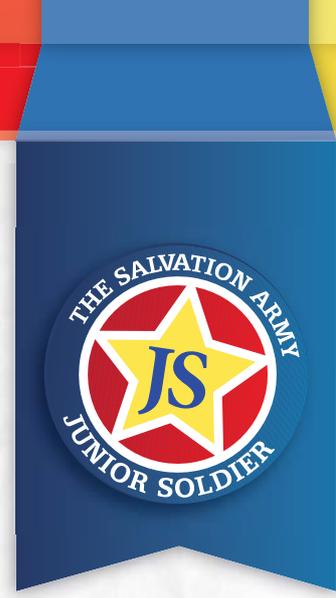


Junior Soldiers

Unit 12 : Lesson 10

Who is God?



PURPOSE : For the children to explore and understand some of the characteristics and attributes of God.

'The Lord is the greatest God, king over all other gods. He holds the deepest part of the Earth in his hands, and the mountain peaks belong to him. The ocean is the Lord's because he made it, and with his own hands he formed the dry land.'

Psalm 95:3-5 (CEV)

Consider & Prepare

Read:

Psalm 95:3-5

Mark 4:35-41 (Jesus calms the storm)

God is amazing; he is way more than all we could ask, understand or imagine. For example, I wonder if you have ever imagined how and why he created things the way he did. Think about what it is like to have a blank canvas and start from nothing yet make everything. What an amazing God!

Then, think about all the amazing things that God has done with and through his people. What he does and what he can and will do with and through us can be mind-blowing.

Even when he took on human form and became Jesus, think about all the things he did while here on Earth, the miracles, and the healing both physically and spiritually, bringing people back to life—some absolutely amazing things happened, maybe more than we can fully understand.

And then there's the whole belief system and teaching, evident throughout the Bible. Notions of forgiveness, grace, sacrifice, justice, mercy, kindness and love were redefined by God for all humanity and then exemplified in the life of Jesus. Not just a miraculous God but a loving and thoughtful God!

Which leads us to the million dollar question for the human race: 'Who is God?' During this lesson we will be exploring this question and will be allowing children to investigate the divine and spiritual characteristics of God. This particular lesson will be set out a little differently to the main format of previous lessons. An initial brainstorming activity with the children will be offered, then eight stations will be set up for the children to explore some of God's characteristics. You may wish to incorporate the children's Big Buds as additional help or ask for some extra help to assist the children as they engage in the stations.

What you will need:

For 'Connecting In'

- Large blank canvas (you can purchase these from cheap variety stores or you might like to use a really large sheet of butchers paper)
- Textas

For 'The Main Thing'

Station 1

- Typed signs and scriptures (see instructions)
- Bucket of sand
- Foam cups and lids
- Scoops or spades/shovels
- Textas

Station 2

- Typed signs and scriptures (see instructions)
- Neodymium magnet or a very strong magnet
- A couple of pictures of hurricanes or tornadoes
- Sheets of A4 plain paper
- A couple of small rocks (fist size)

Station 3

- Typed signs and scriptures (see instructions)
- World globe or world map
- Ping pong balls

Station 4

- Typed signs and scriptures (see instructions)
- Hula hoops
- Textas
- Sheets of A4 plain paper

Station 5

- Typed signs and scriptures (see instructions)
- Tape measure
- Small paper hearts
- Textas

Station 6

- Typed signs and scriptures (see instructions)
- Obstacle course props, e.g. chairs, cushions, small table, climbing items.
- Very large T-shirt

Station 7

- Typed signs and scriptures (see instructions)
- M&Ms or jelly beans
- Chopsticks
- Timer or stopwatch
- 2 bowls
- Sharepacks of M&Ms (enough for each child and leader)

Station 8

- Typed signs and scriptures (see instructions)
- Some bottles of water (preferably that say 'pure' on the label)
- Drinking glasses



- Dark food colouring
- Dirt
- Spoons
- Empty bucket or container

For 'Tying In'

- Textas/Pens
- Coloured sticky notes (as many colours as possible)

For 'Home & Beyond'

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



Connecting In

Who is God and what is he like?...

