

ARMOR OF GOD
SHIELD OF FAITH
Family Study Guides

Armor of God: Shield of Faith

Family Study Guide

Objectives:

- Explain why we need the shield of faith.
- Describe what it looks like to personally demonstrate faith and use it to push the enemy back.
- Give evidence of how joining together in faith to support each other provides incredible protection.

Memory Verse:

Ephesians 6:16 ... hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. (NLT)

Historical Context

To understand how the shield of faith helps us deflect Satan's attacks, let's look at how the Roman army used their shields to win battles.

The Roman Shield

The Roman shield referred to in *Ephesians 6* was the *thureos* (a Greek word from the word "door" since it was shaped like a door). It was about 2 ½ feet wide and 4 ½ feet tall, designed to protect the entire body of the soldier. It was made of a solid piece of wood and covered with metal or leather.

The Roman army was a highly organized unit that operated as a single object. As a result, the Romans would have superior techniques when coming across less organized forces. When in battle the Roman legionaries would form a wall with their shields to create an impasse for any adversary they faced.

The soldiers in battle stood side by side with their shields together, forming a long protective wall, or a rectangular "tortoise" formation, giving them complete protection from all sides. Shields held up together fended off almost any attack.

Often the enemy would shoot flaming arrows at the Roman army. The soldiers would crouch behind their shields for protection.

Ephesians 6:16 ...hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil.

You may want to look at these web links for a better visual (parents, please review before showing your kids):

- Use of the Roman Shield: www.quora.com/How-were-Roman-shields-used-in-combat
- "Testudo" [turtle] formation [graphic]: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CgmFycuRwAw>

- Danger of flaming arrows [**graphic**]: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JyxHh_5Yvak

God's Shield of Faith

As with all the armor, God provides us with protection against the devil and the power needed to win the battle.

1 Peter 1:4, 8-9 (NIV) ...you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.... Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

1 John 5:4-5 (NET) This is the conquering power that has conquered the world: our faith. Now who is the person who has conquered the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

Psalms 18:29 (CEB) With you I can charge into battle; with my God I can leap over a wall.

Psalms 8:30 (NKJV) As for God, His way is perfect; The word of the Lord is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him.

This faith is not speaking as much about doctrinal belief system ("the faith") as it is belief in God and His promises. Satan attacks us by trying to get us to doubt God. In this great battle, we must reject doubt and trust God!

1 Peter 5:8-9 Your adversary, the Devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith.

Paul warned Timothy of the dangers and the need for trust in Christ to ward off Satan's attacks:

1 Timothy 1:18-20 (NLT) Timothy, my son, here are my instructions for you, based on the prophetic words spoken about you earlier. May they help you fight well in the Lord's battles. Cling to your faith in Christ, and keep your conscience clear. For some people have deliberately violated their consciences; as a result, their faith has been shipwrecked. Hymenaeus and Alexander are two examples. I threw them out and handed them over to Satan so they might learn not to blaspheme God.

God promises He will be our shield and support us in this spiritual battle!

• *Hebrews 13:5* He [the Lord] Himself has said, 'I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you.'

• *Isaiah 41:10 (NLT)* Do not fear, for I am with you. Do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will give you strength, and for sure I will help you. Yes, I will hold you up with My right hand that is right and good.

• *Psalms 115:11 (NIRV)* You who have respect for the Lord, trust in him. He helps you like a shield

that keeps you safe.

When we look to God, He promises to be there for us, and give us the strength to succeed. God gives us faith by His power—the Holy Spirit—to help us learn to trust and know that God wants us in His Kingdom, and He will help us to get there.

God is there to deliver, even when we don't “see” Him!

Let's look at a story that helps to illustrate how we could be defeated without the shield of faith. In this story, a king wanted to capture God's servant Elisha. It seemed like a hopeless situation.

2 Kings 6:14-17 (NLT) So one night the king of Aram sent a great army with many chariots and horses to surround the city. [Elisha's servant] got up early the next morning and went outside, there were troops, horses, and chariots everywhere. “Oh, sir, what will we do now?” the young man cried to Elisha. [*He had doubts that God was with them*]. “Don't be afraid!” Elisha told him. “For there are more on our side than on theirs!” Then Elisha prayed, “O Lord, open his eyes and let him see!” The Lord opened the young man's eyes, and when he looked up, he saw that the hillside around Elisha was filled with horses and chariots of fire.

