

Junior Heroes!

A five-day holiday club plan, complete and ready-to-run

IDEAL
FOR
5-11s



John Hardwick

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Introduction



The world of entertainment has always had superheroes, such as Flash Gordon, Superman, Wonder Woman, Batman, Spiderman, Transformers, Power Rangers, Teenage Ninja Turtles, Super Ted, Super Mario, Super Sonic and many more. With every new release of the latest Disney film, a plethora of merchandise is timed to hit the shops alongside the release,

and the DVD is soon available too. With this in mind, *Junior Heroes!* is bang up to date!

Overview

The Bible talks about heroes of faith in Hebrews 11 and the fight against evil in Ephesians 6. As well as the adults of faith mentioned in Hebrews 11, there are many children and young people in the Bible who trusted God and made a real difference. They are junior heroes! Most superheroes have a special gadget, such as a 'truth rope', special bulletproof armour or a laser sword, to help them. Our present-day junior heroes have the armour of God in Ephesians 6 to aid them in their quest!

Junior Heroes! explores the lives of five children in the Bible who had a strong faith in God and made a real difference in the face of adversity. In so doing, they each became junior heroes. Using the ever-popular mix of songs, warm-up activities, drama, crafts, games, puppet sketches, Bible narrations, quizzes and funsheets, the material offers five off-the-peg sessions, designed as a five-day holiday programme but equally suitable for midweek clubs and all-age worship.

- Day 1:** This session looks at the calling of Samuel, the boy whom God chose to speak to. Of course, Samuel listened very carefully, but the message he had to pass on was a difficult one. Would he tell the truth or fabricate a story?
- Day 2:** The crowd was very hungry! The boy had his lunch with him, saw the need and did the right thing. He gave all he had to Jesus and saw how Jesus saved the day.
- Day 3:** Young David's great faith put the adults to

shame. He was victorious because he was strong in the Lord.

Day 4: Naaman's servant girl chose to go to the rescue of her master by sharing the good news of how God could help him.

Day 5: Many of the Old Testament kings led God's people away from him, but the boy king Josiah brought them back to worship God once more when he read out loud the word of God to his people.

Extra story: Ideal for a Sunday service or special holiday club event, this Bible story looks at how Miriam, the sister of Moses, risked her own life by approaching the Egyptian princess—and, in doing so, saved the life of baby Moses.

Setting up

To create a superhero atmosphere, set the scene by having pictures and backdrops of superheroes around the room. For reference, you should be able to find images on the internet by typing superhero names into the search engine. You might also wish to have a display of superhero merchandise if you have any items available. Soundtracks of superhero theme tunes could be played when the children arrive and during the course of the holiday club, such as when crafts and games are in progress.

Choose superhero-related team names, such as Incredibles, Transformers, Power Rangers and so on, and appropriate dress for your leaders and assistants. You'll need additional leaders to lead the crafts and games, and a team leader to oversee the sessions.

You could build, draw or project a large image of a Junior Hero on to a wall or screen and, each day, build it up by adding the different parts of the armour of God. (See page 62 for an image of a complete Junior Hero, including the sword, helmet, armour, belt and shield.)

Roles and responsibilities

Good teamwork is essential for good children's work. As well as an overall holiday club co-ordinator, you'll need people to fill all the following roles.

Registration officer

This role would suit a well-organized person. If the children are registered before the start date of the holiday club, you will save time on the first day of the club. If you choose to register the children on the first day, you will need a good team of helpers to cope with the workload.

You need to register the following details for each child:

- Child's name
- Address
- Date of birth
- Contact phone numbers
- Medical details (such as asthma or allergies)
- Parent's or guardian's permission for child to attend the club

You will need to split children into groups according to their age bands, and if possible sub-section them into teams. It's advisable to issue each child with a colour-coded sticker or badge to identify them and the team to which they belong. Have a 'welcome' team available 15 minutes before the start, to make the children feel at home when they arrive.

