

Dear VBS Parents and Students,

July 13-16, 2020

We are so glad that you have decided to join us on this journey to learn about the Armor of God! Even though we cannot be together, we pray that your children will learn from this virtual program and grow in their relationships with Christ.

For each of the four days of VBS, you will see the following:

- An overview sheet of the day
- A Bible Lesson
- A Craft
- A Mission Activity
- A Game
- Some Worship Songs
- A Snack with a prayer attached (in kit)
- A Devotion for Parents

The main supplies you will need are all included and color-coded in the kit. We have also included a few bonus “just for fun” surprises in there as well!

Day 1 activities are color-coded **RED**. Day 2 activities are **YELLOW**. Day 3 activities are **GREEN**. Day 4 activities are **BLUE**.

For each activity that has a video explanation, there is a **QR code** that you can scan with a smartphone/ipad and pull up the video. The video links will also be emailed each corresponding morning July 13-16.

Again, feel free to do as many or as few of these activities as you would like! And do them at your own pace. The videos will be available all summer. We want these to be fun and valuable activities for your family, not stressful!

Let us know if you ever have any questions or need anything throughout this process!

In Christ,
Ascension Lutheran Church VBS Team
AscensionPghVBS@gmail.com

8225 Peebles Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15237
412-364-4463

Day 1: Belt of Truth

Today is **Disguise Day!** Wear your best disguise and see if your family recognizes you!

Bible Lesson Big Idea: The Belt of Truth helps defend us against Satan's lies.

Craft: Belt Craft Kit

Mission: "Christmas In July" Greeting Card Project

Game: Leaps and Bounds

Worship Songs: "The Voice of God" & "He Is God"

Snack: Fruit-By-The-Foot Belts

Don't forget to email pictures and videos from your day to AscensionPghVBS@gmail.com.

Day 1 Bible Lesson

Video Lesson:



<https://youtu.be/-HeQBMa5JQk>

Day 1 Craft: Belt Craft Kit

Directions:

1. Stick the yellow, blue, and red “gems” onto the circles on the belt and hanging pendants in any pattern you like.
2. Use the double sided adhesives to stick the top of the hanging pendants onto the back of the belt.
3. Poke the string through the small holes on each side of the belt, and position the metal ends so the string stays in place.

Video Tutorial:



<https://youtu.be/P8hmYr623OI>

Day 1 Mission Activity

Greeting Card Project: Make cards reminding Concordia residents of Jesus’ love for them.

The completed cards can be dropped off at Ascension during weekday office hours from 9:00 am-4:00 pm in the bin marked “Completed Mission Projects” at the side entrance. Please turn in projects by **Thursday, July 23rd!** Extra craft supplies are also available in a bin at the side entrance.

Video Directions:



<https://youtu.be/X0nAk7rM7wo>

Day 1 Game: Leaps and Bounds

Directions:

1. Split into 2 teams and set up a start and finish line. You can also nominate a leader to ask questions if you have an odd number of people.
2. Either the “leader” or your opponent will ask you true/false questions from the cards we provided, and take turns answering questions between teams. For each question you/your opponent gets right, you take one giant leap towards the finish line.
3. If you/your opponent misses a question, you stay where you are. The first one to cross the finish line wins!
4. If you want to make it extra tricky, set up obstacles along the course for each question (for example: hula hoop tire runs, 10 jumping jacks, limbo, 10 second plank, etc.)!

Video Tutorial:



<https://youtu.be/IXPn0p39ZVg>

Day 1 Worship Songs

Theme Songs:

“Full Armor of God”
“The Armor of God Fits Good On Me”

Day 1 Songs:

“The Voice of Truth”
“He Is God”

VBS Song Recordings:



<http://ascensionpgh.com/virtual-vbs-2020/>

Day 1 Parent Devotion: The Belt of Truth

*“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”
(Ephesians 6:10-12)*

You may be familiar with the passage in Ephesians 6 where Paul calls us to put on the armor of God. Perhaps you have read through this passage before, but there is so much to be learned when we take a closer look and study it in-depth.

How can we put on the armor of God in today’s world? This passage can be applied to our lives in the same way it was during the time it was written, even though we may not be familiar with putting on armor for battle like a Roman soldier.

