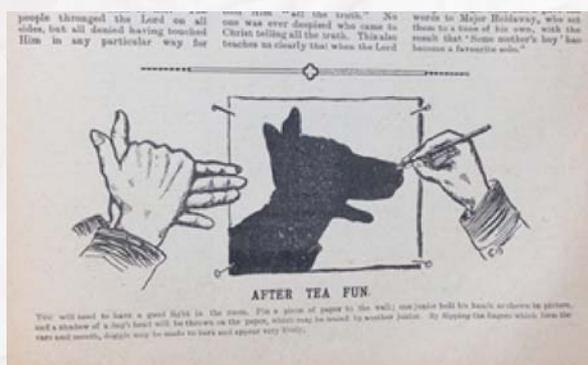
Link... 'I am sure when you get the *Kidzone* magazine you have fun just like we have had today. There are so many cool articles that tell us about certain topics and heaps of great information about being a follower of Jesus. I wonder if you know how long the *Kidzone* magazine has been around or if you think you might know why *Kidzone* was started. (Allow the children some time to comment and share their ideas.)

'Well, *Kidzone* was not always known as this, in fact the first name for the magazine was *The Little Soldier* and it began in 1881—how long ago was that? (Give them a minute to do the maths.) Then, in 1888 it became known as *The Young Soldier* and it stayed that way until 1999 when it became *Kidzone*. Today we are going to explore why starting this magazine was a key development in The Salvation Army; how the magazine has changed, and how it can be used to share the message of Jesus with others.

Playing the old-fashioned way

'Back before computers and even television had begun, games and activities were much simpler for children and they were much easier entertained. Just for fun, we're going to try two activities that were included in *The Young Soldier* in the 1940s.' (If you wish, you can print out enlarged copies of the examples for each activity below to show them.)

1. Hand-shadow sketching: Get the children into groups of three (use a leader/s if you need to make up numbers): one to hold a torch, one to sketch and one to make a hand-shadow. Place a piece of plain white paper on a table, one person makes a shape with their hands, the other holds a torch so that the shadow appears on the paper, and the third person sketches the outline of the shadow. Then swap roles, twice, so that each person has a turn in each role. The person whose shadow is drawn can keep the sketch for themselves, if they wish.



2. One-line picture: Give each child paper and pencil/texta. 'It's easy to draw a circle in one continuous line or even a hand or a tree, but can you draw a car or a horse or an elephant or a helicopter using one continuous line?'



Link... 'These two activities were printed in *The Young Soldier* in the 1940s; if any of you have grandparents who were in The Salvation Army back then, they may have done these very activities when they were first published! It's amazing to think that The Salvation Army has been providing a magazine just for children for more than 130 years. And, just like today's *Kidzone*, *The Young Soldier* provided not only fun activities and craft and stories, but was also a way that children could learn about Jesus and the Bible and Bible characters like Noah and Moses and David and Mary and so many others.

'To help us understand the purpose of *Kidzone* better, we'll explore the history of the magazine first and then talk about what each issue contains and how to use the magazine to introduce other kids to Jesus.'



The Main Thing

Timeline...

'As we heard, The Salvation Army have been printing a magazine for children for more than 130 years. To help us visualize what that history looks like, we're going to make a timeline of some key events.'

Have some butchers paper (or paper joined together) about two metres long and mark the following dates on it with black text: 1880, 1881, 1890, 1921, 1933, 1939, 1965, 1995, 1999, 2013. If you put 1880 at one end and 2013 at the other, you can place 1939 at about the middle and then place the other dates scaled appropriately along the line.

Enlarge and print out a copy of each picture in Appendix A and distribute the 10 images among your children.

'I will read through a history of children's publishing in The Salvation Army and when I get to the event that you have the picture for, take a small piece of Blu-Tak (*you can have a helper hand this to them*), put it on the back of your picture and stick it to the timeline where it belongs.'

Read the history in Appendix B.

