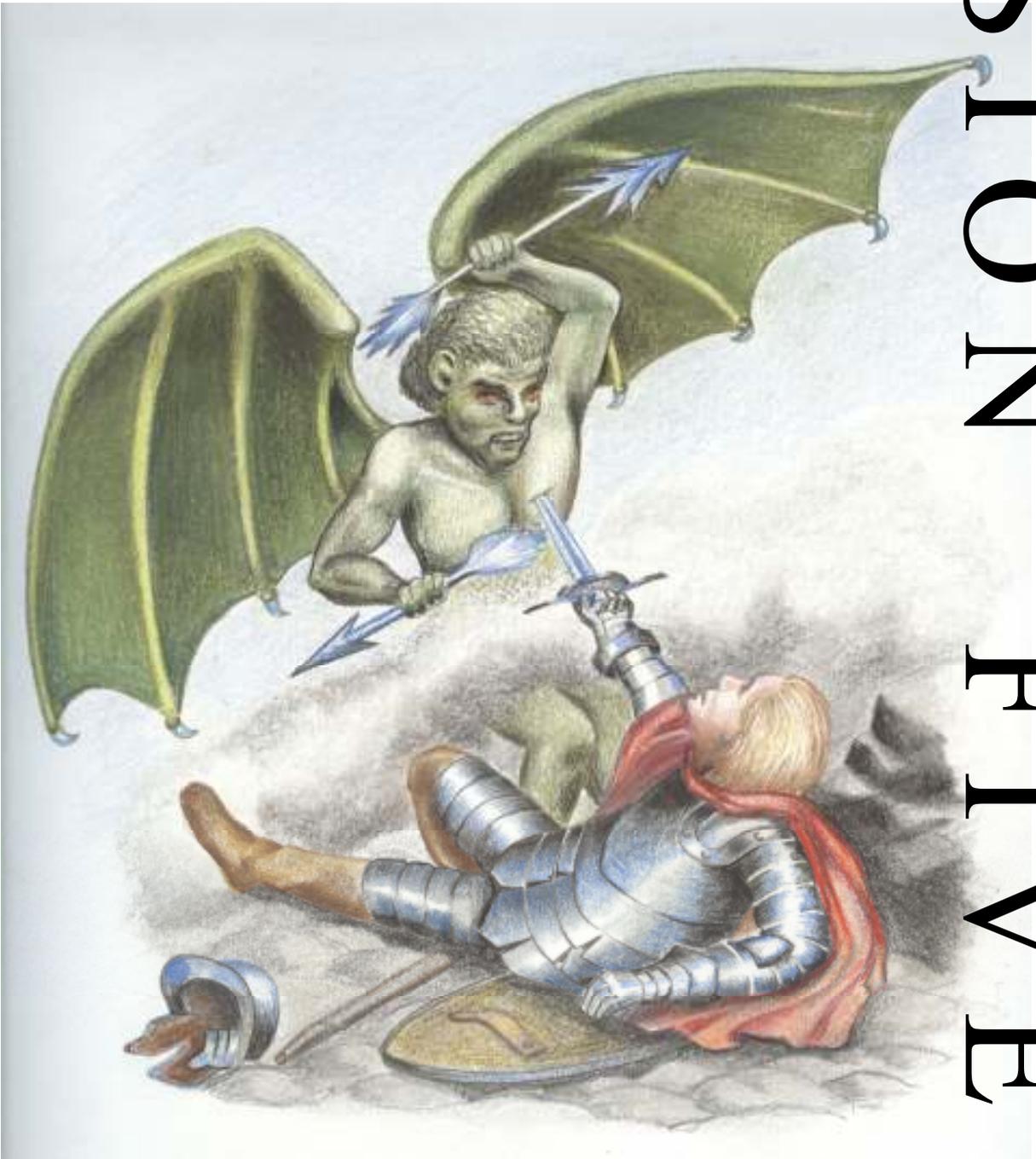


Apollyon



SESSION FIVE

SESSION FIVE

Outline: Apollyon

MAIN POINTS:

Pick out the main points in chapter 5. You can use the ones I provide, but feel free to change some of them to relate better to you and your group. Prepare the flipchart as directed.

WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER FROM LAST TIME?

FAITH AND TRUST

FINISH THE STORY ABOUT SLEEPING LIONS

WHAT DO YOU THINK THE STORY MAY BE SAYING TO US?

