

Junior Soldiers

UNIT 15 : LESSON 5



Connecting with the Elderly

PURPOSE: For the children to explore and understand the benefits of intergenerational connections with the elderly.

Gray hair is a glorious crown worn by those who have lived right.
Proverbs 16:31 (CEV)

You have taught me since I was a child, and I never stop telling about your marvelous deeds. Don't leave me when I am old and my hair turns gray. Let me tell future generations about your mighty power.
Psalm 71:17-18 (CEV)

Consider & Prepare

As Christians, we have the privilege of being members of the family of Christ. Like any family, we have our failings and our quirks, but we are healthiest when all members are working together, supporting each other and encouraging each other.

A healthy church community will make opportunities for different generations to worship, socialise and serve together. In your church community this may or may not already be happening. This lesson aims to reinforce that there is value for both children and elderly people when they come together.

Read:

Genesis 7:5-7

Genesis 12:4-5

Genesis 16:15-16

It doesn't matter how young or old we are God has a purpose for our lives.

Reflect on a positive relationship that you had with an older person when you were a child.

- What did you enjoy about the relationship?
- What did you learn?
- As a child, what value did you bring to the relationship?

Project Opportunity

This lesson provides a great opportunity to do a project with your group.

Two options are outlined in the attachment to this lesson:

1. Host a morning or afternoon tea for elderly people in your community.
2. Join with older people in your church community to complete a service or mission project.

What you will need:**For 'Connecting in'**

- Choose a couple of these games and set them up for the children to play.
 - » Pick-up sticks
 - » Hopscotch
 - Mark out hopscotch game with chalk or masking tape – see attachment
 - » Marbles
 - » Jacks
 - » Elastics
 - » Quoits
- Write/print each of these activities on separate small strips of paper (page 8. If you have a large group you can do multiple copies of each).

For 'The Main Thing'

- Pen
- A few items to set up an obstacle course
- Ear muffs or noise cancelling headphones
- An old or cheap pair of glasses – smear them with Vaseline
- A sealed jar, a jelly bean (or similar small lolly), a toothbrush
- Six craft sticks cut in half, sticky tape (To save time in the lesson you might like to tape the sticks to the fingers of rubber gloves beforehand. The children can then just put the gloves on.)

For 'Memory Verse Activity'

- Create a large hopscotch outline using chalk or masking tape
- Write sections of the verse in each of the squares (as shown) or print the words on A4 pages and place them next to each square.

***NOTE: do not place the papers on the squares as the children may slip on them.**

For 'Prayer Activity'

- Pens
- Paper and envelopes – consider purchasing some fancy paper and cards with matching envelopes

For 'Home and Beyond'

- Print a copy of the Home and Beyond card for each child.
- Print a copy of the 'Information Exchange' questions for each child.

Connecting In

In this lesson we will be thinking about how we can connect with elderly people. Here are some questions to get us thinking.

- What do you think it means to be an elderly person?
- How would you know if someone was elderly?
- What is different about the way an elderly person looks?
- How does an elderly person move?
- What is different about how an elderly person sounds?

Let's try playing a few games that an elderly person may have played as a child.

Allow about ten minutes for the children to try one of these games. See attachment for game instructions (page 9-10).

Games like these were often played by children in the past. Older people are likely to remember playing games like this when they were young.

I wonder, have you have spent time hanging out with an elderly person? What did you do together? What types of things did you talk about? *(Allow time for the children to ponder this.)*

Sometimes it can seem like we don't have anything in common with older people. But when we start to get to know each other we may realise that we share many interests.

Scatter the prepared strips of paper (page 8) on a table. Invite the children to gather around and look at them.

Choose an activity in which you are interested from the table.

If you think that an elderly person might be interested in the activity that you have chosen stand on the left side of the room.

If you think that an elderly person would not be interested in your chosen activity then stand on the right side of the room.

There are many elderly people who are interested in every one of these activities and many more. We share many interests in common with people of all ages. However, an older person might not be able to participate as actively as they used to.

The Main Thing

We all change over time.

Think about your favourite toy or thing to do when you were three years old. Is that still your favourite?

Think about how you looked when you were one. How have you changed?

Can you move differently now than you could when you were six months old?

What do you think are some things that an elderly person can no longer do that they used to be able to do when they were a child?

Everyone stand up. I'm going to list a few things that an elderly person might not be able to do as well or at all anymore. When I say the thing, point to the body part that is involved.

- Chew food properly
- Bend over to pick something up
- Walk easily
- Lift heavy items
- Hear soft sounds
- See clearly
- Move their hands and fingers easily and without pain

Let's try a little challenge to get a bit of an idea of what it might be like as an elderly person who has trouble doing these things...