'Well, look at the wonderful timeline we've made. It's great to know that while we love *Kidzone*, there's a whole long history behind how it came to us. You know, decades ago, Junior Soldiers might have been having a lesson about how important their magazine, *The Young Soldier*, was. Well, we have *Kidzone* and we're so glad we do.'

- I wonder if you receive the *Kidzone* each week. How, where, from who?
- What is your favourite page or section or character?
- Why do you think The Salvation Army makes a *Kidzone* magazine?
- I wonder how you think getting a copy or reading this magazine might introduce someone to Jesus.
- I wonder if you have ever shared your magazine with someone else or given them a copy.

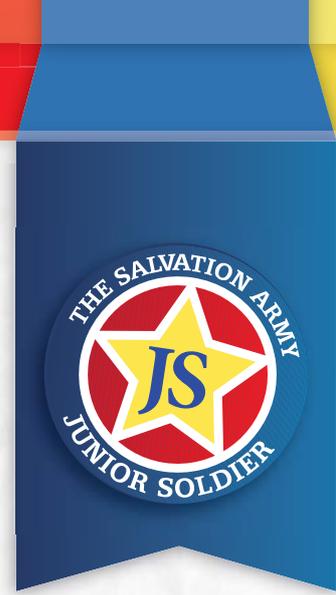
'In the Bible, in Mark 16:15, Jesus instructed the disciples to "Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone." As followers of Jesus, we don't have a choice about this, we can't decide, 'Hmm, should I tell other people about Jesus or just keep it a secret?', we are told, by Jesus himself, to do this.

'Being able to give someone something to read about Jesus, like a magazine, helps in a few ways:

- First, while you can tell them about Jesus, they might forget later, but if they have a magazine with them they can read the message again and again;
- Second, if you get nervous talking to people about Jesus it can be helpful to have a resource or 'help' to start the conversation. It's hard to just sit down and say to someone, 'Can I tell you about Jesus?' but it's very easy to say, 'Hey, check out the great story in this magazine.'
- Third, it can be easier to talk to a friend about Jesus than a total stranger, so giving someone a copy of *Kidzone* every week is a great way to make a new friend!

'So while *Kidzone* is a fun magazine to read, don't forget that you can use it to introduce kids you know to Jesus. It's a great way to 'go into the world' and tell people about the good news of Jesus.'

- I wonder how you might have tried to share the message of Jesus with someone else.
- How could using *Kidzone* help you introduce someone to Jesus?



Tying In

Let's make a magazine...

It can be helpful for children to experience the sort of challenges the *Kidzone* team face every week putting together a new magazine—every week since April 1999 and counting!

For this activity, if you have a small group, assign each child a page, if you have a larger group, divide them into pairs and ask them to work together. Each person/pair should work on developing one page of the magazine.

Before you divide and start work, decide on the theme for your *Kidzone* (e.g. being a good friend, honesty, respecting others, helping parents, prayer, the Bible, or pick a Bible story like Noah's ark or David and Goliath or the parable of the 'good Samaritan').

Each person/pair needs to decide what will be on their page and announce it to the 'editor' (i.e. you), and then they can get to work. Some ideas for pages are:

- a story and illustration
- some letters to and from Cousin Koala
- the front cover masthead, contents and picture
- a craft activity (step-by-step with illustrations)
- a movie/DVD review
- a puzzles page
- information about a sport

Give everyone 10–15 minutes; as editor you can move from group to group offering advice.

Once everyone has finished, collect all the pages. During the week you can colour photocopy them all and make a copy of the magazine for each child for the following week.

Prayer...

Using the *Kidzone* magazine for that week, get the children to open up to either the birthday page or the letters page to Cousin Koala or the page with photos of children from another corps (if this is a copy that has these pictures). As you go around the circle ask the children to pray for one of the children named on these pages.

Finish the prayer time by praying that God will help the children to be strong and courageous and share the message of Jesus with someone.