THE STORY CONTINUES

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE HAVE TO SAY?

A ROMAN SOLDIER'S ARMOUR AND THE PILGRIM'S ARMOUR

DRAMA FIVE: APOLLYON

SOME QUESTIONS

THE MOST IMPORTANT TRUTH TO REMEMBER is to put on the full armour of God and be prepared to stand firm against evil and injustice.

FOR YOUR TRAVEL GUIDE: Bible verses from Ephesians 6

COMPLETE THE STORY

PREPARE BEFOREHAND:

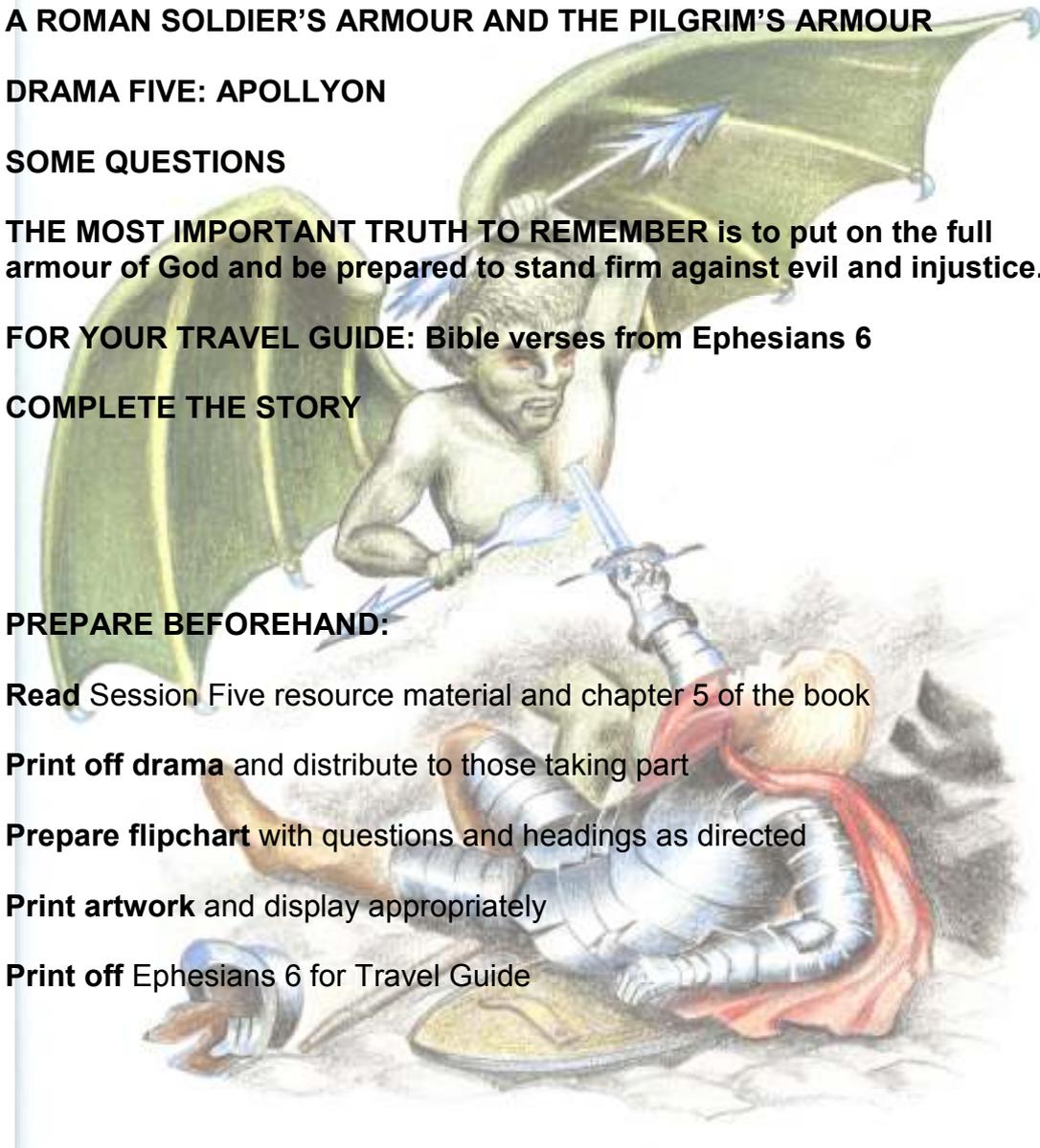
Read Session Five resource material and chapter 5 of the book

Print off drama and distribute to those taking part

Prepare flipchart with questions and headings as directed

Print artwork and display appropriately

Print off Ephesians 6 for Travel Guide



Session Five: Apollyon

WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER FROM LAST TIME?

