



ARMOR OF GOD

SHOES OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE

Family Study Guides

Armor of God: Shoes of the Gospel of Peace

Family Study Guide

Objectives:

- Discuss how the “shoes of the gospel” help us resist Satan’s attacks.
- Discuss how walking in these shoes can help share the good news of God’s Kingdom.
- Analyze how the apostles used the “shoes” to preach the gospel of peace.

Memory Verse:

Ephesians 6:15 ... and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace (NKJV)

Review

Review with your family what the true gospel is:

You can use this quick link: www.ucg.org/bible-study-tools/booklets/the-church-jesus-built/what-is-the-true-gospel

Discuss how God’s Holy Days help reveal that plan.

What is the gospel of peace?

The Greek word, *euaggelion*, translated gospel, simply means “good news.” The gospel of peace is the good news of God’s Kingdom, which includes Jesus Christ the King, His grace and His plan of salvation for all humankind, which will be fulfilled after Christ’s return to this earth. God’s plan gives His followers peace now (you can always review the Family Study Guide on the fruit of the Spirit, peace, here: ucg.org/members/family-study-guides/fruit-of-the-spirit-peace) and will bring complete peace to the whole world. Our loving Father is preparing a future for members of His eternal family, which is beyond our wildest imagination!

Why “shoes” of the gospel?

First, let us review and understand the context! God gives us His armor to protect against Satan’s attacks.

Ephesians 6:11 (NIV) Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.

How do the “shoes of the gospel” help us to stand against Satan?

What part do shoes play in a soldier’s uniform?

Have you ever heard a military leader say something like, “In order for us to reach our goal, we are going to need more ‘boots on the ground’?” The inference of this statement is that soldiers are needed to move forward in their mission and goal to win the war. While soldiers will encounter obstacles and attacks from the enemy—they must keep moving ahead. A soldier needs all of his equipment to succeed, but he moves on his feet.

Notice this advertisement for Military boots: “Whether you’re a hard core marine or more of a desert eagle, the need for standardized footwear cannot be overstated for any uniformed occupation. Unlike the average citizen, Army and Military personnel face far more hazardous environments and deadly occupational hazards. As a soldier smack in the middle of action, any weakness in your body, gear or tactics could cost you your life.” [Comforting Footwear]

2 Timothy 2:3 tells us: “Put up with your share of hardship as a loyal soldier in Christ’s army.” As part of God’s army, His Church has a job to do. Jesus Christ preached the gospel of peace, teaching about God’s Kingdom. He expects His church to announce the good news of God’s Kingdom, which will spread His way of peace around the whole world.

Matthew 4:23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom...

Romans 10:14-15 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!”

Having our shoes on, we will be ready to move in order to spread these glad tidings to others.

But remember—Satan wants us to give up and stop doing the work and reaching our goal. Think about it like this:

Reaching the End-Zone

The goal of an American football team is to move the football along, to reach the end zone and win the game. As the team works together to achieve their goal, the other team wants to knock them down and stop them. The players have to stay focused on the goal, get back up when knocked down, keep on going and keep digging their cleated shoes into the turf so they can reach the end zone and win the game.

In a similar way, we have a goal of reaching the Kingdom of God at the end of this age. The whole team works together to support all those doing the work of preaching the gospel. While not all team members “touch the ball,” everyone has an important part to do in supporting the preaching of the gospel. We cannot give up even though there is opposition.

With this in mind, let’s look at what Jesus said about reaching “the end-zone.”

Matthew 24:3 (NIV) [The disciples said,] “Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”

Matthew 24:9-14 Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness [ESV says, “because lawlessness will be increased”], the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

ACTIVITY

Analyze the verses above to see how many ways Satan can try to make us give up and keep us out of God's Kingdom.

Bonus: How can the pieces of the Armor of God protect us from these attacks?

The Apostle Paul put it this way:

Philippians 3:13-14 (GNT) ...[I] do my best to reach what is ahead. So I run straight toward the goal in order to win the prize, which is God's call through Christ Jesus to the life above.

How does putting on your “shoes of the gospel” protect you from the enemy?

Two ways:

1) *You can stand firm.*

Satan wants us to be afraid and run away from God's promises. It is often called a “flight” response.

