

# Junior Soldiers

UNIT 16 : LESSON 7



## Bouncing Back - Resilience

**PURPOSE:** For the children to explore and understand that hope in Christ allows them to keep on trying no matter what happens.

*I may have fallen, but I will get up;  
I may be sitting in the dark but the Lord is my light.*

**Micah 7:8b**

## Consider & Prepare

**Read:** 2 Corinthians 1:1-11

Life doesn't always go the way we hope it will. What is your reaction when something doesn't go your way? Are you quick to say, 'it's not fair'? It seems that this is the default response of many children. The reality is that life is not fair. We will face obstacles, challenges, disappointment and failure. However, life events such as these may be seen as opportunities for growth. As we strive to overcome challenges and move forward from setbacks we grow more resilient.

We can help prepare our children for life by helping them to view circumstances such as failing a test, losing a game, or broken friendships as opportunities. As they formulate new strategies and draw on resources around them they will grow in their ability to handle the challenges of life. Most importantly, we can give our children the gift of finding hope for the future in Jesus.

Four areas of life contribute to our resilience

1. Personality
2. Family environment
3. Support outside the family
4. Faith in Christ

Children don't always have a lot of say in what goes on in their day to day lives. The school they attend, the routine of the family and the struggles that they face are typically out of their control. However, we can equip them with some skills and knowledge that will help them take control of how they feel and how they respond in these situations.

When children put God first and seek Him, they will understand where to place their hope. When everything in their world seems to go wrong, they can firmly place their trust in Jesus. He is our constant in a world of uncertainty. He is the rock and our foundation. When we teach children to lean into the Word of God as their source of strength God will continue to build them up. After all, resilience isn't about never falling down. Resilience is about getting back up again...and again...and again.

During this lesson we will explore ways to build resilience in children and see how the hope that Christ gives us plays a critical part in this.

## **What you will need:**

### **For 'Connecting In'**

- Option 1: Toys that 'Bounce' Back
  - » Bounce Back Tip Sheet (page 8)
  - » Choose several of the following items that 'bounce' back
    - Yo-Yo's
    - High bounce balls
    - Handballs with elastic strings
    - Toys with round bottoms that rebound back every time
  - » You will also need several items that don't bounce
    - A bowling set
    - A set of wooden blocks etc.
- Option 2: Musical Bobs
  - » Music
- Option 3: Inspirational story
  - » Computer with internet or print out of Bethany Hamilton's story
  - » <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ffgxXjGPrT4>

### **For 'The Main Thing'**

- Paper for each child
- Pencils / markers
- Scenarios printed off
- Write the following headings (based on Rohn's 7 traits of the most resilient) on large sheets of paper:
  - » A resilient person tries different options
  - » A resilient person has hope for the future
  - » A resilient person looks at the big picture
  - » A resilient person can see the funny side of a situation
  - » A resilient person uses creativity
- A large bouncy ball
- Write out/print each question/statement on a strip of paper (page 9):
  - » I'm not sure I can do it but I'll give it a go.
  - » I have no other option.
  - » I will try that to see if it works.
  - » What else can I try?

- » How could I do this differently?
- » I'm hopeless.
- » Can I think outside the box?
- » If I can do this then great things will happen!
- » What's the point?
- » No one ever wants to help me.
- » After I get through this I can do something else I will really enjoy.
- » I believe that good things will happen because Jesus is with me.
- » What will happen when I succeed?
- » Who else will be affected when I achieve this goal?
- » Whenever I try something I fail.
- » Why does this matter?
- » Why bother?
- » What difference will this task make to me or someone else?
- » Can I find something funny about what is happening?
- » Who can help me with this?
- » Right now I'm feeling down but I could watch a funny movie to make me smile.
- » I give up.
- » Can I paint or draw about what is troubling me?
- » I'm feeling stressed so I will listen to some music to calm down.
- » There's no hope for this situation.

- Bibles

#### For 'Prayer time'

- String or wool cut into 30cm lengths and tied into groups of three

#### For 'Home & Beyond'

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

## Connecting In

Today we are talking about our ability to 'bounce back' when things go wrong in our lives.

### Option 1: Toys that 'bounce' back

Let's take a few minutes to play with some things that bounce and some things that don't bounce.

*Give the children a few minutes to explore the toys that you have selected.*

#### Link...

Today we are exploring resilience. Who knows what resilience means? (*Resilience is being able to stay strong and bounce back when we face challenges.*)

- Which toys were able to bounce back?
- Which ones didn't?
- How do you usually respond when things don't go the way you want? Do you try and figure out a solution or just give up?

