

Junior Soldiers

Unit 12 : Lesson 9



Endurance!

PURPOSE : For the children to explore and understand that when things get tough or don't go our way and we feel like giving up, God will be there to help us through and persevere.

'Don't get tired of helping others. You will be rewarded when the time is right, if you don't give up.'

Galatians 6:9 (CEV)

'All these many people who have had faith in God are around us like a cloud. Let us put everything out of our lives that keeps us from doing what we should. Let us keep running in the race that God has planned for us.'

Hebrews 12:1 (NIV)

Consider & Prepare

Read:

Galatians 6:9

Acts 1:1–10

Acts 16:16–40

Helen Keller was born in 1880. At 19 months old she contracted an illness which doctors suspected to be scarlet fever or meningitis—the illness left her both deaf and blind. At that time, she was only able to communicate somewhat with Martha Washington, the six-year-old daughter of the family cook, who understood her signs; by the age of seven, Keller had more than 60 signs to communicate with her family.

Eventually, Helen's parents employed a woman named Anne Sullivan who was also visually impaired; Anne became Helen's instructor. It was the beginning of a 49-year-long relationship. Anne immediately began to teach Helen to communicate by spelling words into her hand, beginning with 'd-o-l-l' for the doll that she had brought Helen as a present. Helen was frustrated, at first, because she did not understand that every object had a word uniquely identifying it. Helen's big breakthrough in communication came when she realised that the motions her teacher was making on the palm of her hand, while running cool water over her other hand, symbolized 'water'; she then nearly exhausted Anne demanding the names of all the other familiar objects in her world.

Helen Keller showed endurance throughout her life but especially her childhood where she had to overcome issues of communication with those around her and within society. So did Anne Sullivan who endured hours and hours of teaching and supporting Helen. At 24, Helen graduated from Radcliffe College with a Bachelor of Arts degree. She became a world famous speaker and author. Her endurance and persistence paid off.

Children need to develop endurance and persistence. Endurance is important for all of us, whether it is related to learning or being a part of a sporting game, finishing off a homework project, learning an instrument, building or creating something, within families or friendships or just life in general.

We need to help our children explore how to keep on going when things get tough and things don't go our way. The early Christians endured many trials and much suffering not only for their own benefit as believers but also so that others would know about Jesus. They were able to do this with the help of the Holy Spirit. They showed endurance when things didn't always go their way, when things weren't nice for them or becoming increasingly difficult because they knew that, in the end, it was all worth it.

Children in our society today are losing the art of endurance or resilience; they are more freely allowed to change their minds about commitments if they don't feel like it or it is too hard etc. We want to encourage those children within our area of influence to stick at things and endure, and help them to explore the benefits of that persistence. We want to encourage them that they are not alone in striving to endure when things get difficult—let them know about all those in your faith community that will help them to stay strong and that the Holy Spirit will help them see things through.

What you will need:

For 'Connecting In'

- Skipping ropes

For 'The Main Thing'

- Bibles
- Piece of string/Box of fruit loops
- Photocopy of sentences cut into individual words

For 'Tying In'

- YouTube clip: www.youtube.com/watch?v=15R6SNZ-K1g
- Copy of the music 'Never Give Up' from Hillsong Kids (optional)
- 6 balloons
- Permanent marker

For 'Home & Beyond'

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

Connecting In

The activities below will be a test of physical endurance for the children. Ensure that when you are explaining the instructions to them that you use the word 'endure' so that later on during the session you can come back and explore this word.

I can stand on one leg...

The aim of this activity is for the children to see how long they can endure standing on one leg.

- Ask all the children (who are able) to stand up.
- They need to put their arms straight out to their sides.
- When you say 'go' they need to stand on one leg for as long as they can.
- They need to 'endure' through the pain of holding their arms out while standing on one leg.



- When they can't stand any longer, they can stop and sit on the floor.
- The last person to keep balancing on one leg is the winner.

Have another go, but this time ask the children to close their eyes during the challenge. So they put their arms out straight to their side, stand on one leg and close their eyes when you say 'Go'. Again they need to endure through the pain and the balancing skill. This will be harder than the first exercise. The last person to keep standing is the winner.

Jumping rope...

Find as many skipping ropes as you can for this activity or you might like to have a couple of rounds of the challenge. For the children who can skip with a rope and would like to participate in the challenge, have them start skipping when you say 'Go'. The option for the children who cannot skip would be to have a rope held at a low level by other children at each end and the child could jump over the rope back and forth. Have the children start to skip and see how long they can physically endure the skipping without stopping. When they cannot endure any longer, have them stop and sit on the floor until the others are done.

Link... 'Wow, how did you go with the physical challenges today? Were they easy or hard to endure? You all had to endure through the physical pain and keep going as long as you could before giving in.'