The armor of God represents the defense we must take in our spiritual lives. The Bible tells us that we are fighting a war against Satan, who seeks to destroy us. Therefore, we must take action and put on God’s armor.

As Christians, it is important for us to understand the severity of this battle. As it is often something we cannot physically see, it is easy to lose sight of the impact it can have. However, it can be very dangerous when we forget to equip ourselves with the armor of God and allow the enemy to take control in our lives.

The first piece of armor Paul discusses is the **belt of truth**. In Ephesians 6:14, he says, “Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist.” Of all the pieces of the armor of God, you may be wondering why Paul started with the belt. However, the belt plays a much more important role than we may think.

The belt is where Roman soldiers stored their weapon – without a belt, they could not carry a weapon! So, why does Paul associate the belt of a soldier with truth? For Christians, God’s Word is truth, and it serves as our foundation.

2 Timothy 3:16 says, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.” If our beliefs are not rooted in God’s Word, we cannot expect to fight battles for Christ.

Just as a belt is worn close to the body, we should hold God’s truth close to us and allow it to surround us. When we remain in His Word, we can distinguish what is true from what is untrue.

With this being said, you are encouraged to apply the concept of the belt of truth to your life and hold onto God’s truth. In the end, by remaining in His Word, you will be equipped for spiritual battles that may come your way.

Adapted from Lauren Abraham (Grand Canyon University) by ALC elder Darryl Gunther

Day 2: Breastplate of Righteousness

Today is **Superhero Day!** Dress like your favorite superhero!

Bible Lesson Big Idea: The Breastplate of Righteousness protects our hearts from sin and allows us to be right with God.

Craft: Cardboard Breastplate

Mission: "Christmas In July" Candy Cane Poem Project

Game: Guard Your Heart

Worship Songs: "Nothing But the Blood" & "Because You First Loved Me"

Snack: Pretzel Hearts

Don't forget to email pictures and videos from your day to AscensionPghVBS@gmail.com.

Day 2 Bible Lesson

Video Lesson:



<https://youtu.be/zky1aiCiZKE>

Day 2 Craft: Cardboard Breastplate

Directions:

Use the duct tape and markers found in your Take Home Kit (or other supplies at home!) to decorate your own Breastplate of Righteousness. Make sure to write the word "righteousness" somewhere on the breastplate!

Video Tutorial:



<https://youtu.be/lne0nAqHkdQ>

Day 2 Mission Activity

Candy Cane Poem Project:

Make a poster or chalk drawing of the poem and take a picture to send. With parents' permission, record and email poem/pictures to AscensionPghVBS@gmail.com for playback at Concordia.

Video Directions:



<https://youtu.be/OeTusp7oRI4>

Day 2 Game: Guard Your Heart

Directions:

Using only a straw, move the candy hearts into a bowl as quickly as possible. Time yourself for a minute and find out how many you can move. Challenge your family members or friends! If you want a challenge, try using the larger purple candies or moving the bowl farther away!

Video Tutorial:



<https://youtu.be/2N6Wy85G6xk>

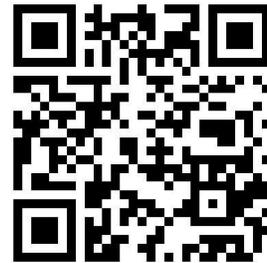
Day 2 Worship Songs

Songs:

“Nothing But the Blood”

“Because You First Loved Me”

VBS Song Recordings:



<http://ascensionpgh.com/virtual-vbs-2020/>

Day 2 Parent Devotion: The Breastplate of Righteousness

“Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, (Ephesians 6:13-14)

The second piece of the armor of God that Paul discusses in Ephesians 6 is the **breastplate of righteousness**.

In the armor of a Roman soldier, the breastplate served as protection for some of the most important parts of the body. Underneath the breastplate is the heart, lungs and other organs necessary for life. Therefore, if a soldier did not wear his breastplate, he was vulnerable to an attack that could result in instant death.

So, why does Paul call it the breastplate of righteousness? If we do not protect ourselves with righteousness, we open ourselves up to attack from the enemy and can fall into sin.

To be righteous means to obey God’s commandments and live in a way that is honorable to Him. Psalm 106:3 says, “How blessed are those who keep justice, who practice righteousness at all times!”

