David and Goliath



Scripture Reference: 1 Samuel 17

Suggested Theme: God gives people strength to do His will. Trust in God.

Memory Verse: “But the person who trusts in the Lord will be blessed. The Lord will show him that he can be trusted.” Jeremiah 17:7, ICB

Story Overview:

David’s older brothers went to fight battles with King Saul while David stayed home and cared for his father’s sheep. When David was sent to take food to his brothers, he was appalled to find that the whole army was afraid of the Philistines. Every day, a huge soldier, Goliath, came forward and mocked the Lord and his army. David trusted in the Lord’s strength and knew that the Lord would help him defeat Goliath. David used his sling and killed Goliath with a stone between his eyes.

Background Study:

David’s conquering Goliath was a turning point in David’s life. The events of 1 Samuel 17 probably occurred after David played his harp to soothe Saul (1 Samuel 16:18-20, 23; 1 Samuel 17:15) but before he was one of Saul’s armour-bearers (1 Samuel 16:21, 22).

The Philistines, the Israelites’ enemies during King Saul’s reign, worshipped many gods and did not respect the Lord God of Israel.

The Philistines had a heavily guarded secret that made their army superior to that of the Israelites – they knew how to make iron. This secret was so closely guarded that people from other nations would travel many miles to the Philistine metal workers and pay vast sums of money to purchase ploughs or tools made of iron to use on their farms. The bronze and copper swords used by the Israelite army were no match for the stronger iron swords and weapons used by the Philistines.

Until Saul became king of Israel, there was no official Israelite army. Some farmers and shepherds only grouped together to fight when they were attacked. King Saul kept a small army of about 3000 men. Whenever the situation called for more soldiers, Saul would send a message to each tribe to send men (who were untrained) to help out.

It was common practice in ancient times for two nations preparing to fight to make their camps near the battlefield. At daybreak, if all went as usual, the two armies would line up facing each other on the battlefield. The commanders would order the attack, and the battle would continue until one army killed or drove off the other. Israel and King Saul were prepared for this type of battle.

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The Philistines wanted a different type of battle. The giant, Goliath, proposed that one man of Israel fight him to determine which nation was superior. Every day for forty days, twice a day, Goliath came down into the valley between the two armies and challenged an Israelite to come and fight him. But the Israelites were afraid of him.

Goliath was not proposing this new thing – having one champion fight for the entire army. But when ancient armies did this, they tried to use such formidable war equipment that the challenger had the advantage from the beginning. And Goliath was a terrifying sight! His description indicates that he was more than nine feet tall, wore a bronze coat of armour (like fish scales) that weighed 125 pounds, a bronze helmet for his head and bronze greaves that protected his legs from knees to ankles and carried a huge javelin (spear) as his weapon that had an iron point weighing about 15 pounds. In addition, an armour-bearer walked in front of him (probably another giant.)

When David saw and heard Goliath, he was indignant! David wanted to fight Goliath, but he had to overcome some obstacles: the army's fear, his brothers' insults, Saul's discouragement, and the fact that Goliath was better equipped. When David heard Goliath's challenge, he was outraged that this heathen should dare to challenge the Lord's army. He was even more upset that no one trusted God enough to accept the challenge. So he went to King Saul and said that with God's help, he would defeat Goliath. Perhaps the Spirit of the Lord was evident in David's manner because David's trust in God convinced King Saul.

Goliath felt disdain for this shepherd coming to fight him in the name of the Lord. David was very proficient with a sling. After acknowledging God was his helper, David hit the giant on the forehead with a stone. The giant fell, and David ran to him, pulled out Goliath's sword, killed him with it, and cut off his head. The Philistine army ran away, and God's people were triumphant.

Way to Introduce the Story:

Bring a measuring tape to the gathering today. Let the children measure to see how high the ceiling is. If one of the walls is nine feet tall, mark that height. "How would you like to be that tall? Did you know that there was someone in the bible who was even taller than that? We are going to talk about him today."

