

ARMORED AGENTS



A Study on
Ephesians
6:10-18

8 Lesson Series
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Introduction

This 8-lesson unit introduces children to the Armor of God. They will learn that there is an Enemy who wants to keep them from living for Jesus. They will also learn that God gives Christians the tools necessary to be victorious.

Room Decoration:

If possible, decorate the room with a spy theme. The lessons are taught in a Secret Agent Headquarters. Above the door through which the kids enter, post a sign that says, “AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY.” Use some (or all) of the following items for decorations:

- A desk with stacks of files on which “Top Secret” is written
- Trench coats and hats hanging on a coat rack (or on a rolling, hanging rack in a doorway so the kids feel that they are walking through a secret entrance in a closet)
- Briefcases, sunglasses and messages written in code
- A pointer (old-fashioned or laser) for directing attention to visuals used in the lessons, retractable or flip maps hanging over blackboards or white boards that will be used.

Lesson Segments:

There are common threads that occur in each lesson. A general description of these is listed here. More specific information is included in each individual lesson. Each lesson will take more than one hour to teach if all segments are used. If your teaching time is shorter than this, you may wish to select from those listed.

1. Secret Agent

Begin each lesson with a time of singing. Immediately following the songs, a “Secret Agent” will enter the room. This is someone dressed in a trench coat and a hat. This person never says anything. If possible, have special “spy music” play just as the Secret Agent enters, like

the theme music from “Mission Impossible.” To add to the effect of the Secret Agent delivery, some lights can be turned off and rotating siren lights can be used. The Secret Agent will deliver a Top Secret Message to introduce the theme for the day. The message will be delivered to the leader, who will read it to the kids, then destroy the message. A variety of methods for destroying the message are suggested. Feel free to “mix and match” the ideas. Because the Top Secret Message will be destroyed, photocopy it rather than removing the page from this book. Each message has blanks at the top of it. In these spaces, enter information that applies to your situation. Write the date on which the lesson will be taught, a time shortly before the meeting time, and the name of the person who will be reading the message. This will make the lesson more personal for the students.

2. Lesson Introduction

Puppets are a great way to introduce the lesson theme of the day. Each lesson includes a general idea of what the puppet can say to help the children focus their thoughts on what they will be learning in the lesson. Only one puppet is needed. This puppet can be used by the leader, much as a ventriloquist’s dummy would be used, or it can interact with the leader from behind a puppet stage. Continuing with the spy theme, the leader may wish to use a puppet with a name such as “Spy Guy” or “Gadget Man,” with a personality and costume to match the name. Help for Solo Puppeteering can be found on page 97 of this book. Each lesson will contain an option for leaders who do not wish to use puppets in this section.

3. Dark Evil Man Story

The Dark Evil Man is a character who represents the Devil. He works well because, while he is not scary, he is real enough to help children understand the schemes of Satan. Played much like a melodramatic villain, he is out to make kids fall into sin. The Armor of God protects them every time, though. The Dark Evil Man should be dressed completely in black (including a cape), but the costume should be toned down with the use of a brightly colored tie or some other accent to keep young children from being too scared by the character. The Dark Evil Man is overly dramatic in his body language, especially during fits of rage or when he wrings his hands together while plotting. He never speaks audibly, so body language is important.

These dramas use the “instant skit” format, which means they use actors who are on-the-spot. The leader will select a good dramatic reader to read the story as the skit is acted out. Each drama has a list of characters and the limited props necessary for that drama. In addition, the Dark Evil Man must be prepared for each skit. As characters are chosen, it is helpful to give each actor a name tag on which his character’s name has been written. A “fair” way to choose characters for the stories, and for helpers needed in other parts of the lesson, is to have each child write his name on a craft stick as he enters the lesson area. Another option is to hand out carnival type tickets to students as they enter, then the leader chooses a ticket and reads the numbers on it. The student with the corresponding ticket is in the skit.

The actors are instructed to listen for their actions and then to act them out. When their characters speak, they are simply to move their mouths. This adds humor because it looks like an old martial arts film, where the mouths do not move with the words. The reader provides all the words and sound effects.

The “Dark Evil Man” dramas can also be done with a drama team if desired. If a drama team is in place, it can rehearse the skits in advance and simply perform them for the rest of the group during this time.