Team leaders

Team leaders need to be able to deal with a high level of responsibility. Each team leader will be allocated to a particular group of children or age band. They will stay with the children the whole time, sitting with them and leading them through various activities. They will befriend, enthuse and maintain a level of control. It's important that team leaders join in the songs, as children will look to their leaders as role models.

Team helper

These are people who can help the team leader. They need to be free to fetch things, accompany children to the toilet and so on.

Games leader

This needs to be someone with experience of sorting children quickly and organizing games. A powerful voice would be an asset! Keep the games in one location and bring the children to that area when it is their turn to play.

Craft leader

This needs to be someone able to organize a simple craft activity. The craft leader will need to start collecting materials well in advance. Try to make the crafts relate to the theme. Once again, have a fixed location for crafts and bring the children to that area when it is their turn to participate.

Time keeper



This person keeps an eye on the time and gives a five-minute warning to activity leaders that the session is about to end. The time keeper then rings a bell when it's time for the teams to move on to the next activity.

Snack team

One person, or team, is needed to prepare drinks and biscuits for the children. Not all the children will need their drinks at the same time, as teams will take turns to have their refreshments. Please ensure that all the leaders, including the game leader and craft leader, also receive drinks.



First aider

It is essential to have someone available who is a trained first aider, and to have a well-stocked first aid box. St John Ambulance may be able to offer advice if you are unsure about how to provide this facility.

Discipler

Children may have questions about the Christian faith. Disciplers need to be able to talk in simple language, be good listeners, and know what they believe and how to put it across without manipulation or forcing the children into making statements or promises that they cannot understand or keep.

You will need to think about how to follow up children who are seeking to know more about the Christian faith.

Publicity officer

This person is needed to design and organize posters, leaflets and school visits, and to contact the local press.

Floaters

Floaters are people who cannot commit themselves to attend the whole week's programme but are able to come for a day or two. They can help wherever there is a need.

Stage team or presenter

Either one person or a team is needed to lead the up-front programme, including leading the songs, the theme illustration, quiz, Bible story and teaching, and introducing the drama and puppet sketch. You may wish to fill this role from your own team, or you may decide to give your regular children's leaders a rest and bring in someone from outside.

Dos and don'ts

It's worth repeating that good children's work relies on good teamwork!

- Do sit in with the children during up-front time.
- Do be prepared to join in songs and interactive parts of the programme. Don't forget that children will look to the team leaders as their role model.



- Do encourage, befriend and control your team of children.
- Do use your common sense.
- Do encourage children to go to the toilet during the activities times rather than the up-front/teaching times. Remember that children follow each others lead: if you're not careful, all the young ones will decide at once that they need an outing to the toilet.
- Do expect to have fun yourself and be open to learn. The teaching aspect of the programme is not just for the kids—God may choose to speak to you too!
- Don't loiter on the edge, chatting or distracting the children or presenter, as the programme is taking place.

Safety guidelines



These guidelines should be observed by everyone involved, in order to maintain the safety of the children and members of the team. Any questions relating to safety should be addressed to the organizers before problems arise.

- No team member should be alone with a child where their activity cannot be seen by others.
- Always treat the children with respect and dignity.
- Never use physical punishment.
- Ensure that more than one person is present if a child needs to be washed or helped in the toilet.
- Don't become over-friendly, with children sitting on your lap, hugging or rough-and-tumbling.
- Don't play-fight children, or join in games where you could fall on a child.
- Don't run around with children on your shoulders.
- Do not go off into a room alone with a child, and never arrange to meet a child alone.
- Avoid any inappropriate touching or any excessively rough or physical games.
- Do not engage in any scapegoating, ridicule or rejection of a child.
- Do not invite a child to your home alone.
- Avoid giving lifts to children on their own, other than for short journeys or in an emergency. If a car journey is necessary, the child should sit on a rear seat, using an appropriate seat belt.
- If you need to contact a child during or after the holiday club, ensure that you identify yourself as a member of the holiday club team.
- If abuse is suspected, do not encourage the child to talk further. Report suspicions immediately to the holiday club co-ordinator and make written notes of anything you and the child said to each other.