I need five volunteers.

1. I want you to pick up the pen on the floor. BUT you are not allowed to bend your back or your legs. You can use anything you can find in this space and any method you like but you cannot bend.
2. I would like you to make your way through this obstacle course. BUT you can only use one leg. You can use anything you can find in this space and any method you like but you can only use one leg.
3. I would like you to follow the instructions I'm going to give you to find a reward. BUT I am going to place these ear muffs on your ears and turn my back to you as I say the instructions. You can use anything you can find in this space and any method you like but you must keep the ear muffs on. *Place ear muffs over the child's ears; turn your back and quietly give instructions to find a hidden reward. Repeat the instructions twice. Turn back to the child, remove the ear muffs and let them know that they have missed out on the reward because they didn't follow the instructions.*
4. I would like you to read the words on this card. BUT you must wear these special glasses. You can use anything you can find in this space and any method you like but you must keep the glasses on. *Show the child a card with the memory verse written in small handwriting.*
5. I would like you to open this jar, pick up a jelly bean and eat it and brush your teeth. BUT I'm going to tape sticks to the inside of your fingers first. You can use anything you can find in this space and any method you like but you must leave the sticks taped in place. *Cut paddle pop sticks in half and tape a piece to the inside of each of the child's fingers OR have them pre-taped to a glove.*

Note: If the children doing these challenges think to ask for help from a leader or another child then allow them to help – it is good for the children to realise that sometimes elderly people do need their help.

Have a think to yourself, what do you think life will be like for you as an elderly person?

Even though there are many things that become more difficult as we grow older, there are many things that older people CAN do.

Choose a child that is known in your group for being knowledgeable or skilled in a particular area. Talk about how much he already knows and ask the children to imagine how much more he will know and how much more he will be able to do when he is 75.

For example: We all know that Mick is a real expert when it comes to cooking. I love eating his food and I know that he could teach me some things! If Mick knows this much about food already, imagine how much he will know by the time he is 75 years old! Imagine how good his cooking will be after so many years of practice.

Elderly people have been around for many more years than we have. They have had many more years to learn and experience life.

I wonder how much you know about Australia. What was it like here 80 years ago?

I wonder if you know what types of transport were around?

Did homes have electricity?

What was school like?

How many years did most children go to school?

What did kids do after school?

How did people find their way to new places with no GPS?

How did people find each other in large shopping centres without mobile phones?

You could try asking Google for answers but wouldn't it be better to chat with someone who has lived through that time?

Elderly people have loads of wisdom that they can share with us, they often have lots of free time to hang out with other people and they often have skills that we don't even know about.

As children, there are things that you can do to help or teach older people too.

- What do you think you know that an older person might not? *Allow for responses.*

Examples:

- Teach them how to send an email.
- Teach them how to find a contact on a mobile phone.
- Teach them how to use a travel card (e.g. Opal, Myki, Go, SmartRider, AT HOP etc.)
- Teach them how to use an app.

There are also things that you may be able to do that older people can no longer do.

Replay the five challenges, you might like to use different volunteers, but now assign a helper to each one.

- How was the challenge different when someone was helping?

Draw a large hand on a board or butchers paper and allow the children to write their responses inside the hand.

- What else do you think you could do to help elderly people in your family, church or neighbourhood?

Elderly people can teach and help children and children can teach and help elderly people. One of the most important things that we can share with each other is our beliefs and our faith.

Tying In

We all need love, purpose and hope in our lives, no matter our age and for Christians, we need to keep growing in our relationship with Jesus – this doesn't stop when we become adults.

Ask the children to look up Psalm 71:17-19 (CEV) in their Bibles. Ask a volunteer to read the verses out loud.

You have taught me since I was a child, and I never stop telling about your marvelous deeds. Don't leave me when I am old and my hair turns gray. Let me tell future generations about your mighty power. Your deeds of kindness are known in the heavens. No one is like you!
Psalm 71:17-19 (CEV)

- What do you think these verses mean?
- Why do you think this is important?

Memory Verse

Prepare a hopscotch game with the memory verse marked on or beside the steps. Give each a child an opportunity to take a turn. As they jump onto each step they can say the words aloud.

Prayer Time

Invite the children to sit or stand in a circle.

Think about one or two elderly people you know. They might be your grandparents, neighbours or people in our church. As we go around the circle, say the names of the people that you are thinking of.

Once you have gone around the circle instruct the children to take a minute to quietly pray for that person/people.

A great way to encourage people is to write them a note, letting them know that you appreciate them and that you have been praying for them. We are going to do that right now!



Hand out pens, paper and envelopes and encourage the children to write a letter to one of the elderly people they mentioned before/prayer for.

