

The Armor of God – Pray

Ready (*Plant the seed*)

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. 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. Ephesians 6:14-18a

Set (*Get the conversation started*)

After God has equipped us with all the armor and a sword to enter battle with, He tells us to do one last thing: pray. Soldiers don't go into battle without a plan. They consult with their commander and formulate a plan of attack against the enemy and protection for themselves. Jesus is your commander. When you pray, you connect to your commander and can formulate a plan for anything you may come up against. God tells us to pray "on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests." This means that you can present anything to God through prayer: requests for help, thankfulness for His work in your life and help for others. Scripture tells us that God hears our prayers and will answer them. We should pray in all times: before battle, during battle and after. God will equip us for battle against the temptation to sin, he will strengthen us during battle and encourage us after.

In the NFL, players are connected to their coaches through headsets in their helmets. Other sports connect with their coaches on the sidelines. Players formulate a plan and create plays with the guidance of their coaches to be ready for what will happen in the game. Just as your coaches know a lot about your sport and you can trust their experience, you can bring your concerns and requests to God because he knows everything! You can rely on your coaches for direction in your sport and you can rely on God for His guidance in your life, but you have to connect to Him through prayer. Prayer is how we talk to God. Just think if you couldn't talk to your coaches! How would you communicate? How would you know what to do next in your game? Reading God's word and speaking to Him through prayer is how we protect and prepare ourselves for battle against sin.

Grow (*Talk it over*)

- Why is it important to listen to your coach's instruction during a game?
- How often should we pray?
- Besides prayer, what else is important to help protect us in the war against sin?

Pray

Father God, we come to you in prayer to speak with you, to be close to you and to love you. God, we are so thankful for your word that guides us, teaches us, corrects us and encourages us. As we go out this week, we remember that you know all that has happened and all that will happen. We can go with confidence knowing that you will protect us and strengthen us in the battle against the temptation to sin. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Overtime (*Optional reinforcement game as time allows*) Telephone.

Have players sit in a circle and whisper a tongue twister into the ear of one player. They then will whisper into the ear of the player next to them. When it gets to the last player, they say what they heard out loud. How close is it to the original? Play a few times. Example: If a dog chews shoes, whose shoes does he choose? Four fine fresh fish find flashy finned friends. I wish to wash whales with wild wrist watches.

After say: *Great job everyone! Some of us got a bit mixed up, didn't we? When we talk to God, though, we can be sure that he always hears just what we mean. Scripture tells us that God knows what we need even before we ask! He knows our hearts already so when we come to him in prayer, we can be confident that he understands what we want and need.*