

# Junior Soldiers

UNIT 14 : LESSON 3



## Creating Faith Pathways

**PURPOSE:** For the children to explore how people progress along a faith pathway as they grow closer to Jesus. To explore how they can engage their friends and families in faith pathways.

I planted the seed in your hearts, and Apollos watered it, but it was God who made it grow.

1 Corinthians 3:6

## Consider & Prepare

Read:

1 Corinthians 3:1-12

Part of the mission of The Salvation Army is to create faith pathways that help people journey towards Jesus. Jesus came to bring us life in abundance (John 10:10). This is a lifelong process of transformation for all that includes growing in maturity, service of and love for others.

Think about the pathways you have walked down in your life. Some pathways are straight and smooth. Others are less direct and more bumpy. Often there are multiple ways of getting to the same destination, and we get to choose the path we take. To move along a pathway, we need to take a series of steps. If we stop moving, we never get to the destination. At times, we venture on paths that simply stop and take us nowhere. Other times we stop because there is an obstacle or hurdle that is too difficult for us to navigate.

All of this can be true of our faith journey too.

Consider your own journey of faith and the pathways that you have travelled. How did others engage you? Where can you see God leading you? When was the road bumpy? What kept you going at those times?

Take time to pray for the Junior Soldiers as they continue along their pathway of faith.

### **What you will need**

For 'Connecting In'

- A Bible

For 'The Main Thing'

- On a whiteboard or roll of butcher's paper, draw a large pathway.
- Pens or markers; optional: sticky notes
- Invite a leader, Big Bud or another adult to briefly share their story of faith.

Ask them to include responses to these questions:

- When did you first learn about Jesus?
- Who has helped you to learn more?
- How did you first connect with a church?
- What is the most important thing you have learnt so far about God
- What do you like best about being a friend and follower of Jesus?

For 'Tying In'

- Chalk to draw circles on concrete floor OR two A4 sheets of paper per child.

### For 'Memory verse'

- 10-12 sheets of paper - write a couple of words of the verse on each one
- One strip of double-sided tape per page

### For 'Prayer Activity'

- Enough postcard sized pieces of cardboard for each child to have one
- Pens and/or markers

### For 'Home & Beyond'

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

## Connecting In

### Activity...

Pathway activity – getting from one point to another in different ways.

Set up a start and end point. Ask the children to line up at the starting point. One at a time, they must move to the finish line in a unique way. For example, walking, hopping, running, crawling, etc. How many different ways can they think of to get from one point to another?

Ask a volunteer to look up Colossians 1:9-10 and read the verses out loud.

### Link...

The last part of verse 10 says, 'All the while, you will grow as you learn to know God better and better.' As Christians, we are moving along a pathway towards Jesus. We are growing in our understanding of God, closeness to Jesus and our love for others. There are many different ways that we can move along that pathway. In The Salvation Army we sometimes talk about this as our faith pathway. Today we are going to explore faith pathways.

# The Main Thing

On a whiteboard or roll of butcher's paper, draw a large pathway. As the stories are shared, write down key words on sticky notes (or straight onto the pathway). As each person finishes their story, offer them the sticky notes and invite them to check the key words and add them along the pathway.

Ask the children to share about their journey of faith.

- When did you first learn about Jesus?
- Who has helped you to learn more?
- How did you first connect with a church?
- What is the most important thing you have learnt so far about God?
- What do you like best about being a friend and follower of Jesus?
- Do you have any ideas about where God might be leading you next?

Invite a leader, Big Bud or another adult to share about their faith pathway.

Did you notice that our faith pathways are all different?

Highlight some of the differences that have been shared.

There are so many different ways that we can learn about God and become connected with Jesus. There are people who have helped us to learn and connect along our faith pathways, and we can each help others to learn and connect. We can help create faith pathways.

Ask the children to brainstorm some ideas about how we can help others learn about God and connect with Jesus. For example:

- Invite a friend to an activity at church, like Kids Club
- Pray with someone at lunch time
- Read a verse from the Bible with someone when they visit your home
- Do some random acts of kindness – if people ask why you did this, talk about how Jesus wants us to love others

We can help others to move along their faith pathway, just like others help us. It doesn't matter where we are up to on our journey, it just matters that we keep on moving and growing.

## Tying In

Repeat the 'Connecting In' activity but add in some obstacles along the path – include some challenges that are difficult to overcome and some that need the help of someone else.

For example:

- draw chalk circles that are too far away to step across – need to jump between
- create a section where the children cannot touch the ground, but can only move on pieces of paper. Provide two sheets of A4 paper. Allow another child to move one sheet to the front as the child moves onto the other piece. They will need to keep moving one sheet of paper at a time for their friend to make progress

Sometimes, we move slowly along our faith pathway. Other times, we make big leaps along it. Some parts of our faith journey are easy, like when we have lots of friends supporting us. Some parts are challenging, for example, when we have doubts or questions. The most important thing is that we keep on moving forward, knowing that whatever is happening, Jesus walks alongside us – even when we don't realise he is with us.

## Memory Verse

Take 10-12 sheets of paper and write a couple of words of the verse on each one. Add some double-sided tape to the back of each one to stop them from slipping, and lay them out like stepping stones.

Ask the children to take turns walking along the path, reading the verse out as they step on the words. After each turn, flip one over so that the words can no longer be seen.

## Prayer Time

As we have just learnt, 1 Corinthians 3:6 says, 'I planted the seed in your hearts, and Apollos watered it, but it was God who made it grow.'

This verse helps us to better understand the faith pathway of people in the Corinthian church. First, Paul told them about Jesus. Then Apollos helped them to learn more, but it is always God who makes us grow.

We try to keep moving forward in our faith journey, and we try to help others move forward too. But we can always trust God to help us grow.

Hand out a blank piece of cardboard to each child ask them to:

- Draw a pathway
- Imagine that one end of the path is before they know anything about God. The other end represents knowing God completely
- Put an 'x' on the pathway to indicate where they think they are at right now
- Write the name of someone who is helping them on their faith pathway
- Write the name of someone they are helping on their faith pathway
- Pray silently and ask God to help them keep on growing and moving forward

## 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.