While God may not let us “see” behind the scenes, the shield of faith helps us to believe and trust that God knows our needs, and that He is faithfully protecting us with His invisible power.

It is when we do not see an answer to our problems that we need faith that God is there. One of God's promises is found in **Romans 8:28** “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”

Satan continually bombards us with his fiery darts of fear, doubt, worry, despair, distrust, immorality, hatred, envy, anger, covetousness, pride, etc.

Have you ever had any of these thoughts enter your mind?

- “God isn't answering my prayers.”
- “I don't see any way out of this!”
- “Why try? I don't think I am going to make it anyway!”
- “Nobody wants me, I think I'll just quit!”

Object Lesson

A little boy was frustrated because he couldn't get a puzzle to go together. He said that they must not be the right pieces, and that there was no way they could go together. He asked his sister to help. In seconds, she did it. He asked her how. She showed him the front of the box and said, “I looked at the picture. You were looking at the pieces.”

Life is sometimes like a puzzle. God knows the big picture. We hold the shield of faith when we believe Him for what we don't understand.

Hebrews 11:1 (NLT) Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see.

God sees the big picture—we see only the immediate situation.

Fighting Together in Faith!

An old Latin phrase “Nemo resideo” basically means “No one left behind.” It was a critical part of Roman Legion morale. It is actually also a motto for our modern military units. Working together and supporting one another, especially when holding a shield in a Testudo formation was essential. One man’s failure to do his job could result in the whole unit being wiped out. Everyone goes into battle together and everyone leaves together.

Read in Genesis 14 how Abram took a military force and went after his nephew Lot in a “no one left behind” rescue.

There is a saying, “No man is an island.”

Discuss what you think that means.

Ask: How do you think it might apply to our use of the “shield of faith?”



Jesus established the Church so His people could support each other and work together towards the Kingdom of God. Just as a soldier does not go by himself into combat, God does not leave us to fight this battle alone! Jesus Christ has given us each other to help us succeed and enter His Kingdom.

Four Examples of Supporting Each Other With the Shield of Faith

1. *Review* the story in *Numbers 13-14* of the 12 spies sent into the Promised Land. [Ask kids to tell the story. *Read* a few parts of the story to reinforce or fill in details.]

- *Discuss* the fiery darts of doubt and fear that the 10 spies and most of the Israelites had about entering the Promised Land.

- Fear that there were giants they thought were too big for them to handle
- The cities are walled—they seemed too tall to get over
- “They are stronger than we are”—“We can’t win”
- They thought, “It is not worth the fight. It would be easier to go back to Egypt.”
- They lost the vision of their Promised Land and they only saw the immediate challenges
- What else?

NOTE: If we are not careful, we could end up standing together for the wrong things.

Exodus 23:2 (NLT) You must not follow the crowd in doing wrong...

We must be sure we are also wearing the belt of truth and the breastplate of righteousness!

Say: Let’s contrast the faith and confidence in God’s power that Caleb and Joshua had. They supported and reinforced each other’s faith in God. They responded this way:

- “...don’t be afraid of the people who live there.
- “...he will take us there and give us that rich and fertile land.”
- “We will conquer them easily...”
- “The Lord is with us and has defeated the gods who protected them; so don’t be afraid.”

2. Read the example in *Exodus 17:8-16* of how Moses, Aaron, Hur and Joshua worked together in faith to defeat the enemy.

Each person in this story had an active part to play. This reminds us that God expects us not only to believe, but to act [*James 2:20 (GNT)* ... faith without actions is useless]. God expects us also to act together in faith.



Discuss as a family about a time where you acted in faith, believing that God would help you, even if you weren't sure how things would turn out. How did He help?

- Joshua followed directions and led an army to fight against the evil forces together.
- When Moses's hands were raised, it was like a shield over the Israelites and they prevailed. When his hands were down because his arms were tired, the "shield" was down.

Ask: What things tend to wear you out so that you might put your shield down? (Examples might be thinking about endless "what-ifs", sudden increase of stressful situations, questioning your ability versus God's ability to take care of things, feeling guilty about past actions, frustration or bad thoughts toward others, fear, temptation, etc.)

- Aaron and Hur helped Moses keep his arms (the shield) up. They worked as a team.
- As a family, make a list of those who can help you keep up your shield.