Fire safety

- Do not use candles, matches or lighters on the premises.
- Familiarize yourself with the fire exits.
- Observe fire drills—they are for everybody's safety.

Stay legal

- If your holiday club lasts for more than two hours and runs for six days or more in a year, then you need to register with Social Services. If you are planning follow-up events, this rule might affect you.
- If under-8s are involved, write to inform Social Services of your plans.
- Have someone on security to stop children or strangers from wandering in or out.

For further information about legal requirements for child protection, contact your local council, your diocese or church office, or:

The Criminal Records Bureau
CRB Customer Services
PO Box 110
Liverpool
L69 3EF

Tel: 0870 9090811
Website: www.crb.gov.uk

The Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service
Disclosure Service
PO Box 133
Swanley
Kent
BR8 7UQ

Tel: 0845 120 4549
Fax: 0845 120 4552
E-mail: disclosure@ccpas.co.uk
Website: www.ccpas.co.uk

Incentives

Throughout our lives, we have incentives to help us achieve or to keep up our enthusiasm and excitement for the job in hand. In schools, children have stars or house points and receive qualifications. In the workplace, there are company perks, plus the chance of promotion or a pay rise. Incentives can help with the boredom of routine. There is always a new target to reach.

In weekly children's clubs, incentives or a little competition can help to create and maintain enthusiasm. There are many ways you can add them to the weekly programme.

With a personal achievement chart and/or team achievement score board, children earn points that are visible on a card, scoring chart or token. They earn points for:

- Attendance
- Answering a question in the quiz
- Being the coolest-behaved girl and boy
- Being outstanding at joining in activities
- Bringing along a friend

The scoring chart could be based on a theme, such as:

- Millennium buds: Each child has his or her own tree to climb. Stickers are added to the tree as they progress.
- Hands or cartoon character pictures. Each child has his or her own hand or cartoon picture to which stickers are added. When a child reaches five stickers, he or she receives a small prize (for example, a sweet). When the child reaches ten stickers, he or she is given a bigger prize (for example, a small item such as a pencil, yo-yo or badge).

You can continue the incentive by having a big prizegiving at the end of the year, and inviting parents along to it.

Equally, you could have a different chart or card for each term, or use tokens instead. If tokens are used, a child receives a token for achievements, which he or she exchanges at the end of the evening for a prize.

Try to avoid the 'tuck shop' idea, where children can exchange their own money for sweets. Some children have plenty of money, while others have very little. It's far better to have a prize system so that they all have an equal opportunity to earn a prize.

Daily programmes

Day 1: The truth is a belt

Samuel learnt to live his life for God from an early age. When God chose to speak to him, Samuel was ready to listen—and to tell Eli the truth.

Bible story: 1 Samuel 3:1–21

Memory verse: It has given me great joy to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as the Father commanded (2 John 4).

Day 2: God's justice is your armour

This piece of armour is sometimes translated as the 'breastplate of righteousness'. A small boy did the right thing when he gave his lunch willingly to Jesus. Jesus accepted the boy's gift and used it in an amazing way.

Bible story: John 6:1–12

Memory verse: Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you (Ephesians 4:32).

Day 3: Your faith is a shield

When the Israelite soldiers didn't know how to tackle Goliath, David gave a simple but true answer: 'Trust in the Lord!'

Bible story: 1 Samuel 17:12–50

Memory verse: Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding (Proverbs 3:5).

Day 4: God's saving power is a helmet

Naaman's servant-girl was an Israelite by birth. She chose to share the good news of God's power so that her master could be cured of leprosy.

Bible story: 2 Kings 5:1–27

Memory verse: Go and preach the good news to everyone in the world (Mark 16:15, CEV).

Day 5: God's message is a sword

Josiah was only eight years old when he became king of Judah. Many of the earlier kings had led the people away from God, but Josiah brought them back to worship God once more.

