

The Shoes of Peace

(Ephesians 6:15)

Introduction

[Teacher, bring a collection of different kinds of shoes to class in a bag, such as a golf shoe, shoe with cleat, swim fin, ski boot, cowboy boot, a ballet slipper, and so on. Let the children take turns pulling one from the bag. Talk about what you do while wearing the shoe.]

You can tell a lot about what a person is getting ready to do by what he puts on his feet! For instance, it's not easy to dance on the tips of your toes. A ballet star could not do it without the proper shoes and the right training.

If you were a soldier in a battle, it would be important to have the right footwear. Today we will learn that God has given us special shoes to wear as a soldier in His army.

Opening Prayer

Lord, just as it is important for real soldiers to be ready for battle, it's important for us to be ready for the spiritual battle we are in with Satan. Please give us good listening ears so that we might not miss any of the instructions that You have for us this morning. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared (Ephesians 6:15 NLT)

Lesson

The Bible warns us that as followers of Christ we are in a spiritual battle with the devil and we need to learn how to protect ourselves against his attacks.

The past few weeks we've been learning a lot about spiritual warfare.

It has been exciting to learn about the Roman soldier and to think about the battles he fought with his spear and shield. But it can seem scary to know that we, as followers of Jesus, are in a battle with an invisible enemy in the heavenlies. The good news is we don't have to be afraid because God has given us just what we need to have victory.

For review, read Ephesians 6:1-14

As we have been learning about the various pieces of equipment that the Roman soldier wore to protect his body, we have been relating that to the spiritual armor God has given us for our protection.

Let's talk about this battle we are in:

Ask: Why are we in a battle with Satan and his army of demons?

Satan hates God and he hates anyone who places their faith in Him. So, that makes God's enemy our enemy.

Satan doesn't want anyone to go to heaven. That's why he tries to get us to sin against God. The devil knows that God hates our sin. So, he thinks that if he can get us to sin, God will punish us and shut us out of Heaven.

Ask: Where is this invisible battle taking place?

This battle takes place in your thought life—in your minds. [Teacher, tap your head.] The enemy is constantly putting ideas in your mind to sin against God. He puts thoughts in your minds to be mean or to argue with your parents or to get in a fight with your sibling. Satan takes great delight when you are rebellious, defiant, angry, prideful, selfish, or jealous.

Ask: How do we battle these thoughts and ideas the enemy shoots into our minds like a fiery dart?

Satan puts a bad thought in your mind; you put the fire out by remembering how God wants us to think and talk and act. You do battle in your thought life—thought for thought. It's like hand-to-hand combat. [Teacher, put your fists up like a boxer.]

Let's talk about the pieces of our spiritual armor that we've learned about so far.

The Belt of Truth

The **belt of truth** is the first piece of armor we must put on.

Ask: How do we put on the belt of truth?

We put on the belt of truth by remembering the truth of God's word.

Part of Satan's battle plan against us is to place doubt in our hearts and to discourage us from doing the right things. First, he wants us to doubt God's word and he wants us to doubt God's love. Second, he wants us to feel defeated.

When he causes us to have feelings of anger or hate in our hearts, he makes us feel terrible to have allowed these bad feelings into our hearts. He reminds us that God doesn't approve of those kinds of thoughts and whispers into our minds that we aren't good, and that discourages us.

So that's when we put on the belt of truth. Remember Satan is lying to you. When he tries to tell you that you are a bad person, remind yourself that God doesn't think you are bad. God loves you with an everlasting love (Jeremiah 31:3), He has forgiven you (Ephesians 4:32), and He has accepted you as a member of His forever family (John 1:12).

The Breastplate of Righteousness

The **Breastplate of Righteousness** is the second piece of armor we must put on.

Ask: How do we put the spiritual breastplate on?

Again, the battle is in our thought life. When Satan puts a lie into our mind, remember the truth. Satan might whisper into your heart, "*You are not worthy of God's love because you are a sinner!*"

That's when you remember that the moment you put your faith in what Jesus did on the cross, God declared you to be "not guilty" of sin. God sees you as righteous because Jesus already took the

punishment for your sin.

Shoes of the Gospel of Peace

This week we're going to talk about the third piece of the armor, the shoes of the gospel of peace.

It is very important for a soldier to have his feet in good condition if he is going into battle, isn't it? Roman soldiers did almost everything they had to do on their feet. Sore feet would not have been considered a reasonable excuse for a Roman soldier not to do his duty. What do you think might have happened to a Roman soldier who said, "*Sir, I won't be able to march the 18 miles with my regiment today; my feet hurt?*" [Teacher, let the children respond.]

If your feet hurt, it's hard to stand, much less walk or march into battle. That's why one of a Roman soldier's most important pieces of equipment was heavy protective footwear. They wore special shoes that helped them stand firm in battle. Like all Romans, the soldiers wore leather sandals. The sandals had soles that were three-quarters of an inch thick. They had spikes on the bottoms, kind of like golf shoes or the shoes football players wear that have cleats. If you had slippery soles on your shoes, you'd easily fall down and be trampled.

With these sturdy sandals, the soldier could safely go anywhere because his feet were ready. Their shoes made them sure-footed and stable in the battle with the enemy. And, in the same way, we Christians need to be sure footed against our enemy, too.

In your ESV bible Ephesians 6:15 might be hard to understand:

Ephesians 6:15

as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. (ESV)

I like the way the NLT says it better:

Eph 6:15

*For shoes, put on **the peace that comes from the Good News** so that you will be fully prepared. (NLT)*

Here the scripture calls the Christian soldier's shoes, "*the peace that comes from the Good News.*" Let's talk about what that means.