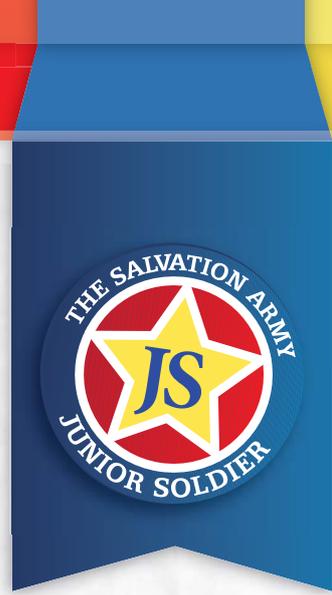
Home & Beyond

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.

You will need at least two copies of *Kidzone* per child for the 'Home & Beyond' section so that they can give one copy to their friend.

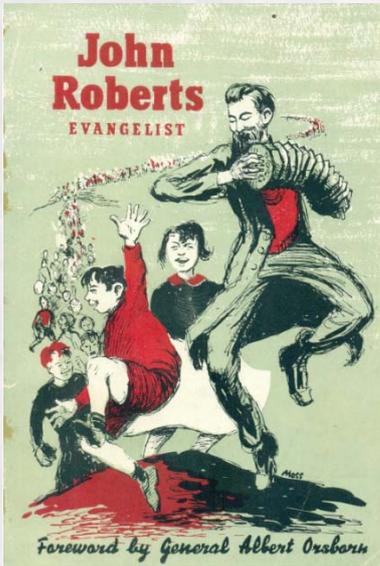
Share the message...

- Take two copies of *Kidzone* today. Keep one for yourself and give one to a friend.
- Write a letter to Cousin Koala (you can also include a drawing)
- Make sure you have added your name to the birthday list.
- Fill in the coupon titled 'Jesus loves you and wants to be your friend' to receive some info about Jesus
- Each day this week, check who is having a birthday and pray for them.

