

GET READY FOR BATTLE

LISTEN UP, SOLDIER! IT'S TIME TO GEAR UP AS YOU ENTER SCHOOL.

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Your school is a battleground. Oh, of course, it's a place where you learn and grow, socialize and have fun. But beyond that, it's also the site of a daily struggle in the ongoing contest for hearts, minds, and souls.

This battle is part of the great war all of us have been waging since before we were born, and though you may think that this combat zone is just an insignificant skirmish in the bigger picture of that war, be assured that the enemy doesn't see it that way. He looks for any weakness in your defenses, relishes every small victory, and will press his advantage wherever he can, whether it's through sin, apathy, or discouragement.

BULLYING

It's always been around, but with today's technology, there are new and innovative ways to intimidate, humiliate, and manipulate people. Strong vs. weak, popular vs. unpopular—it's likely going on somewhere in your school at any given time.

> THE DEVIL'S D.A.R.T.S. (DEDICATED ASSAULT ON THE RESOLVE OF TEENAGE SAINTS)

The adversary will try to wear down your defenses over time through a constant barrage of his "fiery darts" (Ephesians 6:16). If it sometimes feels like you're being attacked on several fronts at once, that's probably because you are. The Lord has warned us, "Behold, the enemy is combined" (D&C 38:12).

At school, some of the projectiles pointed at you may seem petty by themselves, but taken together, they can tempt you, try you, and tear you down. Here are just a few things to be on your guard against, all of which can be amplified by peer pressure.

SWEARING

At a young age, and certainly by the time you move on to the next level of schooling, many of your peers start peppering their language with profanity and vulgarity. It starts to feel like it's everywhere.

CHEATING

This ought to be straightforward—cheating, including plagiarism (copying someone else's words for work that's supposed to be your own), is wrong. But so many people do it—and rationalize it—that you may start feeling like you have to cheat just to keep up.

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

Don't get too complacent on this one. Some people will try to get you to experience whatever buzz-inducing substance they've got, whether it's beer, cigarettes, hallucinogenic seeds, illegal drugs, or prescription medications.

As you prepare to once again enter the fray, remember one thing: *You can win this battle.*

So, how can you defend yourself (and others) from the surrounding onslaughts? The Lord has given you some strong protection.