Unfortunately, our sinful nature often gets in the way of living an upright life. When we decide to live based on our own desires rather than God’s, we make decisions that are harmful to ourselves and others. Romans 8:6 says, “So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace.”

How can we put on the breastplate of righteousness? We can start by being knowledgeable of God’s Word, which will allow us to understand how to live a righteous life. When trials and temptation come our way, we can base our decisions in His Word.

In addition, through prayer, we can ask God to empower us to resist living in sin and to do what is right according to Him. 1 John 3:22 says, “And we will receive from Him whatever we ask because we obey and do the things that please Him.”

As Christians, we can put on the breastplate of righteousness in our daily lives. In becoming aware of the decisions we make, we can determine whether or not they are based in God’s Word. In addition, we can ask Him to give us the strength to live righteously. Ultimately, this will allow us to withstand attacks from the enemy and live in ways that glorify Christ.

Adapted from Lauren Abraham (Grand Canyon University) by ALC elder Darryl Gunther

Day 3:

Shoes of the Gospel of Peace

Today is **Crazy Sock Day!** Wear the wackiest socks you can find!

Bible Lesson Big Idea: We always need to be ready to share or defend the Gospel of Jesus to others.

Craft: Shoelaces of Peace

Mission: "Christmas In July" Candy Cane Project

Game: Easter Egg Hunt

Worship Songs: "Happy Day" & "This Little Gospel Light of Mine"

Snack: Cheddar Bunny Crackers

Don't forget to email pictures and videos from your day to AscensionPghVBS@gmail.com.

Day 3 Bible Lesson

Video Lesson:



<https://youtu.be/Il75pumYp2o>

Day 3 Craft: Shoelaces of Peace

Directions:

1. In the bag for today, you'll see two white shoelaces and some fabric markers. We would suggest getting a piece of cardboard and taping the shoelaces to the cardboard so that the shoelaces are easier to decorate, and so that the markers don't stain any of your clothes or furniture! Ask a parent to make sure you're set-up well before you begin!
2. You can decorate the shoelaces however you'd like! You can draw patterns, write your name or other words, or draw symbols like a cross. Be creative!

****Parent Note:** Crayola recommends ironing the colored fabric for 4 minutes or placing in the dryer for 30 minutes to set the color.

Video Tutorial:



https://youtu.be/LZDyaCtP_ns

Day 3 Mission Activity

Candy Cane Project:

Decorate the candy cane from your kit. Tell the story of the candy cane and why it should remind everyone of Jesus and His love for all of us.

Any completed projects can be dropped off at Ascension during weekday office hours from 9:00 am-4:00 pm in the bin marked "Completed Mission Projects" at the side entrance. Please turn in projects by **Thursday, July 23rd!**

Video Directions:



<https://youtu.be/7RIsDYB6SWc>

Day 3 Game: Easter Egg Hunt

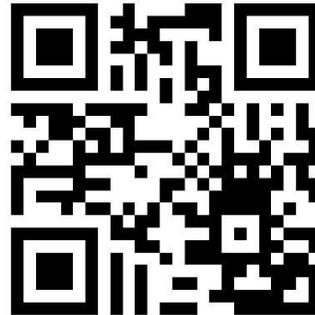
Directions:

1. Ask someone to hide the eggs found in your Take Home Kit.
2. Find your eggs (which should all be the same color so you know which ones are yours)! When you open them, you will find slips of paper with events from the Bible. Put the events in order of when they happened.
3. If you are playing with someone else, you could set it up like a race and see who could find all their eggs and put the cards in order correctly first!

Answer Key:

1. *Isaiah prophesied the coming of a Savior (Isaiah 53)*
2. *Jesus was born in Bethlehem (Luke 2:1-7)*
3. *Jesus rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday (Matthew 21:1-9)*
4. *Jesus has the Last Supper with His disciples (Mark 14:12-26)*
5. *Jesus was crucified (Luke 23:26-56)*
6. *Jesus is raised from the dead (Luke 24:1-12)*
7. *Jesus ascends into Heaven (Luke 24:50-53)*
8. *God sends the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-21)*

Video Tutorial:



<https://youtu.be/VTA2qFeGxSQ>

Day 3 Worship Songs

Songs:

“Happy Day”

“This Little Gospel Light of Mine”

VBS Song Recordings:



<http://ascensionpgh.com/virtual-vbs-2020/>

Day 3 Parent Devotion: The Shoes of the Gospel of Peace

Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. (Ephesians 6:13-15)

In Ephesians 6, Paul tells us to stand firm with our **feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace**.