A few questions: *(Use flipchart and prepare questions beforehand)*

Can anyone remember what the last session was about?

Sleeping Lions

What made Christian fearful?

He had to walk past some very fierce and hungry lions

Why was Faithful not afraid of the lions?

He knew the lions were chained

Can you remember what Christian's friend, Faithful, was encouraging him to do?

Have faith

FAITH AND TRUST:

We talked a lot last time about having **faith** and **trust** and realised that faith was a gift from God and all we had to do was ask and receive it.

(Show list from last time and ask for any comments or questions)

You were given a little prayer card to help you if you wanted to.

FINISH STORY ABOUT SLEEPING LIONS:

Before we move on to the session for today, let me finish the story about the sleeping lions.

Christian, after finding faith to pass the lions, discovers he has lost his Scroll. He knows he cannot enter the Golden City without it, so immediately starts to run back, calling to Faithful to go on without him.

He passes the lions, which once more bounded to the full extent of their chains, and he wasn't one bit afraid. He went back still further...till he could faintly see the three crosses on the Hill.

Daylight was fading fast and the darkness was threatening. The Scroll was such a small thing and he hoped he would be able to find it before a rat chewed it or someone took it.

Christian finds the bench where he had slept and looks hard to see if he can find the Scroll. He gets down on his hands and knees and worms his way under the bench to the place he fell asleep. There it is, pale in the darkness, cool and crisp under the touch of his hand. He hugs it to him, doing a little jig of delight under the tree.

WHAT MAY THIS PART OF THE STORY BE SAYING TO US?

(Ask for suggestions and add to flipchart)

We all make mistakes

We lose precious things and don't always value them enough

Anything else?

CHRISTIAN LOST SOMETHING VERY SIGNIFICANT:

Remind them of the Scroll and what it represented

Remind them that Christian had lost his Scroll

Who of us hasn't lost something precious given to us by God and perhaps not valued enough?

Can you suggest some of the precious gifts given to us by God that perhaps we don't value enough or, like Christian, are in danger of losing?

Promises of God found in the Guidebook (the Bible)

(Maybe take time to look at these promises and help the group understand the significance of them. This may be an opportunity to look more closely at the promise of salvation which is mentioned later)

It's always good to go back to the cross....to remember again just how much God loves us.

John 3:16 (NIV)

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him, will not die but have everlasting life.”

Like Christian, we may have lost the gift of faith (like his Scroll) but it is never too late to look for it again.

The Guidebook says, “You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all your heart.” Jeremiah 29:13 (NIV)

THE STORY CONTINUES

(Perhaps get someone else to read this part, just for a change of voice)

Christian searched and found the precious promise, the Scroll, the means by which he will enter the Golden City. He nearly lost it!

He now knows he was foolish to fall asleep and remembers that the Preacher told him not to. He promises himself, “I will never fall asleep again, but be watchful and keep awake!” But there is no one to witness this vow but the rolling silver moon floating over Lucre Hill and the startled lions roaring themselves hoarse as he passes by, their collars chaffing their thick manes.

Within a couple of hours Christian is back at the armoury door, knocking for all his might, but hardly daring to hope that anyone would open the door to him at this late hour. The countryside around was littered with bandits and villains; people were afraid to open their doors late at night.

A small shutter slides back in the door, and a small freckled nose protrudes through it. “You’re very late,” said a woman’s voice. “We were starting to worry about you.”

Christian, expecting to find some battle-hardened war veteran to be in charge, finds the armoury is the home of three quiet, amiable girls: Prudence, Patience and Charity, who give him a delicious supper and show him to a bedroom, where Faithful is already sleeping.

The room is called Peace and there the Pilgrims have the deepest, most delectable sleep they have ever had. They awaken refreshed and ready for the next part of the journey.

Leader: *(Take up the story from here)*

Next day they are taken into the workshop full of brightly shining breastplates, helmets, swords and all kinds of armour. They are told to put on their armour for the journey ahead.