3. Read Acts 4 to see the example of the early church persecution and Christians shielding together in faith and helping one another. Notice the unity in support they displayed: *Acts 4:24 (AMP)* ... (they) lifted their voices together with one united mind to God ...

So they prayed together, praising God and asking for His help.

Acts 4:31-32 (NIV) After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly. All the believers were one in heart and mind...

The early church continued growing in grace and knowledge by supporting each other in faith!

Philippians 1:27-28 (ESV) Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one

spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God.

4. The Church today must do the same things to have God's protective shield!

The author of Hebrews speaks to Christians living near the time of the return of Christ.

Hebrews 10:24-25 (GNT) Let us be concerned for one another, to help one another to show love and to do good. Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are doing. Instead, let us encourage one another all the more, since you see that the Day of the Lord is coming nearer.

Satan will attack us with the fiery arrow of unbelief—so we must support one another in faith!

Hebrews 3:12-14 (NLT) Be careful then, dear brothers and sisters. Make sure that your own hearts are not evil and unbelieving, turning you away from the living God. You must warn each other every day, while it is still “today,” so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God. For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ.

When members in God's Church strengthen each other with our faith (join our shields together), build each other up and help one another, we will be an unstoppable force. We can increase our success by helping and encouraging one another's faith. As we fight, remember this is not just our battle but also for our brethren. We win by putting our faith in God and standing side-by-side for “our common salvation... the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.” (*Jude 1:3*)

Ask: How does getting together, as well as considering one another in love and good works, help us in our faith?

Discuss how specific members in your congregation, or elsewhere, have been an inspiration of faith and dedication to God's way of life.

- Consider those who have been through sickness or other trials.
- Think about the brethren in other parts of the world who have a difficult life, but continue to put God first in their lives. (Maybe review President Victor Kubik's blogs)
- As a family, make a list of some physical things you can do to shield together with others in the church (sending cards, visiting the sick, waving to people on the webcast, talking to someone at church who is alone or may not be able to move around easily, inviting others to your home to spend time together, Bible study together in a group chat, spending time praying for others, making a meal or some treats for someone, bringing special snacks to services, etc.)

Ask: How has their example strengthened your own faith?

Ask: Who do you have that you can “put your shield of faith together with” and talk with and reinforce your faith in God?

Think about examples of people in the Bible who help you increase your faith.

Additional resource: UCG.org Bible Study Guide for the Shield of Faith

Suggested Group Activities

Possible Group Discussions

- How would things have been different for the Children of Israel if they would have stood in faith with Caleb and Joshua?
- What are some “arrows” that Satan might shoot at us to get us to doubt?
- How do you react and what do you say when difficulties occur in your life?
- How does standing together in faith—with others of the same mind, having the faith of Christ, help to defeat the enemy? Give an example of how using this method of spiritual warfare helped you win over Satan.
- What are some ways we can stand together in faith as young people in God’s church to help defeat Satan?

Activity

Create “fiery darts” (red construction paper circles) with Satan’s attack attempts written on them to attach to the shield sheet. Label fiery darts with the following situations to make the story of the Israelites’ fear come alive.

Satan’s attempt to keep Israel from entering the Promised Land:

- Fear —“there are giants” that seemed too big for them to handle
- “the cities are walled” and seemed too tall for them to get over
- “they are stronger than we are”—“We can’t win”
- It is not worth the fight—would be easier to go back to Egypt
- Lost the vision of their Promised Land—they only saw the immediate challenges

As you are telling the story of the Israelites fighting the Amalekites, children can re-enact the scene. Show how Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Israelites made the “tortoise” formation when Aaron, Hur and the other men held Moses’s hands up for him in battle.

Hebrew 11:3-39 give examples of actions by faith. Have students choose their favorite example and explain how it encourages faith.

Activity

Do a service activity for individuals in the congregation as a reflection of *Hebrews 10:25* and the focus of the early Christians banding together.

Use the fire extinguisher guidelines as an analogy. The acronym is **PASS**:

Pull the pin (pull out your shield),

Aim at the base of the fire (face the real problem—don’t back down or ignore the real challenge),

Squeeze the trigger (hold your shield up and don’t let go—keep believing in God’s help as you act—use your faith tools of prayer, study, meditation, fasting), and

Sweep the area (shield together for greater protection). This quenches the fire, or fiery darts, that we face.

