Junior Soldiers

Unit 1 : Lesson 9

The Armour of God

PURPOSE : For the children to understand the different parts of God's armour and how they can help us to stand against Satan.

'Put on the full armour of god so that you can take your stand
Against the devil's schemes.'
Ephesians 6:11

Consider & Prepare

Children learn about God's protecti on by putting on the full armour of God. During this lesson the children will explore what each of the parts of the armour are and how they can help them oppose Satan and his attempts to make us do wrong. It is important during this lesson that you make the links between how the spiritual battle affects our everyday life, the things we do and the choices we make.

Younger children will have difficulty with thinking in the abstract (spiritual realm) and so you will need to connect this thinking to concrete, everyday items, places and situations. So when we talk about spiritual attacks from Satan, what does that really mean? What does that look like in your life and the life of a child? For example, Satan wants us to mess up and do things that God doesn't want us to do. He might try to do that by getting us interested in violent video games, inappropriate television shows or movies, making bad things look fun and exciting, and using other people to pressure us to make choices that are not wise.

It is also important to make the practi cal and relevant link for children about how the different pieces of armour will help to protect them. For example, putting on the 'sandals of peace' that comes from knowing the gospel, helps the children to be confident because they understand what Jesus has done for them. It also helps them in the way they show love and care to others. It would be really helpful for the children if you could share an illustration of what that looks like from your experience.

What you will need:

For 'Connecting In'

- Collect all the items of clothing for the 'everything you need' game.
- Decide on a recipe if this is the connecting activity you are going to do.
- Gather all the items you need for the recipe that you choose.
- Print out recipes so that children can see all the ingredients that they will need.

For 'The Main Thing'

- Gather the articles of clothing and walking stick for the lets go hiking illustration. If needed, you can make substitutions and use equipment from a different sport.

For 'Tying In'

- Gather all the items needed for making God's armour (self-portrait/dress up)

For 'Home & Beyond'

- Print off a Home & Beyond page for each child.

Connecting In

Everything you need game...

- Before you can participate in the relay race you need to make sure that you have everything on that you need.
- You will need the same items for each team, e.g. oversized trousers, shirt, tie, shoes, hat, glasses and bag.
- Each team member is to put all these items on before they can go to the other end of the room and around a chair and then back to tag the next person. They must then take off all the items ready for the next person to have their turn.
- The winning team is the one who has all their team members sitting in a row with their items stacked neatly.
- **Link**: It is important for this game that you put on all the items in order to participate and then try to win the challenge.
  - → Did you put on all the items before you had your turn?
  - → What would have happened if you didn't put on all the items before having your turn? (Your team would have been disqualified or sent back to start that turn again?)
- There are times when in order to participate in a game, challenge or activity we need to follow the rules; we need to have all the things that were set out in the instructions. Just like in this game where you needed to have on all the items that were outlined, it is important for us to have all that we need to keep us safe on our journey every day.
- The Bible talks about putting on the 'armour of God', all the things that we need to help us to be strong and make a stand against the devil and his evil ways.

Cooking ...

- As an introduction to this lesson you might like to choose to do a quick cooking activity.
- Choose an easy/quick recipe, e.g. scones, quick easy fudge or chocolate balls, etc.
- It is important that the recipe is printed out and that you ask the children to check them off the list.
- 'Do we have all the ingredients? Do we have everything we need to make this recipe?'
- Make the recipe together and tell the kids that they can have some to share after the lesson and to take home.
- **Link**: It is important for most recipes, if you want them to turn out exactly like the pictures, to have all the right ingredients.

  - → Did we have everything we needed today?
  - → What would have happened if we didn't have one of the key ingredients? (Might not turn out right or taste very nice.)
- Just like when we are cooking and need to have all the right ingredients, it is important for us to have all that we need to keep us safe on our journey every day.
- The Bible talks about putting on the 'armour of God', all the things that we need to help us to be strong and make a stand against the devil and his evil ways.

