

LARGE GROUP WORSHIP *Session* 4



PAUL'S LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS

Ephesians 2:1-10; 6:10-20

During Paul's day, the city of Ephesus was thriving and was likely at its greatest economically and politically. The city at that time boasted around 250,000 residents and would have been the fourth largest city in the world. In a city that size, it is no wonder that Paul spent a significant amount of time there. You might recall that after Paul left his three-year stint in Ephesus, he penned the book of Romans. Shortly after that writing, Paul was imprisoned and held for quite a number of years. While in prison, he penned this letter to the Ephesians and other letters contained in the New Testament.

The book of Ephesians contains one of the best descriptions of what Christian faith looks like as well as rules for the church on how they should operate. It is interesting to note that Paul wrote some of these letters to churches following his explanation of the gospel which he expounded upon in the book of Romans. Paul had clearly identified for the Roman believers that salvation comes only through faith in the resurrected Christ and that salvation is a gift from God, unable to be bought with money or earned by human effort.

Paul began the letter to the Ephesians by reminding them of that very thing. Believers have been redeemed by Jesus' shed blood for the forgiveness of their sins. Paul went on to explain that just the benefit of that gracious gift is not the end for believers. If believers follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, they will do and say things that line up with God's will.

Two major themes dominate the book of Ephesians. The first theme is that of the church's relationship with one another. Paul taught that unity should rule the day. Believers should work together to advance the church's mission—sharing the truth of the gospel with others. The second major theme is the individual believer's responsibility to participate in the church's work. Paul identified specific roles that God has called individuals to and identified the armor that could be used to fight the advances of the devil.

SESSION FOCUS

BIBLE PASSAGE: Ephesians 2:1-10; 6:10-20

MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE: Ephesians 2:4-5

BONUS BIBLE VERSE: Ephesians 2:8-9

TEXT TRUTH: Salvation is a gift from God.

CHRIST IN CONTEXT: The book of Ephesians proclaims Jesus is seated at the right hand of God in the heavens. Jesus is far above every ruler and authority on earth. He has full power and dominion over all—now and forever. He reigns over everything and is head of His church, the people of God.

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS

BIBLE STORY PASSAGES: Ephesians 2:1-10; 6:10-20

Paul wanted to tell everyone about Jesus. One day when Paul was in prison for telling people about Jesus, he wrote a letter to the believers in Ephesus. Paul said, “You were once dead in your sin. We were children under wrath because we disobeyed God. But God, who is full of mercy because of His great love for us has made us alive with Jesus. You are saved by grace!” Paul continued, “Then God will show His endless grace and kindness to us through Jesus. You are saved by God’s grace through faith. This isn’t something you can do. It is God’s gift to you. It is not because of your good actions, so you cannot boast. You are God’s creation, created by Jesus for good works that God planned for you to do.”

Later, in his letter to the Ephesians, Paul explained that followers of Jesus have been given armor—spiritual armor for a spiritual battle. This armor helps believers be strengthened by God to resist the devil’s evil plans.

Paul said, “Put on the full armor of God and be ready to take a stand. Stand with truth like a belt around your waist and righteousness like armor on your chest. Put the gospel of peace on like you put sandals on your feet. At all times, pick up the shield of faith so that you will be defended against the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit. The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God. Then, pray in the Spirit all of the time. Stay alert. Pray for other believers.”

Finally, Paul explained he was an ambassador of the gospel, an ambassador who was in chains. But Paul asked the Ephesians to pray that he would be bold enough to share the gospel as he should.

WELCOME

- Display the “Metal Helmet” object slide.
- Ask: “What is this?” (*helmet*) “What is it made from?” (*metal*) “What is it for?” (*It protects a soldier’s head.*)
- Explain: “For the past few weeks, we have been studying Paul’s epistle to the Romans. Today we will begin studying another of Paul’s epistles. We know this letter as the book of Ephesians.”
- Continue: “In Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, Paul explains that followers of Jesus have been given spiritual armor. Like the metal helmet in today’s object, the spiritual armor helps strengthen and protect God’s people.”
- Introduce: “You will hear about armor like a shield of faith, a sword of the Spirit, and even a helmet of salvation! Listen to hear what Paul tells us to do with it.”

