



Together
For His
Kingdom

2017 NORTH AMERICAN MISSION STUDY for Children

Strong in the Lord

Study Overview

Imagine a home where there is no Bible. No one knows the song, “Jesus Loves the Little Children.” Sunday is just another day. Perhaps you grew up in such a home. The picture such scenarios paint are becoming more and more common in our post-Christian society. You have an opportunity to lead children in your church and community to know God and His plan of salvation, and that cannot be taken for granted. The overall theme for this year’s Week of Prayer for North American Missions and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering® is “Together for His Kingdom.” You are a key partner in your role as a children’s leader in your church. You are investing in future generations today.

You may have children in your study who have grown up in the church and consider it natural to pray, learn the Bible and participate in church and in missions. You may also have children who are not well versed in church culture or practice. The theme for this children’s study is “Strong in the Lord.” If you have children who do not have an essential tool for becoming strong in the Lord—a Bible, consider purchasing and providing a Bible for each child who does not have one as part of this study.

The video segment for the study, “Strong in the Lord” focuses on the Parrish family. Serving in Fort Collins, Colorado, near Denver, Kelly and Brandi Parrish have had to be brave and courageous in forging a path for a new church plant in their community. They have not only made great sacrifices to serve, but so have their children. Every family member serves together in the ministry. Missionary Kids (MKs) make sacrifices, too. As you lead this study, help children connect with the reality that God provides for adults and children in missionary families. God uses the smallest and the tallest to accomplish His work.

Ephesians 6:10-18 outlines what is required to be strong in the Lord. The armor is protective gear, and we need it to be strong against our enemy. Children can understand that there is good and evil in the world, and that even in their own hearts and minds they struggle with making good decisions over bad ones.

Knowing what the Bible says about that helps us make the good decisions that honor and please God. When we follow Jesus, He helps us to know right from wrong, and one of the best ways we know Jesus is through the Bible.

Southern Baptist church planting missionaries like Kelly and Brandi Parrish focus their efforts on connecting with people who don’t have a relationship with Jesus and little to no church background. They have started Living Rock Church in Fort Collins, and it has not been easy. Prior to moving to Colorado, the Parrishes lived in Texas, where they were part of a healthy, growing church. Their children, Zach, Noah, Joshua and Anna Faith loved their church and community. In the video, children will learn that Zach had to leave his beloved baseball team when he moved. He could do so because he knew God was going to take care of him and his family—he knew he could be strong in the Lord in the face of change. One way God provided is through the monetary gifts from Southern Baptist churches like yours to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering.

God is working through the Parrishes to share His love with children and their families in Fort Collins. It may not be easy, but following God is always worth the struggles.

Prepare for the study

- For overall promotion of the North American missions emphasis to your entire church, order the free North American Missions Emphasis theme poster, Annie Armstrong Easter Offering envelopes and prayer guides from your state WMU office. Ordering information can be found at AnnieArmstrong.com/statewmu.
- Work with missions leaders and other church leaders to plan aspects of the study, such as scheduling, scope and promotion. Encourage these leaders to enlist other church members to take ownership by helping in the planning and implementation of the study. You may choose to do the study as a special event or incorporate it into an existing meeting or group setting.



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- Publicize the study through church bulletins, social media, church-wide announcements, newsletters, etc.
- Pray for the outcome—that children will be inspired as they learn about missions efforts in North America and will eagerly support through prayer for, giving to, and encouragement of, those who are serving as missionaries and church planters with the North American Mission Board (NAMB).
- Consider enlisting an outside speaker, such as a North American missionary, to lead or contribute to the study. Perhaps your church is already connected to a planter who could share specifically about his efforts. For the children's study, consider having an MK (former or current) share about their participation in a missionary family.
- Explore AnnieArmstrong.com for resources to enhance the learning experience for your church, such as bonus video segments, promotional materials, information on the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, supplemental materials and more.
- Download the study materials and video segment from AnnieArmstrong.com, or print from the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering promotional DVD/DVD-ROM your church should have received from NAMB in January. Other segments on the DVD can be used for study purposes or for the Week of Prayer and Annie Armstrong Easter Offering emphases. The video segment used in this study for children is "Strong in the Lord." Your church has permission to copy the DVD, or you can download videos and other resources at AnnieArmstrong.com. Downloads are free. To order additional DVDs, free of charge, call 1-866-407-6262.
- Find the 2017 Week of Prayer Missionary Contact Information at AnnieArmstrong.com.
- Secure a photo or illustration of a set of armor. Check with your pastor or children's Sunday School teachers, as your church may have armor images in their files.
- Gather items that represent activities that help us to grow strong: jump rope, running shoes, sports gear, hiking boots, climbing rope, etc. Also include a Bible.
- Secure a puzzle with enough pieces that multiple people can put it together in a short period of time.
- Print off the shield template, so each child has a copy. Or, use the template as a pattern to trace and cut out on construction or cardstock paper.
- Talk with your pastor or children's minister about providing Bibles for children who do not have one in their home.

