

David trusts God

1 SAMUEL 17

prepare

PRAYER

Living God, it can be difficult to face my fears. Gently remind me that you are with me in the midst of them. Amen.

PURPOSE STATEMENT

To turn away from fear and trust God

STORY SUMMARY

The Israelite and Philistine armies had gathered for battle. Goliath, the Philistine champion, taunted the Israelites to send someone to fight him. The loser's side would become servants of the winners. All the Israelite soldiers were scared. David, in from the fields on an errand, volunteered to face Goliath. King Saul was surprised, but gave David his permission. Confident in God's protection, David used his slingshot and a stone to defeat Goliath.



teaching tips for primary

Trusting others helps children learn to trust God. In this session, children will have the opportunity to practice working together and trusting each other. Some children may find it easier to do this than others. They may be shy or reluctant to speak. They might fear rejection or be overstimulated in group settings. Gently offer encouragement and suggestions so that everyone might safely enter into the activities in their own ways.

This story will appeal to some children because of the slingshots and weapons. While understanding this appeal, gently focus on how David trusted God instead of emphasizing that he shot Goliath in the head.

Today's Spiritual practice would be well placed following Wonder and reflect, before Peace notes.

Choose which Explore options you will do. Check Supplies and To do throughout this session to see what needs to be prepared.

A shepherd finds his voice

Today's text is the third story in a series of stories in 1 Samuel. The earlier stories reported David's anointing in Bethlehem (1 Samuel 16:1-13) and his initial meeting with Saul (1 Samuel 16:14-23) and service to the king, primarily because of his musical ability.

In the first two stories, David is the silent recipient of anointing and quietly

(except for the music) joins the king's

staff. But in 1 Samuel 17, David finds his

voice, engaging in lively dialogue with

his brother, with Israelite soldiers, with

King Saul, and, finally, with the Philistine

giant. He asks questions (verse 26), he

gives reassurance (verse 32), and, most

importantly, he gives eloquent witness to his faith in God (verses 36-37, 46-47).

Which army will be victorious?

This very familiar tale is often called the story of David and Goliath, but the name Goliath only appears twice in the Hebrew text. Rather, the giant is referred to twenty-seven times as "the Philistine." Translations sometimes obscure this by inserting Goliath's name more often in an effort to enhance the dramatic flow of the story. The emphasis on David and "the Philistine" reminds us that this is a contest between the two representative champions of opposing sides and the focus is on which army will be victorious.

David is initially not part of the military confrontation at all. He only arrives at the battlefield because his father sends him on the errand of delivering grain, bread, and cheese to his older brothers and their commander at the front (verses 12-18). When he arrives, he hears about the challenge that the Philistine giant has made: each side will choose a champion and that contest will decide the battle.

Faith and courage

As the narrative unfolds, David appears as a person of clear-eyed courage and faith in contrast to the Israelite army, under Saul's leadership, which is frozen with fear.

Saul observes that David is a youth and unable to fight against a Philistine who has been a warrior for many years (verse 33). But there is another unspoken contrast: Saul was anointed king to "save [the people] from the hand of their enemies" (1 Samuel 10:1). Now it is David who volunteers to protect Saul and his army by going to fight the Philistine (verse 32).

David understands the contest as

a theological one—the Philistines are

challenging the armies "of the living

God" (verses 26, 36). In the first of two

powerful testimonies in this story, David

speaks about his faith in God as Savior

(verses 34-37). Drawing on his personal

experiences as a shepherd tending off

wild animals who attack the sheep, David testifies that

God will deliver him from the hand of the Philistine

champion. It is God who has power to save. Saul prays

that God will be with him (verse 37), but when Saul seeks

to dress David in his own heavy armor, we might wonder

if his earlier prayer for God's presence was any more than

wishful thinking. David rejects Saul's efforts to arm him;

his confidence is grounded in the faith that God is in

control of the battle and will bring deliverance.