In the military it is called desertion. Sometimes Satan will give us an option that looks easier so we give up on standing firm with our shoes on. The sandals of the Roman soldier were “often were fitted with nails or armed with spikes, to make the hold firm in the ground” (Barnes' Notes).

Like proper footwear that helps us move over tough obstacles, God provides us with these shoes of the preparation of the gospel of peace—to help us to stand through the hard times of life without fear, knowing that God's Kingdom is greater than difficult times we have in this world.

Example: Nehemiah and the people of Jerusalem worked to rebuild the walls so they could worship God fully again as His special people. Many surrounding people did not like this and made a plan to attack Jerusalem. At the same time many of the Jews had very little because of a famine. The enemies of the Jews even sent a letter: “For they all were trying to make us afraid, saying, “Their hands will be weakened in the work, and it will not be done.” (Nehemiah 6:9)

Nehemiah could have gone back to being the king's cupbearer in Persia. Instead, he decided to **stand firm** and finish rebuilding when it was dangerous.

Because God used Nehemiah to **stand firm** and rebuild, many Jews who had been captives in other nations were able to return to Jerusalem and begin worshipping God again as His special people.

- Nehemiah stood firm because he knew God was helping him to build something that would be pleasing to Him. Think of a time when you needed to STAND FIRM for God's way instead of giving in to something that may have seemed easier.

- Nehemiah also stood with others in the community—they decided to stand firm together. Who will stand firm with you when times are challenging?

Ask: What motivates you to stand firm even when things in life can be painful or hard?

The rest of this story can be found in the book of Nehemiah.

We can **stand firm** knowing that even when things seem difficult or impossible, God will see His

plan through to create an eternal family when Jesus Christ returns.

2) *You can run your race and move forward.*

Life is not always easy. Every person has good days and bad days. When we go through tough times, this is when Satan wants us to think that God doesn't care. Satan wants us to give up—to quit “running the race” and quit fighting the battle, to abandon our determination to become a part of the Kingdom of God. That is when we need to get up and keep moving forward with the good news of God's Kingdom.

During battle, soldiers have been known to “freeze” and fail to move forward due to anxiety and fear of what might happen.

Say: Think of a time that you were afraid of moving ahead and doing something because of anxiety and fear. What ended up happening?

While our fears are sometimes justified, most often they end up being unfounded or overexaggerated. Satan wants us to freeze in place and quit trying to reach the goal God has set in place for us.

When we pray to God and trust Him, he will send his Spirit to enable us to get back on our feet and keep moving!

If anxiety is something that affects you, you may want to take the time to connect to this link and other helpful materials on the *Beyond Today* website: ucg.org/beyond-today/beyond-today-television-program/confronting-anxiety

The Ultimate Example

Jesus Christ's very purpose and goal as a human was to preach the gospel of the Kingdom (Mark 1:14) and make it possible for mankind to love forever in the Kingdom of Peace. Satan and his demons did everything possible to stop Jesus from succeeding in His mission from God!

ACTIVITY

As a family (or Youth Instruction Group), find as many examples as you can where Satan and people tried to stop Jesus from doing His job!

Ask: Which of these situations do you think were the most difficult for Jesus? How did he respond and work through these issues? What was His greatest help?

As we follow Jesus' example, when we truly believe the good news promised by God, there shouldn't be anything that can trouble our hearts or give us reason to be afraid.

We can have peace now while we wait for God's Kingdom to come! Christ overcame the world (John 16:33), so we have nothing to fear.

Let's look at some more examples of people who were faithful and wore the “shoes of the gospel of peace” to protect them from Satan's efforts to knock them down.

BIBLICAL EXAMPLE

Caleb and Joshua—a lesson for us

We know that the children of Israel and their journey to the Promised Land is a type of God's chosen people, the Church and our journey to the Kingdom of God.

ACTIVITY

Read and review Numbers 13 and 14 with your family.

Discuss the difference in attitude between most Israelites, and Caleb and Joshua.