It may seem strange to consider shoes to be part of your armor, but can you imagine going to battle shoeless? You would most likely be in pain with every step, as you pass over all kinds of harsh landscape. Ultimately, it would inhibit your ability to fight.

So, how can the gospel of peace be related to shoes? To start, we must understand what the gospel of peace is. The word “gospel” means “good news,” referring to the sacrifice Jesus made for us so that we can be saved. As a result, this brings us peace.

As Christians, we are called to share the good news of Christ with others. Having our shoes fitted with the gospel of peace allows us to do this successfully.

John 14:27 says, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” With God’s strength, we can be brave in sharing our faith with others. Jesus already defeated death, so we do not need to be afraid.

Our shoes equip us to walk through rough areas. In the same way, having hope in Jesus helps us walk through the trials we face. John 16:33 says, “I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

Just like having a good pair of shoes can help us walk across rough terrain, having confidence in Christ allows us to boldly proclaim His name. While we may face persecution in this life, we can rest in knowing the Savior of the world loves us and cares for us.

Having our feet fitted with the shoes of the gospel of peace, allows us to be ready to share God with others at all times. As Christians, we should always be prepared, as we never know when an opportunity may arise to share the good news of the gospel with someone else. Ultimately, the shoes of peace equip us to fight for Christ in the spiritual battles we face.

Adapted from Lauren Abraham (Grand Canyon University) by ALC elder Darryl Gunther

Day 4: Shield of Faith, Helmet of Salvation, and Sword of the Spirit

Today is **Crazy Hat Day!** Wear the craziest hat you can find!

Bible Lesson Big Idea: The shield protects our weaknesses. The helmet protects our thoughts. The sword guides us into Godly living.

Craft: PreK-2nd: Put on the Armor Doll / 3rd-6th: Coloring Sheet

Mission: Become a Prayer Warrior

Game: Foil Armor

Worship Songs: "All About Jesus" & "The B-I-B-L-E"

**Bonus Song: "Super Wonderful"

Snack: Granola Bars

Don't forget to email pictures and videos from your day to AscensionPghVBS@gmail.com.

Day 4 Bible Lesson

Video Lesson:



<https://youtu.be/T6jKkqWh9Cc>

Day 4 Craft: Put on the Armor Doll or Coloring Sheet

PreK-2nd Directions:

1. Use the markers in your Take Home Kit to color in the armor and the girl/boy.
2. Cut out the pieces of armor. You might want to ask someone in your family for help. You can then dress up the boy/girl with the pieces of armor!

3rd-6th Directions:

1. Color the detailed coloring sheet using the colored pencils we gave you in the kit, or you can use markers or crayons if you'd like! As you color, try to identify each piece of armor on the kneeling person.

Video Tutorial:



https://youtu.be/_081QRBk88s

Day 4 Mission Activity

Become a Prayer Warrior:
Use the blank piece of paper in your kit to write down things you want to pray for each day.

Video Directions:



<https://youtu.be/poMtos44osQ>

Day 4 Game: Foil Armor

Directions:
Using the aluminum foil found in your Take Home Kit, work with someone else in your family to make the following pieces of armor:

1. Belt of Truth
2. Breastplate of Righteousness
3. Shoes of the Gospel of Peace
4. Shield of Faith
5. Helmet of Salvation
6. Sword of the Spirit

Video Tutorial:

<https://youtu.be/Bh0J94FKAK8>

Day 4 Worship Songs

Songs:
"All About Jesus"
"The B-I-B-L-E"

**Bonus Song: "Super Wonderful"

VBS Song Recordings:



<http://ascensionpgh.com/virtual-vbs-2020/>

Day 4 Parent Devotion: The Shield, Helmet, and Sword

“In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people. (Ephesians 6:16-18)

The fourth piece of armor Paul discusses in Ephesians 6 is the **shield of faith**. He tells us to take up the shield of faith in order to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

For a Roman soldier, a shield was used as a form of protection. It was worn strapped to one’s arm and, at any time, it could be held up to deflect attacks. In addition, it could be used as an offensive weapon to knock enemies over with force.