Christian wants a back-plate as well, but is told very sternly, that he would be lost if he turned his back on the enemy.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE HAVE TO SAY?

In the Bible, in a book called Ephesians, we read about the armour of God. The Apostle Paul, who wrote this book, would have been very familiar with the Roman soldiers and the armour they wore, as he would have met them on his travels and seen them in Jerusalem.

He dictated this letter to the church in Ephesus when he was chained to a soldier by the wrist.

So he uses his knowledge and likens the soldier’s armour to help us understand how we need to equip ourselves if we are to be properly prepared to face the battle between good and evil.

A ROMAN SOLDIER’S ARMOUR AND THE PILGRIM’S ARMOUR

*(Get someone to read **Ephesians 5:10-18**, but tell the group to listen carefully, as it will give them some clues about the armour we may need)*

(Use flipchart and make two columns as shown below)

A Roman Soldier’s Armour	The Pilgrim’s Armour
Belt Breastplate Shoes Shield Helmet Sword	Belt of Truth Breastplate of Righteousness Shoes of Peace Shield of Faith Helmet of Salvation Sword of the Spirit

(Using the information below, go down the list commenting on the similarities and the differences, and explain the significance of what Paul is saying to us)

- **Belt** - a leather belt that gathered the tunic together and held the sword. As it buckled, it gave the soldier a sense of strength and confidence, a bit like belt and braces do!
- **Belt of truth** - confidence in the truth as revealed by Jesus Christ. Truth that is sincere, honest and has integrity. The opposite of deceit.
- **Breastplate** - a protection for the vital organs.
- **Breastplate of righteousness** - protection comes from a right relationship with God; knowing that we have been saved by God’s grace. It also gives protection against self doubt, etc.
- **Shoes** - equipped the soldier for long marches.
- **Shoes of Peace** - your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace, shoes with indestructible soles that will never wear out wherever the journey takes them.
- **Shield** – was about three feet long and protected against flaming arrows.
- **Shield of Faith** - protection against all sorts of ‘flaming arrows’. The promises of Jesus act like a shield to protect us in times of temptation, doubt and fear.
- **Helmet** - a very strong protection for the head.
- **Helmet of Salvation** - confirmation that we have already received God’s forgiveness and are part of His family, and that we have the greatest Father of all to protect us.
- **Sword** - is used for both defence and attack.
- **Sword of the Spirit** - God’s word, the Bible

**Look at the picture of Christian fighting Apollyon:
Is he is kitted out correctly?**

(Ask them what pieces of armour they recognise from the previous list.

There is something missing? The belt!

See if they notice that.

Explain it must have been pulled off and is lying under Christian attached to his sword which is on the ground)

Now that Christian and Faithful have their armour on, they are ready to continue on their journey and meet Apollyon.

This short drama tells the story.

SESSION FIVE

DRAMA: APOLLYON

Cast: Narrator, Christian, Faithful, Apollyon

Narrator: (*Setting the Scene*)

As they begin their journey again, kitted out with their armour and looking every bit soldiers of the King, Christian and Faithful believe themselves ready for any encounter with the enemy.

As they chat together, Christian is very aware that he has made lots of mistakes on the way and thinks that Faithful has got everything right. He is encouraged when Faithful tells him of his own experiences, which are very different from Christian's, but still may have resulted in him giving up his journey to the Golden City and settling for a life of apparent slavery, instead of freedom.

This makes Christian feel much better and he is beginning to think he hasn't done too badly after all.

Christian is thinking to himself...

Christian:

In fact, all in all, I've done pretty well to get this far. Here I am, cutting a dash in the Armour of Salvation, with the Great Bog and the Hill behind me, my Scroll safe in my pocket, and the Golden City practically in sight.

Narrator:

He hears Faithful behind him give a strangled cry but, with his ears covered by the helmet, Christian mistook it for a sneeze. When Faithful passed him running, Christian admired his energy, but he did not think to start running himself.

When he sees the monster loping towards him across the plain, it is too late to run, his legs will not obey him.

The monster has wings like a dragon, feet like a bear, and the mouth of a lion. It is covered from head to toe in shining fish scales and fire and smoke issue out of its navel with a noise like a blacksmith's bellows.

Narrator:

Apollyon enters, puffing and blowing.