4. Memory Verse

Each lesson contains a memory verse page that can be photocopied as a handout and/or used as an overhead transparency master. A suggestion for teaching the verse is included in each lesson. Additional ideas for teaching memory verses are found in a chapter beginning on page 96 of this book.

It is also suggested that the leader encourage the kids to memorize the entire Armor of God passage (Ephesians 6:10-18) during this unit. This passage can be found on page 8. Feel free to photocopy it for your own use. A special prize or outing could be awarded to kids who are able to quote it with minimal help.

5. Bible Story

While the theme passage of this unit is the Armor of God section from Ephesians, stories from the life of Jesus will also be studied. This will increase the children's Bible knowledge and will show the principles taught by the Armor of God in action.

6. Object Lesson

The props for each object lesson should be brought out of a briefcase. The Secret Agent who delivered the Top Secret Message at the beginning of the lesson could make an additional appearance to bring the briefcase.



Lesson 3: Breastplate of Righteousness

1. Welcome and Singing

2. Secret Agent

The Secret Agent has wadded the Top Secret Message into a ball. He nonchalantly walks behind the leader and drops it onto the ground. After the Secret Agent has left, the leader notices that there is garbage on the ground, picks it up, and reads it. After the message is read, it is destroyed by drawing bold black lines through important words in the message, and then it is torn into several pieces before it is thrown away in at least two garbage cans.

3. Lesson Introduction

Option A:

Preparation: Find a metal plate for the puppet to wear under his shirt.

The puppet asks the leader to punch him in the stomach really hard. The leader hesitates to do it, but the puppet finally convinces him. When the leader hits the puppet, his hand hurts but the puppet is fine. The puppet admits that he is wearing a secret punch-proof vest. The leader is impressed and thinks it would be great if everyone had one. Then he realizes that everyone can have one. The kids can learn about it in today's drama.

Option B:

Do the same thing as "Option A," but have an adult helper play the puppet's part. Another possible variation would be to use an audience member with whom you have already discussed what is happening. Have him hide a metal plate under his shirt, select him from the audience, and proceed to punch him "really hard" in the stomach.

4. Dark Evil Man Story: Righteous Rob and the Bulletproof Vest

5. Memory Verse and Object Lesson

“Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous, just as He is righteous.” I John 3:7

Items needed for this object lesson: Tape recorder, language-learning tape, and a tape on which you have recorded today’s verse. On the tape, read the entire verse, then record one phrase at a time. Repeat each phrase. For example, the tape will say, “Dear children, (pause), Dear children (pause), do not let anyone (pause) do not let anyone (pause),” etc.

From the briefcase, pull out a tape recorder and a language-learning tape. “When someone is going to a country where a different language is spoken, sometimes he will use tapes like this to learn the new language. He studies so he can be more like the people of that country.” Play a short section of the tape. “The Bible tells us that we are to study what Jesus is like so we can become more like Him. Part of today’s memory verse says, ‘Be righteous as He is righteous.’” Play the memory verse you have recorded on a tape. Turn off the tape and tell the kids that when you turn the tape on again, they are to repeat the phrases they hear as they practice the verse. After finishing the verse, turn off the tape player and have the kids say the verse a couple of times. Now record them saying the verse all together. Let them listen to it.

6. Bible Story

Read a letter that has been “written” to the leader. It says, “Dear _____, Sometimes my friends try to get me to do things that I know aren’t right, like making fun of people or taking little things that don’t belong to me. When I say that I don’t want to do it, they make fun of me. That really hurts my feelings. I know that I shouldn’t do the things they want me to do, but it’s not fun to be laughed at either. Do you have any ideas to help me?”

Ask the kids if they have any ideas.

Tell the stories of Mary and Joseph. Mary’s story is found in Luke 1:26-38. Joseph’s story is found in Matthew 1:18-25. A possible way to tell this story is to read letters that were written from one to the other. Mary writes a letter to Joseph telling him about what has just happened to her, how excited she is, but also that she is worried because doing what God has asked her

to do will not be easy. Joseph writes to Mary telling her that at first, he thought she was lying, but then the angel came and told him that it was actually true. Joseph assures Mary that he will do everything he can to protect her and the baby. No matter how hard it is, he will be with her to help her.

Teach the meaning of righteousness: “doing what is right.” Talk about the fact that Mary and Joseph made choices that were difficult, but they were determined to do what was right.

