



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

MEMORY VERSE: Ephesians 2:4-5

BIBLE VERSE: Ephesians 2:8-9

TEXT TRUTH: Salvation is a gift from God; we cannot earn it.

BIBLE SKILLS SPOTLIGHT: Understand that the truths in the Bible are without error and will never change. Memorize Bible passages and quote individual verses when given the references. Know the Bible teaches God's gift of salvation came through Jesus' sinless life, death, and resurrection.

BIBLE STUDY

(35 MINUTES)

- Jump In:** *Item 15: "Objects: Metal Helmet" (Printables)*
- Examine the Text:** *Bibles, Item 5: "Text Truth 4" (Poster Pack), Item 5: "The Gospel" (Printables)*
- Play the Video:** *Explore the Bible on Location video*
- Memory Verse:** *Item 1: "Ephesians 2:4-5" (Poster Pack), index cards, colored pencils*
- Prayer:** *Family Cards*

APPLY THE TRUTH

(20 MINUTES)

- Explorer Guides:** *Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens*
- Review:** *"Ephesians" (Books of the Bible Posters), "Item 11: Christ in Context: Ephesians" (Printables), Bible Timeline for Kids, Bibles*

ACTIVITIES

(20 MINUTES)

- Bible Skills:** *Item 5: "The Gospel" (Printables), index cards, small gift bags (1 per kid), colored pencils, permanent markers*
- Move:** *Item 15: "Armor of God" (Poster Pack), 2 rolls of aluminum foil*
- Make:** *large pieces of cardboard, paint, paint smocks, paintbrushes, craft knife (adult use)*
- Explore:** *hacky sacks (1 for each group of 6 kids), cell phone or tablet with internet capability*

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PAUL'S LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS

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

Paul wanted to tell everyone about Jesus. Paul traveled to new towns and told people about Jesus. When the people believed, Paul would help them start a church so they could gather together and continue learning about Jesus. Sometimes after he left the city, Paul wrote letters to the churches to continue to teach them how to follow Jesus.

One day when Paul was in prison, 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 were disobedient. 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 explained that when Jesus returns, believers will be raised up to be with Jesus.

Paul continued, “Then God will show His immeasurable 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 workmanship, created in 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 reminded the Ephesians that their battle is not a physical battle against people; it is a spiritual battle against the devil and evil.

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 with perseverance. Pray for other believers.”

Finally, Paul asked the believers to pray for him to have the words to share the gospel with boldness. 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.

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.

BIBLE STUDY (35 MINUTES)

TOOLS:

- Jump In: Item 15: “Objects: Metal Helmet” (Printables)
- Examine the Text: Bibles, Item 5: “Text Truth 4” (Poster Pack), Item 5: “The Gospel” (Printables)
- Play the Video: Explore the Bible on Location video
- Memory Verse: Item 1: “Ephesians 2:4-5” (Poster Pack), index cards, colored pencils
- Prayer: Family Cards

Need an Opening Activity? Choose one of the activities in the *Activities* section and adapt it to introduce the session.

JUMP IN

- Ask: “How many of you have ever worn a helmet—maybe a bike helmet or a football helmet?”
- Ask: “What is the purpose of a helmet?” (*to protect our heads from injury*)
- Display the “Metal Helmet” and ask: “Why do you think someone would have worn a helmet like this?” (*Give kids time to respond.*)
- Say: “I don’t think people would have worn a helmet like this just walking down the street; they probably needed it for combat or war. This helmet looks like it was probably used in battle.”
- Say: “Paul wrote the book of Ephesians to remind Christians that their battle is not physical but a spiritual battle against evil. He wanted them to be prepared to fight, so he gave instructions on how to defeat evil.”
- Say: “Paul mentioned a helmet in Ephesians, so let’s open our Bibles and find out what Paul said about the helmet.”