Lesson summary

Being strong in the Lord means knowing who Jesus is and what He has done for us. It means trusting Him to teach us what is right and wrong and being willing to stand up for what is right. Missionaries like Kelly and Brandi Parrish are helping children and adults know who Jesus is as they plant a church in Fort Collins, Colorado.

Opening activity (10 minutes)

As children arrive, direct them to a table with the fitness equipment on it. Invite children to figure out what all of the items have in common and then direct them to another area of the room with ample space to play with additional items, such as a beach ball or other soft ball to toss, a jump rope, a tug-of-war quality rope, hopscotch grid with pebble or marble, and the like. Encourage children to play with these items until everyone arrives.

For those children who may not want or are not able to be active physically, set up a table with a puzzle on it. Choose a puzzle that can be easily assembled but with enough pieces that it will not be easy to accomplish with only one person. The goal will be to have children work together to complete the puzzle.

Prepare for the lesson

- Ensure you are equipped to show the featured video and that you have previewed it with the equipment in the setting in which you will be showing it.
- Read through this lesson plan, and become familiar with it.
- You will need a large space to do the opening activity. Improvise on the activities if you do not have access to a larger space.



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Bible Story (10 minutes)

Tell the children that the Bible is filled with stories of adventure. Ask the children for examples of that. If children are not giving you any, share some of your favorites (e.g., David and Goliath, Moses and the parting of the Red Sea; Jonah and the big fish). Give a summary of one or more, and make sure you share where in the Bible the stories are found.

While these adventure stories are really cool, they are not in the Bible to entertain. They are stories that teach us what God wants us to know so that we can trust and follow Him. When we trust God, He will provide a way to help us through struggles or battles!

Show the photo or illustration of armor. Explain to the children that armor is worn by people who go into battle. It helps protect them from harm. It's important that anyone who needs armor has the right pieces and that they wear them properly. The Bible talks about putting on the "armor of God" in Ephesians 6:10-18. Have a child find the Bible reference. As they are looking up the Scripture, ask by a show of hands who has a Bible in their home. Encourage them to read the Bible with their family. If anyone does not raise a hand, make sure that child leaves with a Bible.

Tell the children the writer of Ephesians, Paul, used the armor illustration because he knew people would be familiar with what Roman soldiers wore to battle. Each piece had a specific purpose, and together they would help keep the soldier safe. In the same way, when we follow God, we can use His Word—the Bible—to help us be prepared for the difficulties and battles we face. We can "be strong in the Lord" (KJV version) because we know Him and follow His Word.

Activity – Be Strong (5-10 minutes)

Ask the children to tell you what all the items on the focal table have in common. Affirm their answers related to helping a person to be fit or strong. Pick up the Bible, and tell the children that it helps us to be strong in the Lord. Pick up the rope, and lead the children to do short tug-of-war battle. If you believe this could get out of hand, have two children compete at a time until all have played.

If you do not have adequate space to do tug-of-war, have children work together to assemble a puzzle. If you have older children, do not show them what the completed puzzle should look like.

Reinforce the truth that while we can help our bodies be fit through the games we play and our minds fit through activities like putting together a puzzle, we know that God wants us to be strong in Him, too, by following Him and trusting in Him to show us the way to live.