(Optional) Project Opportunity (page 11)

The ideas covered in this lesson provide a great opportunity for your group to consider doing a project that involves crossing generational boundaries. Check the attachment for two options that have been outlined.

Home & Beyond

Have a chat with an elderly person in your family, neighbourhood or church. Ask them to do the “Information Exchange” activity with you (page 12). You will ask them some questions and they will ask you some questions.

You might also like to ask your parents the same questions and see what changes have happened since their childhood.

Reading

Fishing

Games

Church

Caring for pets

Music

Cooking

Car racing

Craft

Nature

Sports

Gardening

Family

Serving others

Building

Movies

Reading

Fishing

Games

Church

Caring for pets

Music

Cooking

Car racing

Craft

Nature

Sports

Gardening

Family

Serving others

Building

Movies

Instructions for Retro Games

Pick-up sticks

Purchase a game set and follow the included instructions.

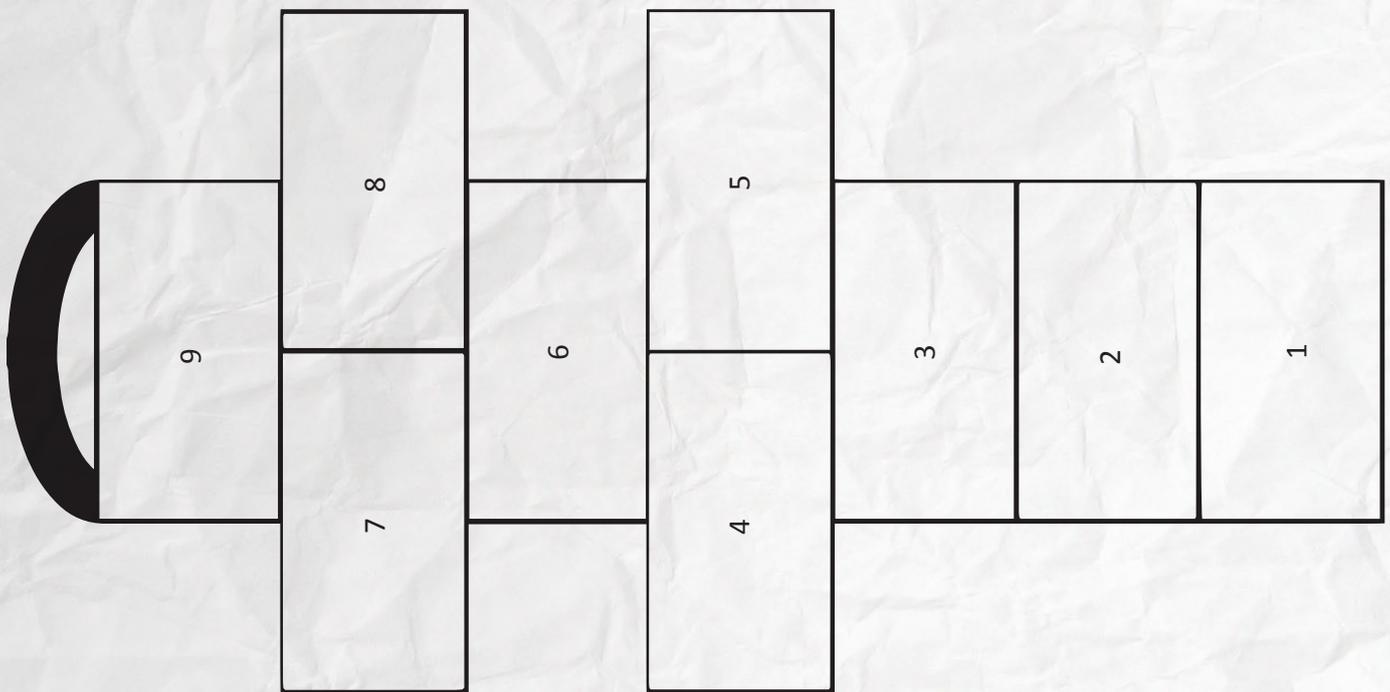
Hopscotch

Mark out a hopscotch game with chalk or masking tape as shown in the diagram.

Find a medium-sized, flat rock.

The first child must toss the rock on to square 1. Hopping over the first square they must hop or jump from square to square in order. Once they reach the end they must turn around and hop/jump back to square 2, pause and pick up the rock and return to the starting point.

The rock is then tossed onto square 2 and the pattern continues. If the rock misses the correct square then the child is out.



Marbles

There are many variations on how to play but this very simplified version will give everyone a chance to take a turn.

