

Junior Soldiers

Unit 3 : Lesson 2



'Super-human power!'

PURPOSE : To help the Junior Soldiers to explore that once they have made a choice to follow God, it is the Holy Spirit who empowers and uses them.

Jesus said to his disciples: "If you love me, you will do as I command. Then I will ask the Father to send you the Holy Spirit who will help you and always be with you. The Spirit will show you what is true.

The people of this world cannot accept the Spirit, because they don't see or know him. But you know the Spirit, who is with you and will keep on living in you."

John 14: 15-17 (CEV)

Consider & Prepare

Read:

John 16:5-15 (especially v. 7) (CEV)—The words say 'help, advocate' but the notes at the bottom say the Greek reads *paraclete* (comforter or encourager or counsellor).

Luke 24:46-49 (CEV)—clothed with power

Acts 1:6-8—Greek word used in this text for power is *dunamis* which means energy. The word 'dynamite' also stems from the Greek word *dunamis*.

Acts 2:1-47(especially v. 38, 39)—The Holy Spirit is promised to all who ask for forgiveness of sins and follow Christ.

Of all Christian doctrines, possibly the hardest to teach are those in relation to the Holy Spirit; this is largely because, firstly, we are trying to understand a spiritual being who is inherently abstract and 'not-easily-defineable' and, secondly, we are trying to understand the complexity of the Trinity and how the Holy Spirit is God (as are the Son and the Father).

At this stage of their faith journey, possibly the best we can do is seek to 'introduce' the Holy Spirit to the children in our care and emphasis the need for them to learn of the function of the Spirit in the life of faith—a Spirit who empowers, challenges, comforts, guides and loves us.

While an understanding of spiritual gifts is important for all Christians—including junior soldiers—today we seek just to let the children know that there is a part of God called the Holy Spirit who can empower them as they seek to grow in relationship with Christ and live as a Christian.

What you will need:

- For the experiment you will need: plastic zip lock bag, piece of toilet paper, vinegar, baking soda and an area where you can make a little bit of a mess (*it might be wise to put down some drop sheets too*)
- 10 plastic/polystyrene cups (not transparent), a chocolate or treat (*appropriate for the group*) and some everyday items e.g. paperclip, pencil sharpener, stone etc.
- Collage poster : large pieces of plain cardboard (A2), old magazines, brochures, glue, scissors, sticky tape, textas/coloured pens.
- Print off the 'Home & Beyond' cards at the back of the lesson for each of the Junior Soldiers. They can place them in their notepad or journal to remind them of the challenge of this week.



Connecting In

Experiment time:

In this experiment you will demonstrate how ordinary, household items can create power (it would be good to practice this experiment prior to doing it with the children).

What you will need is:

- A plastic, zip-lock sandwich bag that doesn't leak
- A piece of toilet paper
- 1 tablespoon of vinegar
- 1.5 tablespoons baking soda.

Step One:

Start by dumping the baking soda in the middle of a piece of toilet paper and fold it carefully into a packet.

Step Two:

Then, put your vinegar into the plastic bag.

Step Three:

Next, hold the toilet paper packet of baking soda inside the bag away from the vinegar while you seal the bag with the other hand.

Step Four:

Finally, drop the packet into the vinegar, put the bag on the ground and back away. You usually have about a minute, depending on how well you folded your packet.

The two substances mix and produce energy causing a bang or pop.



Link: For some things to happen, there needs to be power, and this means there must be a source of that power.

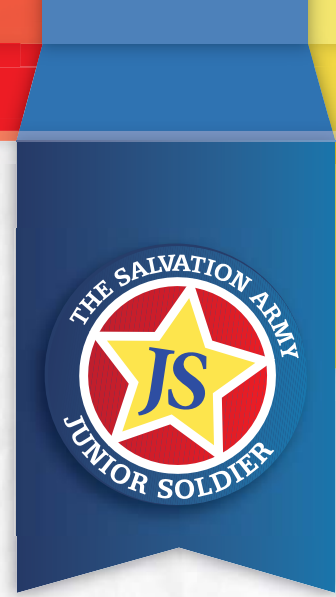
- 'What just happened? Why do you think it happened?'
- 'We saw and heard the bag pop; that means something happened to create that mini-explosion-in-a-bag. It seems the vinegar acted with the baking soda to create a powerful effect.'
- 'Today we're going to learn how something can have an influence on something else, and make it more powerful.'

The Main Thing

Power and Energy...

Explore these questions with your children (*if you like you may want to record the answers on a whiteboard or large sheet of butchers paper to help some children*):

- What is energy? What is power?
- What does it do?
- Can you see it? How?
- How do we get energy/power?
- What sort of things require power to work/run/exist?



'The human body needs a balanced diet for it to be healthy, for it to produce energy so that we can move, think, speak and do things. Cars need petrol to make the engine run faster which, in turn, creates the power to propel the car forward. Fires need both wood and oxygen to burn: alone, they are harmless, but put them together and make a spark, and suddenly you have a powerful fire that generates light and heat.'

'As followers of Jesus, we have also been given power to help us to live like Jesus did, to follow His example and to make the right choices in the things we say and think and do.'

- Can anyone tell me where that power might come from?

'We have power from God—through the Holy Spirit—to help us in our daily Christian lives. The Holy Spirit acts as our conscience and guide. He guides us in our thoughts and feelings, encourages us, comforts and supports us in good and not so good times.'

'Think of someone who loves you and encourages you and praises you a lot (*a friend, a parent, a grandparent, a teacher, etc.*); the Holy Spirit is a bit like that person but with extra special power (*not like any human*) to really know how you're feeling inside.