The Main Thing

Lets go hiking

- You will need the following items for this illustration:
  - → Oversized clothing including a hat, vest, coat or jacket, hiking boots, canteen belt and walking stick.
- Ask a volunteer to come out the front and to pretend that they are going on a hike. The volunteer will put on the articles of clothing in the following order: canteen belt, vest, boots, jacket, and hat. Then give them the walking stick.
- As the volunteer takes each item, explain the safety qualities of each high-lighted below.
  - → The canteen belt allows us to carry water and other tools for survival.
  - → The vest and jacket protect us from cold or rain.
  - → The hat protects our head from the hot sun.
  - → The boots keep our feet strong and dry.
  - → The walking stick helps us stay balanced on bumpy paths.

We want to be safe when we go hiking and these things give us added protection.

- Canteen belt (representing the belt of truth), vest (representing the breastplate of righteousness), boots (representing feet fitted with the gospel of peace), jacket (representing the shield of faith), and hat (representing the helmet of salvation). Then give him or her the walking stick (representing the sword of the Spirit).
- *(You might like to use a different sort of sport or outdoor activity for this illustration. Make sure that you have the same amount of items as above to correspond with the full armour of God.)*

- **Link**: Then compare the use of these special protective items when we go hiking to putting on the full armor of God described in the Bible to protect us from the devil and his evil ways.

Exploring God's armour

- The passage below tells us that we must be prepared as we go into spiritual battle. Satan is trying really hard to get us to do things that God wouldn't want us to do - making them look fun, putting pressure on from others and moving us gently towards making an unwise decision. Without God's armour and protection we do not stand a chance. God will empower us to fight against these situations if we believe and follow Him. How? Let's have a look together.

- Scripture - Ephesians 6:10–18 (spiritual warfare)
- Read the passage together. Once you've read the verse, explore together how each piece of armour protects us against Satan's tricks that can impact our decisions and how we live.

- ***The Belt of Truth:*** The belt worn by Roman soldiers was important because it firmly held the soldier's weapons that he needed for fighting. By putting on the **belt of truth**, we surround ourselves with truth…and Satan can't stand the truth! The truth is that Jesus is our foundation and is stronger than Satan, and Satan really hates that truth!

- ***The Breastplate of Righteousness:*** A Roman soldier wore a protective plate over his chest and stomach to protect his vital organs (his heart, lungs, liver, etc.). If any of these were injured he would be in serious trouble. Putting on a **breast-plate of righteousness** can represent doing what God says is right. If we do what is right, Satan will lose out - because he always wants us to do the wrong thing.

- ***Feet with the Gospel of Peace***: To survive in battle, a soldier had to be sure of his footing; so good strong sandals were necessary. Feet fitted with **sandals of peace** means that no matter where we go - walking, running, jumping or hopping! - we can feel at peace because of the message of the Gospel. The Gospel is the good news about Jesus, what he did for us and how he loves us. We can tell others how they can have peace because of Jesus and share the message that is not one of hate but of love and care for others.

- ***The Shield of Faith:*** Roman soldiers used shields to protect themselves from spears, arrows and sword blades. We use a **shield of faith** to deflect anything that comes our way that might try and make us doubt God or behave in a way that would not please God. When Satan makes you question God, use your shield of faith to stay safe and strong. Joshua 1:9 tells us to be strong and courageous for the Lord our God is with you wherever you go. If you believe this, you have faith. We need to hold strong to what we know about God to be true.
- ***The Helmet of Salvation:*** Helmets were vital to a Roman soldier in battle. No soldier goes to war without a helmet. You would never think about opposing Satan without your **helmet of salvation** on. Who saved us? Who gave their life so that we didn't have to take the punishment? Yep, Jesus. He is the one that saved us from the punishment of our bad choices. If we accept Jesus into our lives, we are saved - we know salvation. It's our best protection against Satan.
- ***The Sword of the Spirit:*** The Roman sword was short and lightweight so they could use it easily. At close range, it was a deadly weapon. When it's time to go into battle, you'll need a weapon. **The sword of the Spirit** that we have to use against Satan is the Bible. The Bible is God's instruction book that is full of the truth on how to live. Just like the sword was easy to use, there are many versions of the Bible today that make it easy to use and understand so that we know his truth. It's a fantastic weapon to know what the Bible says about God and about how we should live. Satan has no weapon as effective as the Bible - it's the sword of the Spirit.