Discuss the following Scriptures with the children:

I Peter 3:14—“But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened.”

I John 3:7-10—“Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God. This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.”

I John 2:3-6—“We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. The man who says, ‘I know him,’ but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.”

7. Closing

TOP SECRET MESSAGE

DATE:

TIME:

TO:

RE: Assignment from the High Office

Greetings in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Master and Sovereign Leader.

This message has been delivered to you through great peril for its contents are urgent.

Our Enemy is deploying a new strategy! He has convinced people that they can do what is right in their own eyes, instead of what is right in the eyes of their Creator.

This is very dangerous. When people invent their own code of righteousness, it leads them into danger and deception. Only by obeying God's truth can they hope to be victorious in life.

Therefore, in addition to the Belt of Truth discussed last week, it is imperative that the children also learn how to wear the invisible Breastplate of Righteousness. This will further hinder the Enemy from being able to pierce their hearts with his sinister arrows of deceit. I think you know what needs to be done. You have your orders.

**AFTER READING THIS TO THE CHILDREN,
DESTROY THIS MESSAGE!**

TOP SECRET MESSAGE

Dear children,
do not let anyone
lead you astray.
He who does what
is right is righteous,
just as He is righteous.

I John 3:7 (NIV)

Drama: Righteous Rob and the Bulletproof Vest



CHARACTERS:

- Rob
- Rob's Mom
- Dog
- Cashier
- Dark Evil Man

SUGGESTED PROPS:

- Toy bow and arrow
- Notebook with paper shreds
- Toy breastplate
- Money
- Loaf of bread
- Bowl of cereal and spoon
- Candy bars

ONCE UPON A TIME, in a neighborhood not too far away, there lived a boy named Rob. Rob was a pretty good kid. His grades were pretty good and he stayed out of trouble for the most part, but he did have one little habit that sometimes got him into trouble. He had a keen eye for shortcuts. If there was a faster or shorter way to do something, Rob would discover it. This was good when it helped him find a better way to do a project, but it occasionally got him into trouble—like the one time he tried to take a shortcut to school.

It all started the morning he overslept. There he was in his pajamas, with his hair a mess, and it was 30 minutes until school started! "Oh, no!" cried Rob. He rushed to the breakfast table and ate a bowl of cereal as fast as he could. Then he rushed back to his room to get ready for school. Soon he was ready to go.

Rob yelled, "Bye!" to his mom and then flew out the door. As he dashed out his mother yelled after him, "Hurry! You'll make it! But be careful and don't take any shortcuts!"

Rob ran and ran until his sides ached. Finally, he just had to stop and rest. Hunched over and holding his sides, he tried to catch his breath. "I'll never make it," he thought to himself.

SUDDENLY, OUT OF NOWHERE APPEARED. . .THE DARK EVIL MAN!

Seeing the wheezing boy, the Sinister Sin Master said to himself, “Ah ha! If it isn’t little Rob, my apprentice of shortcuts!” He looked at his watch and continued, “And it appears he is late for school. The poor boy. I shall come to his rescue and help him!”

From his dark cape he pulled out his Bow of Rebellion and with it some Arrows of Temptation. The DARK EVIL MAN took careful aim at helpless, wheezing Rob and fired!

The Arrow of Temptation flew through the air and hit its target. Rob suddenly stood up and said to himself, “Hey! Mom gave me a great idea! I can take a shortcut to school! But wait, she told me not to....”

Suddenly, another Arrow of Temptation struck poor Rob. “But who’s to know?” thought Rob. “And I have to get to school! I’ll just cut through this alley here and be there in no time!” With that, he headed down his new path to school.

The DARK EVIL MAN was having a victory fit, jumping up and down and rejoicing in the fact that he had successfully tempted Rob to disobey his mother. “Yes! I am so wickedly wonderful! Hee hee hee! Poor little Rob doesn’t know why his mother told him not to take shortcuts, but I do! Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!”

Suddenly a wild dog leaped out from behind a fence and lunged after Rob, knocking him to the ground. The dog ripped all his homework from his arms and, after shredding it and eating it, the dog ran away.