### Option 2: Musical Bobs

*Play some music and ask the children to walk or dance around the space. When the music stops everyone has to bob down as fast as they can. The last one down is out! Everyone else can then get back up again and keep playing. Play until you have a winner or the group has had enough.*

### Link...

Today we are exploring resilience. Who knows what resilience means? (*Resilience is being able to stay strong and bounce back when we face challenges.*)

- How did you feel when you got out?
- How did you feel when you got to keep playing?
- How do you usually respond when things don't go the way you want? Do you try and figure out a solution or just give up?

### Option3: Inspirational story

Bethany Hamilton, known as the 'Soul Surfer', has a really inspirational story. She faced a really tough challenge but her attitude made a huge difference.

*Play the clip or read the attached information sheet to the children.*

Today we are exploring resilience. Who knows what resilience means? (*Resilience is being able to stay strong and bounce back when we face challenges.*)

- What was important about Bethany's story?
- What sort of attitude did she have?
- How do you usually respond when things don't go the way you want? Do you try and figure out a solution or just give up?

## The Main Thing

Life changes for us every day. Many of these changes are good. Some changes don't make much difference to us but some really shake things up and knock us down. Resilience helps us to deal with these changes. Each time we face a new change or overcome a new challenge it builds up our resilience muscle a bit more so we can face the next one.

**Share:** *It is valuable for children to realise that even as adults we continue to face challenges that require us to have resilience. Ask a leader to share a challenging time with the group including how they felt and what they did to overcome this situation. Ask them to keep it to three sentences. For example: A couple of years ago I was badly hurt and couldn't keep working. I felt worried and useless and I thought about giving up. Instead, I worked really hard on all my exercises and became strong and well again.*

*Ask if there are any children who would like to share a time when they had to face a challenge.*

I wonder how resilient you are. We can often tell if a person is resilient just by listening to the things they say and the questions that they ask.

### Resilience Activity:

*Ask the children to stand in a circle. Place the sheets of paper in the centre of the circle, reading out each heading:*

- A resilient person tries different options.
- A resilient person has hope for the future.
- A resilient person looks at the big picture.
- A resilient person can see the funny side of a situation.
- A resilient person uses creativity.

*Distribute the strips of paper (page 9) to the children. Some children may receive more than one depending on the size of your group.*

*Hand the ball to one of the children to begin.*

*That child will read out the question/statement on their strip of paper.*

*If the question/statement is something a resilient person would ask/say then they can tape it to the ball and bounce it to another person.*

*If the question/statement is something that does not help a person to be resilient then they must scrunch it up and toss it into the centre of the circle then bounce the ball to another person.*

This activity has given us lots of ideas about what we can say or do to bounce back from changes and challenges. Which ones do you think would work best for you? What else can you think of?

### **Draw and share (page 8)**

*Give each child some pencils/markers and a copy of the 'Bounce Back Tip Sheet'. Ask them to draw images and words of things they can do to bounce back when they face a challenging situation.*

**Example:** *Talk to family or friends or teachers; have a break from some friends; visit a place where you can chill out; play sport or exercise; spend time with friends; play with your dog; listen to worship music; read a book or the bible.*

*Ask if any child would like to share their ideas with the group. Encourage the children to add any helpful ideas that are shared by others. Let the children know that they can take this sheet home and put it up somewhere so they can see it and use it next time they face a challenging situation.*

With everything you know now about resilience, think about this scenario.

Your parents have just told you that you are moving to a new house and will have to change school. You have lots of friends here and are happy at your school. You ask them to stay but they have made up their minds. You *really* don't want to move.

Which of these options would help you bounce back?

- a. Go to your room and not talk to your parents for a couple of days.
- b. Make plans to meet up with an old school friend next holidays to give you something to look forward to.
- c. Write a list of all the new things you can do at your new house/school with new friends.

What other options can you think of?

When we face challenges and hard times we can stop and think about how we will respond. We can't stop troubles from coming but we can choose what we will do.

## **Tying In**

Let's take a look at what the Bible says about this.

*Ask the children to look up 2 Corinthians 1:2-5 in their Bibles.*

These words were written by Paul to the church in Corinth. The people in that church were facing some pretty tough challenges.

*Ask a child to read one verse at a time.*

**Read verse 2** I pray that God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ will be kind to you and will bless you with peace!

**Ask:** What does Paul wish for the Christians at Corinth? (*Kindness and peace.*)

**Read verse 3** Praise God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! The Father is a merciful God, who always gives us comfort.

