

To Parents/Carers,

Hello 🙏 How are you getting on? As mentioned on Sunday, we will be sending out something for you to do with your children weekly, in the absence of Kids Church and this is this week's offering! Our hope is that it will provide a bit of a base for you to work from and that most of it can be done through conversation over a mealtime. We've tried to make something not too screen-heavy, as I'm sure many of us are trying to limit this. I think it's a good idea for you to have a quick read of it before settling down to go through it, as you might want to make your own adjustments to suit your children/ignore some of the ideas you don't want to have to deal with...

Also, you've probably already thought about this and seized the opportunity to help/make 😊 your kids get into a daily Bible reading routine. We all know it should be a priority, but we also know how many other things are fighting for our attention daily and get in the way. Speaking from experience, we had a good habit when the kids were little, they started to maintain their own and then, about 2 years ago, because we as parents dropped the ball, we realised 3 of our 4 (no names, that's tight), had got out of the daily habit and were much more relaxed about reading their Bibles. So, in our house, we've laid down some more rules to get them back into the habit in the hope that it will become their own again.

Below are some of the books we've used along the way with our lot. Obviously, there are hundreds of alternatives out there, so I'd encourage you to have a gander and choose something for yours if you haven't already 😊

For under 4s- we just read to them from Children's Bible books.

For 4-12yr olds (ish) 'Table Talk' – a series of Bible discovery books for families to do together. The idea is that each one takes about 5 minutes and is ideal to do at tea-time.

For 7-10yr olds-' XTB' (eXploreTheBible)- a series of daily Bible reading notes with puzzles, pictures and prayers.

For 11-13yr olds 'Discover'- a series of daily Bible reading notes with puzzles/tasks.

For 14-21yr olds 'Engage'- a series of daily Bible reading notes!

Salford Elim Kids Church

The Armour of God Ephesians 6:10-20.

GAME: With your household, think of all the kinds of safety equipment or protective equipment or clothing you use, or know of. For example: a firefighter will wear specialist protection, safety goggles for a science experiment, a seat belt in a car... Maybe start with one person and then go onto the next, no repetition allowed and whoever pauses or can't think of something, they are out and see who can keep going the longest! NO GOOGLE. 😊

For those of you with younger children, they'll probably be familiar with things like car seats and stair gates, so just adapt your conversation to teach them a bit more about other safety equipment you think they will understand.

DISCUSS: Why do we need and use safety equipment? Share your answers.

Safety equipment isn't worn by those not needing it. The equipment means things can be done safely and stay protected whilst doing them. If a firefighter didn't have the right gear, fires would be left to burn and spread even more danger. Sometimes staying safe, isn't about avoiding things, but making sure we are kitted out and ready to do the job.

BIBLE BIT: In **Ephesians 6 v10-20**, Paul tells us about 'The Armour of God'. He mentions 6 pieces of battle-wear.

The armour God has given us, is the spiritual safety equipment that we need in order to live out our job as Christians. Just as a soldier is in a battle, Paul tells us that we are in a spiritual battle against the devil, his schemes and forces.

- Watch https://youtu.be/o7eC-W_XNyw and listen out for the 6 pieces. *(Have someone read the passage above if you can't watch the video.)*
- Can you name the 6 pieces of armour? Ask older children if they think they use all the pieces of armour already? Is there any that they think are 'harder to put on'?
- How do you think each piece of armour helps you to do your job as a disciple of Jesus? *(Try to give an example for each)*

READ: verses 18-20 to your household. If you have younger children, use a Good News version and explain any bits you think they will need help with.

Notice Paul says: '**And pray...**' Wearing the right gear isn't enough. If we are to do our job in battling the devil and his lies with the truth, if we are to guard our hearts through doing what is right in God's eyes and asking God's forgiveness when we mess up, if we are to tell others the good news of Jesus' salvation and stand firm, if we are to use our faith in Jesus to defend ourselves, if we are to fill our thoughts with the knowledge of our salvation through Jesus (and of Jesus himself) and if we are to attack the enemy with God's very own words (The Bible) we need to know it first, so we can quote it and **we need to PRAY**. Praying keeps us soldiers in touch with our Commanding Officer.

NOW WHAT?

During this weird time of being stuck at home, no school, no trips to the park or even to anyone else's house, how do we put this into practice? There is always more to know about God and the opportunity to get to know Him more. We should carry on reading our Bibles or maybe use this time to start a new habit of doing so, so that we can strengthen our armour and keep ready for battle.

- Can you think of any ways that you can show or tell people about Jesus when you can't meet up with them?
- If you didn't know God, and were on lockdown, what might help you find out about him?

How often do you pray? Maybe you could pray as a household, if you don't already. Paul asks us to 'stay alert and always keep praying for all the Lord's people'. Praying helps us be alert to what God might be asking us to do or who might need our help.

PRAY: Ask each person what they'd like to pray about and one or two of you pray out loud. Think about all the things you can be thankful for right now. Think about those you know are unwell right now. Think about those working for the NHS and the protective equipment they need. Think about asking God to give you His spirit to strengthen you to be ready to tell anyone you can about Jesus.

For younger children, consider using a dice to help engage them. You could ask them to roll it and if they roll a 1, they thank God for 1 thing, rolling 2 = 2 things, 3=3 things, etc. Then change the action of the prayer to something like 'who to pray for'- 1 = 1 person, 2 = 2 people, etc.

GET CREATIVE: As a household consider doing any of the following:

- Make a poster displaying the Armour of God and informing what each piece is and what it does.
- Make a video of some sort either using your poster, or other drawings/creations to explain the Armour of God.
- Raid the recycling bins (safely) and make the armour, kit a member of your household out in the armour any way you can. You could even video the finished article with spoken explanations of each piece of armour. (We'd love to see it.)
- Watch this song, sing along and even share your household's version on Beyond Sunday...(please?)
<https://youtu.be/M3FqKD98FiQ>

SHARE: Let others (perhaps others in your Connect Group, Homegroup or on Beyond Sunday) know how you got on. Any interesting thoughts, questions or answers? Any funny pictures or creative outcomes?

I hope you enjoy doing this together. It might not always be easy but, in time, hopefully as we all get used to it, we will be able to give and get more from it.

Morag