Bible story: 2 Chronicles 34:1–33 (see also 2 Kings 22:1–11 and 23:1–5)

Memory verse: Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things (Philippians 4:8).

Extra story: Shoes on your feet

This story is ideal for a Sunday service or special holiday club event. Miriam, the sister of Moses, risked her own life by approaching the Egyptian princess and, in doing so, saved the life of Moses.

Bible story: Exodus 2:1–10 and 15:19–21

Bible verse: Your desire to tell the good news about peace should be like shoes on your feet (Ephesians 6:15, CEV).

Memory verse: Recap the five verses learnt during the holiday club week.

Junior Heroes! timetable

A two-and-a-half-hour programme (adaptable to suit your situation)

- 9.15am** Team meet together to pray.
- 9.35am** Last-minute preparation.
- 9.45am** Doors open for registration. Split the children into three teams according to their ages. Children go to team leaders/areas.
- 10.00am** Stage-based presentation/Up-front time 1 (30 minutes).
- Introduction and welcome
 - Opening talk to introduce the theme for the day
 - Theme song (see page 12 for details)
 - Action song
 - Theme illustration or theme team challenge
 - Memory verse song
 - Watt family daily drama
 - Song or Bible memory verse recap
- 10.30am** Activity time. Three activities, each lasting for 25 minutes. In their teams the children rotate round the different activities so that all the children do each activity.
- Game
 - Craft
 - Snack, and chat and funsheet
- 12.00pm** Stage-based presentation/Up-front time 2 (30 minutes).
- Songs
 - Puppet sketch
 - Bible memory verse recap
 - Quick quiz
 - Bible story
 - Round-up/prayer
 - Theme song
- 12.30pm** Children go back to small groups and wait to be collected.



Opening talks

Day One: The truth is a belt

Ask the children if they have seen the film, *The Incredibles*. Say: 'You know, ever since people first started making movies, superheroes have been popular. The superhero who entertained children in the 1950s was a guy called Flash Gordon—ask your grandparents if they remember him! He was an amazingly brave spaceman. Since then, there have been lots of superheroes, such as Captain Britain, Captain America, Superman, Wonder Woman, Spiderman, Batman, Power Rangers, Mighty Mouse, Super Mario and, of course, the Incredibles!

'Wonder Woman was a beautiful, brave woman with great strength. She had special bracelets and she was so fast she could stop speeding bullets with her bracelets. She also had a special rope with which she would lasso the baddie. This "rope of truth" would make the baddies tell the truth.

'I wonder what the difference is between goodies and baddies, or superheroes and villains? (Apart from the villains' wicked laugh, of course!) Superheroes aren't perfect, but they do their best to tell the truth—which makes them honest and reliable. After all, you have to be able to trust a superhero, otherwise they become the villain—dishonest and untrustworthy.

'In the Bible, there are many people who we might call heroes of faith. A hero, as you know, is someone who is very brave—someone who comes to the rescue of ordinary people like you and me, and makes good things happen. A hero can be trusted to do the right thing and tell the truth. A hero of faith is someone who does the right thing for God, someone who can be trusted to speak out and tell the truth about God.

'But we don't need to be superhuman to be superheroes for God. To be a hero of faith, all we need is to put on God's armour. The first piece of God's armour is a belt. It is the "belt of truth". The belt of truth is a bit like Wonder Woman's "rope of truth". It helps us to be

honest people—trustworthy and reliable. So come on, junior heroes, let's imagine we are putting on the belt of truth.' (*Get the children to mime doing this.*)

Day Two: God's justice is your armour

Say: 'Superheroes must choose to do what is right and not do what is wrong. If Superman was flying through the sky one day and saw a woman who needed rescuing, but also saw two little girls eating a bar of chocolate, he wouldn't be much of a hero if he zoomed down and stole the little girls' chocolate instead of rescuing the woman. "Oi, come back with my chocolate, you naughty Superman!" you'd say. He would become the villain if he did things like that! With their super-amazing power, superheroes can either try to rule the world and be a villain, or use their power to save and help people—choosing to do what is right.