The Shield of Faith

The Roman Soldier

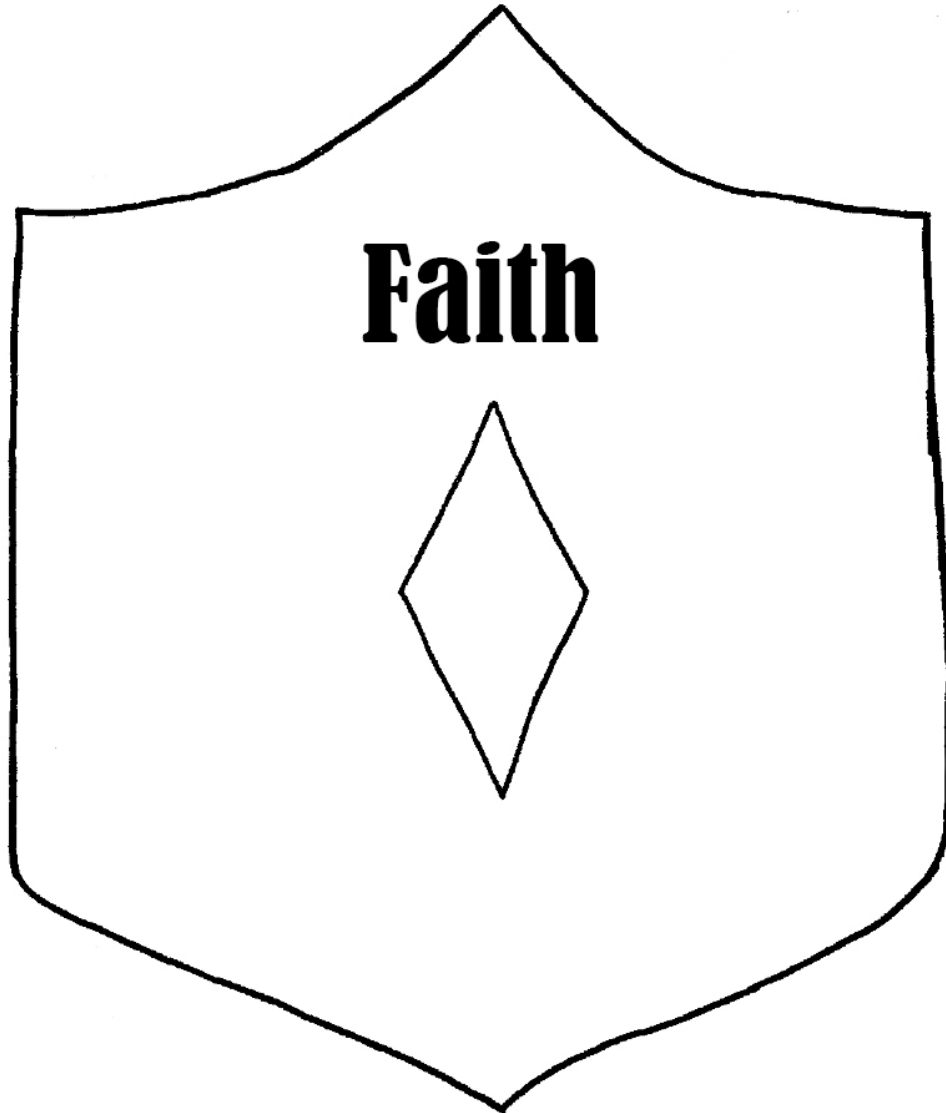
God's Armor

Key Scriptures

Spiritual Lessons

My Armor

The Shield of Faith



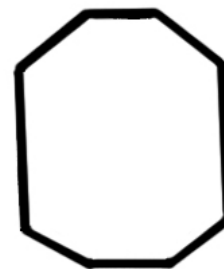
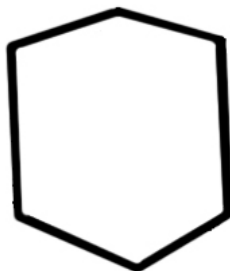
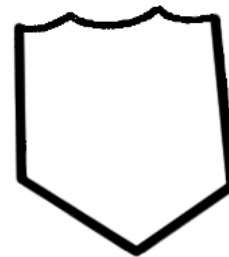
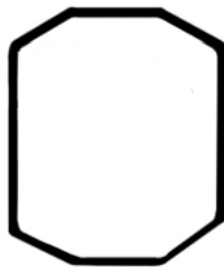
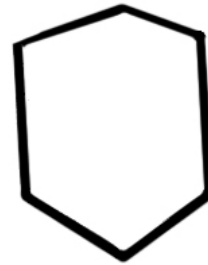
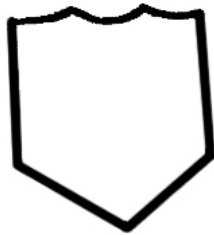
Color and design the shield any way you like.