The Holy Spirit also helps us understand and talk about spiritual matters. When you have to talk to someone about Jesus and you might be feeling a bit shy, it's the Holy Spirit who can give you the courage and the words you might need at the right time.

The Holy Spirit gives us power to live well. When we believe in God and ask him for forgiveness from our sin, he promises he will give us his Holy Spirit to help us live a life that is clean in thought word and deed.

Scripture verses...

Below are some verses of Jesus' teaching on the Holy Spirit that was promised after Jesus goes up to heaven and what the Holy Spirit will do. Explore the following scripture verses together or in small groups and then have the groups share with the whole.

- John 16:7—given a counsellor
- Luke 24:49—clothed with power
- Acts 1:8—Greek word used in this text for power is *dunamis* which means energy.
- Acts 2:37–39—The Holy Spirit is promised to all who ask for forgiveness of sins and follow Christ.

Illustration:

Some of the children might be familiar with Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and their wise old counsellor and teacher Master Splinter (*you can find a picture of TMNT and Splinter on the web as a reminder to them*). Whenever one of the turtles needed advice or even to be warned about something, Master Splinter is the one they turned to.

'Wouldn't it be great if we had someone like that who would keep an eye out for us because they love us so much? Well, that's sort of what the Holy Spirit does for Christians.'

Activity:

- Have someone turn their back or leave the room and set up 10 upside down cups (*that you cannot see through*) in front of them on a table (*plastic or styrofoam*). Under one cup put a small chocolate or treat (*appropriate for the group*), under the other cups put a stone or paperclip or something else relatively worthless.
- Have the child enter the room, stand in front of the cups and—without touching them—select one cup. This is their one chance to select the cup with the chocolate under it. (*Hopefully, they'll pick the wrong cup!*)
- Now do it again. Have the child enter the room and stand in front of the table and this time have someone stand behind them, close enough to whisper to them but without touching them. The person in front (*choosing the cup to pick up*) can hold a pointed finger over each cup but says nothing; the person behind them whispers to them whether they are 'Colder' or 'Warmer' to the cup with the chocolate under it. It should only take them a few seconds to pick the correct cup.
 - 'What changed from the first try to the second try?'
 - 'Isn't it so much easier when we have someone advising us, guiding us which way to go? We're more in control of what is going on; we're more confident of success at what we're trying to do.'
 - 'Imagine if throughout life you had someone helping you like this, as if someone was whispering in your ear. You would feel more power in your life to achieve things, stay safe, make better choices and live the life that Jesus would want for you. Well, this is what the Holy Spirit wants to do for you.'



Tying In

Power Collage...

Talk to the kids about how they can experience and perceive the Holy Spirit in their own lives and how he can influence them:

- The ability to know right from wrong;
- Courage to do new things; share their faith, do things in the church to help in ministry;
- Showing the 'fruits' of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness and self control;
- Be able to pray with wisdom for people and situations.

Ask the kids to share a time they think the Holy Spirit helped them, e.g. gave courage to talk to someone about God, guided them to make good choices, gave them a dream or idea for ministry. (*This will be easier for the children to share if you have an example to share with them first – it is important for them to hear about your spiritual journey too.*)

- Have a stack of magazines and brochures about different kinds of power/energy; wind, water, wood, coal, steam, food, etc.
- Have the Junior Soldiers create a poster with pictures and/or drawings of different sources of energy but leave a space in the middle of the poster for the words 'Holy Spirit'.

Again, discuss with the children how everything and everyone needs a source of energy to operate; the Holy Spirit is our source of energy to live as a follower of Jesus. Without the Holy Spirit we cannot live like Christ on our own. The Holy Spirit gives gifts and abilities to help us to live like Jesus and also demonstrate the power of God in our world today.

Around the words 'Holy Spirit' get the children to add how the Holy Spirit gives them power and energy, what sorts of things are they able to do because they have the Holy Spirit with them.

Prayer time:

Ask each of the Junior Soldiers if they want the Holy Spirit to help them, guide them, support them, comfort them and give them power in their life to live the way Jesus would want them too, to go around in a circle and say 'I want the Holy Spirit in me'. Pray at the end for all those present, thanking God for giving us the gift of the Holy Spirit and that he will reveal to each of us what the Holy Spirit will do in their lives.



Home & Beyond

Print off the 'Home & Beyond' cards attached. The children might like to keep these in their journal or notebook where they could write or stick the challenges, reflect, answer questions or complete activities each week.


Try and **read this verse each day this week**, you may even like to try and memorize it:

'When you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, who he promised long ago.' (Ephesians 1:13)

Reflect about times this week when you think you might have had the Holy Spirit 'whispering in your ear'. Maybe you were going to do something wrong but then you thought differently and didn't do it. Maybe you had a sudden thought to do something nice for someone. You might like to write some of these in your journal or share them with your Prayer Pal/ Junior Soldier leader.

When you pray this week, **stop for a minute and just listen**, be quiet and think about how much God loves you. Sometimes—when we stop talking!—the Holy Spirit puts things into our minds and heart that we hadn't thought of ourselves! You might like to write some of these in your journal or share them with your Prayer Pal/Junior Soldier leader.

LEADERS NOTE: These are some really important practices that we need to help our children learn, but it can be difficult if they have never done them before. There might be some examples that you can share for the 'reflect' section (above) and you might like to practice the 'listening' all together as a group, so that all the children will feel comfortable when they try it for themselves at home.



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