Numbers 14:21-24 (NCV) But, as surely as I live and as surely as my glory fills the whole earth, I make this promise: All these men saw my glory and the miracles I did in Egypt and in the desert, but they disobeyed me and tested me ten times. So not one of them will see the land I promised to their ancestors. No one who rejected me will see that land. But my servant Caleb thinks differently and follows me completely. So I will bring him into the land he has already seen, and his children will own that land.

Paul shows that Israel's journey pictures our own journey to the Kingdom of God.

- **1 Corinthians 10:11 (ESV)** Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come.

- **Hebrews 3:5 (GNT)**... We are his house if we keep up our courage and our confidence in what we hope for. [*The Kingdom of God!*]

- **Hebrews 3:19** We see, then, that they were not able to enter the land, because they did not believe.

- **Hebrews 4:1-3a** Now, God has offered us the promise that we may receive that rest he spoke about. Let us take care, then, that none of you will be found to have failed to receive that promised rest. For we have heard the Good News, just as they did. They heard the message, but it did them no good, because when they heard it, they did not accept it with faith. We who believe, then, do receive that rest which God promised. It is just as he said...

This process of moving ahead towards the Kingdom is often referred to as “walking” with God.

1 Thessalonians 2:11-12 ...we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

BIBLICAL EXAMPLE

Peter and John wore the shoes of the preparation of the gospel of peace. The book of Acts is full of events where men and women were prepared with the good news of God's Kingdom. The apostles worked to spread the gospel to all who would hear. Satan tried to stop them, but God delivered them.

Let's look at one example of these men preaching the gospel, people trying to knock them down, and God's armor delivering them from Satan's attack!

Acts 12:1-5 (TLB) About that time King Herod moved against some of the believers and killed the apostle James (John's brother). When Herod saw how much this pleased the Jewish leaders, he arrested Peter during the Passover celebration and imprisoned him, placing him under the guard of sixteen soldiers. Herod's intention was to deliver Peter to the Jews for execution after the Passover. But earnest prayer was going up to God from the church for his safety all the time he was in prison.

Notice in verse 5 that the "rest of the team" was supporting them with their dedication and prayers! Because of the Apostle's dedication and determination to move forward with the job—and the member's support—God delivered them!

Acts 12:7-8 (GNT) Suddenly an angel of the Lord ...woke him up, and said, "Hurry! Get up!" At once the chains fell off Peter's hands. Then the angel said, "Tighten your belt and put on your sandals." Peter did so, and the angel said, "Put your cloak around you and come with me."

He put on "the belt of truth" and "the shoes of the gospel of peace"—and moved on!

Acts 12:24 (TLB) God's Good News was spreading rapidly and there were many new believers.

Paul was determined to stay the course and do God's will—no matter what!



Acts 14:19-22 (TLB) Yet only a few days later, some Jews arrived from Antioch and Iconium and turned the crowds into a murderous mob that stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, apparently dead. But as the believers stood around him, he got up and went back into the city! The next day he left with Barnabas for Derbe. After preaching the Good News there and making many disciples, they returned again to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, where they helped the believers to grow in love for God and each other. They encouraged them to continue in the faith in spite of all the persecution, reminding them that they must enter into the Kingdom of God through many tribulations.

The church continued to grow because the apostles "kept their shoes on." No matter how difficult the road looked, they were prepared to move forward and focus on the good news of God's Kingdom. Many people came to believe in that good news because of their perseverance and service to God.

God gave the apostles the armor they needed to overcome evil. He does that for us also.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

As a contrast to those who wore their shoes to move forward, *discuss* these examples of people not wearing their armor:

- Read this particularly interesting story in Mark 14:48-52 where one of Jesus' followers literally was NOT wearing the armor!

• John 6:66-67 From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. Then Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you also want to go away?”

• 2 Timothy 4:10 ...Demas has deserted me because he loves the things of this life...

Ask: How could the apostles and the church have peace when all these terrible things were happening? What kind of peace did they have when they were being persecuted? What lesson can we learn about peace from their examples?

Ask: Are there ways that you can relate to the apostles or the people of the church in Acts?

Ask: What kind of decisions do you have to make that are like theirs?

• Think of a time when you felt like giving up on something that you decided to do.

• Did you give up? Or did you keep going even though you did not feel like it?

• What do you do when you feel like quitting? Have you ever felt like not going to church? Have you felt like nobody likes you?