- ***Discussion Questions:***
  - *I wonder why we need the armour of God? (To stand against the tricks of Satan.)*
  - *I wonder what we are fighting against? And what does that mean? (Refer to Ephesians passage. We fight against anything that opposes God and His love. We fight against evil forces and influences in the world. Then connect what this means for the kids in their everyday life.)*
  - *Should we be afraid of this battle? (No, God will help us stand against evil. Satan will be defeated by God.)*
  - *There was something else important mentioned in the passage but wasn't a specific piece of the armour but is an essential thing that sort of holds it all together. What is that essential thing? (Prayer)*
  - *How does God help us in the battle against evil? (He gives us the power to be strong and the Holy Spirit to help us.)*
  - *Why is it important that we put on our spiritual armour every day? (Without it we will be open to spiritual attack by Satan. It is necessary for the journey. Like getting ready to play sport each game, you get ready before taking the field/court.)*
  - *How can we use each piece of the spiritual armour at home? At school? At …?*

Tying In

God's armour - self-portrait/dress up

- During this activity the kids can choose to create their own set of biblical armour on a self-portrait cutout or they can choose to dress themselves up in the armour and have photos taken or even produce a short movie that can be used in church.
- Items that you might like to use;
    - Butchers paper
    - Pencils, textas, crayons or paint
    - Glue
    - Strong tape – masking or gaffa
    - Coloured paper, card or poster board
    - Aluminum foil
    - Used cardboard boxes, e.g. cereal, tissue
    - Strips of fabric
    - Cardboard tubes, e.g. from the inside of the foil
- Use poster board to make a shield. Remember to add a handle to the back of the shield, so the kids can carry it.
- Make each of the items – shoes, sword, helmet, breastplate, belt, and shield from the materials supplied either to add to their body outline or to dress themselves up.
- Depending on the size of your class, you may want to recruit several adult volunteers (perhaps Big Buds) to come and help with this activity.
- Have each child that chooses to do a life-size self-portrait to lie down on a sheet of butchers paper and have a volunteer trace his or her body outline. Ask the kids to write their name on his or her paper outline and then tape the paper outline to wall.
- The kids will glue or tape all of their armour onto their own body outline OR when they have finished making all their armour, dress themselves up so that they can have some photos taken or have someone make a short film about the different parts of the armour.
- Once finished, the outlines can be displayed somewhere in the church where others in the faith community can encourage and ask questions and then they can roll them up and take them home to hang on their walls.
- If some of the kids choose to do the dress up and photos or video are taken. Use these images for a segment in the service where the kids can share what they have been learning.
- Have someone in the congregation pray for the kids that they will be fully equipped with their armour for the journey.

Home & Beyond

- Print off the 'Home & Beyond' page 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.

Home & Beyond

This page is to let you know what your child has learnt and explored today. Included is the memory verse that we focused on as well as a couple of questions and a suggested activity to reinforce the lesson. It is wonderful to be able to connect with what you child has been learning and for you to share something of your own experience around this teaching. It is great for you to wonder and explore together.

What we learned

- Today, we learned the importance of being on guard spiritually and to use all the resources that God gives us. The help that God gives us is referred to as the 'armour of God'. Ask me about the different pieces of armour. There are six items.
  - What are they?
  - How can they help us?
- We learned that we should be prepared by putting on the armour and not be afraid for God is with us and equipping us. Ask me how I can use this armour at home, school and elsewhere?

Memory Verse

'Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.' Ephesians 6:11

Suggested Parent/Child Activity

- You might like to come back to this verse several times with your child during the week. This will not only help them remember the verse, but it will also help to reinforce the teaching. You might even like to put it into your own words and come up with a couple of versions.
- Each morning check in with each other to see if you have put on your spiritual armour.
- What is a challenge that you are facing where the armour of God can help you to be strong and make the wise choice?

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