

SUIT UP

Ephesians 6:13-18



Session One

THE STORY SO FAR...

We thought some of you might find it useful to have a bit of context for where this all fits in with the big Bible story - we're not suggesting that you will want to read this all out to your children (though older children might find it useful!) but you might want to share some of this as appropriate to help them understand why the Armour of God is so important! During the 'DIG IT UP' section might be a good opportunity to discuss these things.

Before the beginning of our world, an angel Satan decided to rebel against God and he was expelled from heaven (Luke 10:18). The Bible doesn't tell us too much about Satan's story, but we do know that he is the great deceiver who, since that time, has continued to rebel against God and his goodness.

So when God created man and woman in his own image and to have a close relationship with him, Satan decided to get in the way. He tricked Adam and Eve into doubting God's truth and they chose disobedience over intimacy with God (see Genesis 3). What a sad day that was. Not only did sin enter God's creation but with it came death and a breakdown in the close relationship between God and his lovingly-created people. Satan thought he'd thwarted God's plans, but that's not something anyone - not even Satan - can do!

God always had a plan to save people from their sin and the trap of death Satan had lain. God sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, to restore our relationship with him. In the way he lived, Jesus showed us what God is like. Jesus then paid the deserved punishment for our sins and defeated Satan once and for all, through his death on the cross and by rising to life again three days later.

But the spiritual battle rages on. Until Jesus comes back, Satan will continue his attempts to turn people away from God. We are all on this battlefield and there are only two sides. We are either following Jesus on God's side or we're not.

So where does Ephesians fit in?

Ephesus was a grand city in what is now known as western Turkey. It had huge theatres and temples to false gods but, after several visits by Paul and his missionary friends, the Christian churches in Ephesus and the surrounding towns began to grow. Here are a few things we know about the letter to the Ephesians:

- Paul wrote the letter while he was in prison about 30 years after Jesus' death and resurrection.
- Paul had been arrested for telling people about Jesus.
- This letter was passed around and read by ALL the churches in the surrounding areas.
- Being a follower of Jesus in Ephesus was sometimes difficult and dangerous. Many Ephesians were angry that people had started worshipping Jesus instead of their famous idols.

BREAKING GROUND

Set up an army at one end of the table or some distance away from you on the floor. You could stand lego/duplo bricks up their ends or use playmobil figures!

Take it in turns to roll a marble or small ball at them and see how many they can knock over, or see how many attempts it takes for each person to knock them over.

After everyone has had a turn, place a box over the army, or a barrier in front of them and have a go at knocking them over now! It should be harder, if not impossible!

GET THINKING

How easy was it to knock down the army?

Did the box/barrier make it easier to knock them down, or harder? Why?

The box/barrier protected the army from being knocked over, helping them stand firm - we're going to see over the next few weeks how we can be protected so that we can keep standing firm for God.

DIG IT UP

Read Ephesians 6:10-13

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ¹³ Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

Fold a sheet of paper in half. On one half, write or draw the words or phrases that refer to God and his team.

On the other half, write the words or phrases that refer to the opposition.

In Hebrews 12 we learnt that we need to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus.

Some people (vs 12 - flesh and blood) might try to stop us doing this but they aren't really our biggest enemy.

We have a bigger enemy called Satan (or the devil) who is trying to stop us from loving and following Jesus. Satan and his followers are who Paul is talking about when he writes the rulers, authorities and

QUESTION TIME

Questions for all:

Whose armour does Paul recommend we wear?

Whose power does Paul recommend we use?

What is this power like?

You might want to cover the answers in the questions for the younger children in order to build up to the questions most appropriate for their age group. Think your child can cope with more? Try them with the older questions! Don't worry if they don't give exact answers, let them have a go and then talk through the right answers. Discussing it together might help move them on.

For 3-5 year olds:

Who is the strongest person in your family?

Are they stronger than God?

Talk a bit about what armour is - how it protects us, and that God is looking after us. It's like he gives us armour to wear that we can't see, but keeps us safe.

For 5-7 year olds:

How strong are you compared to other people in your family?

How strong are you compared to God?

