



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.

BIBLE SKILLS SPOTLIGHT: Name the divisions of the Old and New Testaments.

BIBLE STUDY

(35 MINUTES)

- Jump In:** *Item 15: "Objects: Metal Helmet" (Printables), Item 14: "Protections" (Poster Pack), Bible Timeline for Kids, tape*
- Examine the Text:** *"Ephesians" (Books of the Bible Posters), Item 5: "Text Truth 4" (Poster Pack), Item 15: "Armor of God" (Poster Pack), Bibles, tape, scissors*
- Play the Video:** *Explore the Bible on Location video*
- Memory Verse:** *index cards, marker*
- Prayer:** *Family Cards, Item 5: "The Gospel" (Printables)*

APPLY THE TRUTH

(20 MINUTES)

- Explorer Guides:** *Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens*
- Review:** *Item 8: "Review Questions" and Item 11: "Christ in Context: Ephesians" (Printables), helmet*

ACTIVITIES

(20 MINUTES)

- Bible Skills:** *Item 16: "Division Swords" (Poster Pack), Item 7: "Bible Book Cards" (Printables), tape, helmet, scissors*
- Move:** *2 belts, 2 vests or large bib aprons, 2 pairs of shoes, 2 shields or clipboards, 2 helmets, 2 pool noodles or play swords*
- Make:** *jumbo paint sticks, foil tape, electrical tape, large craft sticks, permanent markers*
- 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. 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.

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), Item 14: "Protections" (Poster Pack), *Bible Timeline for Kids*, tape
- Examine the Text: "Ephesians" (Books of the Bible Posters), Item 5: "Text Truth 4" (Poster Pack), Item 15: "Armor of God" (Poster Pack), Bibles, tape, scissors
- Play the Video: Explore the Bible on Location video
- Memory Verse: index cards, marker
- Prayer: Family Cards, Item 5: "The Gospel" (Printables)

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

JUMP IN

- Welcome the children and call them by name as they enter.
- Mention that the last few weeks the Bible study has been based on Paul's letters. Ask the children to recall anything from the last three weeks that they have enjoyed learning about. (*Allow time for answers.*)
- Inform them that you are excited to share another book written by Paul.
- Instruct a child to find Ephesians on the timeline. Add that it was written in the same time period as Romans.
- Display the "Metal Helmet." Ask the group: "What do you think this object was used for?"
- Affirm that it was used for protection in battle.
- Display the "Protections" poster. Ask: "What do you think all of these things have in common?" (*They protect you from getting hurt.*)
- Explain that today you are going to talk about spiritual armor and how it can protect us from getting hurt.
- Flip the poster over and tape it to the wall so it is within children's reach.

EXAMINE THE TEXT

Cut apart the pieces of armor from the "Armor of God" poster before the session.

- Direct kids to open their Bibles to the book of Ephesians. Remind them to use the table of contents to locate the book. Display the "Ephesians" poster. Choose a few volunteers to read aloud the questions and answers from the poster.
- Say: "Our story today begins in Ephesians 2:1-10. We will also be looking in chapter 6 as well."
- Choose a volunteer to read aloud Ephesians 2:8-9.
- Display the Text Truth.
- Explain: "We have learned that God sent Jesus to save us from our sins. **Salvation is a gift from God.**"
- Tell the boys and girls the Bible story in your own words using the Bible story page as a guide. Ask them to listen for objects that can protect them from harm.
- Ask: "Did anyone hear anything I mentioned that could be used for protection?" (*Allow kids to respond.*)
- Continue: "Paul explained that the armor of God is important because we are always in battle against the enemy. Who do you think our enemy is?" (*Allow time for responses but be sure the devil is included in the answer.*)
- Exclaim: "This body on the wall is not dressed properly to battle the enemy! Let's get him armed with the things Paul taught us about."

- Show each item and see if the kids can remember what each one stands for. Choose a volunteer to tape the armor on the body.
- Conclude: “Now I think this person is ready for any spiritual challenges they might face today!”

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.*
- Write the Memory Verse three words at a time on separate index cards. (Depending on your group size, you may need to make two sets for two teams. Or if your group is small, give more than one card to a child.)*
 - Give one card to a child.
 - Tell the children they are to “unscramble themselves.” Explain that they should line up so that the verse is in order.
 - Challenge them to do the exercise without speaking.
 - Once the kids think they are in order, go down the line and allow each child to say the words they were given. Encourage the group to say it all together.
 - Say: “Now everyone walk around the room and mix yourselves up.”
 - Once they are out of order, encourage them to put the verse together again faster.
 - Coach the group to say it together loudly.
 - Congratulate the kids and remind them again how much God loves them.