'The Bible talks about God's justice protecting us like armour. In some Bible translations, it talks about the "breastplate of righteousness"—the breastplate being the piece of armour that protects the chest. Just as a bulletproof vest stops bullets, in the old days armour was used to protect soldiers from arrows. Heroes of the faith must wear God's armour. In other words, we must choose to do what is right. So come on, junior heroes, imagine you are putting on God's armour.' (*Get the children to mime doing this.*)

Day Three: Your faith is a shield

Say: 'A super hero has to be trustworthy. Who's ever watched *Batman*? When the police in Gotham City have a problem they can't sort out, they get on the bat phone

and call on the services of Batman! (*Hum the Batman theme tune.*) They put their hope and faith in Batman, hoping that he will succeed where they have failed.

‘Heroes of faith in the Bible had great faith in God because they knew that he had a plan for their lives. Knowing that God loved them and that nothing was impossible for God, they often did extraordinary things because they knew that God would help them in the quest. Superhero Captain America has a shield that protects him from bullets and other missiles. Faith in God is like a shield that protects us against people who may lie to us and make us feel small. We need to remember that God loves us—we can put our trust in him. So let’s be like biblical heroes of faith. Let’s pick up our shields and put our faith in the Lord!’ (*Get the children to mime doing this.*)

Day Four: God’s saving power is a helmet

Say: ‘Who has seen the film *The Incredibles*? Can you remember the part where the man is falling from the building, but Mr Incredible manages to save him? Is the man happy? No, he’s angry and sues Mr Incredible. How sad that the man didn’t want to be saved!

‘It says in the Bible that Jesus actually gave his life in order to rescue us. Imagine that you are on a little boat out at sea, but the weather suddenly turns nasty and the boat is in danger of sinking. Suddenly the lifeboat comes alongside. It

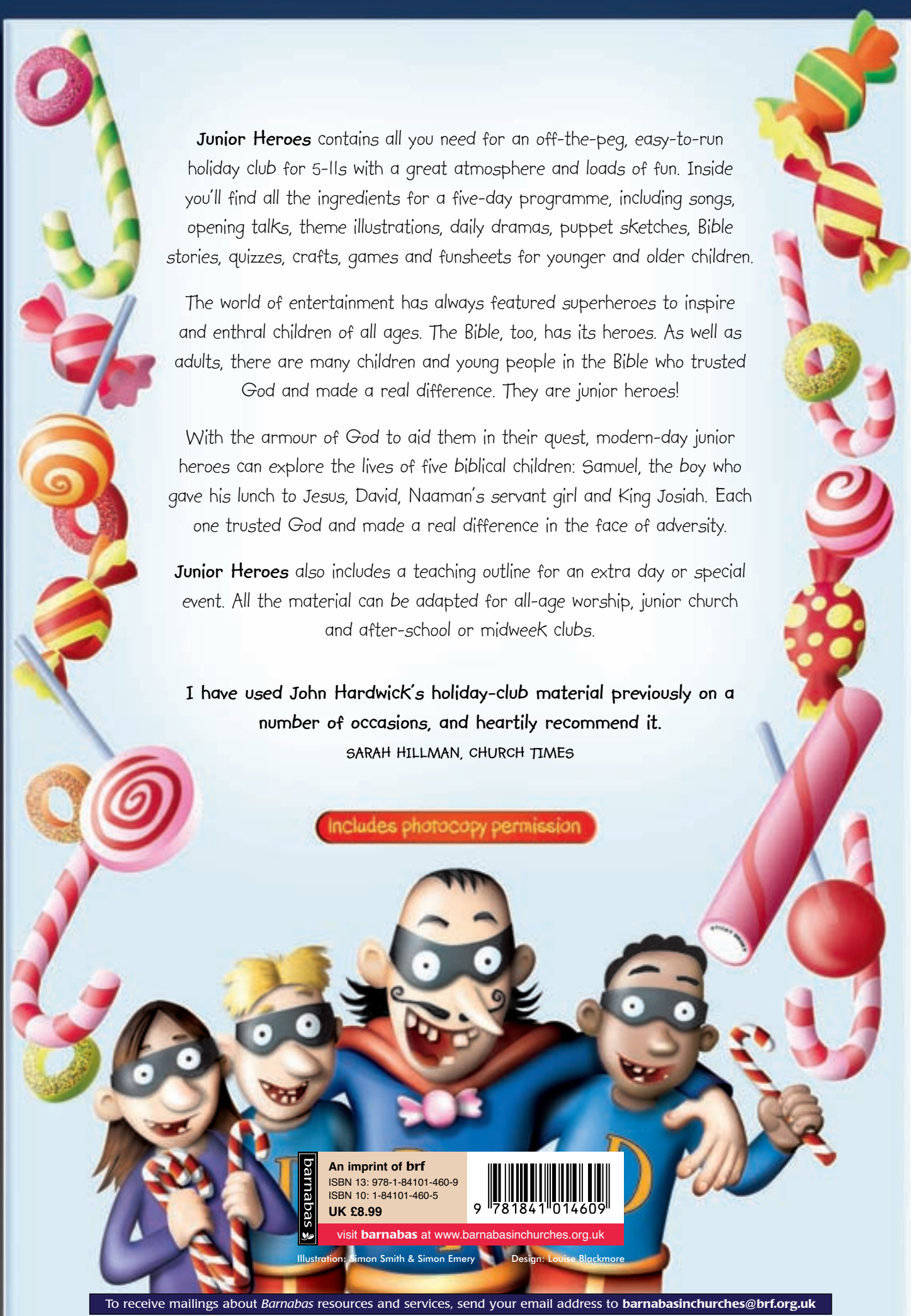
has come to your rescue. You wouldn’t say, “Are you sure that lifeboat is seaworthy? I’m staying on my boat!” Only a fool would say such a thing! You would automatically put your trust in the lifeboat and climb aboard.