How strong is God compared to the things that hurt us or make us sad?

Why is it good to know that God is stronger than anyone and anything else in the whole world?

How does God help keep us safe?

For 7-11 year olds:

What do you think it means to stand firm?

Who doesn't want us to have a close friendship with Jesus?

How might they try and stop us?

Is God more powerful than them?

How does God help us?

For 12+ year olds:

What do you think the devil's schemes might be?

In what areas of your life do face these struggles?

How does putting on the armour of God help us to stand firm?

What other 'armour' do you put on to help you stand firm? Why is it not good enough?

For the grown ups:

Tell your children about a time when you've felt powerless, how it helped to know that God is strong and how he helped you.

Time to chat:

Why is battle a good word to describe living as a follower of Jesus?

God is stronger than everything we can face, but that doesn't mean we won't experience hard things.

PRAYER

Spend a few minutes thanking God for Jesus and the victory that has already been won by his death on the cross and his coming back to life again! Ask God to help you stand firm in faith no matter what happens.

SONG

Why not listen, sing or dance to “Put on the Armour of God” by Colin Buchanan.

It is available to listen to on Spotify or YouTube here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UxwXw2ph5PI>

(Or search on YouTube)

Or alternatively, sing these words to the tune of ‘Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes’. Pretend to put on each piece of armour as you sing it. Hold the sword up high. When you sing “this is the armour of our Lord,” march in place.

Belt, breastplate, shoes and shield, Helmet, sword,
Belt, breastplate, shoes and shield, Helmet, sword,
This is the armor of our Lord,
Belt, breastplate, shoes and shield, Helmet, sword.

MEMORY VERSE

“Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Ephesians 6:13”

Write the verse out in small phrases and put into saucepan lid ‘shields’. Take it in turns to pick up a ‘shield’ and say the words on it while others throw crumpled up paper balls at you.
Put the ‘shields’ in order.

Watch out for our memory verse videos for some more ideas!

CHALLENGE TIME

Design a suit of armour for someone you know. Give it unique features to represent it's wearer's values. Why have you designed it like that?

IDEAS FOR DURING THE SERMON

While the grown ups are listening to the sermon, maybe the children could have a go at some of these ideas:

For little ones:

If you have a printer, why not print the colouring sheet on the next page. If not, try building a wall using building blocks that could protect you if you hid behind it!

For middle ones:

Give some materials that they could use to make some armour for an egg - after the service why not test the armour out by dropping the egg from a height (a first floor window into the garden is a very good test and requires less clear up if the armour isn't very good!!)

For older ones:

Why don't you have a go at listening to the sermon? On the next few pages there are some options for a handout (one aimed at pre-teens and early teens, one slightly older) that you could print out and use to take notes. If you don't have a printer, grab a sheet of paper and fold it into four.

In Section 1 - Write down anything you learn about God's character and anything you learn about what God has done, or is doing.

In Section 2 - Write down how this effects you personally.

In Section 3 - Draw a picture of what is happening in the Bible passage. Add any key words from the passage.

In Section 4 - Write down any questions you have or anything you don't understand.

Put on the ARMOUR OF GOD

Ephesians 6:10-20

Can you draw on the armour?



the helmet of salvation
the sword of the Spirit

the shield of faith

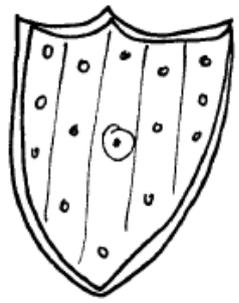
the belt of truth

the breastplate of righteousness

feet fitted ready with the gospel



PLUS...
Can you draw a line to the right bits? (I've done one for you!)



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SERMON NOTES for NEARLY teens

Bible Passage:

Date: _____

Things we prayed for: _____

Songs we sang:

How does this affect me?

Questions I have: _____

Something new I learnt:

I think the main point was:

SERMON NOTES

Bible passage.....

Sermon title.....

Three main points

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Words you hear repeated

What did you learn about God's character?

What did you learn about what God has done or is doing?

How will you change?

What did you not understand?

