The Armor of God

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

Main point: We stand strong in the Lord, not in ourselves, when we put on the whole armor God gives us.
Bible passage: Ephesians 6:10–20. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." *Ephesians 6:11 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), paper and a pencil for each child, a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the board. Write ten short sentences for the opening game (see part 1).

1. Opening game: Stand for the Truth (5–10 minutes)

Everyone sits. Read a sentence. If it is true, kids stand up. If it is not true, they stay seated. Mix easy ones ("A week has seven days") with Bible facts ("The Bible is God's Word") and sneaky ones that sound nice but aren't true ("A little lie is OK if nobody finds out"; "If everyone is doing it, it must be right"). Ask: *Which ones were hard? Why do lies sometimes sound true?* Say: "The Bible says the devil uses wiles, or tricks (Ephesians 6:11). Today we'll see the armor God gives us so we can stand."

2. Bible teaching: The Whole Armor of God (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Ephesians 6. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Explain the rest in your own words.

Who wrote it. Look up Ephesians 1:1. Paul, an **apostle** (a messenger sent by Jesus), wrote this letter to the **saints**, God's people, at Ephesus. Paul was a prisoner when he wrote it (3:1, 4:1). He called himself "an ambassador in bonds" (6:20). An ambassador speaks for his king; **in bonds** means in chains. Paul sent a faithful helper named Tychicus to tell them how he was doing (6:21–22).

Strong in the Lord. Look up Ephesians 6:10. Finally means "last of all," and **brethren** means brothers and sisters in the Lord. Our strength comes from the Lord, not from ourselves. **Look up Ephesians 6:11. Wiles** are tricks and sneaky plans to fool us.

The real fight. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood" (6:12). Our fight is not against people. It is against evil spiritual powers we can't see; Paul calls them principalities, powers, and rulers of the darkness of this world (6:12). So we never treat people as the enemy. We stand against the evil, and we keep loving people.

Stand. Look up Ephesians 6:13. Withstand means stand against, and **the evil day** means a hard day when we are tempted or attacked. Ask: *How many times can you find the word "stand" in verses 11 to 14?* (Three: "to stand" in 6:11, "to stand" in 6:13 and "Stand therefore" in 6:14, plus "withstand" in 6:13.)

The armor. Look up Ephesians 6:14. "Loins girt about with truth" means truth wrapped around your waist like a belt. A belt holds everything together. The **breastplate** covers the chest and heart; **righteousness** means doing what is right in God's eyes. "Feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace" (6:15) means shoes on our feet, ready to go and share the good news of Jesus. **Look up Ephesians 6:16.** "Above all," the shield of faith can **quench** (put out) all the fiery darts, or burning arrows, of the wicked. Faith means trusting God, and it stops lies and temptations. **Look up Ephesians 6:17.** The **helmet of salvation**: God saving us guards our minds. The **sword of the Spirit** is the word of God. It is the only piece that is a weapon.

Praying always. Look up Ephesians 6:18. Supplication means asking God for something with all your heart. **Watching thereunto with all perseverance** means staying alert and not giving up. **Saints** are all of God's people. Paul even asked them to pray for him, that he could speak boldly and make known the gospel (6:19–20).

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

Thinking questions (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. Paul says "be strong in the Lord" (6:10), not just "be strong." What is the difference?
2. The devil uses wiles, or tricks (6:11). What are some tricks or lies kids get tempted by?
3. Our fight is "not against flesh and blood" (6:12). How should that change the way we treat someone who is mean to us?
4. The sword is the only weapon in the armor (6:17). Why does knowing Bible verses help when we're tempted?
5. Paul was in chains, and he asked them to pray that he would speak boldly about the gospel (6:19–20). What does that tell you about Paul?

Recall questions

1. What does the shield of faith quench? *(All the fiery darts of the wicked, Ephesians 6:16)*
2. What is the sword of the Spirit? *(The word of God, 6:17)*
3. What did Paul call himself? *(An ambassador in bonds, 6:20)*

4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **armour** means armor, gear that protects a soldier; **ye** means you; **wiles** means tricks. Read the verse on the board together. Erase two words and read it again. Keep erasing two words at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Paul named the helmet of salvation and the gospel of peace. Here is that good news. God loves you. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). How do we obey the gospel? 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5)."
Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.
This week: pick one piece of armor you need most. Each morning, ask God to help you "put it on" that day.

6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10–15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point.

1. Ephesians 1:1: Who wrote this letter? *(Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ)*
2. Ephesians 6:10: In whose power should we be strong? *(In the Lord, and in the power of his might)*
3. Ephesians 6:12: What do we wrestle not against? *(Flesh and blood)*
4. Ephesians 6:13: After we have done all, what do we do? *(Stand)*
5. Ephesians 6:15: What are our feet shod with? *(The preparation of the gospel of peace)*
6. Ephesians 6:16: What do we take "above all"? *(The shield of faith)*
7. Ephesians 6:19: What did Paul ask them to pray for him? *(That he could open his mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel)*
8. Ephesians 6:21: Who would tell them how Paul was doing? *(Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister)*

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for making us strong in You. Help us tell the truth, do what is right, share the good news, trust You, know Your Word and pray always. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks "Is the devil real? Should I be scared?": answer simply and calmly. The Bible says the devil uses wiles, or tricks (Ephesians 6:11), but we don't have to be afraid. We are "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might" (6:10), and God gives us everything we need to stand.