EXAMINE THE TEXT

- Direct the kids to open their Bibles to Ephesians 2:1-10 and then Ephesians 6:10-20.
- Say: “We’ve learned from Paul’s teachings to the church in Rome that Paul loved telling people about Jesus.”
- Say: “Paul was now in prison, and he wrote a letter that we now know as the book of Ephesians to the Christians in Ephesus.”
- Tell the Bible story in your own words. A Bible story page has been provided for you as a guide.
- Ask: “In Ephesians 2:8, Paul taught us it is by grace that we are saved through faith. What do you think that means?” (*We can only be saved when we repent of our sin and trust Jesus as our Savior and Lord. We cannot rescue ourselves from our sin problem. Only Jesus could rescue us.*)
- Display the Text Truth: **salvation is a gift from God; we cannot earn it.**
- Say: “Paul reminded us that we can’t do enough good things to get to heaven. Our good deeds will never be enough. The only way to be saved from our sin is through faith in Jesus.”
- Display “The Gospel” and share with girls and boys how to become a Christian.
- Ask a volunteer to read Ephesians 6:13-20.
- Ask: “Was Paul telling us to put on armor to go fight in a war against people, or was he telling us to put on spiritual armor to help fight the evil in this world?” (*spiritual armor*)

- Say: “In verse 17, he said to take up the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit. Why is the helmet of salvation needed?” (*Pause for kids to think and respond.*)
- Say: “Just like all of the other helmets we have talked about, this helmet protects us. It protects our minds from the doubts and lies Satan tries to convince us to believe. The helmet of salvation reminds us of the hope we have in Jesus. We can endure difficult times because we will one day spend eternity with Jesus. This helmet protects our minds against evil and reminds us that our future is with Jesus.”
- Conclude: “Paul wanted the Christians in Ephesus to understand that God had equipped them to fight against Satan.”

PLAY THE VIDEO

- Play the Session 4 video.
- Ask: “What gift did Joel receive for his birthday? What gift did Paul want the Ephesians to know they had been given from God? Is salvation a gift from God for us too?”

MEMORY VERSE

- ☐ *Bible Verse Option: The Memory Verse activity each week is focused on the monthly Memory Verse, Ephesians 2:4-5. If your kids quickly memorize the Memory Verse, you may opt to challenge them to learn an additional weekly Bible Verse. This week’s Bible Verse is Ephesians 2:8-9.*

- Display the “Ephesians 2:4-5” poster.
- Read the poster out loud together.
- Remind kids that this is the last week for this Memory Verse and that it’s a good time to commit it to memory if they haven’t already.
- Guide the kids to write the verse on an index card to put in their Bibles.
- Say: “God loves us, and we are saved because of His grace toward us. Don’t forget the Text Truth: **salvation is a gift from God; we cannot earn it.**”

PRAYER

- Distribute the Family Cards and remind kids to share them with their families.
- Say: “We have learned so much about Paul the last four weeks. Over and over, Paul shared that we can only be rescued from our sin by repenting and trusting Jesus as Savior and Lord.”
- Ask the kids if they know anyone who needs salvation that you could all pray for.
- Lead the kids in a prayer for those who are lost and need salvation in Christ.

APPLY THE TRUTH (20 MINUTES)

TOOLS:

- Explorer Guides: Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens
- Review: “Ephesians” (Books of the Bible Posters), “Item 11: Christ in Context: Ephesians” (Printables), *Bible Timeline for Kids*, Bibles

EXPLORER GUIDES

- Distribute Explorer Guides and help kids locate today’s pages.
- Review this week’s object, the “Metal Helmet.”
- Guide girls and boys to unscramble each word in “Put on the Armor.”
- Invite two kids to take turns reading aloud “What Is an Ambassador?”
- Help kids complete the “Memory Verse Q & A.”

REVIEW

- Display the timeline and allow kids to locate the book of Ephesians.
- Invite a volunteer to read aloud the “Christ in Context: Ephesians” statement.
- Reveal the “Ephesians” poster. Select volunteers to share with the group the questions and answers on the poster.
- Provide each kid with a Bible and challenge them to open the Bible directly to the book of Ephesians. Allow kids to attempt the challenge multiple times.

ACTIVITIES (20 MINUTES)

- Select one or more of the activities to complete as time allows.