WORSHIP

- Say: “Salvation is a gift from God. I am so thankful for this gift and for the armor and other tools God gives me to help me know and follow Him.”
- Invite the girls and boys to stand and sing “More Like Jesus,” then sing “In Christ I Am” while you pass the offering basket.

INTRODUCE THE SESSION

- Ask: “What letter did we finish studying in our last session?” (*Romans*) “Who wrote that letter?” (*Paul*)
- Say: “Paul wrote several epistles to different churches. The letter that we are going to read today was sent to the church at Ephesus.”
- Challenge the kids to locate the book of Ephesians in their Bibles. Remind them that this book is in the Paul’s Letters division in the New Testament. Encourage the boys and girls to use the table of contents page in their Bibles if they need assistance.
- Option: Reference the “Ephesians” Books of the Bible Poster as the children turn to the book of Ephesians.
- Say: “The book of Ephesians teaches us that **salvation is a gift from God.**”
- Display the Text Truth.
- Guide the group to stand and read the truth aloud with you: **salvation is a gift from God.***
- Option: Show the Explore the Bible on Location video.

TOOL BOX

- Welcome: “Metal Helmet” object slide
- Worship: music videos (Video & Media Extras), offering basket
- Introduce the Session: “Text Truth 4” (slide), “Ephesians” (Books of the Bible Posters), Option: Explore the Bible on Location video
- Dig Deeper: Bible, Option: armor of God props
- Practice Bible Skills: music videos (Video & Media Extras)
- Missions: “Adoniram Judson Photo” and “Myanmar (Burma) Map” (Music & Print Extras)
- Review: “Armor Matching Game” (Music & Print Extras), scissors
- Closing: “Ephesians 2:4-5” (slide)

*GOSPEL CONNECTING POINT

- This would be a natural point in today’s session to explain more about the gift of salvation. Refer to The Gospel: God’s Plan for Me for talking points.

MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

- The monthly Memory Verse is Ephesians 2:4-5.

BONUS BIBLE VERSE

- This week's Bonus Bible Verse is Ephesians 2:8-9.

DIG DEEPER

- Open your Bible and read Ephesians 2:1-2.
- Say: "The Bible says that before we become children of God, we were dead in our own sins. We followed the ways of this world and our flesh."
- Ask: "Verse 2 mentions a prince or a ruler of the air who leads us in disobedience. Who do you think this might be?" (*Satan; our enemy*)
- Say: "Last week, we talked about the Holy Spirit, who leads us to be more like Jesus. But if we are living in disobedience, we are not living according to the Holy Spirit. The Bible tells us we are not following God and that our disobedience deserves His judgment."
- Read Ephesians 2:4-5. (*Option: Challenge volunteers to stand and recite these verses from memory.*)
- Say: "God is the King of everything! He is so rich, but not just with jewels and crowns. God is rich in mercy! He loved us so much that He sent Jesus to give us salvation. Sin brings death, but Jesus brings life!"
- Ask: "When we receive Jesus, what other riches does the King give us?" (*forgiveness of sin, eternal life, heaven, adoption as children of God*)
- Continue: "The King does not love us because we are good. Remember—we were dead in our sin. But God's love for us is unconditional. This means He freely chooses to love us. And the Bible tells us that God loved us so much, He sent Jesus to pay the price our sin deserves. This is a great, great, merciful love."
- Invite a volunteer to read Ephesians 2:8-9 aloud. Mention that this is today's Bible Verse, and invite a few additional children to read or recite the verses to the group.
- Say: "We have no right to brag about ourselves. Salvation is not something that we can work hard for and earn. The gospel is a gift of mercy and grace from God!"
- Continue: "God gives us new life and our response is to do the good works He has planned for us. Remember all the way back to the book of Genesis and to the promises God made to Abraham. It was God's plan to save us all along!"
- Guide your group to turn in their Bibles to Ephesians 6.
- Say: "God planned to send Jesus to rescue us from sin, but there is someone who has a different plan. His plan is not for our good, and his plan does not glorify God. He wants us to live our lives for ourselves."
- Ask: "Can you guess who this evil prince is?" (*the wicked prince, Satan*)
- Read Ephesians 6:10-11.
- Ask: "What is Satan trying to do?" (*He is trying to trick us.*) "What does the Bible say that we need to put on?" (*the armor of God*)
- Say: "Satan is trying to deceive and distract us. He is planning and scheming how he can cause us to doubt God."
- Continue: "We cannot always see what this enemy is trying to do. Many times his weapons are invisible, but that does not mean that they are not