Read together Mark 4:35–41, NIRV, (Jesus calms the storm)

When evening came, Jesus said to his disciples, 'Let's go over to the other side of the lake.' They left the crowd behind. And they took him along in a boat, just as he was. There were also other boats with him. A wild storm came up. Waves crashed over the boat. It was about to sink. Jesus was in the back, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him up. They said, 'Teacher! Don't you care if we drown?' He got up and ordered the wind to stop. He said to the waves, 'Quiet! Be still!' Then the wind died down. And it was completely calm. He said to his disciples, 'Why are you so afraid? Don't you have any faith at all yet?' They were terrified. They asked each other, 'Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!'

'Wow, even the disciples who were Jesus' friends asked the question "Who is this?" They were constantly amazed at the miracles that Jesus performed and the words that Jesus spoke.

'Today we are going to explore and think about who God is.'

For this activity you will need a huge blank canvas (you can purchase these from cheap variety stores or you might like to use a really large sheet of butchers paper).

'This canvas is to help us think about being an artist—someone who creates. When an artist has a blank canvas in front of them it has endless possibilities of what can be. It is up to the artist to imagine and then create what they want to show to convey a message.

'Today we have a blank canvas in front of us and, as a group, I would love you to either draw something or write some words that help us understand who God is. I would love you to think about all the things that go through your mind when you think about God and what he is like.'

- Give the children 5–10 minutes to create their masterpiece.
- As the children are completing this task, ask them some questions about some of the things they have drawn or written about, e.g. 'Tell me why you would say that about God. What sorts of things do you see that make you think that about God?' etc.
- When time is up, look at the canvas as a group and spend some time discussing some of the things.



The Main Thing

For this session we are going to set up eight different exploration stations that will represent the following characteristics of God.

Divine characteristics:

- Omniscient – all knowing
- Omnipotent – all powerful
- Omnipresent – everywhere
- Eternal – no beginning and no end

Spiritual characteristics:

- Loving
- Faithful
- Patient
- Holy

Each station will have an activity that will take about five minutes to complete. You might like to allow the children to wander through the work stations at their own pace in whatever order they would like to follow. If you are choosing this way to structure your 'Main Thing' then it would be helpful to recruit some volunteers to help you (Big Buds are a great option). They can be a presence around the stations so that when the children have any questions or comments there is an adult to assist them and encourage them as they wrestle with some of the ideas. Otherwise, if you have a small group you might like to go to each of the stations as a whole group—allowing the children to choose which station they go to next.

Explain to the children:

'Today we have eight exploration stations that we are going to work our way through that will help to think about and explore the characteristics of God. I wonder if you know what a characteristic is (*allow the children some time to respond and make suggestions*). It is a feature or quality belonging to a person, place, or thing and helps to identify something. (*Give the children an example of some of their characteristics that might identify them, e.g. brown hair, freckles, tall, small nose etc.*)

'Well, God has many amazing characteristics and today we are going to have fun exploring what some of them are. We are happy to have some Big Buds/volunteers here to help us, so if you have any questions or concerns ask one of the leaders or volunteers to help you.'

Station 1 – God is omniscient – He knows all things

For this station you will need to type up a sign that says:

'God is omniscient'

'Omni' means all and 'scient' means knowing. Omniscient means all-knowing; God knows everything.

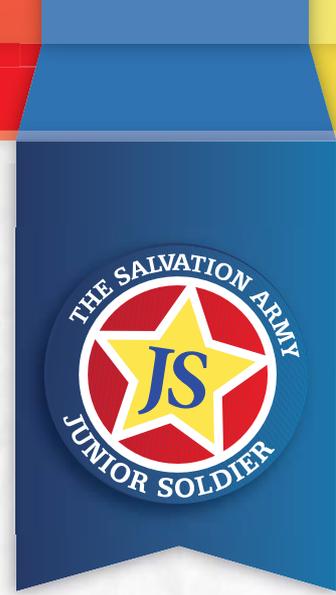
Place the sign on the table or on a wall near the table where the children can see it. Type or write out the following scripture on an A4 sheet and place it also on the table or wall for the children to read.

Luke 12:6–7 (CEV)

'Five sparrows are sold for just two pennies, but God doesn't forget a one of them. Even the hairs on your head are counted. So don't be afraid! You are worth much more than many sparrows.'