**Ask:** How does God help us when things get tough? (*God is merciful and has compassion on us. God is the ultimate source of all comfort.*)

**Read verse 4-5** He comforts us when we are in trouble, so that we can share that same comfort with others in trouble. We share in the terrible sufferings of Christ, but also in the wonderful comfort he gives.

**Ask:** How do you think you grow and learn when you face tough times?

**Ask:** How can our problems help us to comfort others? (*If we learn from our problems, we can teach others who face similar problems.*)

Even when we are living the best life we can with Jesus there are still going to be times of trouble or change. However, when we love and serve God and have a relationship with Jesus we have comfort and hope for a bright future. If we keep building our resilience muscle and bouncing back from our challenges and leaning on the word of God we will succeed.

## Memory Verse

*I may have fallen, but I will get up; I may be sitting in the dark but the Lord is my light. Micah 7:8b*

Invite the group to think of actions that will go with each part of this verse to help them remember it. Some examples:

**I may have fallen** – bend down or fall over  
**But I will get up** – stand up straight  
**I may be sitting in the dark** – pretend to sit on a chair  
**But the Lord is my light** – point to heaven  
**Micah 7:8** – flash 7 then eight fingers.

Repeat this a few times until everyone remembers all the words and actions.

## Prayer Time

As Paul reminds us in 2 Corinthians we have a God that loves us and wants to comfort us in times of trouble. We are not facing life alone. We also have friends, family and other people who will help and support us when we need it. When everything in your life seems to be changing or challenging remember

that in a world that is ever changing Jesus is our rock and our foundation. He never changes. Resilience isn't about never falling down. It's about getting back up again... and again...and again.

*Introduce the verse from Ecclesiastes 4:12.*

An enemy might be able to defeat one person, but two people can stand back-to-back to defend each other. And three people are even stronger. They are like a rope that has three parts wrapped together—it is very hard to break.

*Explain that we have friends and family and other people who are here to support us. We are going to make our own 'triple braided cord' that represents the strength that we have with the support of others. Give each child three precut pieces of string or wool (approx. 30 cm) tied in a knot at the top. Ask them to pair up with a buddy. Have the buddy hold onto the knot while the child plaits it. Change over so that the other child also plaits their wool. Take note that some children may need some help with this activity. Ask the children to name some people who can help them when they face problems and share it with their buddy. Once they are both done tie the cord around their wrist like a friendship bracelet. As they wear it they will be reminded of those who are here to support us.*

*Ask the buddy pairs to sit back to back and pray for each other and for the people who support them. This can be done silently or out loud. Give some time and then close in prayer.*

### **Let's pray**

Lord, today I thank you for the joy and kindness of the children in the group.

I thank you for their love of life and their smiles.

I pray that you will help them to be resilient and to be able to get through and bounce back when life brings them problems.

I pray for a resilience that grows and nurtures their soft hearts and hopeful mind;

A resilience that keeps them from crumbling when met with challenges.

A resilience that empowers them to rise again and again and again;

With hope and strength, free from fear or uncertainty.

I pray for the people who support them.

Help them see your light in times of darkness.

May you bring them hope.

Amen

## **Home & Beyond**

Share the ideas on your 'Bounce Back Tip Sheet' with your Big Bud or a family member.

Teach the memory verse to a friend or family member.

*I may have fallen, but I will get up; I may be sitting in the dark but the Lord is my light. Micah 7:8b*

# Bounce Back Tip Sheet

A resilient person looks at  
the big picture

A resilient person tries  
different options

A resilient person has hope  
for the future

A resilient person  
uses creativity

A resilient person can see  
the funny side of a situation

I'm not sure I can do it  
but I'll give it a go.

Who else will be affected when I  
achieve this goal?

I will try that to see if it works.

Whenever I try something I fail.

I have no other option.

Why does this matter?

What else can I try?

Why bother?

How could I do this differently?

What difference will this task  
make to me or someone else?

I'm hopeless.

Can I find something funny about  
what is happening?

Can I think outside the box?

Who can help me with this?

If I can do this then great  
things will happen!

Right now I'm feeling down but I could  
watch a funny movie to make me smile.

What's the point?

I give up.

No one ever wants to help me.

Can I paint or draw about  
what is troubling me?

After I get through this I can  
do something else I will really enjoy.

I'm feeling stressed so I will listen to  
some music to calm down.

I believe that good things will  
happen because Jesus is with me.

There's no hope for this situation.

What will happen when I succeed?



# Home & Beyond

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