Rob crawled to his feet and slumped on his way to school. “Great! Not only am I gonna be late, but now I don’t have my homework either. What teacher is going to believe that a huge dog jumped me on the way to school, shredded my homework, ate it, and then ran away?” He couldn’t see the DARK EVIL MAN slip away, still celebrating his evil victory.

When Rob got home from school, his mom met him at the door. “Oh, my! What happened to you?” Rob explained all about the giant dog who jumped him, shredded his homework, ate it, and ran away. His mom even seemed to believe him! She gave him a loving hug and said,

“My poor Rob, where did this happen?” Rob gulped and then admitted, “I’m sorry, Mom, I disobeyed you and took a shortcut, but I couldn’t help it. I got tempted!”

Rob expected his mom to get mad and punish him, but instead she did the most amazing thing. She said, “I understand, Rob. Our Enemy is always waiting to tempt us. Without protection, we will fail every time. When those fiery Arrows of Temptation hit, we are usually goners.

“Then how are we supposed to do the right thing?” Rob asked.

“We do the right thing by wearing the Breastplate of Righteousness. It’s like a bulletproof, or arrow-proof, vest. It is invisible, but it is powerful! It’s activated by a simple prayer: ‘Lord, help me to do the right thing,’ and then He does!”

“Wow! I’ve got my own bulletproof vest! I’m wearing it all the time!” declared Rob as he stood tall and proud. “That Terrible Tempter won’t get me again!”

Rob’s mom smiled. “Well, I’m glad to hear that. Tell you what, why don’t you go put on your toy armor breastplate and run to the store for me. I need a loaf of bread. You can pretend that it is your real breastplate. And don’t take any shortcuts!”

“Don’t worry, Mom!” Rob promised as he ran off to his room to put on his toy breastplate. Mom smiled and prayed, “Lord, help my Robby to be righteous. Give him the power to do what is right, even when it is hard. Amen.” Rob reappeared with his breastplate on, got some money from his mom, and was on his way.

SUDDENLY, OUT OF NOWHERE APPEARED...THE DARK EVIL MAN!

“Ah ha ha ha! Is my little friend Rob coming back for more? Hee, hee! He looks like he thinks a toy breastplate will stop me. Foolish boy, a mere toy will not stop my arrows, for my arrows are not toys. They pierce to the heart and soul. I’ll show you!” From his flowing black cape he

pulled out his Bow of Rebellion and some Arrows of Temptation and loaded one. “How about a shortcut, my boy?”

The DARK EVIL MAN took aim just as Rob muttered, “Lord, help me to do what is right.”

The arrow fired and hit Rob right in the chest, but nothing happened! “What? How can this be?” cried the DARK EVIL MAN, “I’ll show him!” He loaded another Arrow of Temptation. “How about a temptation to steal, eh?”

Rob looked at the candy bars for sale and thought to himself, “Those sure look good, but I don’t have enough money...oh, boy...Lord, help me to do the right thing.”

An arrow flew through the air and bounced right off his chest. Again, nothing happened. The DARK EVIL MAN was furious! “Why, you little do-gooder, I’ll get you yet! If candy doesn’t do it, money will.” He loaded up his Bow of Rebellion again.

Rob paid for the loaf of bread and as he turned to leave, he noticed that the cashier gave him too much change. “Now I can get that candy bar,” Rob thought to himself. “No! Lord, help me to do the right thing!”

The arrow flew, and guess what? Yes! It was as harmless as if it had been a toy. Rob gave the extra money back to the cashier. The DARK EVIL MAN went into such a tirade of anger, he was soon having a temper tantrum and didn’t even notice that Rob was gone...until it was too late.

“Curses! Foiled again! That little Righteous Rob. Where does a pipsqueak like that get such power? It must not be that toy armor. He must be calling on that Name that is above all Names. The name of...ugh! I can’t even say it!”

The DARK EVIL MAN trembled as he listened to a voice that only he could hear. “I command you to leave my child alone. Unlike you, Rob is righteous, and he is wearing spiritual armor. Be gone! I command you in the name of Jesus!”

The DARK EVIL MAN fled in terror. Rob became “Righteous Rob,” and whenever he remembered to activate his spiritual breastplate, he was victorious. He did sometimes forget, but that always resulted in trouble. Then he remembered that things went better when he did what was right!

I hope you will all be righteous boys and girls and remember to activate your Breastplates of Righteousness whenever you feel an Arrow of Temptation poking at you.