

The Armor of God – Breastplate of Righteousness

Ready (*Plant the seed*)

Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place... Ephesians 6:14

Set (*Get the conversation started*)

This season we are learning how to put on the armor of God to help us fight against the temptation to sin. Last week we learned how the belt of truth will prepare us for battle by helping us to recognize what is the right thing to do. This week we add the breastplate of righteousness. Roman soldiers in biblical times wore a breastplate to protect their heart, lungs and other vital organs from damage during battle much like our police officers wear bullet proof vests today. Righteousness means putting truth into action. Now that you know what the right thing to do is, you must do it, be an example to others and stand up to injustice.

Are there any professional athletes that you look up to? Why do you follow them? (*take some answers*) Most of the athletes that you get excited about are leaders in their sports. Just as you look to these great athletes as examples for who you may want to be like, younger athletes will look to you. The problem with following leaders is that they can sometimes lead you down the wrong path. When you arm yourself with the belt of truth (God's word), you will be better equipped to see that wrong path. Putting on the breastplate of righteousness means standing up for what you believe is true and being able to choose the right path when others don't. If someone on your team encourages you to cheat or go against what your coach asks you to do, you have a choice to either follow them down the wrong place or "stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place" as scripture tells us. You are an example to those who come behind you. Be a leader that guides people down the right path.

Grow (*Talk it over*)

- Does a professional athlete's actions off the field matter?
- Who do you influence as a young athlete?
- What do you want your behavior on and off the field show others?

Pray

Father God, we thank you for your word that guides us and puts us on the right path. Your word helps us to see what is right and stand against what is wrong. This week let our behavior point to you, God, and show those that come behind us how to be leaders that follow Christ's example for us in righteousness. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Overtime (*optional game for reinforcement*) Follow the Leader

Directions: Players stand in a circle. Select a leader to start. The leader starts an action. All of the players must mimic the action. The player who does it last is out, as well as any players that do it wrong. You can increase difficulty by including a ball. Play as time allows or until there are only 3 players left. Select a new leader each round.

After the game discuss: Great job everyone! How well were you able to follow the leaders? Was it easy? Did you wonder if what they were doing was wrong or right, or did you simply follow their example? In life, we have to remember to take the time to stop and think if what the person we are following is leading us down the right path.