Type or write out the following sign and place it also on the table or the wall near the table:

*'Google' is the first stop for nearly everyone when they have a question that needs an answer. BUT...
Can Google assure you that it knows the future and that there's no need to worry?
Can Google understand your heartache or know just what to do to heal your broken heart?
Can Google give you wisdom and guide you to make the best decision about your life?*



*Google can't guarantee that the knowledge found there is 100% right.
BUT God knows everything and is always 100% right.*

Provide a bucket of sand, scoops or small spades/shovels and a foam cup with lid and textas for each child. Type or write out the following instructions for the children to follow:

Using a shovel or scoop, take some sand out of the bucket and place into your foam cup of dirt. While you are doing this see if you can count how many grains of sand are being poured into your cup and keep counting.

After a couple of minutes of them counting they will realise that they will not be able to do this task and will most likely let you know this! The leader at that table should say:

'It would be impossible for us to do this task but God is amazing and knows how many grains of sand there are in each cup. Even if you took some out of the cup in a dark room, he would know how many grains you took out. God knows all things; he is omniscient, he even knows how many hairs are on your head.'

Ask the children to start counting their hair on their head. After a while explain that it is just like the sand, impossible for us to know but God knows everything and knows how many hairs are on our heads.

The children can place a plastic lid on the cup of sand and could write on the side of the cup, 'God is omniscient, which means that he knows all things'.

Encourage the children to take home their cup as a reminder that God is amazing and knows all things—even like all the grains of sand that there are or how many hairs are on their heads.

Station 2 – God is omnipotent – He has the power to do all things

For this station you will need to type or write up a sign that says:

'God is omnipotent'
'Omni' means all and 'potent' means powerful. Omnipotent means all-powerful.

Place the sign on the table or on a wall near the table where the children can see it. Type or write up the following scriptures on an A4 sheet and place it also on the table or wall for the children to read.

Jeremiah 32:17 (NLV)

*'O Lord God! See, You have made the heavens and the Earth by your great power and by your long arm!
Nothing is too hard for you!'*

Psalms 147:5 (CEV)

'Our Lord is great and powerful! He understands everything.'

Type or write up the following sign and place it also on the table or the wall above the table:

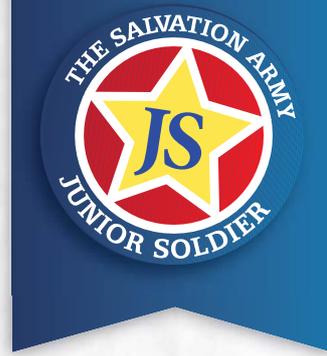
Remember: God's power is unlimited. He can do whatever he pleases. However, he will never do anything outside of his character. Because God is all-powerful, we can trust him to help us. We can know that he will always have the ability to do what he has promised to do.

Provide a Neodymium magnet or a magnet that will be strong enough to move around the edge of a table towards metal legs and a folding table with metal legs. Type or write out the following instructions for the children to follow:

The power of a magnet

Place the magnet on the table. Experiment with placing the magnet on different places of the table. When the magnet is close to metal, it will 'mysteriously' move by itself.

Allow each child to play with the magnet for awhile, they will be fascinated by how it works. Have the leader explain that, 'God's power is invisible; we cannot see it. However, we can see the results of his power. Just like we can't see the power of the magnet but we can see the results.'



Print some pictures off the internet showing the power of hurricanes and tornadoes and the damage they can cause, and place the pictures on the table. The leader can remind the children that we just read the Bible story, a few minutes earlier, about Jesus calming the storm. He showed an enormous amount of power to be able to stop the storm.

- Do you think the storm may have been this powerful? (*Show them one of the hurricane pictures.*)
- I wonder if you think God is powerful enough to stop a storm like this.
- Are we all-powerful?

Provide a piece of paper for each child and some small rocks that will fit into the palms of their hands. Type or write up the following instructions for the children to follow:

*Place a piece of paper in your hand and crumble it up.
How easy was that?
Now try and crumble the rock.
Not so easy now is it?
Our power is limited, but God's power is unlimited.*

Have one of the adults point out the sign on the wall about God's power is unlimited and have a brief discussion.



Station 3 – God is omnipresent – He is everywhere (present everywhere at the same time)

For this station you will need to type or write up a sign that says:

'God is omnipresent'

'Omni' means all and 'present' means in a place. Omnipresent means being in all places.

Place the sign on the table or on a wall above the table where the children can see it. Type or write up the following scriptures on an A4 sheet and place it also on the table or wall for the children to read:

Jeremiah 23:23–24 (CEV)

'I am everywhere—both near and far, in heaven and on Earth. There are no secret places where you can hide from me.'

