

The Sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17)

Getting started:

Allow each person to introduce themselves (if needed) and share “high, low, buffalo.” (**High**= something good from the week, **Low**=something not good from the week, **Buffalo**=something surprising from the week, or something random). *Note: Anyone can choose to pass and not participate.*

Expect to experience God in prayer:

Pray together, asking God to open hearts to see his holiness and mercy in making atonement for sin.

Expect to experience God in fellowship:

Choose either the ice breaker activity or the Conversation Starter:

Icebreaker: Opposites

The leader will call out a word, and anyone can blurt out the opposite:

Hello	Day	True	Fast
Complex	Easy	Dull	Early
Forget	Dark	Conflict	Doubt
Revere	Moral	Mortal	Loving
Indifference	Revenge	Evil	Righteous

The goal of this game was to serve as a reminder that every word we speak can be positive or negative, godly or ungodly.

Conversation Starter:

- How many of you were told as a child, “If you don’t have anything nice to say, then don’t say anything at all?”
- How many of you have heard the expression, “Open mouth, insert foot”?
- What does that expression mean?
- How many of you have done that before?
- Would anyone like to share an example of when they did that, and what they learned?

Expect to experience God by reading and discussing God’s Word together:

Background:

The book of Ephesians was written by the apostle Paul in approximately 60-62 AD while he was imprisoned in Rome. Paul wrote this letter for God’s holy people, among whom were the believers of Ephesus. The purpose of the letter was to identify ourselves in Christ, walk in God’s likeness, and stand against the devil’s schemes.

To stand against the devil’s schemes, we are to be strong in the Lord by putting on the full armor of God. Today, we are going to dive into the sword of the Spirit as one part of the full armor of God.

Discussion Questions (choose from these questions to discuss as a group):

The Sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17)

1. Read Ephesians 6:17 Together

In Ephesians 6:17, Paul encouraged believers to use “The Sword of the Spirit” to protect them and the unity of the church. Paul also clarified that the sword of the Spirit is the word of God.

- What is the sword of the Spirit?

2. Read Hebrews 4:12

- What is the word of God?

If the sword of the Spirit represents the word of God, and the word of God is God himself, then Paul was indicating that we should defend ourselves by using God's truth, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This implies that the sword is symbolized by our mouth; it's what we choose to speak. We are called to proclaim God's truth.

3. Let's back up for a minute. Read John 14:16-17

- What is the Holy Spirit?

4. Read Ephesians 1:13-14

- Who has the Holy Spirit within them?

The Holy Spirit was given to us to guide, teach, advocate, empower, transform, comfort, and convict us. This gift includes the fruits of the Spirit, which are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23)

5. Read Ephesians 6:10-12

- Who are we fighting against?

6. Read 1 Peter 5:8, John 8:44, 10:10

- What are the devil's schemes? Many people unknowingly do Satan's bidding. Can you think of a time when a friend or family member lied to you, stole from you, or hurt you? How did you handle the situation? Would you change anything if you could go back?

7. Read Genesis 3:1-5

- How did Satan mislead Adam and Eve? Consider a time when someone attempted to deceive you. Were you prepared? How did you know you were being lied to?

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8. Read Matthew 4:1-11

- How did Satan try to mislead Jesus during his time in the desert? What are some practical ways you can practice being in this world, but not of it? What does it mean to feed yourself spiritually? Do you have any idols that steal your time and attention from doing this?

9. Read Psalm 64:2-3 and Proverbs 12:18

So, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we are to speak God's truth. With this great privilege comes great responsibility.

- Why is the Sword of the Spirit such a great responsibility? What is the correct response when we find ourselves guilty of lying, deceiving, or hurting another with our words?

Additional Optional Discussion Questions:

1. Consider how arguments start. What are some examples of why?
2. Consider what causes a war to start. What are some possible motives?
3. Read James 4:1, Ephesians 4:31-32, Matthew 5:9, 2 Timothy 2:24-25
What can we do to avoid conflict and help prevent arguments and wars?

Readiness Check (a simple way to add intentionality to your daily spiritual preparation):

- Read the Bible
- Praise the Lord for the gift of the Holy Spirit
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to bless you with God's word to defend yourself against the devil's schemes or to bless others, and the discernment to recognize the appointed time for either.

Expect to experience God by closing in prayer together:

Pray for awareness of the power of our words, and that we would listen for the Holy Spirit's guidance before we speak. When we must speak, let it be Your words, not ours. When we do not need to speak, please help us to remain silent. In times of defending our faith or in spiritual battles, we pray that the Holy Spirit bless us with power and discernment to recognize Satan's schemes and equip us with an adequate response.