David goes into the contest with the simple weapons

of a shepherd—stones and a sling. Goliath approaches,

presumably with the armor he is described as wearing

at the beginning of the story (verses 5-7). He ridicules

David and curses him by his gods. David gives a second

testimony, calling on the Lord to deliver him and further

declaring that this deliverance will be a witness to "the

whole world" that there is a God in Israel (verse 47).

While many of the details of this story do not highlight a pacifist point of view, it is possible to see the

groundwork for developing such a perspective in some

aspects of the story. David rejects the weaponry of both

Saul and Goliath in his courageous stand and insists at

the moment of confrontation that "the Lord saves not

with sword and spear" (verse 47).



gather

supplies

- Primary leaflets
- *Shine Songbook and CD*
- CD player
- Candle and matches or battery-operated candle
- Pencils and crayons
- Scarves or streamers
- Sand or uncooked rice
- Plates

poster pack

- Bible memory poster (Psalm 25)

media connections

- *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig* by Eugene Trivias and Helen Oxenbury
- Robert J. Dufford song "Be Not Afraid"
- Internet search for pictures of mountains and valleys
- YouTube search for *Dave vs the Bully*

BUILD COMMUNITY

Welcome the children. Share with them about one of your fears. Talk about their fears. Is anyone afraid of the dark? Of bugs? Of new places? Sometimes our minds are so filled with fear that we can't think about anything else. Use page 2 in the Primary leaflet to talk about places and people that help us feel safe again.

WORSHIP TOGETHER

Light your worship candle as you say:

We remember that God is with us all the time.

Offer a short prayer thanking God for being with us when we are afraid and when we are brave.

Give children scarves or streamers to wave as you play "I Lift My Eyes Up" track 10.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Repeating a word or phrase can help us focus on God's presence. It can also calm us when we are afraid. Give each child a plate partially covered with sand or uncooked rice. With their finger, they can draw a picture of something they are afraid of in the sand. Then they can gently erase it with their hand as they think about God helping them with their fears. As the erase their pictures, they can repeat a phrase such as, "God takes care of me," "God is with me," or "God loves me."

Bible memory

Point out the Bible memory poster. Try saying the verse as a walking prayer. Walk around the room in a line. As you walk, say a phrase and have the children repeat the phrase after you. How far did you get in the passage by the time you returned to the starting point?

Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long.
—Psalm 25:4–5



SHARE THE STORY

Create a mountain scene to help children imagine the story. Spread a brown or gray cloth in front of you. Make two short stacks out of blocks or books, a short distance apart. Spread a brown or gray cloth over each stack to complete the "mountains." The space between the mountains becomes a "valley." Place a story figure on one mountain to represent Goliath. Place a smaller wooden figure on the other mountain to represent David. Open the Bible to 1 Samuel 17. In session 10 we heard about David being anointed to be the next king in 1 Samuel 16. Today's story happens before Saul knew about this. Tell the story from page 88 in *Shine On*. When you are finished show the children the picture.

WONDER AND REFLECT

Take some time to reflect on the story. Pause between each of the questions below for quiet reflection or spoken responses.

- Imagine staying on a mountain inside and listening to Goliath shout his challenge for weeks and weeks.

- I wonder what helped David believe that God was mightier than a giant.
- I wonder why no one else challenged Goliath.
- I wonder what you are afraid of.
- I wonder what helps you trust God when you're scared.

PEACE NOTES

David trusted God's protection facing Goliath because God had protected him in the past. Trace the path on the "God speaks to us" poster. As your finger stops at each circle, read the words and invite the children to pantomime the action. Ask them if they can remember a time when they felt that God was with them. How did they know God was with them? Write down the children's responses on sticky notes and place them around the poster.

teaching tip
Today's session calls for wooden story figures. See patterns on www.ShineCurriculum.com/ Extras. Wooden figures cut from 1x material (approximately ¾ in / 1.9 cm thick) will allow figures to stand. Story figures can also be made from craft foam. You can also use toy wooden figures or create figures from clay.