• Can you think of times when Satan was probably trying to get you to quit?

• The Apostles asked not only help from God but from other Church members.

In the context of the armor of God:

Ephesians 6:18b-20 ...Always pray for all God’s people. Also pray for me that when I speak, God will give me words so that I can tell the secret of the Good News without fear. I have been sent to preach this Good News, and I am doing that now, here in prison. Pray that when I preach the Good News I will speak without fear, as I should.

Philippians 1:19-20 (NCV) Because you are praying for me and the Spirit of Jesus Christ is helping me, I know this trouble will bring my freedom. I expect and hope that I will not fail Christ in anything but that I will have the courage now, as always, to show the greatness of Christ in my life here on earth, whether I live or die.

DID YOU KNOW?

Jesus’s family kept God’s Feast days just like you do, but without modern transportation.

When Jesus was growing up, his family walked from their home in Nazareth to Jerusalem to keep the Feast.

Luke 2:41-42 Every year Jesus’s parents went to Jerusalem for the Passover Feast. When he was twelve years old, they went to the feast as they always did.

Look on a map to see how far it was. The round-trip trek was between 200 and 240 miles! It has been estimated that in Jesus’ lifetime, he walked around 20,000 miles doing the will of His heavenly Father!

He brought the Gospel of Peace to the world and will soon become the Prince of Peace for all mankind.

Isaiah 9:6-7 And His name will be called... Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end...

Family Activity: Pick a location 100 miles from your home. What would it be like if your family had to plan to walk there—and back—in order to keep the Holy Days?

Jesus and his parents were determined to obey God no matter how difficult it might be.

Ask: When Satan tries to discourage you, do you go to your parents, minister, or friends in the Church for help?

Discuss: What other things can you do to keep motivated to do the right things?

- Do we have a duty to preach the gospel beyond supporting the ministry and those who create *Beyond Today* programs, write articles, etc.?
- What are some ways to share your hope of the good news of God's Kingdom?
- Have you heard the phrase, "actions speak louder than words?" How do you think that might apply to "preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God?"

CONCLUSION

Life isn't always easy just because we believe in God. However, God does give us what we need to battle our enemy and help others. If we wear our shoes, we can move forward through the most difficult roads. We can have peace because we know that God is with us and He is bringing His Kingdom to this earth soon. When Christ returns, the entire world will have true peace.

In order to make God's armor a practical reality, we must put on each piece every day...

Ephesians 6:15 ...and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

POSSIBLE GROUP ACTIVITIES OR DISCUSSIONS

Instructors: Bring in several types of shoes: dress shoes, flip flops, street shoes, athletic shoes, boots. Talk about what would happen to our feet if we wore each type of shoe on a rocky road. Which would be painful and cause blisters? Which would help our feet? God gives us shoes of the gospel of peace to help us follow Him even on rocky roads.

Instructors: Using construction paper or long butcher paper, create a "hopscotch" with squares or a football field with yard lines. On a couple of squares or yard lines, place pictures or phrases that demonstrates challenges requiring God's gospel of peace (people arguing, getting sick, etc.). Then, have participants place their own examples on other squares or yard lines. Lastly, talk about ways we can "move forward" with our shoes through these challenges (pray to God, stick together and get help from "team members," list things to be thankful for, demonstrate kindness, be patient, etc.).

Instructors: Ecclesiastes 4:12 (NLT) says: "A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken." When you stand firm, God is with you. But we can also stand firm together as God's children. Talk about the strength of a triple-braided cord. How can we stand firm together and help one another?

Discussions

Sometimes when we get a pair of shoes, there are shoes that have a similar style but don't actually fit the same or they are cheaply made. Those shoes don't always work well when the road is rocky or when we need to be very active. Sometimes they even end up hurting our feet or falling apart on us! There is "false peace" out there, too. What do you see that people "try on" to have peace in life but doesn't really help on the rocky path or even can be hurtful? Example: Stay distracted or detached by spending lots of time on your phone or watching TV.

You have friends in school that do not share the same beliefs as you. You recently returned from observing one of God's Holy Days. One of your friends asks why you were gone. Would you "re-treat" and just say you were on vacation—or you use your shoes to share the truth of the gospel of peace?