Missionary Story (10 minutes)

Introduce the Parrish story by asking children if they have ever had to move from one place to another. Ask for a show of hands. Next, ask how many children had to move from one state to another. Affirm that it is tough to move away from what you have known, especially your friends. Sometimes, though, parents make the tough decision to move. For Kelly and Brandi Parrish, when they believed that God was telling them to move from Texas to Colorado, it meant not only they were leaving a familiar, happy place, but their children would also be leaving the home they had always known. They have started a church called Living Rock in their community of Fort Collins, Colorado. Tell the children that they will meet Zachary, their oldest child, and hear about a struggle that he had when he moved from Texas. They will discover how God turned what was a difficult time into a good thing.

Tell the children to watch and listen carefully to the video because you will play a game afterward based on what they saw. Show the video segment, "Strong in the Lord."

Divide the children into two teams. Tell them you are going to play a baseball game. This one isn't played with a bat and ball, and it won't have nine innings, but it will have true/false questions about the story they saw. Teams score "homeruns" if they answer correctly. If they do not, they get an out. Only one out is allowed per inning. Pitch the statements to the first team, and let them score until they receive an out and the second team has a chance to play. It is important that they listen carefully to the statements!



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1. Zachary and his family moved from Colorado to Texas. *(False—they moved from Texas to Colorado)*
2. Zachary played on a baseball team in Texas. *(True)*
3. Zachary didn't like playing baseball. *(False)*
4. Zachary joined a soccer team when he got to Colorado. *(False—It was a baseball team)*
5. Zachary went to youth camp. *(True)*
6. Zachary told a friend about Jesus. *(True)*
7. The teammate Zachary told about Jesus didn't want to follow Jesus. *(False—he accepted Christ and became a follower of Jesus)*
8. The teammate's family now comes to church. *(True)*
9. The Parrish family planned a baseball game for the children in their neighborhood. *(False)*
10. The camp was held in the winter. *(False—it was held in the summer)*
11. The theme of the camp was called "Playtime" *(False—it was called adventure camp)*
12. Human twister and crab soccer were two games played at adventure camp. *(True)*
13. Capture the flag was another game they played at Adventure Camp. *(True)*
14. Only five children came to adventure camp. *(False—130 children came)*
15. The children shouted, "I am strong in the Lord." *(True)*
16. Zachary didn't help with the camp. *(False—he was a leader)*
17. The Parrishes want children to put on heavy metal armor every day. *(False—it's not physical armor)*
18. Spending time with God and His Word is the armor we should put on every day. *(True)*
19. Zachary showed the children love, so they knew he cared about them. *(True)*
20. Missionaries trust in the Lord and tell people about Jesus. *(True)*
21. Praying for missionaries is a waste of time. *(False—we should pray for them to be strong in the Lord)*
22. The Annie Armstrong Easter Offering provides money to missionary families. *(True)*
23. Zachary and his family are strong in the Lord. *(True)*

Activity – Create a Shield (15 minutes)

Children at Adventure Camp crafted shields to remind them that they can be strong in the Lord. Have children cut out and decorate their copy of the shield template. Have children write on their shields the Bible verse: *Be strong in the Lord. – Ephesians 6:10*. Encourage them to put this in a place where they will see it daily to remind them to spend time with God in prayer and reading the Bible. When completed, have the children put their shields next to one another on a table, and take a photo of the finished shields. Provide this photo to your church to include in an upcoming bulletin or newsletter. You can also send the photo to the Parrish family via email (contact information is available at AnnieArmstrong.com) as an encouragement to them to continue to be strong in the Lord.

Challenge (5 minutes)

Have children hold up their finished shields and shout "I am strong in the Lord!" Remind them that God loves them and wants them to follow Him. Ask if any of them would like to share in one sentence a current struggle that they are facing where they need to be strong in the Lord. Close in prayer, mentioning the struggles noted. Pray for the Parrish family and their new church plant, Living Rock Church, in Fort Collins, Colorado. Pray that people in Fort Collins will follow Christ and become strong in the Lord.

As children leave, give a Bible to those who noted they do not have one. Include a note or letter from your pastor to the child's parents about this gift.