PRAYER

- Distribute Family Cards.
- Point out that the back of the card is to be used with their family. Remind them to ask the questions and talk about it at home.
- Instruct the kids to remember that **salvation is a gift from God** and that there is nothing they can do to earn this gift.
- Review “The Gospel.”
- Ask boys and girls to think of someone they could share the gospel with, like Paul did.
- Expound: “Remember, even Paul was asking for prayer so that he could be bold to share his faith.”
- Pray, asking God to help kids be bold to share the good news of Jesus.

APPLY THE TRUTH (20 MINUTES)

TOOLS:

- Explorer Guides: Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens
- Review: Item 8: “Review Questions” and Item 11: “Christ in Context: Ephesians” (Printables), helmet

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 kids to examine the world records in “Bragging Rights.”
- Lead kids to create their own lists of “Gifts From God.”

REVIEW

- Print out the “Review Questions” and place each one in the helmet. Invite kids to share how this helmet is similar or different from today’s object.
- Ask willing children to pick a question from the helmet. Lead the child in reading the question aloud.
- That child will then choose someone willing to answer the question. If the answer is correct, that child chooses the next question from the helmet, and so on.
- Display the “Christ in Context: Ephesians” statement.
- Choose a willing child to read it aloud.
- Affirm: “Isn’t it a comfort to know that Jesus is the ruler over everything, and no matter what comes our way, He is more powerful than anything or anyone?”
- Congratulate the kids on how much they learned from the book of Ephesians.

ACTIVITIES (20 MINUTES)

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



DIVISION SWORDS

Tools: Item 16: "Division Swords" (Poster Pack), Item 7: Bible Book Cards (Printables), tape, helmet, scissors

- ❑ Cut out the swords from the poster. Tape the swords to the wall. Print out the "Bible Book Cards" and place the New Testament ones in the helmet.
- Remind the children that God's Word is the sword in the armor of God. Explain that the more we know about the Bible, the more we can be ready for any troubles that come our way.
- Announce that the swords on the wall are the five divisions of the New Testament.
- Present the helmet to the kids and allow them to take turns drawing the cards from the helmet and taping it under the proper sword.
- Encourage them to help their friends if they get stumped.
- Continue as time allows, and congratulate the kids on their accomplishment.
- Guide kids to say the Text Truth together: **salvation is a gift from God.**
- Conclude by reminding kids that salvation and the Word of God are both precious gifts and that we should treasure each gift God gives us.



READY FOR BATTLE

Tools: 2 belts, 2 vests or large bib aprons, 2 pairs of shoes, 2 shields or clipboards, 2 helmets, 2 pool noodles or play swords

- ❑ Gather the articles of armor and place them in two piles at one end of the room.
- Ask: "Who remembers the six items in the armor of God that Paul told us about?" (Allow time for responses.)
- Teach: "As believers in Jesus, Paul taught the church in Ephesus that they already had this armor to win spiritual battles. That is also true for us if we have repented of our sin and trusted Jesus as our Savior and Lord. We can stand strong when we face troubles by remembering to use our armor."
- Form two groups.
- Explain that they are going to compete in a relay to see which team can put on the armor the fastest.
- Line teams up in single file lines. Announce that when you say "Go to battle," they are to run and put on the armor. When they have all six items, they should shout, "Ready for battle!"
- The next person in line will run to that team player, take the armor, and suit up.
- The first team to complete the task wins the battle.
- Conclude by reminding children that every morning they should remember to pray and "put on their armor" for any battle they may face.
- Recall the Text Truth: **salvation is a gift from God.**
- Say: "The devil can never defeat you if you are suited up for battle! Remember to thank God for the gift of salvation and for His protection as you put on your armor each day."



SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

Tools: jumbo paint sticks, foil tape, electrical tape, large craft sticks, permanent markers

- Before the session, wrap each paint stick with the foil tape. (Option: You may choose to let kids do this with your assistance if time allows.)
- Using the electrical tape, attach the 2 large craft sticks on each side of the paint stick to form handles for the sword. (This will be the example your kids will look at when making their own swords.)

- Ask: “Who remembers what the sword of the Spirit is in the armor of God?” (*God’s Word*)
- Distribute a paint stick, 2 large craft sticks, and electrical tape to each child.
- Instruct the kids to assemble their sword using your example as a guide. Encourage kids to print on the hilt the Scripture reference for the armor of God: *Ephesians 6:10-20*.
- Teach: “Remember that when we feel attacked, God’s Word can always come to our rescue. That is why we memorize verses so that we can have it with us wherever we go. It helps us to live like Jesus!”
- Encourage the kids to keep their sword in their bedrooms to remind them to read the Bible.
- Conclude: “Remember that **salvation is a gift from God**, and He gave us wonderful promises with that gift. We have God’s Word to help us when the devil tries to lie to us or tempt us to sin.”



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.