GOSPEL GIFTS

Tools: Item 5: “The Gospel” (Printables), index cards, small gift bags (1 per kid), colored pencils, permanent markers

- Display the “The Gospel” printable.
- Say: “Today we learned **salvation is a gift from God; we cannot earn it.** The Bible teaches us that God’s gift of salvation came through Jesus’ sinless life, death, and resurrection.”
- Say: “You are going to make your own gift to take home and remind you of God’s gift of salvation.”
- Distribute index cards and colored pencils. Invite girls and boys to draw the first gospel statement symbol (*the crown*) on the front side of an index card then turn the card over and write the statement and Scripture references: *God Rules. Genesis 1:1; Revelation 4:11; Colossians 1:16-17.*
- Continue the process with each symbol, gospel statement, and the Scripture references.
- Give out small gift bags for kids and permanent markers. Lead kids to write the Text Truth on the front of the bag. You may opt to guide kids to personalize the statement using their names (*Example: Salvation is a gift from God for Drew; Drew cannot earn it.*)
- Instruct kids to place their index cards inside their gift bags.
- If time allows, demonstrate how kids could use their gospel gifts to share the gospel with a friend or family member.



CAN YOU MAKE THE ARMOR?

Tools: Item 15: “Armor of God” (Poster Pack), 2 rolls of aluminum foil

- Create two teams. Each team gets a whole roll of aluminum foil to create each piece of the armor. Bonus points are given if someone can wear it.
- Say: “You are going to play a game where you get to create the armor of God. The ‘Armor of God’ poster is available for you to look at as a guide.”
- Say: “When I say ‘go,’ both teams will begin working on their armor. You should attempt to create each piece, and bonus points will be given if someone on your team can actually wear it.”
- Let the kids play and assist if necessary.
- Say: “Did God give us armor to fight real physical wars?” (*No.*)
- Say: “Paul wanted us to know about this spiritual armor so we could be ready to defeat the devil. Don’t forget that our battles aren’t with each other but with the evil one who wants to keep us away from Christ.”
- Review the Text Truth: **salvation is a gift from God; we cannot earn it.**



SHIELD OF FAITH

Tools: large pieces of cardboard, paint, paint smocks, paintbrushes, craft knife (adult use)

□ *Cut the pieces of cardboard into shields.*

- Say: “One of the pieces of the armor of God is the shield of faith. Our faith in Jesus makes us children of God.”
- Say: “I have a shield for you to paint and decorate. The shield of faith keeps away the flaming darts of the evil one, so you may want to represent that on your shield.”
- Distribute shields and paint supplies. Give kids time to decorate and paint their shields.
- Say: “Don’t forget that our actions and good works are not what get us into heaven. You can never be good enough or brave enough without Christ. Even strong soldiers with shields need Jesus.”
- Display the Text Truth: **salvation is a gift from God; we cannot earn it.**



PLAY CHINLONE

Tools: hacky sacks (1 for each group of 6 kids), cell phone or tablet with internet capability

□ *Before the session, do an online search of the game chinlone to find a child-friendly video of the game. Prepare to show a brief segment to the kids for them to see how the game is played.*

- Remind kids that the nation of Burma is now known as Myanmar. Explain that a game called *chinlone*, which literally means “basket-rounded” or “rounded basket” in Burmese, is the traditional national sport of Myanmar. It is sometimes called “caneball.” The game is usually played with six players moving around in a circle, with one player in the middle of the circle. The players are working together to keep a single rattan ball (*chinlone*) in the air by using only a combination of their knees, feet, and heads to keep the balls in the air. Point out to kids that the game is similar to what Americans sometimes do in playing with a hacky sack, but the clicking sound of the rattan ball adds a musical element to the Burmese game and the players continue to walk and move in circles as they pass the ball between them.
- If space allows, form teams of six players. Request that kids play barefoot or only in socks. Give each team a hacky sack to use to play chinlone.
- Say: “The game is noncompetitive. No one wins or loses. Play the game with your team for a few minutes.”
- After each child has had an opportunity to participate in the game, close in prayer. Thank God for the work of Adoniram and Ann Judson and other missionaries who came after them in the country of Myanmar.