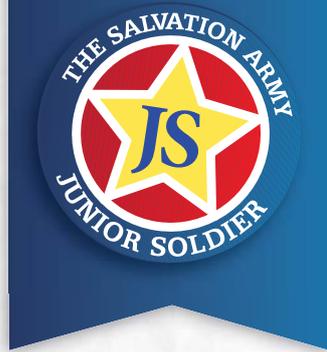


Appendix A

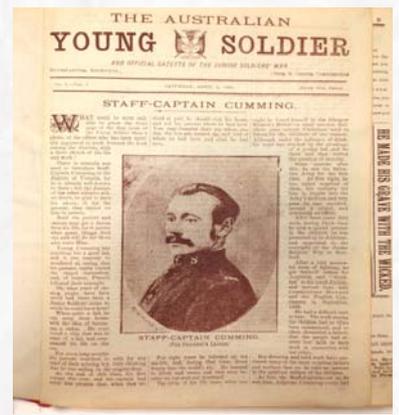
1880



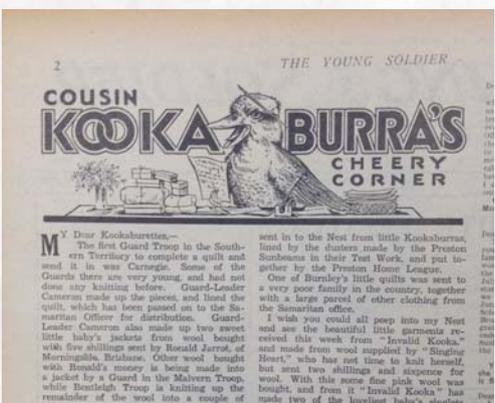
1881



1890



1933

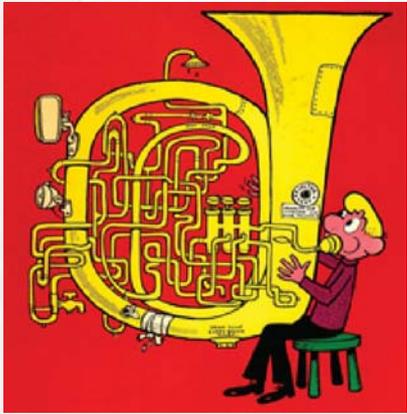


1939

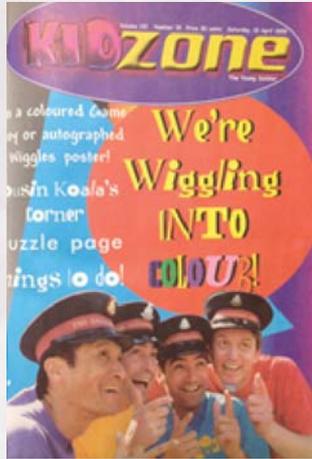
1921



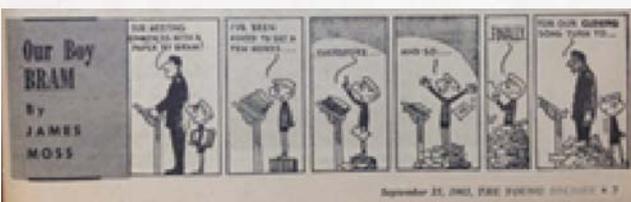
1995



1999



1965



2013



Appendix B

A history of *The Young Soldier* (key dates are in bold print)

William and Catherine Booth were ahead of their time in recognizing the value of children and the spiritual needs of children, so when Captain John Roberts—the corps officer at Blyth Corps in northern England—commenced a children’s meeting on 30 June **1880**, General Booth instructed all corps to do likewise and the Army’s work with children was born.



To help resource and disciple the children, the first issue of *The Little Soldier* was released on 27 August **1881**. *The War Cry* that week announced the launch of the children’s paper, describing it as: ‘A real Salvation paper for the youngsters. Simple, solid and straightforward.’

The name changed to *The Young Soldier* after seven years as *The Little Soldier*. The first Australian *Young Soldier* was printed under Commissioner Thomas Coombs on 5 April **1890** and the editor was Staff-Captain Francis Cumming.

It continued as the ‘official gazette of the young people of the Salvation Army’ until 20 August **1921**, and then, on 27 August 1921, it became the ‘official gazette of the young people of the Salvation Army in Southern Australia’ because on that same day the Australia Eastern Territory launched their own *Young Soldier*.

This continued until 7 January **1933** when, with the effects of the Great Depression being felt by Army finances, the decision was made to return to one national *Young Soldier*. At that stage, if children wrote a letter to appear in *The Young Soldier*, they addressed it to Cousin Kookaburra.

Cousin Koala first appeared in the 7 January **1939** issue and it was reported: ‘Our cheery friend Cousin Kooka, having already taken her flight to another nest, all letters for this page, and those in type, have been re-addressed to Cousin Koala!’ No real reason given—just that Cousin Kooka had flown away!

Apart from Cousin Koala, the other incredibly popular *Young Soldier* character for many years was Bram. The first Bram cartoon by James Moss appeared in the 25 September **1965** issue and continued until 20 May **1995**.

On 3 April **1999**, the last ever Australian *Young Soldier* was released. Then, on the 10th of April, the magazine went full colour and was renamed *Kidzone*. The magazine also had a stronger evangelistic focus, aimed more at introducing children to Jesus rather than written for Christian children.

Kidzone is a unique magazine in Australian Christian publishing. No other denomination produces a magazine just for children.

To accompany the *Kidzone* magazine, there is also *Kidzone* merchandise available, including T-shirts, Frisbees, pencils, notebooks, drink bottles, yo-yos and other things. In **2013** the Cousin Koala soft toy arrived, so you can now have your own Cousin Koala!

Cousin Koala is, theoretically, now 74 and still going strong, as is children’s publishing by The Salvation Army in Australia—123 years and counting!