What does it mean to have faith, and how can this be related to a shield?

Hebrews 11:1 says, “Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.” Faith is more than just a feeling. To have faith is to believe God created the world and sent His only Son to die for our sins so we might have eternal life.

As Christians, the faith we have in Christ is based in reality. Romans 1:20 says, “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.” Even though we cannot physically see God, He has manifested Himself through creation. Therefore, our faith in Him is based on this truth.

If we have faith in Christ, this will influence the way we live. Our faith can guard us during trials in the same way a shield would during battle. For example, when doubt creeps in and our beliefs are questioned, our faith in Christ will protect us. We can stand firm in knowing what we believe.

In addition, our faith can protect us when we experience anxiety and fear. Isaiah 41:10 says, “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous hand.” If we have faith in God’s promises, we do not need to fear.

It is important to realize that doubt, fear and anxiety are attacks from the enemy. Taking up the shield of faith will protect us and allow us to fight back against these attacks. In addition, as the body of Christ, we can help each other to grow stronger in our faith by living in community.

The **helmet of salvation** is another part of the armor of God that Paul discusses in Ephesians 6. In the Roman army, the helmet served as protection for the head. It was a vital piece of the armor, as an attack to the head could result in instant death.

For Christians, to receive salvation is to be delivered from our sins and the harmful consequences that come along with them. Jesus Christ paid the ultimate price by being crucified on the cross so that we might have eternal life if we believe in Him. The consequence we deserve is death, but Christ stood in for us out of His great love.

We can receive salvation if we confess our sins and believe in God's Word. John 5:24 says, "Very truly I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes Him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life." Salvation is not something we can work toward. Rather, it is a free gift we receive if we believe in God.

We can find peace when we acknowledge the sacrifice Christ made for us. While this world is corrupt and filled with sin, our salvation acts like a helmet in the way it protects our minds.

As Christians, we are not to be of this world. Romans 12:2 says, "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."

When we put on the helmet of salvation, we can avoid sinful thoughts and understand what is good and true. When we forget to do this, we are susceptible to thoughts that are planted in us by the enemy, who seeks to harm our walk with Christ.

You are encouraged to put on the helmet of salvation in your daily life so that you may be confident in Christ. Remember that in order to keep it secured, we must fully submit to His ways. When God is on our side, there is no battle we cannot face in this world.

The last piece of armor that Paul discusses in Ephesians 6 is the **sword of the Spirit**, which represents the Word of God. For a Roman soldier, the sword served as an offensive weapon against enemies. When sharpened, the sword could pierce through just about anything, making it a very dangerous tool.

To understand the connection between the sword and the Word of God, it is first important to understand the power of God's Word. Hebrews 4:12 says, "For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."

Through God's Word, we can distinguish between right and wrong. As a result, we can strive to live in a way that is free from sin. His Word is the ultimate truth, and we can find confidence in knowing it is our greatest weapon.

If we are lacking in knowledge of God's Word, we will struggle to fight against the enemy. However, those who seek God's Word and abide by it will be blessed. John 5:24 says, "Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes Him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life."

In addition, the sword of the spirit is unique in that it can be used as both a defensive and offensive tool. While God's Word can protect us from the lies of the enemy, it can also counter attacks. For example, Jesus used God's Word as an offensive weapon in Matthew 4 when Satan tried to test Him in the wilderness.

So, how can we use the sword of the spirit in our lives? We are not meant to keep the knowledge we gain from God's Word to ourselves. When we are asked to defend what we believe, we can use God's Word to point back to Him.

Sometimes, it is not easy to take up our swords and fight against the enemy. However, we are not called to do this by our own strength. When facing trials, we can find peace in knowing that God is on our side. Romans 8:31 says, "What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?"

You are encouraged to take up the sword of the spirit in your daily life. Remember that God's Word is the ultimate truth and that we can stand on His promises. With God on our side, we are unstoppable.

Adapted from Lauren Abraham (Grand Canyon University) by ALC elder Darryl Gunther