Joshua 1:9 (NIRV)

'Here is what I am commanding you to do. Be strong and brave. Do not be terrified. Do not lose hope. I am the Lord your God. I will be with you everywhere you go.'

Type or write up the following sign and place it on the table or the wall above the table:

'Because God is everywhere, I know that I am never alone.'

Provide a world globe (or world map) and ping pong balls. Type up the following instructions for the children to follow:

*On the world globe/map I wonder if you can find the following countries:
China, America, France, Russia, New Zealand and Australia.*



The leader at the table should ask:

- Did you know that God is with people everywhere in the world at the same time?
- I wonder if you find that amazing.
- I wonder if we can see God everywhere with our eyes.

Type or write up the following instructions for the children to follow:

*Gently blow a ping pong ball across the table.
While you are blowing, see if you can see your breath.
Can you see it?*

The leader should explain:

‘Even though you can’t see your breath, you know it is there because the force of your breath is moving the ball across the table. This can remind us about how God is present and working even though we cannot see him. He is in action all over the world at the same time. He is with you while you are at school and at the same time he can be helping a sick child in hospital way over the other side of the world and he is also in another country helping an adult with a problem they may have with a family member or at work. God is everywhere at the same time. He is omnipresent.’

Finish by reading the Bible verses on the wall together.

Station 4 – God is eternal – There is no beginning and end with God

For this station you will need to type or write up a sign that says:

**‘God is eternal’
‘Eternal’ means lasting or existing forever; without end.**

Place the sign on the table or on a wall near the table where the children can see it. Type or write up the following scriptures on an A4 sheet and place it also on the table or wall for the children to read:

Hebrews 13:8 (CEV)

‘Jesus Christ never changes! He is the same yesterday, today, and forever.’

Revelation 22:13 (NIRV)

‘I am the Alpha and the Omega. I am the First and the Last. I am the Beginning and the End.’

Type up the following sign and place it also on the table or the wall above the table:

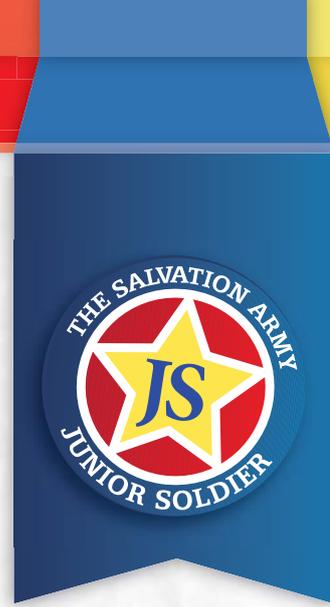
Every time you see something round, be reminded that God is ETERNAL—there is no end and no beginning to God.

Provide a couple of hula hoops, some A4 paper and textas for the children to explore with. Type or write up the following instructions for the children to follow:

- *Play with the hula hoop by rolling it on the floor or swirling it around your waist.*
- *Take the hula hoop and see if you can find the beginning of the hoop and the end of the hoop. Since it’s a circle, it doesn’t have one. It is an eternal hoop with no beginning or end. This can be helpful as we think about God as never ending—the beginning and the end—that he goes on and on forever. The hula hoop just keeps on going around and around, there is no beginning and no end in a circle. God is eternal (no beginning and no end) and keeps on going and going and going.*

Provide the children with some paper and textas at this station. Encourage them to draw a circle on a piece of paper and inside write the following words: ‘God is eternal; he is the beginning and the end.’ (You may like to have one already done as an example on the table.)

The leader should point out the scriptures and the sign on the wall/table and spend a minute or so discussing this with the children.



Station 5 – God is loving

For this station you will need to type or write up a sign that says:

'God is loving'

Loving means feeling or showing love or great care.

Place the sign on the table or on a wall above the table where the children can see it. Type up the following scriptures on an A4 sheet and place it also on the table or wall for the children to read:

Ephesians 3:18 (NLV)

'I pray that you will be able to understand how wide and how long and how high and how deep his love is.'

Romans 8: 38–39 (CEV)

'I am sure that nothing can separate us from God's love—not life or death, not angels or spirits, not the present or the future, and not powers above or powers below. Nothing in all creation can separate us from God's love for us in Christ Jesus our Lord!'