A person at your school was killed in a car accident. All of your classmates are very upset. Death is sad and scary to think about. Some of your classmates are saying they will never see your friend again and they can never be happy because of this. How can understanding the "gospel of peace" help you and classmates move forward in life?

Activity: Ten Seconds or Less: Create a short list of statements or scriptures from God's Word that you could share in 10 seconds or less to share the "gospel of peace." In what situation would this be helpful?



Sony Wiseman

Shoes of the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace

The Roman Soldier

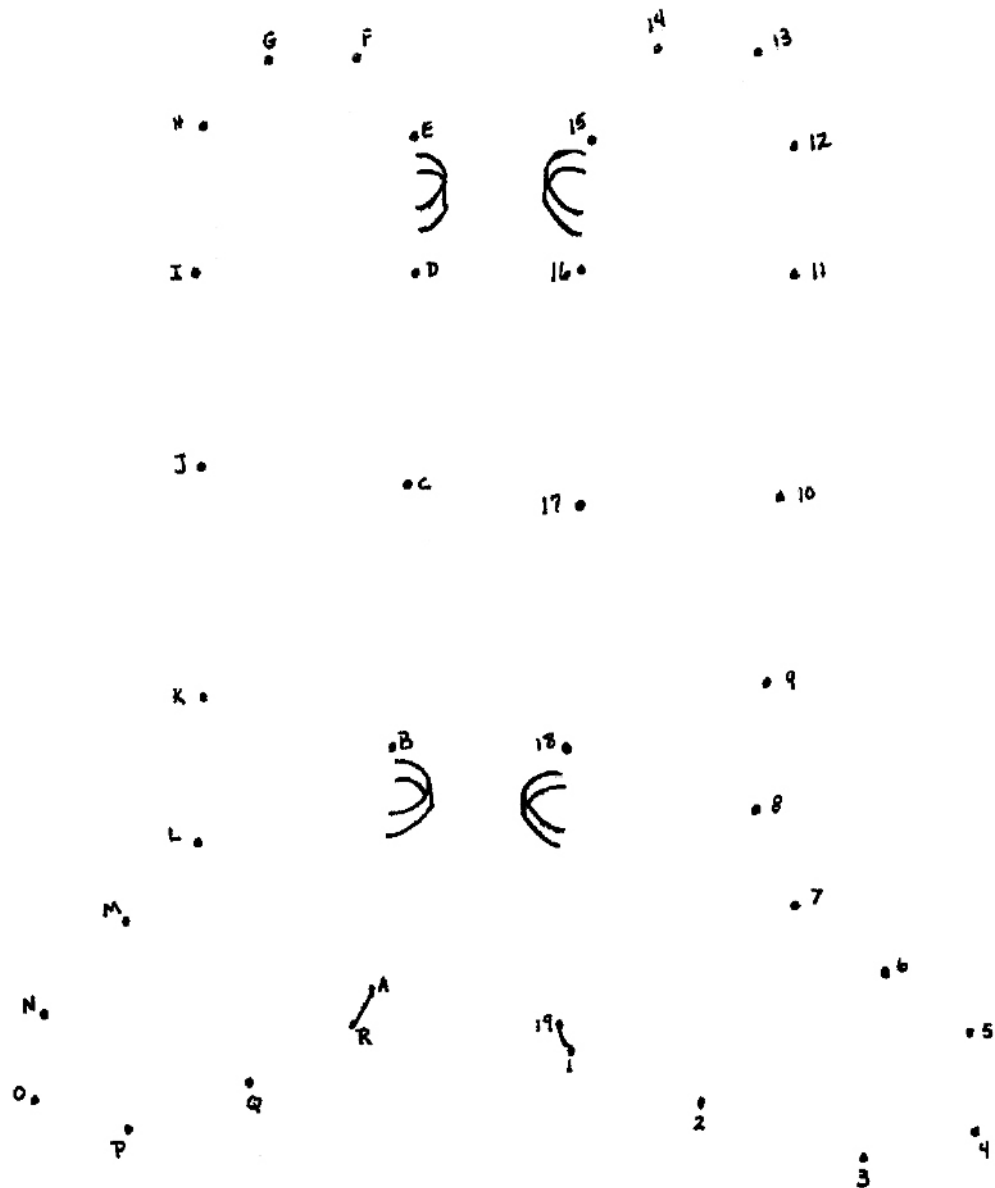
God's Armor

Key Scriptures

