



'I am really excited about Rooted Junior, and it feels like a timely approach for us. It is so important to be investing in the wellbeing and emotional health of our primary-aged children, and I am sure that the schools we work with will really value it.'

Sarah Williams, Team Leader, Christians in Schools Trust (CiST)

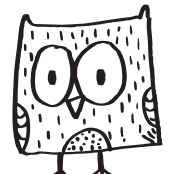
Rooted Junior is not a programme. It is not something that you 'do' for ten weeks with a group of children.

Rooted Junior is a way of being, a way of thinking about long-term relational ministry with children, particularly those aged 8 to 11. Rooted Junior works in any context, with any level of faith development and with any level of ability.

Rooted Junior is adaptable, accessible, invitational and creative.

The Rooted Junior material places the child at the centre. It seeks to provide space for that child to grow, flourish and be nurtured in a safe, committed and compassionate Christian community.

Rooted Junior aims to unlock potential in each child, enabling them to be the very best version of themselves, helping them to become all that God intended them to be.



Rooted Junior invites children to explore who they are and why they matter, while making space for them to wrestle with the big questions of life.

As a Rooted Junior leader, you have the privilege of journeying alongside these children and helping them in their exploration, while sharing something of your own journey so far.

You will notice that there is very little in the way of explicit 'faith discussion' or 'God-slot'-type material included in this resource. Instead, within the material for each session you will find several questions listed as part of the 'DIG DEEPER' section. These questions can be used *during* the other activities in your session, helping you to naturally, authentically and appropriately share your own experiences of how faith and life meld together.

Rooted Junior isn't about the activities you 'do', the venue you 'inhabit' or indeed the resources you can provide. It is about journeying with the children in your group, giving space and opportunity for genuine conversations and meaningful long-term relationships.

The Rooted Junior material in this resource covers ten key themes (outlined on the following page) and is designed in a way that is adaptable to any context in which you are working. The suggestions for activities are exactly that – suggestions, so you should expect to mould and shape them to suit your context and

the children you are working with. Several alternative activities are included within each session, if you need a few extra ideas! The last session will help you to encourage the children to dream big, reflect on their lives so far and inspire them for the next adventure that awaits!

If you're not already in contact with a group of children, check out our collection of resources at www.su.org.uk for ideas and advice on running your own Rooted Junior Hub. A Rooted Junior Hub is a tried and tested way of helping you make initial connections with 8- to 11-year-olds in your area.

I pray that God will use you to share his love with children as they discover the difference Jesus can make to the challenges and adventures in life.



Lucy Pearson

Scripture Union, Greater Manchester Mission Enabler
Rooted and Rooted Junior Pioneer



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WHERE DO I BEGIN?

A few questions to consider before embarking on the Rooted Junior journey...

- Who are you working with? Why are you doing this? (Check out our collection of resources at www.su.org.uk for ideas and advice, and read the section on initial connections and running your own Rooted Junior Hub at the back of this book.)
- Who will work with you on your Rooted Junior team?
- Where will you meet?
- What resources do you have?
- What are the children expecting?
- How will you explain to the children what Rooted Junior is?
- Are these children exploring faith?
- Are there any issues that you want to focus on?
- How might you adapt some of the material in this resource to better suit your context? (Eg if the group you are working with doesn't enjoy creativity, what types of activity would they enjoy? Perhaps sport, drama, outdoor activities etc. How can you make sure your activities will help you to relay the message?)
- Have you made sure that your group gatherings will adhere to the safeguarding policies of your organisation? What additional pastoral support will you offer? (You might consider a mentoring programme and/or referrals to other agencies or key workers.)
- What's next?



Using the *Rooted Junior Leaders' Guide*

The sessions are designed to be easily adapted for your context. Feel free to change the activities, swap sessions around or adapt the order. The key thing is that you create space for the children to unpack some of the themes and thoughts in their own time and in an environment that is comfortable for them. Having said that, do remember that developing a bit of a routine for each session will help the children to feel safe and at ease.

As the children arrive at your meeting venue, it can be helpful to have a selection of activities available for them to engage with straight away (such as colouring, printed quizzes, simple board games etc), particularly if the children in the group don't know each other very well. If you are able to do this every time you meet it may help the children know what to expect, reducing any potential anxiety or nervousness.

As your group progresses through the Rooted Junior sessions outlined in this guide, they will hopefully feel more confident in sharing their thoughts and feelings with one another. But this isn't always easy, and you should consider the use of some other tools that allow children to explain how they are feeling without having to say too much. For example, you could incorporate an emoji wall into your meeting space and encourage children to use it both at the beginning and throughout your time together.

- 1 Create an emoji wall for your group by printing out various emojis and sticking them on to a large sheet of paper to create a chart.
- 2 Print or write the first name of each child in your group on a slip of paper. Affix a small piece of sticky tack to each name.
- 3 Stick your emoji chart on the wall of your meeting space, and attach the name slips to one corner of your chart using the sticky tack.
- 4 As the children arrive (and throughout your time together) encourage them to place their name next to an emoji that represents how they are feeling.
- 5 Invite the children to talk with you about their emoji choice, if they would like to. (If they would prefer not to talk about their choice, that's also fine!)



Within each session outline you will find the following sections:

OBJECTIVES

what you might achieve by using this session.



ICEBREAKER

a game or activity that gets everyone involved and helps them get to know one another.



THEME

an opportunity to unpack the theme and explore it as a whole group.