The Story:

Even though God had chosen David to be the next king, people did not know about him yet. David knew the Lord would tell him when it was the right time to be king. For now, Saul was still the king of Israel.

Saul led his army to battle against their enemies, the Philistines. The Philistines did not believe in God, and they did not like God's people. The Philistines wanted to kill the Israelites.

King Saul's army camped on one hill, and the Philistine army on another. There was a valley in between them. Every morning and every evening, a giant Philistine named Goliath would come into the valley and yell at the Israelites.

"The Philistines are better than the Israelites," Goliath would shout. "Choose a man and have him come down and fight me. If he can kill me then we will become your slaves. If I kill him then the Israelites must become slaves to the Philistines."

Goliath did this every day for forty days. The Israelites were frightened, and no one wanted to fight the giant man. He was over nine feet tall and had a bronze helmet and armour. He had a massive spear and a servant who walked before him carrying a shield.

David was not in Saul's army. He still stayed out in his father's pastures, caring for sheep. David's three oldest brothers did fight with Saul, though. Their father, Jesse, would often send David to take food and

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supplies to the three brothers.

This time, when David arrived at the army's camp with supplies, he was surprised at what he saw. He arrived just in time to see Goliath come out and make his challenge. David could not believe that anyone would talk about God in such a bad way. David knew that God was stronger than Goliath. God is stronger than anyone! David heard some soldiers say that whoever was brave enough to fight Goliath would win many prizes from King Saul. His father would never have to pay taxes to the king. The king would let the winner marry his daughter, and he would give him great wealth. When David asked the soldiers about Goliath, his brothers overheard him and became angry.

Why don't you go back to watching the sheep." they said. "Let us fight the battles."

But David had an idea. David went to King Saul and told him he wanted to fight Goliath. David told the king how the Lord always helped him. When a bear had carried off one of his father's sheep, David had chased it and hit it. The bear died. The Lord also gave him the strength to fight lions when they tried to kill the sheep.

"I know I am not a soldier but I know that God will help me fight the giant. I trust in God and God is stronger than any bears, lions, giants or spears."

King Saul listened to what David said and believed David when he said he trusted in God. King Saul told David that he could fight Goliath and even gave David his armour and sword. But when David tried them on and walked around, he knew he could not wear the king's armour. He had never been trained to use them, and they only made walking hard for him. David decided to fight Goliath using only his sling.

David went down to a stream and collected five smooth stones. With a sling, stones, and trust in the Lord, David was ready to face the enemy.

When Goliath saw David, he started making fun of him and God. He told David that he would kill him and feed him to the birds.

David still trusted in the Lord. He told Goliath, "You come against me with sword and spear but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. Today I will kill you and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel."

As Goliath moved closer to attack David, David ran toward him quickly and put one of the stones in his sling. He swung the swing round and round and released the stone straight at Goliath's forehead. The stone hit Goliath, and he fell to the ground. David killed Goliath with Goliath's own sword.

When the Philistines saw that a boy had killed Goliath, their hero, they all began to run away. The army of Israel won the battle. They won because David trusted in the Lord.

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Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using various methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible, but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection or other group participation.

Be selective. Each teacher is unique, so only use the illustrations that best relate to how YOU tell the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing, so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasise in this lesson.

Click here for visual aids and more storytelling methods.

View this slideshow and download it from the original source: http://freebibleimages.org/illustrations/david-goliath/

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Review and Reflection Questions:

Review questions help children remember and know the facts of a story. Reflection questions encourage them to internalise the meaning and implications for their lives. Asking at least one of each type of question can help strengthen a child's spiritual development and help them connect to God. Click here to learn more about review and reflection questions.