Spiritual Lessons

My Armor

Footwear Dot to Dot



Connect the dots A-R and 1-19

The Footwear of Peace

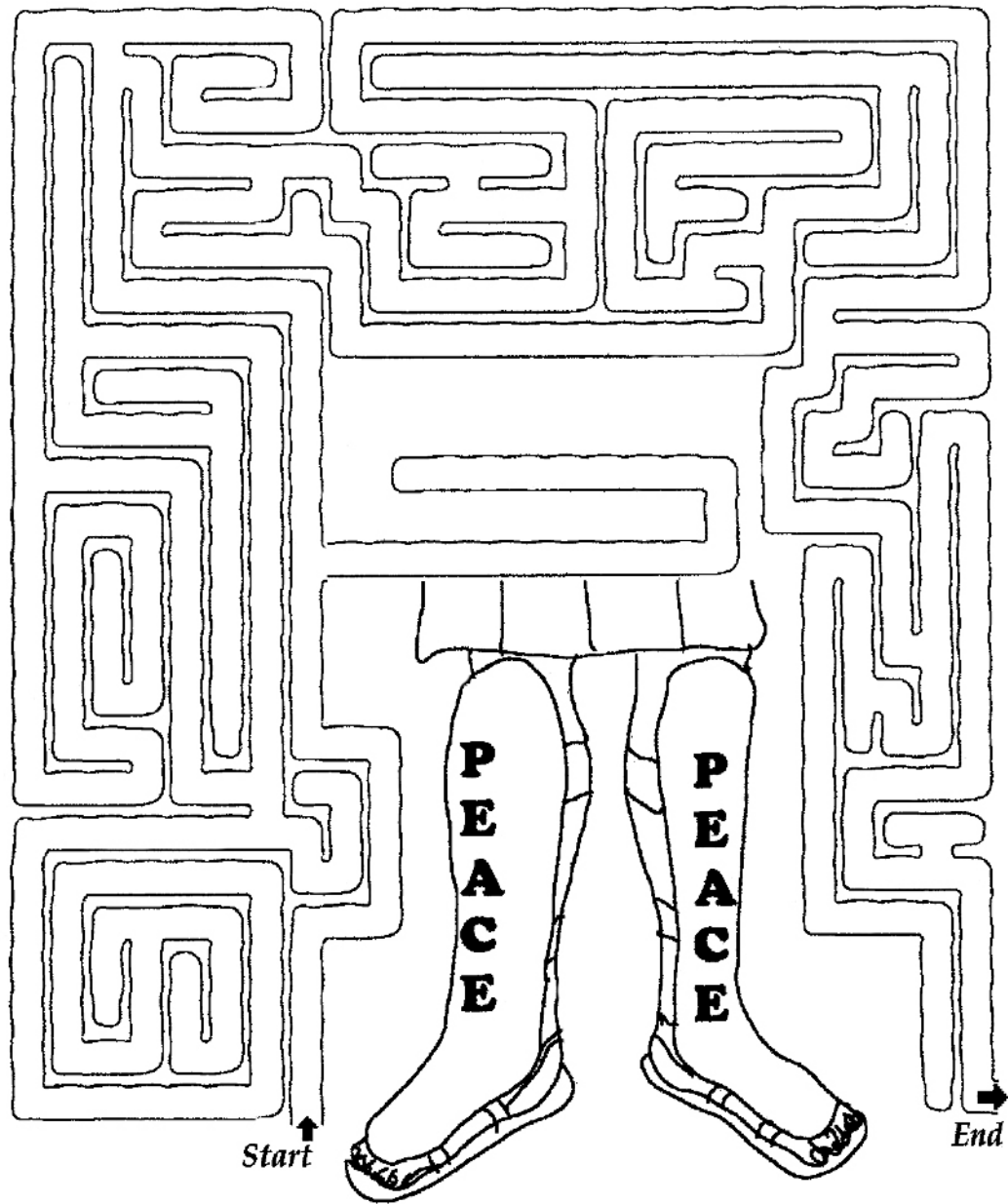


Color the knight's footwear

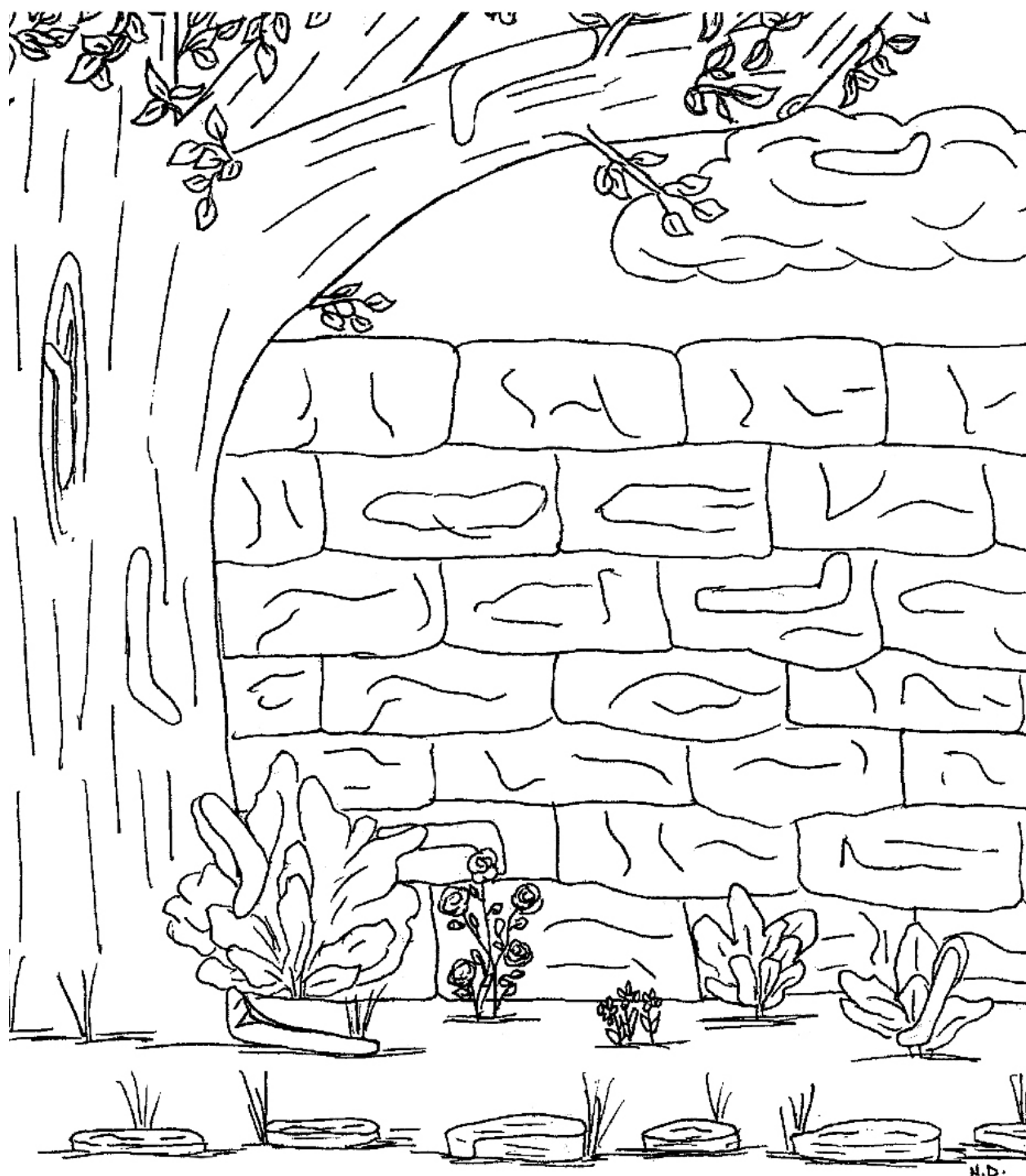


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The Footwear of Peace



Start at the bottom left and go through the maze to the end at the bottom right