‘Jesus is a bit like a lifeboat: he has come to save us and he wants us to put our trust in him. God’s saving power is like a helmet—if we believe in Jesus we will be saved. So let’s put on the helmet of salvation!’ (*Get the children to mime doing this.*)

Day Five: God’s message is a sword

Say: ‘Super hero Captain Britain, had the “sword of might”, a sword with special power to help him in his quest against evil. Superheroes have to listen carefully and follow instructions. There’s no point zooming down to help an old lady across the road if she didn’t want to cross the road in the first place!

‘The Bible tells us that God’s message is like a sword that comes from the Holy Spirit. A sword in battle is a powerful weapon. The word of God—the Bible—is a very powerful weapon indeed! It’s like God’s instruction book, guiding us to do the right thing. It tells us how we should live in the world that God made. We need to follow the master’s instructions and read the Bible. Let’s pick up the sword of the Spirit—the word of God—the Bible!’ (*Get the children to mime doing this.*)



Junior Heroes contains all you need for an off-the-peg, easy-to-run holiday club for 5-11s with a great atmosphere and loads of fun. Inside you'll find all the ingredients for a five-day programme, including songs, opening talks, theme illustrations, daily dramas, puppet sketches, Bible stories, quizzes, crafts, games and funsheets for younger and older children.

The world of entertainment has always featured superheroes to inspire and enthral children of all ages. The Bible, too, has its heroes. As well as adults, there are many children and young people in the Bible who trusted God and made a real difference. They are junior heroes!

With the armour of God to aid them in their quest, modern-day junior heroes can explore the lives of five biblical children: Samuel, the boy who gave his lunch to Jesus, David, Naaman's servant girl and King Josiah. Each one trusted God and made a real difference in the face of adversity.

Junior Heroes also includes a teaching outline for an extra day or special event. All the material can be adapted for all-age worship, junior church and after-school or midweek clubs.

I have used John Hardwick's holiday-club material previously on a number of occasions, and heartily recommend it.

SARAH HILLMAN, CHURCH TIMES

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