Apollyon:

Stand still pretty subject. Stand still and name yourself!
Are you not some runaway slave of mine?

Narrator:

Christian stood stock still. Although Faithful is still in view, running for his life, the monster pays him no attention; it seems interested only in Christian, bestriding the path ahead of him, barring his way forward.

Christian: (*in small quaking voice*)

It's true that once upon a time I used to serve a master something like you, but my name is Christian now and my new master is the King of this land!

Narrator:

Apollyon tosses his hideous head and paws the ground.

Apollyon:

Exactly as I said, my subject. I am Apollyon. This land is mine. I rule it. Therefore anyone inside its borders is my subject.

Christian: *(feeling frightened)*

Then I must be on my way out of your land, sir, as fast as my legs will carry me, because I am bound for the City of Gold.

Apollyon: *(smiling and drawing in his claws)*

A wise king values his subjects and wants to keep them at his right hand. Don't go. Stay....and serve ME.

Christian:

I don't like the wages you pay, or the job prospects.

Apollyon:

Then I will pay you better. Indeed, I may even share with you some of my power. What do you say?

Christian: *(his fingers closing round his sword)*

I fight now under a different banner and you have no power against the forces of my King.

Apollyon: *(sneeringly)*

Oh, but consider, Christian....consider what a failure you have been as a Pilgrim. What are your chances of winning through to the end? You fall into bogs; you who fall asleep when you should be praying; you who forget the instructions of your commander.

Christian:

All that is true, but my new King forgives me and for that I will never leave his service.

Narrator:

The heat within Apollyon seethed and bubbled and his scales clicked.

Apollyon:

When you deserted wickedness, you deserted me....didn't you? And for that I will spill your soul.

Narrator:

Christian knew there was nothing left but to unsheathe his sword and fight the beast until his last breath.

And we know it almost comes to that....After a dreadful battle, Christian thrusts his sword into Apollyon, who soars into the air and diminishes to the size of a raven, flapping away over the landscape. Christian falls back, his strength exhausted.

(End of drama)

(If you want a more detailed account, you can read it on pages 58-60 of the book)

SOME QUESTIONS:

(This first question, you may or may not want to include)

What does the name Apollyon mean?

It means 'the destroyer' and in early Christian literature was the name for the devil.

Who or what do you think Apollyon represents?

All kinds of evil

(Make a list on flipchart of what they consider to be the evils of our day)

What is this part of the story saying to us?

As Pilgrims, or Christian soldiers, we are called to stand against all the evil things in our world and to fight for justice and freedom

THE MOST IMPORTANT TRUTH TO REMEMBER is to put on the full armour of God and be prepared to stand firm against evil and injustice.

FOR YOUR TRAVEL GUIDE: Ephesians 6 (NIV)

Be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the full armour of God. Stand firm then, with the Belt of Truth; Breastplate of Righteousness; your feet fitted with the Gospel of Peace; the Shield of Faith; the Helmet of Salvation and the Sword of the Spirit.

COMPLETE THE STORY FOR THIS SESSION:

After Apollyon has gone, Faithful runs over to Christian, bringing with him some leaves he has plucked from the Tree of Life, leaves that will bring healing.

Faithful tells Christian he was magnificent, but Christian feels it was his stupid pride that had drawn Apollyon to him.

As they recuperate under the tree, Preacher comes along and tells them both that they have done well, but now is the time for one of them to end his journey and the other to go on.

They are distressed about this as they had planned to journey together, but the Preacher tells them they are coming to a place full of trouble and danger. One of them will be asked 'to pay the fare' and speed ahead by the only quick route to the Golden City.

They don't quite understand what the Preacher is saying and start checking to see if they have enough money for the fare. But the Preacher assures them that either of them could muster the price, but that this particular price is paid in blood.

“So rise up Pilgrims! The time has come for one of you to die.”

And there we must leave them until next time....

SESSION FIVE

SESSION 5: APOLLYON

Ephesians 6:11, 13-17 NIV

**Be strong in the Lord
and in His mighty power
Put on the
full ARMOUR OF GOD
Stand firm then with the
BELT of TRUTH
BREASTPLATE
of RIGHTEOUSNESS
Your FEET fitted with
the GOSPEL of PEACE
the SHIELD of FAITH
the HELMET of SALVATION
the SWORD of the SPIRIT**

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