Type or write up the following sign and place it also on the table or the wall above the table:

God's love is perfect—his love is not lessened by human weaknesses and faults. When we experience what God's love really is, we will know how powerfully and how perfectly we are loved. God's love never fails!

Provide tapes measures, small paper heart shapes and textas for the following activities. Type or write up the following instructions for the children to follow:

Take the tape measure and use it to measure the room you are in.

Measure how wide the room is.

Measure how long the room is.

I wonder if you can measure how tall the room is.

It's pretty big and not so easy to measure out exactly.

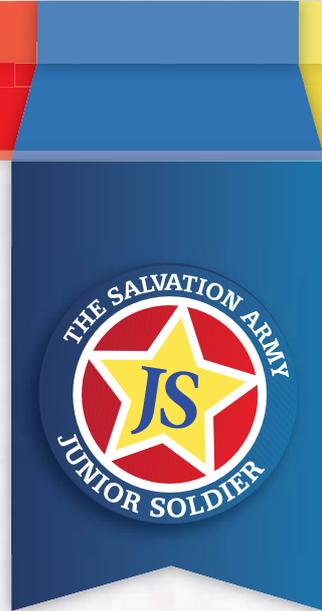
Well, God's love cannot be measured. We can't measure God's love with a measuring tape. God's love is so big that it is wider than the world, deeper than the sea, longer than the longest road and higher than the sky.

The leader can explain to the children:

'All the other characteristics of God that we have explored so far are features that we do not share with God. We have a beginning and an end, we cannot be everywhere, we are not all powerful, we do not know everything like God does. However, there are characteristics of God that we can share. God is loving. Can we be loving? Yes! I wonder what that might look like for God. I wonder what that might look like for you and me.'

- Take a heart shape from the table and write inside the heart one loving act that you could do for someone in your family this week.
- Take the heart home as a reminder to complete this loving act.

Have the children read the scripture verses and sign on the wall.



Station 6 – God is faithful – He is dependable

For this station you will need to type or write up a sign that says:

'God is faithful'

'Faithful' means remaining loyal and committed.

Place the sign on the table or on a wall near the table where the children can see it. Type or write up the following scriptures on an A4 sheet and place it also on the table or wall for the children to read.

Lamentations 3:22–23 (NIV)

'Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.'

Psalms 86:15 (NIRV)

'But, Lord, you are a God who is tender and kind. You are gracious. You are slow to get angry. You are faithful and full of love.'

Type up the following sign and place it also on the table or the wall above the table:

Because GOD IS FAITHFUL, I can be sure he always keeps his promises!

Set up an obstacle course for the children to run through. Make it short but a little bit complicated. Type or write up the following instructions for the children to follow:

Your task is to go through this obstacle course on your own. Ready! Set! Go!

Now that you have completed this on your own, choose a partner and place the large T-shirt over both your heads so that you are both wearing it together. You must run through the obstacle course again, sticking together no matter what; you must depend on each other and remain faithful to each other until the end of the course. Ready! Set! Go!

Did you remain faithful to each other?

Did you stick together?

I wonder if you wanted to leave your partner behind when you got frustrated.

The leader can say to the children:

'Faithfulness means sticking together even when things are uncomfortable and it might be a bit difficult. Faithfulness is being willing to stand by someone's side during the good times, the bad, the challenging, the fun, the exciting and the hard—even when at times you might not feel like it. Sometimes, we can feel like it might be easier if we just did it alone. Sometimes we don't want to stay loyal to a friend or a family member and just think of ourselves. However, we are taught that, in love, we are to stick it out with people and remain faithful. God is faithful. Can we be faithful? Yes! This is another characteristic of God that we can share.'

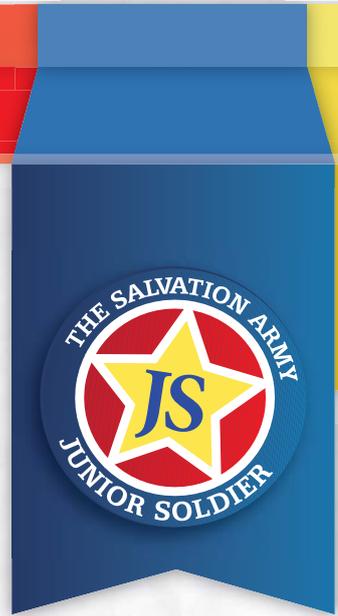
Station 7 – God is patient

For this station you will need to type or write up a sign that says:

'God is patient'

'Patient' means being able to accept or tolerate delays, problems or suffering without becoming annoyed or anxious.