A complex maze puzzle is presented within a shield-shaped frame. The maze features a central diamond-shaped area. A 'Start' arrow is located at the top left, and an 'End' arrow is at the bottom center. The maze is composed of multiple paths and dead ends, requiring a logical solution to reach the end from the start.

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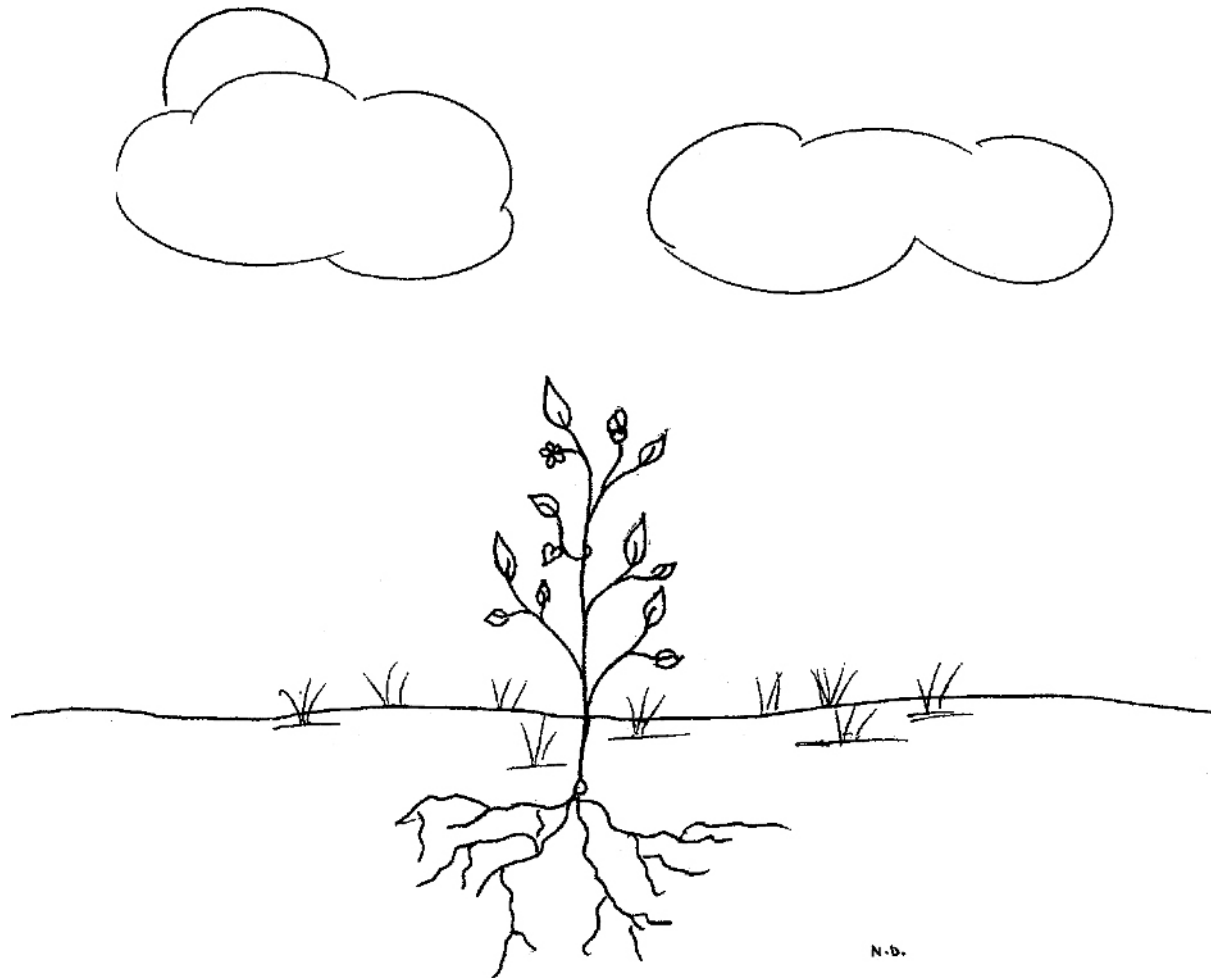
Matching

The Shields of Faith



Draw a line from the shields on the left to the matching shield on the right.