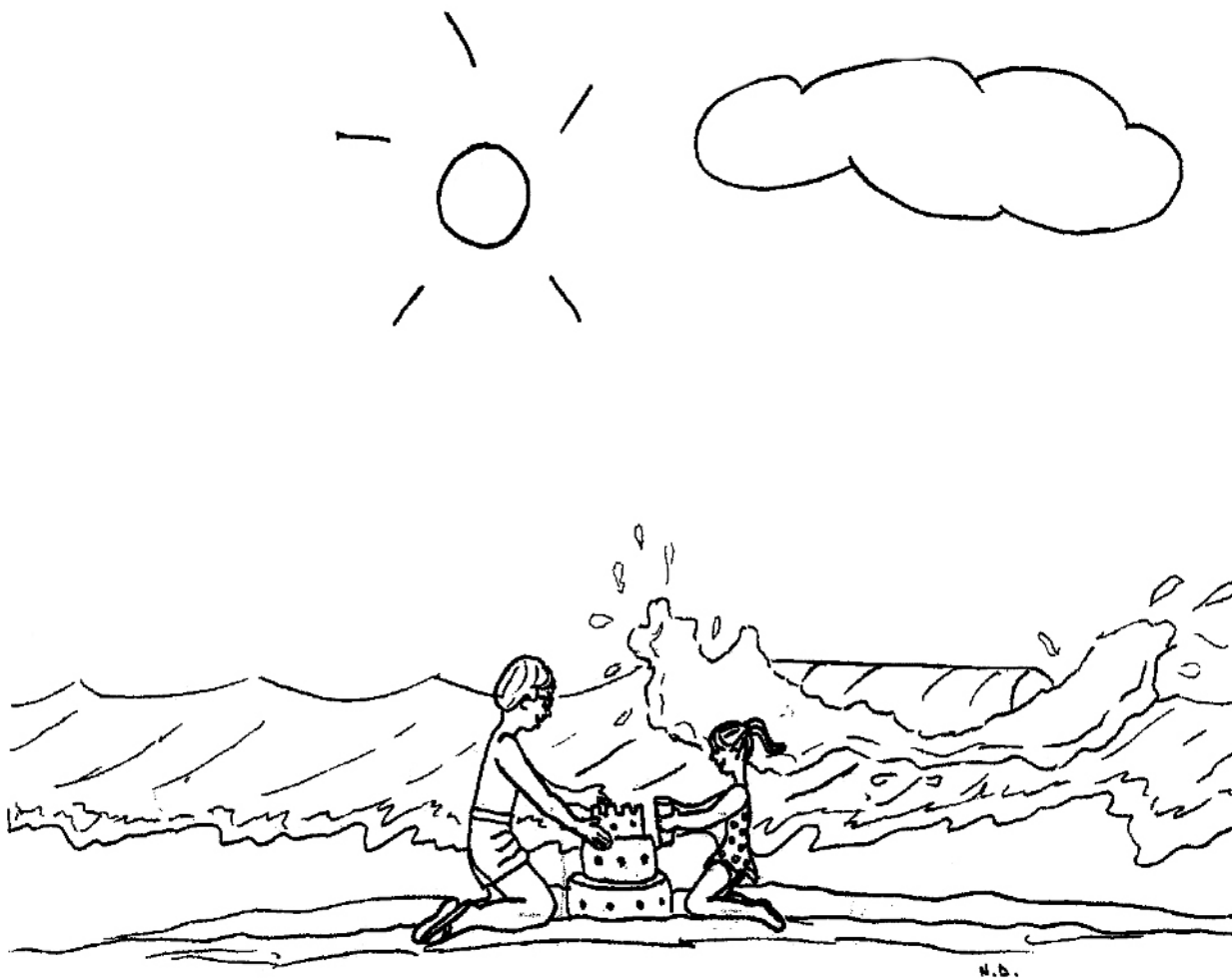


Find the hidden shapes

How many of the Footwear can you find?

There are 10 hidden in the picture.

Footwear of Peace



*Do you fight with your brothers or sisters?
Or do you put on the Footwear of Peace
and play nicely with them?*

*Color the picture of the children playing together on the
beach.*