- How did you feel standing on one leg and holding your arms out straight? I wonder if you found it hard or easy.
- What about when you had to close your eyes and do it; did you find that a little harder?
- I wonder how long you thought you could keep on skipping for.
- Did you have to endure or work through the pain and exhaustion to keep on going?
- I wonder if you can tell me what the word endure means. *(Allow the children some time to explore this with you.)*
 - *The ability to do something difficult for a long time.*
 - *The ability to continue or last.*
 - *To be persistence and to persevere.*

'Let's think of some examples. One example of endurance is what a marathon runner has to do in order to get through a race. I wonder what your example might be. *(Let them think of some.)*

'Sometimes endurance is not just about enduring something physically; there can be times when we might be doing a task that we really don't like or perhaps find a little boring. We need to keep on doing the task and not give up—this is also endurance. Sometimes it could be trying to complete a task that keeps on failing, but you know that if you keep on going with it that it will eventually work out and be worth it.'

'Have a think about all the inventors that have invented things over the years, for example, Alexander Graham Bell who invented the telephone in 1876. I wonder how many years and attempts it took him to be successful with his invention. He would have endured many, many hours of experiments until he got it just right. Remember, it's only because Alexander Graham Bell initially invented the telephone that we now have mobile phones. All thanks to a person who endured many hours of trials and experiments. Sometimes in order to endure something we need to have a lot of patience.'

'Today we are going to explore a little further how we can endure and stick with things when perhaps we might think we can't do it any longer.'



The Main Thing

Riding a bike...

- I wonder how many of you can ride a bike.
- Can you remember when you first started riding a bike?
- I wonder how you felt. Maybe you were excited, maybe you were scared or nervous. How did you feel?
- If you started with training wheels, I wonder how you felt when the training wheels came off for the first time.
- I wonder if you had to try many times until you could ride without stopping or falling off.

Have a chat and explore this topic with the children about their 'biking' experience, and share your own experience of learning to ride a bike (if you can!).

'Most people, when they are learning to ride a bike, are able to persist and practice so that they can eventually ride a bike solo with no training wheels. You will need to show some persistence and endurance in order to learn this new skill. When you started learning I am sure that you went into it knowing that it might take a bit of practice before you could ride a bike without stopping and falling off. I wonder what other new skills you have learnt that have taken some endurance to learn fully (*it would be great for you to share an example of something you have endured with the children*).'

Fruit loop...sticking at it!

Choose a volunteer to help demonstrate the next activity with you. Give the child a piece of string and some fruit loops. Ask the child to start threading the fruit loops onto the string to make a lovely long necklace.

Make sure you don't tie a knot at the end of the string so that when they start threading the fruit loops on they just fall off the other end straight away. When this happens, suggest that you might be able to help them. Tie a very small knot in the string so that the fruit loops will still fall off the string when they start threading again.

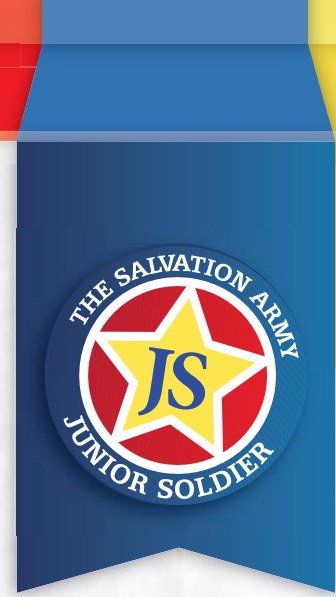
When this happens, tell them you can help them again and this time, tie a knot around one of the pieces of 'fruit loops' so that when the rest are threaded on they will stop at the end and not fall off. Ask the child to keep on threading and wait until the necklace is nearly complete before you notice that they have not got the colours in the order that you wanted. Take the fruit loops off the string and have them start again following the pattern of colours that you would like e.g. 8 pink, 5 green, 2 yellow etc.

Once they have almost finished threading the whole necklace, ask to see it and hold it up for everyone to see. Drop the necklace 'accidentally', causing all the fruit loops to fall off again. Ask them to start the necklace again. Emphasis that 'poor' has had to keep on going and put the necklace together even when things have not gone their way.

- Should ... keep on going with the fruit loop necklace?
- Should ... endure all the obstacles that get in the way or just give up?
- I wonder if it will be worth it in the end.

'Sometimes it is hard to keep going when things get frustrating; it is difficult to persist when things take longer than you first thought and it can be hard to stick at it and show endurance when you have to go back and start all over again. I wonder if you have ever felt like that. Today we are going to look at three Bible verses that can help us as we think about endurance and what this might mean for us.'

Print the following three sentences out into large font and cut up the individual sentences into single words. As we go through this section together, time will be given for the children to try and put each sentence together in the correct order. You might like to divide your children into smaller groups to work on this section, in that case you will need a set of three sentences for each group.



- **I can keep going because God will help me through the power of His Holy Spirit.**
- **I can keep going with something even when things don't go my way.**
- **I should keep going with it because it's worth it.**

Ask the children to look up Acts 1:1–10 focusing on verse 8—‘But the Holy Spirit will come upon you and give you power. Then you will tell everyone about me in Jerusalem, in all Judea, in Samaria, and everywhere in the world.’