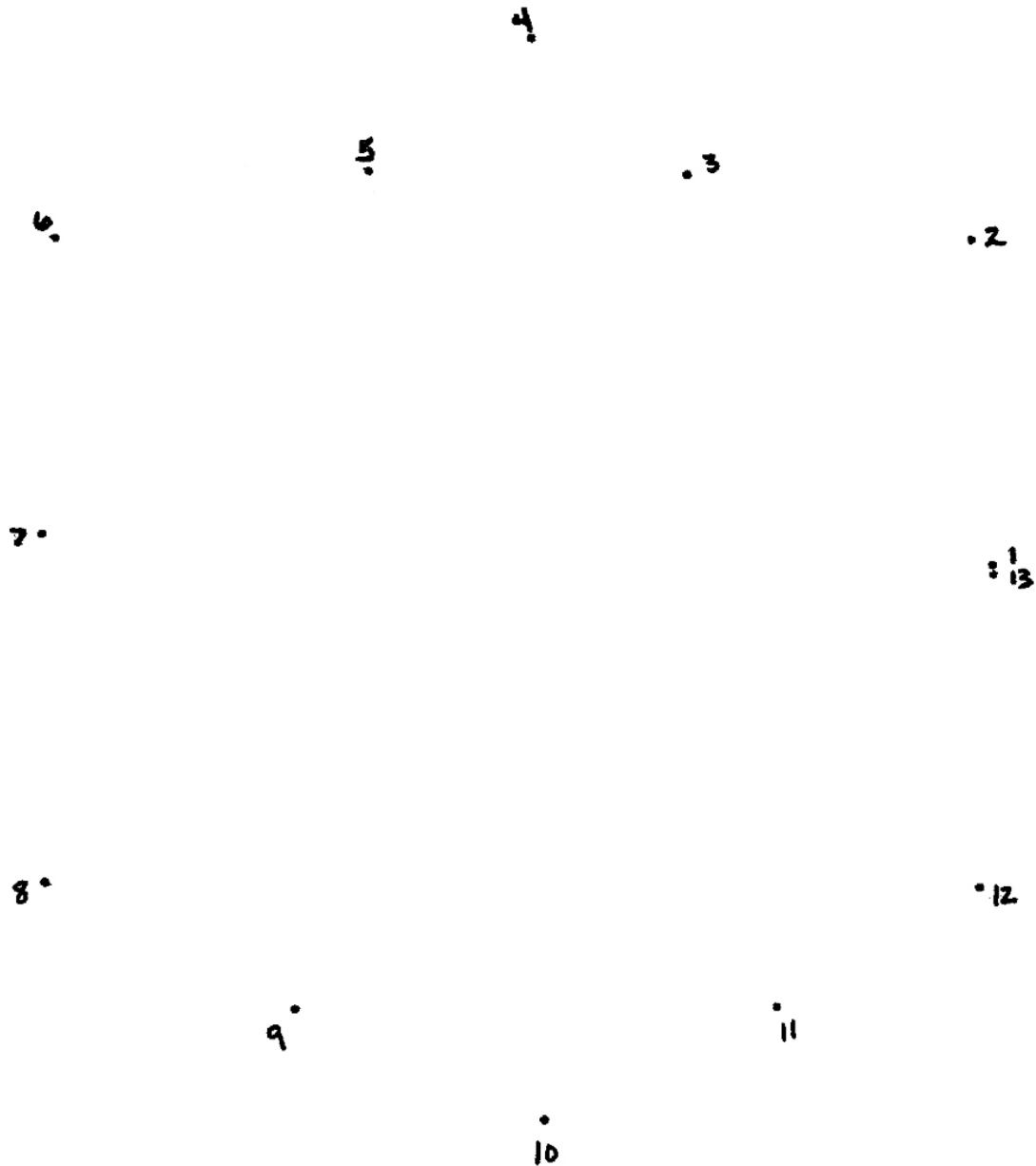
Having Faith



*When you plant a seed, you have faith
that it will grow.
Use the Shield of Faith!*

Color the picture of the new plant.

Dot to Dot



Connect the dots 1-13 to make your own shield.