Ask: What is the gospel? The Gospel is the Good News. But what is the Good News?

The Good News is that Jesus took the punishment for our sins.

Ask: Why does the Good News give us peace?

Before you were a believer you were in a war against God.

The Bible tells us that whoever is not with God is against God. (Matthew 12:30) Anyone who isn't working with God is actually working against Him.

But once you become a true believer in Jesus, you have peace with God. You're on His team and you are working with Him.

Romans 5:1

Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. (NLT)

The moment you realized that the gospel was for you and you put your faith in what Jesus did for you on the cross, God gave you these shoes of peace. So, to *put on the peace that comes from the Good News*, as our verse says, is to ask Jesus to forgive you of your sins. That gives you the peace of God.

We'll add shoes to our soldier as a reminder that they are his shoes of the gospel of peace. This will help us remember to put on our shoes of peace, too.

Fully Prepared

We've talked about the first part of this verse, "*For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News.*" Now, let's talk about the second half of this verse, "*so that you will be fully prepared.*"

Ask: What do your shoes of peace fully prepare you to do?

Once you have the peace that comes from knowing that you are forgiven of your sins, you are ready, or "*fully prepared,*" to tell others about this Good News.

1 Peter 3:15 says, "*...if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it.*"

Ask: If someone asked you why you are always so cheerful and full of joy, what could you tell them?

That would give you the chance to tell them what Jesus did for you on the cross. Explain to them that you have peace in your heart because you know that Jesus paid for your sins and you belong to God forever.

Our feet carry us many places in our lifetime. We need to be sure that wherever we go we are always prepared to tell someone about Jesus. If we do not speak of Him as we go about our daily lives, perhaps those we meet will never hear of Jesus or know of His love.

We strap on our shoes of peace first of all when we gain peace with God by accepting His gift of salvation (Romans 5:1) and begin to live in a way that is pleasing to Him. Then as we walk through each day, our lives will show others the Good News of God's peace.

Watch your feet! Be sure you are wearing your shoes of peace. You will need them so you will be prepared to tell people the Good News about Jesus. If you are prepared to tell people the gospel, you will be able to stand firm against Satan.

Closing Prayer

Lord, thank You so much for Your plan of salvation. You didn't need to leave the comforts and splendor of Heaven to be born on earth as a baby. But You did because You knew the only way we could ever come to Heaven was if you took the punishment for our sins. So, You came and lived among people, then You endured a horrible death on the cross because You loved us and wanted us to live with You for all eternity in Heaven. Make this knowledge so exciting for us, Lord, that we want to tell all of our friends about the great things You have done for us. Help us to always be prepared to tell people the Good News about the peace we have with You. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Game Center

Armor of God Concentration: Make two sets of cards with the various pieces of the armor named on each. For a correct answer to a review question, a child gets to turn over two cards. If the cards match, he gets to keep the set. The child or team with the most matched sets wins. Copy the cards onto colored card stock and laminate for future use. Or, get fancy and make your playing cards the shape of a sword!

HELMET	SHIELD
SHOES	SWORD
FAITH	GOSPEL
RIGHTEOUSNESS	SALVATION
SPIRIT	TRUTH

BELT	BREASTPLATE
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Or, use the following questions in another game of your choice:

Review questions:

1. What does God give us to stand against the tricks of the devil? (A suit of armor)
2. Is one piece of armor enough to stand against the devil? (No, we must put on the whole armor of God.)
3. Why is it easy to sin and hard to do right? (The devil is like a roaring lion who tries to make us do wrong.)
4. How do you put on the Belt of Truth? (By remembering that Jesus is The Truth—His love for us will never end.)
5. Who can we always count on to tell us the truth? (God)
6. How do you put on the Breastplate of Righteousness? (By remembering because of what Jesus did on the cross, God sees us as righteous.)
7. How do you put on the Shoes of the Gospel of Peace? (By making peace with God by asking Jesus to be your Lord and Savior.)
8. What does the word "gospel" mean? ("Good news")
9. If anyone asked you what the gospel is, could you tell them? (Jesus was born; He died for us; on the third day He arose; now He's in Heaven with God, but He is coming back again.)
10. What does Ephesians 6:15 mean in your own words? (Be prepared to tell people the Good News about the peace we have with God.)
11. How do you make peace with God? (By asking Him to forgive you and to come into your life and be your Lord and Savior.)
12. Who are we pleasing when we do not tell the truth? (Satan)
13. Who is the armor of God for? (For every Christian.)
14. How do we know that our sins are forgiven? (Because the Lord Jesus paid for them and promised that we would belong to Him forever.)
15. Can we use our armor all by ourselves? (No, the Lord Jesus gives us strength to stand against Satan and we have the power of the Holy Spirit to help us, too.)

[For more lessons for children, visit
<https://www.freechildrensministrylessons.com>]

Armor of God Worksheet

Circle the right answers. (You can circle more than one.)

1. Jesus told us to put on (some, all, none) of the Armor of God.
2. Jesus commands us to (put on, set down, step on) the armor.
3. I put on the Belt of Truth when I...
 - A. Tell the truth
 - B. Remember what is true about Jesus
 - C. Listen to my friends
4. I put on the Breastplate of Righteousness when I...
 - A. Choose to be kind instead of mean
 - B. Don't do what I know is right
 - C. Remember that Jesus paid for my sins
5. I put on my Gospel Shoes when I...
 - A. I pull up my socks
 - B. Go out to play golf
 - C. Asked Jesus to forgive my sins
6. The word "gospel" means...
 - A. To eat fast
 - B. Good News
 - C. What a turkey says