Place the sign on the table or on a wall near the table where the children can see it. Type or write up the following scriptures on an A4 sheet and place it also on the table or wall for the children to read:



2 Peter 3:9 (CEV)

The Lord isn't slow about keeping his promises, as some people think he is. In fact, God is patient, because he wants everyone to turn from sin and no one to be lost.

Psalm 103:8 (CEV)

The Lord is merciful! He is kind and patient, and his love never fails.

Type or write up the following sign and place it also on the table or the wall above the table:

When you're tempted to lose your patience with someone, think about how patient God has been with you.

Provide a large bowl of M&Ms or jelly beans (about 100 or more), some chop sticks and a timer/clock watch. Type or write up the following instructions for the children to follow:

Placed before you is a large bowl of M&Ms or jelly beans. You must show how patient you are by picking up each lolly separately with a set of chopsticks and transferring them into the empty bowl. You may not slide the lollies from one bowl to the other or use your hands. You may only use the chopsticks. You will be timed and will have one minute to complete this task. Have fun!

As they are doing this activity, the leader will need to 'accidentally' tip the bowl over that they are transferring the lollies into and make them start again. They will become impatient with the adult and the process. Once the time is up, the leader can discuss with them:

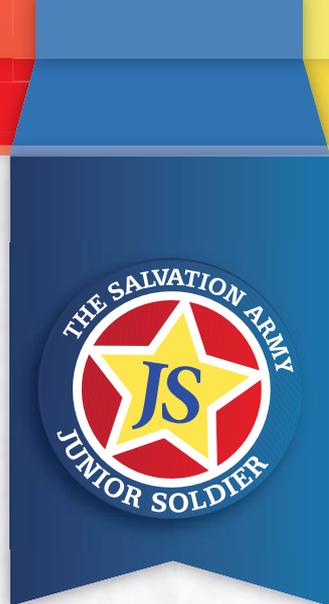
- I wonder how you felt when doing this activity and then I accidentally knocked over the bowl.
- Could you feel yourself losing patience? With me or with the activity and running out of time?

Explain to the children:

'God is so patient with us. We must do things all the time that annoy or frustrate him but he loves us and shows us that he is patient with us. He is always willing to wait for us so that we can learn, grow and to see what is best for us. Sometimes we have to show God that we are patient too. Sometimes when we pray for something and we feel that God isn't hearing our prayers; we need to show that we can be patient because God always knows what is best for us and sometimes it takes a long time for us to see how our prayers have been answered.'

Read the scriptures and sign on the wall.

'God is patient. Can we be patient? Yes! This is another characteristic of Gods that we can share.' (At the end of this station you may like to provide some small packets of M&Ms to encourage them to be patient.)



Station 8 – God is holy – He is clean and pure

For this station you will need to type or write up a sign that says:

‘God is holy’

‘Holy’ means spiritually pure, sacred, innocent or worthy of adoration.

Place the sign on the table or on a wall near the table where the children can see it. Type or write up the following scriptures on an A4 sheet and place it also on the table or wall for the children to read:

1 Peter 1:16 (NIRV)

‘It is written, “Be holy, because I am holy.”’

Isaiah 6:3 (NIRV)

‘They were calling out to one another. They were saying, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord who rules over all. The whole earth is full of his glory.”’

Type or write up the following sign and place it also on the table or the wall above the table:

God is perfect and clean in every way. Because GOD IS HOLY (perfect and clean), he is able to make our hearts clean. We want him to help us keep it that way!

Provide a drinking glass for each child, a couple of bottles of clean water (preferable bottled water that says ‘pure’ on the label). Also provide some dark food colouring, a little bit of dirt, some spoons and a bucket.

Type or write up the following instructions for the children to follow:

Pour yourself a glass of water from the bottle. Look how pure and clean it is on the glass.

What makes the water pure? All the bad stuff is filtered out so only the good stuff is left. We can use the pure clean water to help us think about God who is perfect, clean and pure. Just like the clean, pure water, God is perfect and totally clean and pure; there’s nothing bad in him.