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Review:

- How many days had the Philistine's giant been asking to fight an Israelite opponent? (40 days)
- What was the giant's name that made fun of God and the Israelite army? (Goliath)
- Why was the Israelite army afraid of fighting Goliath? (Goliath was very tall, and had superior weapons, and the Israelites were relying on their own strength instead of trusting in God)
- Who killed Goliath? (David)
- How did David kill Goliath? (He used his sling to hit Goliath with a small stone on his forehead and then killed him with Goliath's sword)
- How was young David, who was not trained as a soldier, able to kill a giant? (He trusted in the Lord and used what he knew from shepherding, like using his slingshot?
- What did the Philistines do when they saw that David had killed Goliath? (They ran away)
- What did you learn about people from this story?
- What did you learn about God from this story?

Reflection:

- What part of this story is most interesting to you?
- What question do you have for God about this story?
- If you were David, would you have been brave and trusted God would help you fight Goliath, or would you not have fought him?
- How do you think David felt when he fought Goliath?
- Imagine you are a Philistine and see that David, a shepherd boy, is going to fight Goliath. What would you be thinking? Who would you think would win the fight, David or Goliath? Why?
- What does it mean to 'trust' someone?
- David trusted God would help him defeat Goliath and win the battle. When is a time you trusted God would help you?
- What is something you want to ask God to help you with? (suggestion: pray together for these things)

Prayer:

It is important to guide children in learning how to pray. In prayer, children can connect with God and learn that He hears and answers them. God can become a life-long friend who is with them every moment of their lives. Try using a variety of prayer methods from time to time so that the children can learn to connect with God in different ways. Note that you can pray at any time throughout your lesson. A variety of prayer methods are found here.

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Song Suggestions:

- Only a Boy Named David Song
- Our God is an Awesome God Song
- My God is So Big Song
- Books of the Old Testament Song
- Refer to the Song Page on this website for more song options.

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Activities and Crafts:

- How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation.
- Visit the activities and songs pages for additional activities and crafts.

Activities:

- Make a sling, go outside, and find five smooth stones. Practice shooting the sling.
- “Practice” shooting a sling by having the children wind up a few times and then let go of the imaginary sling.
- Target practice could be fun. If you are indoors, a rubber ball, haki-sak, or bean bag would work well. You could set up small paper cups for soldiers and add one large cup representing Goliath.
- Draw a large picture of Goliath with a bullseye on his forehead on the chalk/whiteboard. Let the children throw Ping-Pong balls at it.
- Measure off the actual height of Goliath (1 Samuel 17:4).
- Bring scales to the gathering and compare the children’s weight with that of Goliath’s armour (1 Samuel 17:5-7). If the Bible version you are using refers to unfamiliar weights, then research the conversions.
- Use bible reference books to look up information and pictures of the weapons and armour.
- Bring a selection of various stones to the gathering today. Younger children will enjoy examining the stones and then taking turns selecting their own. If possible, each child should have five stones to take home.
- Older children might have fun working out sound effects for the story. One child can retell the story for review while others create sound effects.
- Children can take turns being blindfolded and led around the room by another child. Talk about how the blindfolded person has to trust the leader. We should trust God.

> Invite the children to respond to this story using the adaptable “God’s Story” printable reflection page. Free printables for this story.

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Crafts:

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- Provide five smooth stones for each child. Children decorate the stones with five words that declare their trust in God. Examples of five words might be “I will trust God forever” or “Mary will always trust God.”
- Alternatively, have the children outline five stones on a sheet of paper and then write the words inside these stones.

Print and use these free bookmarks, trading cards or timelines. Free printables for this story.

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Other Online Resources:

- Colouring page with text (Ministry Spark)
- Colouring page (Christian answers)
- Craft: Instructions to make a paper pouch for David’s 5 stones (Sola Publishing)
- Craft: David puppet (Sunday school crafts)
- Craft: Doorknob hanger (Sunday school crafts)
- Craft: YouTube clip showing a shepherd’s sling similar to what David might have used.
- Game: Easy stone toss game. Based on the game “marbles.” (DLTK)
- Game: Pin the stone on Goliath. (DLTK)
- Snack: “Stone” cookies (Church house collections)

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