REFLECTION

time to get creative, expressive or active, while chatting through what has been explored. (Doing something practical while talking with those around you makes natural conversation easier.)



DIG DEEPER

optional questions to help children consider their own faith journey.



FURTHER IDEAS

suggestions for alternative activities based on the theme of the session. (You may find that certain themes really resonate with the children in your context. Don't rush past these – allow time for your group to explore them more deeply. The ideas in this section may be especially useful in this scenario.)

Some of the themes unpacked in Rooted Junior may be challenging for certain children, so be prepared for some difficult but honest conversations. Make sure there is some support in place for children who may need it (in line with your organisation's safeguarding policy). This may include external agencies, mentoring programmes or further groups that are specifically tailored towards children's needs.

SESSION 1

What's my
name?

SAMPLE

OBJECTIVES

For the group to get to know one another and gain an understanding of what their time together will be about.

For the leaders to gain an understanding of the group dynamic.



ICEBREAKER

Begin your session with one of the following activities or games:



We will rock you!

- 1 Invite the children to sit in a circle.
- 2 As the leader, start the game by tapping your legs twice with your hands, then clapping once. When you clap, say your name.
- 3 Tap your legs twice again, then clap once, but this time say the name of someone else in the group.
- 4 Encourage the person you named to tap their legs twice and say their name, then tap their legs twice again, clap, and say the name of someone else in the group.
- 5 The game continues until everyone has been 'named'.

TIP
This game is a good way of learning names and encouraging your group to concentrate!



Object game

You will need: several random objects that can be easily picked up in one hand

- 1 Place the objects in the middle of the room.
- 2 Give each item a number value (but don't reveal the scoring system to the rest of the group).
- 3 Split the group into teams of six (adding leaders to make up team numbers if needed).
- 4 Number each team member sequentially from one to six.

TIP

After a few rounds you may find that team members all start trying to pick up the same object – guessing that it is worth the most. If this happens, don't miss the opportunity to start a discussion on what 'worth' really is.

- 5 When you call their number, invite the team member to run to the pile of objects, choose one object, pick it up with one hand and return with the object to their team.
- 6 After all objects have been collected, announce the total score for each team (using your secret scoring system).
- 7 Play several rounds or until you feel the children have had enough. The children should begin to learn which objects are more 'valuable' than others.

What's in a name?

You will need: a printed list of the first names of the children in the group and their meanings

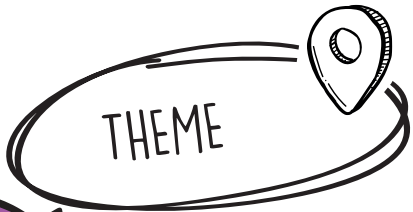
- 1 Ask one person to say their name.
- 2 Invite the rest of the group to guess what the name means.
- 3 If no one guesses correctly, share the meaning of the name from your list.
- 4 Continue until everyone's name has been discussed.



TIP

This can lead to discussion on whether the children think their name describes their character.





THEME

My name

You will need: pens, pencils, art materials, paper, a list of the meaning of all the names of the children in your group

Invite the children to write their name on a sheet of paper in bubble writing. Suggest they decorate it using the art materials provided. As they write and decorate, discuss the following questions together:

- What does your name mean? (Use your list if necessary.)
- Do you know how or why your name was chosen?
- If you could have chosen your name, what would it be?
- Do you think God knows your name?



REFLECTION

My mood board

You will need: pens, pencils, art materials, safety scissors, glue sticks, paper, old magazines or catalogues

TIP
Why not place several *Rooted Junior Hub Cards* around your meeting space to encourage discussion while the group are creating?

Explain that a mood board is a collage of images, colours and text that is themed around a specific idea or person.

Invite the children to create their own mood boards, representing their interests, using the materials provided.



DIG DEEPER

Select the faith-based questions from the *Rooted Junior Hub Cards* and discuss them with the children. Make a note of the cards you choose for this activity and the answers given as you will be revisiting these in Session 10.



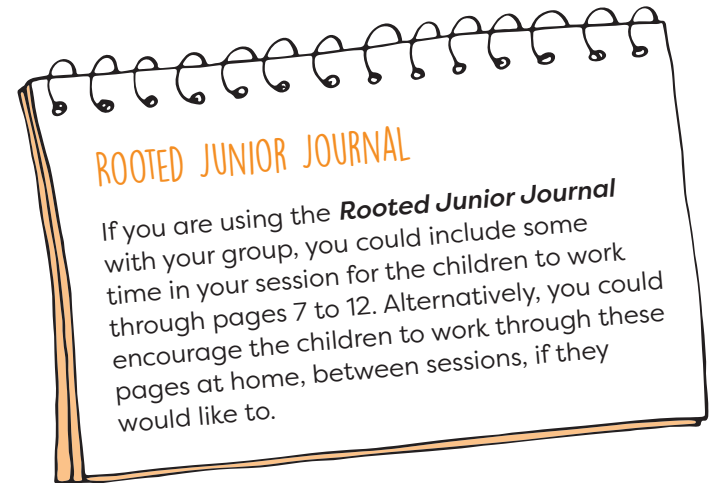
FURTHER IDEAS

My name mug

Invite each child to decorate a mug with their name.

Name bingo

Create your own bingo cards using the names in your group, and play bingo with them during the whole session.



ROOTED JUNIOR JOURNAL

If you are using the *Rooted Junior Journal* with your group, you could include some time in your session for the children to work through pages 7 to 12. Alternatively, you could encourage the children to work through these pages at home, between sessions, if they would like to.