Now add a couple of drops of food colouring and dirt in the glass and give it a stir with the spoon.

Would you be willing to drink this water now? Why/Why not?

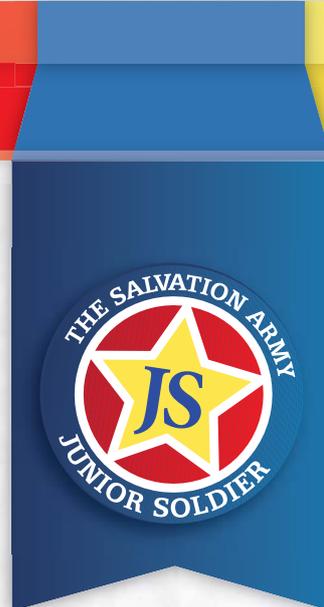
The leader can explain:

‘The tiniest bit of something added to the water destroys the whole glass of water from being pure. God is pure and when he first made humans, we were meant to be pure, too, and do only good things all the time. However, none of us is like that—we are a bit like dirty water.

‘Now, imagine if I had a glass of dirty water and I poured it into a bucket, and then I poured in lots of clean water, even filling the bucket. Would the water—that I poured in first from my glass—now still be dirty or would it be cleaner? (*Give the children a moment to, hopefully, say ‘cleaner’.*) So maybe if I increase the amount of the ‘pure’ God into my life, my ‘dirty’ life can become cleaner. I’ll never get rid of all the dirt, but it will be less if I fill my life with pure and good things that please God.’

Get the children to read the scripture verses and sign that are on the wall.

‘God is pure or holy. Can we be holy? Yes! This is another characteristic of God that we can share. But we can only do it with him, not by ourselves. John the Baptist said, of Jesus: ‘He must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less’ (John 3:30, NLT). It’s the same for us and God: we must put aside our own selfish and harmful attitudes and behavior and try to let more and more of God be seen in us.’



Tying In

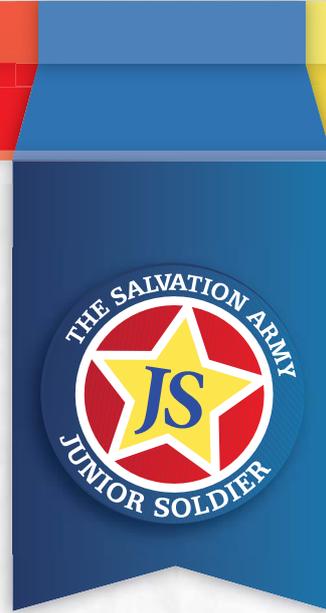
Gather all the children back together with their Big Buds/volunteer leaders and chat about some of the things they have explored together. Was there something new that they discovered about God or something that they understand a little differently. Share.

'Let's thank God together for all the things that make him God.' (For this section you will need some coloured sticky notes and some textas/pens.)

Ask the children to write a 'thank you prayer' or 'praise prayer' on a coloured sticky note. Try and get as many different colours as possible, e.g. 'Thank you, God, for always being with us; you are amazing how you know everything about me and my friends' etc.

Ask the children to read out their prayer as they stick the notes to a window so that, when the sun shines through, the colourful pieces of paper will create a stained glass window effect. Keep the notes on the window, if you can, for a couple of weeks to remind the children that there are many colours in the world just like God has many characteristics, even more than what we have explored today. You might even like to have the children add to the window over the coming weeks.

If you do not have a window in your room, stick the post it notes on the wall so that the wall looks bright and colourful. Remind the children that there are many colours in the world, just like God has many characteristics. Even more than what we have explored today.



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.

Characteristics of God...

We have looked at four characteristics of God that we can share: being loving, being faithful, having patience and living a holy life. I wonder how, as a family, you might be able to show each other some of these qualities. Below are some suggestions but you might like to decide about on your own:

- You may want to write a note for a member of your family telling them how much you love them and then leave it on the kitchen bench or their bedroom for them to find.
- You may have the opportunity to prove your faithfulness to a member of your family this week by sticking up for them in a situation.
- Practice being patient at home this week by playing a game with someone from your family, waiting for your turn to come around certainly can test our patience.
- Every time you drink a glass of water think about how God is pure and holy, and allow the water to remind you that God can also make you purer and more holy.