- Draw a ring on the ground, about one metre in diameter. You can use chalk, masking tape or draw with a stick in the dirt, depending on where you are playing.
- Draw a starting line just outside the ring.
- Each player should choose a shooter then place about five marbles each into the ring.
- The first player must shoot their marble into the ring.
- If they knock any marbles out of the ring they
 - » Keep these marbles and
 - » Take another turn, beginning from wherever their shooter landed
- If they do not knock any marbles out then they leave their shooter where it landed and the next player takes a turn.
- The game is over when all the marbles have been knocked out of the circle.

Jacks

Begin by throwing your jacks onto the table in front of you.

Try and make the jacks land not too far apart or too close together.

Throw the ball into the air (not too high) ... pick up one jack ... then catch the ball after it bounces one time.

Your turn is over if

- The ball bounces more than once
- You drop the ball
- You fail to pick up a jack
- You accidentally move other jacks on the table

Transfer that jack to the other hand. Then throw the ball again and pick up the next jack.

Continue picking up the jacks one at a time.

When you have collected all the jacks, throw them again and start picking the jacks up two at a time (twosies).

When you get to threesies you have to pick up the three sets of three first, then pick up the left over jack. Continue on until you are at tensies.

You can then declare the winner as the first one to tens, or go back down again to onesies.

Elastics

Here is a very simple version of the game. If your children are already familiar with elastics then they may want to do variations.

A minimum of three people are required. Alternatively you can place either end of the elastic around the legs of two chairs for a single player.

Two people stand apart from and facing each other. The elastic is placed around the outside of their ankles.

A third person stands beside the elastics and recites the following as they jump accordingly.

Say 'one' → Jump so that one foot is inside the elastics and one is on the outside,

Say 'two' → Jump across the elastics so that the alternate foot is now inside whilst the other foot is outside.

Say 'three' → Jump across the elastics so that the alternate foot is now inside whilst the other foot is outside.

Say 'four' → Jump across the elastics so that the alternate foot is now inside whilst the other foot is outside.

Say 'inside' → Jump so that both feet land inside the elastics.

Say 'outside' → Jump so that both feet land outside the elastics.

Say 'inside' → Jump so that both feet land inside the elastics.

Say 'on' → Jump so that both feet land on the elastics.

Each child takes a turn then the elastics are moved up to the children's knees and the game is repeated.

Quoits

Purchase a game set and follow the included instructions.

Project Suggestions

Option 1 – Host a morning or afternoon tea for elderly people within your church or community

Ask the children to:

- help make and deliver invitations.
- plan a menu.
- prepare and serve the food.
- plan entertainment or activities.

A few ideas for entertainment and activities (two main aims are to promote interaction between generations and to celebrate old and contemporary):

- Learn a song from the 1950s and sing it with the guests then teach them a contemporary song that the children really enjoy.
- Invite several older people to teach interested children how to knit, carve, cook etc. as well as several children to teach older people about how to play a game on the iPad, what different SMS abbreviations mean, etc.
- Set up a number of games, some retro, some contemporary and allow children and their guests to play.

Option 2 – Plan a mission and/or service event for children and elderly to work together

This could be any project that suits the needs of your community and the skills of your group. Here are a few suggestions:

- Plant a kitchen garden in your local school.
- Host an afternoon tea for parents with young children in your community – plan some entertainment for the children so that the parents can relax.
- Run a sausage sizzle at your local community market and donate the money raised to a community project.

Information exchange

Questions for the children to ask older people...

When you were a child:

1. What types of transport were around?
2. Did you have electricity in your home?
3. What was school like?
4. How many years did you go to school?
5. What sort of things did you do after school?
6. What was your favourite thing to do in the school holidays?
7. How did you find your way to new places with no GPS?
8. How did you find your friends in large shopping centres without mobile phones?
9. What is one way that I could help you?
10. Did you go to Sunday School or church when you were a child? How has it changed?
11. What do you know about Jesus now that you didn't know when you were a child?
12. What is the best piece of advice you can give me?

Questions for older people to ask the children...

1. What type of music do you enjoy listening to?
2. What do you find most challenging or difficult at school?
3. What sort of things do you like to do after school?
4. What is your favourite thing to do in the school holidays?
5. What do you like to eat for breakfast?
6. If you could choose any superpower what would it be?
7. What do you like to watch on television?
8. If you could ask God any question and get an instant answer what would it be?
9. What is the most important thing about Jesus that you have discovered so far?
10. What is one way that I could help you?

Home & Beyond

Have a chat with an elderly person in your family, neighbourhood or church.

Ask them to do the "Information Exchange" activity with you. You will ask them some questions and they will ask you some questions.

You might also like to ask your parents the same questions and see what changes have happened since their childhood.


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