

'Jesus' Armour'



This material is suitable for ages 5 - 7 years.

Aim:

To help the children understand that when we become part of Jesus' family, we are given 'armour' by Him to protect us from the Evil One.

Bible focus:

Ehpesians 6:13 - 18

You will need:

A soccer uniform – shoes, socks, shin pads, shorts, shirt, mouthguard (if you have access to one) and a soccer ball.

Introduction:

Tell the children that you've been asked to play in a soccer game this weekend and you've just picked up your uniform so you thought you'd try it on to see if it fits. Ask them to help you make sure.

(Put the uniform on wrong e.g. shin pads on your arms, socks on your hands, etc. Allow them to tell you what you're doing wrong. Ask them questions like: what difference does it make if I've got these in the wrong place? How will this affect my game? Get them to tell you that you won't be able to play properly, the equipment won't be able to protect you if it's in the wrong place, etc. But don't listen to them.)

So now I'm ready to play soccer. (Have a couple of children kick the ball around with you. You will not be able to play properly. Stop the game after a short time has passed.)

What's going wrong? Why can't I play the game properly? (Again they will tell you that you don't have the right equipment in the right place and that's why you

can't play properly. Listen to them this time and get them to help you put the uniform and equipment in the right place.)

So now I'm ready to play soccer. (Again kick the ball around with the children. Stop the game again after a short time has passed.)

That went much better this time. Why was that? What was different this time? I had the right parts of the uniform in the right place.

Well did you know that Jesus has given us protection? There is a book in the Bible that talks about the 'armour' which He has given to everyone who is part of His family to protect us from the Evil One. Do you know who I mean when I say the Evil One? (Satan, the devil).

Let's have a look at what kind of armour Jesus is talking about and why we need it.

Bible time:

You will need: You could use either a children's toy armour outfit or use dress up clothes to represent the various pieces or you could make the pieces of armour from cardboard. You will need a belt (truth), a breastplate (righteousness), shoes (Good News of peace), a shield (faith), a helmet (salvation), a sword (the Word of God), and a Bible.

(Keep your soccer uniform on as you will compare the different 'armour'.)

So why do we need this armour? Paul, a man who became a friend of Jesus, wrote a letter to help people understand the reason why we need to wear this armour. That letter is in the Bible and it's called Ephesians.

Let me read Ephesians 6:13 to you. We need this armour so we can stop the devil. He will try all sorts of tricks to get us to do the wrong thing but when we are part of Jesus' family, this armour protects us and helps us to fight against doing wrong.

Read Ephesians 6:14a. We need to speak the truth – this is one of the pieces of armour that Paul was talking about. The truth can be very powerful and Jesus helps us to speak the truth, even when it's hard. (Put the belt on the volunteer.)

Read Ephesians 6:14b. (Put the breastplate on the child.) 'Righteousness' is a big word. But look at where this piece of armour goes. What does it cover? (Body, heart, etc.) That's right it covers our body but in particular it covers our heart. The heart is one of the most important parts of our body. If it stops beating then we're in real trouble. So the word righteousness means that we are good friends of Jesus. That means we have a good relationship with Him.



Now tell me how you stay friends with your friends? (Allow time for a response.) You talk to them, you do nice things for them, you listen to them and you expect them to listen to you. It's the same when have a friendship with Jesus. Paul is telling us that being good friends with Jesus or to be righteous, is another part of the armour which we can use to protect ourselves when we are fighting for Him. So that's the next part of our armour – the breastplate of righteousness.

Read Ephesians 6:15. (Put the shoes on the child.) Does anyone know what the Good News is this verse is talking about? The Good News is that Jesus died on the cross and rose again. He was punished for our sins. He took our place.

When you put on your shoes normally, what are you usually planning to do? (Go out, go walking, play sport, etc.) Right. So when we put on our shoes it's usually to go somewhere. What Paul was saying here was that when we go places – to school, to sport or to our friend's house, we can tell people about Jesus so they have a chance to be His friend as well.

Read Ephesians 6:16. (Give the child the shield to hold.) What does a shield do? (Protects us, keeps us safe, stops arrows hitting us, etc.) It also protects us. So when we have faith – that is when we believe with all our hearts that we are friends of Jesus, we are protecting ourselves from the Evil One. People will tell you that Jesus doesn't exist or that He doesn't care about you. But that's not true. The Bible tells us over and over again that Jesus loves us. He proves that too because He's given us people around us who care for us and look after us, like our Sunday school teachers, our parents, our school teachers, our friends, our brothers and sisters and they help us to know and understand about Jesus.

Our faith is such a strong piece of armour that the devil hurt us.

Read Ephesians 6:17a. (Give the child the sword to hold in the other hand.) The Bible is like a sword. What does a sword do? (Kills people, helps you fight an enemy.) A sword helps you to fight an enemy. The Bible is the last piece of armour that helps us to fight the devil. There is a lot of great advice in the Bible.

So how do we use the Bible to help us fight for Jesus? (Allow time for responses.) We need to read the Bible and remember what it tells us. In that way when people try to attack us about what we believe we can tell them the truth, from the Bible.

So that's the armour that Jesus has given us to protect us. (Now stand beside the child in the armour in your soccer uniform.)

So which uniform would be better to play soccer in?

Which outfit would be better to protect and defend yourself in a fight?

The soccer uniform is perfect for what it is made for – to play soccer and the armour that Jesus has given us is perfect to defend us and help us fight the devil.



Now there is one last thing that Paul tells us we have to do. His final instructions about this armour. Read Ephesians 6:18.

Response time:

The very final part of this verse says:

'Do all this in prayer, asking for God's help.'

Not only does Jesus give us armour, He also wants us to ask Him to help us. This final part of the verse is really important. Once we have our armour on we need to pray and ask Jesus to be with us and to help us to fight for Him.

We have this armour when we become a friend of Jesus. If anyone would like to become a friend of Jesus we're going to have a special time to do that now. I'm going to say a prayer and if you would like to pray it with me, I will leave some time after each sentence so you can pray it to yourselves.

Prayer:

Dear Jesus, thank you for loving me. (pause) Thank you for taking my place on the cross. (pause) I'm sorry for the wrong things I have said and done. (pause) Please help me to put on your armour to protect me (pause) and help me to live my life to please you every day. (pause) Amen.

Follow up:

It will be helpful to have copies of *Would you like to know Jesus? for under eights* as a follow-up resource for the children. Some age-appropriate Bible Reading notes may also be appropriate. These resources are available from your local Scripture Union Resources For Ministry bookshop. Make time to go through the Bible Reading notes to ensure the children have a good understanding of how to use these notes.