- real. The armor of God is the only way that we can be protected.”
- Read Ephesians 6:14-17.
 - Guide the group to stand. Read Ephesians 6:14-17 again. Every time that you come to a piece of armor, guide the group to say the name aloud with you and pretend to put it on. (*Option: Use props for each piece of armor.*)
 - Read Ephesians 6:18.
 - Say: “One of the best weapons to use when fighting Satan is the power of prayer. The Bible says that we need to be praying all the time. We need to be praying for our brothers and sisters in Christ. Paul asked the Ephesian church to pray for him.”
 - Ask: “Why did Paul ask for prayer?” (*He was human; he needed it.*)
 - Continue: “Paul was an ambassador for Christ. It was his job to tell everyone about the gospel. Paul was not perfect. I am sure that he was afraid sometimes. Paul asked the Ephesians to pray that he would be bold.”
 - Conclude: “We can pray for each other, too. We may be afraid, but with the armor of God, we can be bold and follow Him.”

PRACTICE BIBLE SKILLS

- Invite the group to stand and sing the song “Every Story” with you.
- Guide the kids to form a circle with their chairs.
- Prompt the boys and girls to jump up and quickly sit back down every time a book of the Bible is named.
- Show the children which direction the circle will go (*clockwise or counterclockwise*). Say: “You will jump up and sit back down when you hear the word *Genesis*, the child beside you will jump up for *Exodus*, the child beside her will jump up for *Leviticus*, and so on.”
- Play the song “Every Story” again. This time, individuals will pop up every time a book of the Bible is named.
- Play another time, encouraging the kids to shout the names of the Bible books as they jump.
- Option: If you have a large group, allow the children to sit in a circle on the floor or to form a huge square by sitting along each of the walls in your room.

MISSIONS

- Show the photo of Adoniram Judson and the map of Myanmar (*Burma*).
- Say: “Adoniram Judson’s wife, Ann (*also called Nancy*), became sick and died while they were serving in Burma. The Judsons also had three children die while they were in Burma.”
- Continue: “Even during these tough times, the Judsons continued to tell others about Jesus. Their sad times, illnesses, challenges with

BIBLE SKILLS SPOTLIGHT

- Know some of the books of the Bible in order and pronounce names of some Bible books.

Burmese officials who did not want them talking about Jesus, and other disappointments did not stop them from ministering to the Burmese people. Missionaries have the same needs, challenges, happy times, and sad times that we all have.”

- Explain that many people in Burma (*now called Myanmar*) became believers in Jesus due to the work of the Judsons so long ago.
- Say: “Translating the Bible into the Burmese language helped future missionaries continue the work that the Judsons started to tell even more people about Jesus! Adoniram also created a Burman-English dictionary while he was in Burma. These tools were very helpful to future missionaries as they learned the Burmese language.”
- Pray, thanking God for the early work of the Judsons, and the important work they did to help future missionaries work in Myanmar.

REVIEW

- Print and cut apart the cards from the “Armor Matching Game.”
- Spread the objects and words on a table or on the floor.
- Guide the children to form two groups. (*Option: boys vs. girls*) Assign one group to work with the word cards and the other group to work with the image cards.
- Encourage the groups to work together to match their cards.
- After each word and picture card have been properly matched, mix the cards, then place them facedown in the table or floor.
- One at a time, invite a kid from either group to approach the cards and play a memory matching game.
- Option: If you have a large group of kids, print several sets of cards so multiple smaller groups can play together.

CLOSING

- Challenge any volunteers who want an opportunity to stand and recite the monthly Memory Verse. If the children are struggling to say it from memory, display the “Ephesians 2:4-5” verse slide.
- Say: “Without Jesus, we are dead in sin. But with Jesus, we have everything! We are made alive in Christ, and we are adopted by God the Father into His family forever.”
- Continue: “God is rich in mercy and grace. He even gives us a suit of armor to protect us against the evil schemes of Satan.”
- Prompt the kids to recall the names of the pieces of armor mentioned in the book of Ephesians.
- Pray, praising God for His riches and mercy. Thank Him for the armor of God.
- Sing “The Lord is My Strength and My Song” as the children exit.