

# Junior Soldiers

UNIT 16 : LESSON 5



## Building Healthy Communities

**PURPOSE:** For the children to explore what a healthy community looks like and understand the part they play in contributing to a healthy community.

We should keep on encouraging each other to be thoughtful and to do helpful things. Hebrews 10:24 (CEV)

## Consider & Prepare

Read:

Ephesians 4:1-16

In Ephesians, Paul paints a picture of how the body of Christ should function. The body of Christ is the perfect example of healthy community. As verse 16 says, "...the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love."

The mission of The Salvation Army in Australia includes building healthy communities. We invest in relationships, embrace diversity and celebrate connection. We work, play, learn and grow together. When relationships flourish, we find the wholeness God intends for us in community.

Take a few moments to think about the community within your Junior Soldier group:

- What would you like it to look like?
- What will you continue to do?
- What could you start doing?
- What could you stop doing that has not been working?
- How could you engage more effectively with others in your corps and wider community?

What you will need:

For 'Connecting In'

- Several packets of paper cups
- A 20 second timer or phone with timer

For 'The Main Thing'

- The paper cups from 'Connecting In'
- Bibles – enough for one per child
- Markers

For 'Memory Verse'

- Recycled boxes – for example, tissue or cereal boxes
- Write a couple of words from the memory verse on each box – create 2 or 3 sets if you have a large group

For 'Home & Beyond'

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

## Connecting In

Activity...

Divide the children into teams of about four children. If you have a small group, let each child compete individually.

Give each team/child a stack of cups and give them 20 seconds to make the highest tower they can make. Play 2-3 rounds.

Link...

I wonder if you have built anything before? Maybe you have built a LEGO set, or helped to build a treehouse? Allow for responses. Have you ever thought about building a community? In The Salvation Army, we believe that building strong, healthy communities is an important part of our mission. Today we are going to explore what it means to be part of a healthy community.

## The Main Thing

A community is a group of people that share life together. A family is an example of a tiny community. But usually, when we are talking about community, we are talking about something bigger than one family. A community might be a school, a neighbourhood, a sports team, a group of friends, a church, a youth group, or a Junior Soldier group.

Sometimes communities are strong and healthy. A strong, healthy community is a group that works well together. People are happy and looked after in a healthy community.

I wonder if you can think of some things that might make a community healthy? Give some examples, if needed:

- Good communication
- Common interest
- Trust
- People of all ages
- Kindness
- Acceptance etc.

As each suggestion is made, write it on one of the cups used in 'Connecting In'. Use the cups to make a cup tower. Ask the child who said it to add it to the tower.

The Bible has a lot to say about healthy communities.

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Give some examples, if needed:

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Use the cups to make a cup tower. Ask the child who said it to add it to the tower.

The Bible has a lot to say about healthy communities.

Divide the children into small groups. Assign each group one of the passages below. If you have more than four groups, then several groups can look at the same verses. Give each group Bibles, some blank paper cups and a marker.

- Hebrews 10:24-25
- Acts 2:44-47
- Ephesians 4:2-4
- Romans 12:9-18

In your group, read the verses out loud. What do these verses tell you about what makes a healthy community? Write each answer on a cup.

For example:

Hebrews 10:24-25 Encouraging others Thoughtfulness Helping others Meeting together Worship	Acts 2:44-47 Meeting together Sharing Giving to those in need Visiting homes Praising God
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<p>Ephesians 4:2-4</p> <p>Humility</p> <p>Gentleness</p> <p>United by the Holy Spirit</p> <p>Peace</p> <p>Hope</p>	<p>Romans 12:9-18</p> <p>Love</p> <p>Goodness</p> <p>Honouring each other</p> <p>Caring for people</p> <p>Hospitality</p> <p>Forgiveness</p> <p>Sharing emotions together</p> <p>Harmony</p> <p>Honour</p> <p>Peace</p>
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After 7-10 minutes, ask the groups to return. Allow each group to read out their responses and add their cups to the tower.

Optional: Sing the old song, 'Building up the temple'. Divide the children into two groups. Encourage one group to call out 'boys won't you help us' and the other to call out 'girls won't you help us.'

Link...

It takes a lot to make a healthy community! Let's think for a minute about our Junior Soldier group as a community.

## Tying In

Thinking about our group, as a community:

- What has been working well? Invite the children to choose a cup from the tower that represents a healthy element they see in the group and share about it.
- What should we continue to be a healthy community?
- What could we start doing that might make us a healthier community?
- What could we stop doing that has not been working?

Sometimes, even when a community is healthy, we can get comfortable with the people in our community, and it can be difficult for a new person to join in. An important part of staying healthy is for a community to grow.

- How do you think we do at welcoming new people into our group?
- How can we invite and welcome new people into our community?

## Memory Verse

We should keep on encouraging each other to be thoughtful and to do helpful things.

Hebrews 10:24 (CEV)

Invite each child to take turns building a tower with the boxes, saying the words out loud as they add each box.

## Prayer Time

Ask the children to choose one cup from the tower that they think is an important part of a healthy community.

Invite them to take a moment to silently pray for a community that they are part of, asking God to keep that community healthy and growing.

Ask the children to take home the cup they have chosen for the Home and Beyond activity.

## 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.

# Home & Beyond

If you brought home a cup from the 'healthy community tower, take some time to decorate it. Otherwise, take a box from your recycling and write on it one thing that helps to make a community healthy. Share your cup or box with a friend, a family member or your Big Bud. Tell them about why this is important that healthy community. Ask them about a community that they belong to. Tell them the memory verse for this week and ask them to test your memory!

  
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