‘Sometimes—when we are trying something new, something that might make us work hard or something that we have to think about in a different way—it can be difficult and we might begin to struggle with it. It is important to stick at it and endure the obstacles in our way. We need to find the strength to keep on going and this might come through getting some help from others around us as well as from God. When Jesus went to heaven and left the disciples, they thought they would be on their own, but Jesus sent a helper for them, the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was there to help the disciples when they needed encouragement and that extra bit of endurance for the situation. Jesus left the disciples the huge job of telling the world about his life, death and resurrection. But he didn't leave them on their own, he sent the Holy Spirit to help them share the story of Jesus.’

Give the children the words to the first sentence, **‘I can keep going because God will help me through the power of His Holy Spirit’**. Ask them to sort out the words and see if they can make up the sentence.

‘The Holy Spirit was not only left to help the disciples but is here to be with us also, to help us when we need some encouragement and help with endurance and sticking at it.’

As a group, read Acts 16:16–40 together. Talk with the children about how Paul and Silas wouldn't stop telling people about Jesus and—because they wouldn't stop—they were thrown in jail. Paul and Silas endured their time in jail and kept on going even when things didn't go their way because they could see it was worth it.

Give the children the words to the second sentence, **‘I can keep going with something even when things don't go my way’**. Again, ask them to sort out the words and see if they can make up the sentence.

‘Sometimes we need to be careful about what we choose to be persistent about. The statement, ‘I can keep going with something even when things don't go my way’ doesn't mean that we will always automatically succeed just because we've tried hard. Sometimes it just isn't meant to be. (*Maybe you have an example of something you persisted with, but eventually—and wisely—gave up.*)



‘Today we're encouraging persistence, but we're not encouraging silliness. What would happen if I was 70 years old, unfit and overweight, but woke up one day and decided to run 50 km? After 5 km my legs were wobbling; after 10 km I have a splitting headache; after 15 km I'm getting strong pains in my chest and I'm struggling to breath. Should I persist? Probably not—I'm going to die! Maybe I should get used to running 5 km, then I can try 10 and so on. Eventually I might be able to run 50 km. Being persistent is a wonderful characteristic to have, but it doesn't mean we stop being wise!’

Ask one of the children to look up Galatians 6:9 and read it out. ‘Don't get tired of helping others. You will be rewarded when the time is right, if you don't give up.’

Give the children the words to the third sentence, **‘I should keep going with it because it's worth it’**. Again, ask them to sort out the words and see if they can make up the sentence.



'Things don't always go our way and this can be frustrating, but this doesn't mean that you give up at the first signs of difficulty. God asks us to keep on helping others, to keep persevering, to stick at things—especially if it is something that would be pleasing to God. God tells us that it will be worth it—I wonder what this means.'

Allow the children some time to share and wrestle with what that means: how does God make something worth persisting with? Is our reward just going to heaven (after we die) or is it in pleasing him or feeling good within ourselves? Is there reward in seeing something through to completion? Does persistence need a medal or award at the end to pay off? What is our motivation for persisting in serving/helping others?



Tying In

Never Give Up...

Watch the following song clip from Hillsong Kids, or listen to it or sing and dance to it as a group if you have a copy of the music. If you do not have access to YouTube you might like to read out the words below:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=15R6SNZ-K1g

Never Give Up

Rain may be falling and lightning fills the sky.
But the sun is rising, God is on my side.
Wind may blow around me and thunder may go boom!
Clouds are disappearing your light is shining through.

Never give up, cause he's always there,
Never give up anytime, anywhere.
Never give up cause he's always there,
Remember God is always by your side.



Balloon prayers...

Blow up six balloons and write each of the following three prayers on separate balloons with a permanent marker. You should have two balloons with each prayer on them.

- Thanks, God, that you are always with us and that you help us endure events and things in our lives that we might struggle with.
- Thanks, God, for giving us the strength to keep on going even when things don't go our way.
- Thanks, God, for showing us that when we endure something and keep on trying, it can be worth it in the end.

'Today we are going to have a little fun with our prayers and some balloons.'

- Depending on the size of your group, throw all six balloons (or three, if a smaller group) in the air.
- Everyone is to try and keep the balloons off the floor and up in the air.
- The first balloon that falls to the floor is what the group will pray for.
- Once you have said that particular prayer, when you say 'Amen' pop the balloon to symbolise that God has heard our prayers.
- Keep going with the other balloons and prayers until they are all popped.

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.

The endurance test...

Over the next few weeks at home, test your endurance as a family. Choose one of the following ideas to complete together. While you are together, discuss what it means to endure something as a family. You can keep going because God will help you even when things don't go your way because, in the end, it's worth it.

- Find an 'unfinished project' at home and, as a family, endure through the project and finish it together.
- Read a classic book in a reasonable amount of time. Read a chapter each night together as a family.
- As a family, go for a hike together in some rugged but safe terrain.

'Don't get tired of helping others. You will be rewarded when the time is right, if you don't give up.'
Galatians 6:9



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