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1 Samuel 17

supplies

- Bible
- *Shine On: A Story Bible*
- Sticky notes
- Pencils

storytelling props

- Blocks or books for two mountains
- Three pieces of brown or gray cloth
- Two wooden story figures

poster pack

- "God speaks to us" poster

to do

- Become familiar with today's story in *Shine On: A Story Bible*.
- Practice telling it with the props.

explore

CREATE

Make a story mural. Use various art supplies to create mountains, a valley, and stones. Draw tents for the Philistine camp on one mountain and the Israelite camp on the other. Or make a torn paper scene similar to the one on page 3 of the Primary leaflet.

supplies

- Primary leaflet (optional)
- Large roll of paper
- Art supplies: construction paper, markers, crayons, colored paper, yarn, buttons, tissue paper
- Glue
- Scissors
- Tape

MOVE

We learn to trust God through trusting others. Put a line of masking tape on each side of your room. The space between the lines is the “river.” Give each pair of children five “rocks” (sheets of paper). One partner makes a path of rocks across the river. The other partner walks across trusting that the rocks are placed so that it is easy to cross without falling in. Switch roles and repeat. What is it like to trust each other?

supplies

- Five sheets of paper for each set of partners
- Masking tape
- Pencils
- Crayons

RETELL

Stand at three different places in the room to read the story from page 1 in the Primary leaflet: one place for paragraph 1 (“The Philistines . . .”), a second place for paragraphs 2–3, and a third place for paragraph 4 (“David and Goliath . . .”). In each place, have the children create a pose to represent that part of the story. Then ask what special number they heard in the story. A volunteer can find today’s arrow and put it on the Numbers poster pointing at 40, the number of days Goliath yelled.

supplies

- Numbers poster (from poster pack)
- Primary leaflets

other ideas

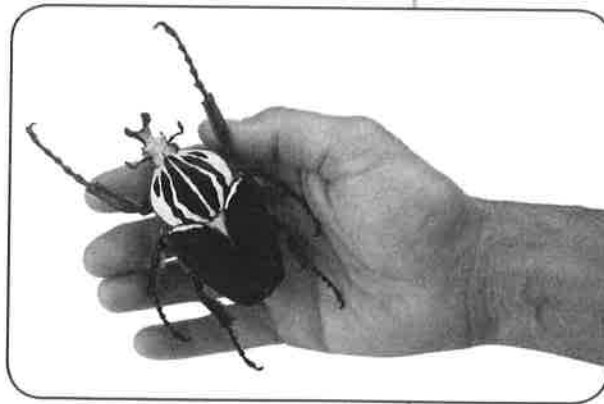
- Cut the back pockets out of old jeans. Fill them with craft sticks labeled with things children can have in their “pockets” when facing fearful situations.
- Pass around a mirror. Encourage each child to think about God being with them as they look into the mirror and say, “I can trust God.”

LEAFLET

Children can complete pages 3 and 4 in the Primary leaflet. The solution for “Puzzling it out” on page 4 is *courage*.

supplies

- Primary leaflets
- Pencils



PRAY

Gather the children in a circle. Say this prayer of thanks, or your own prayer:

Living God, thank you for being with us every day. Each day we can trust you. Amen.

Sing "Dios de la esperanza" (May the God of Hope), track 5. Words and music are on page 10 of the songbook.

SEND

Send the children with these reassuring words from Isaiah 41:10:

Do not fear for I am with you; do not be afraid for I am your God. I will strengthen you; I will help you.

Make sure to send leaflets home with the children.



leader's closing prayer

Spend a few moments thinking about the resources you have for facing your fears. Who or what helps you trust God each day?

God, thank you for those people and things you have brought into my life that teach me trust and model courage. Amen.

supplies

- Primary leaflets
- Shine Songbook and CD
- Year Two Songbooks (optional)
- CD player

Little ones respond well to stories, but the older they get the more I just need to be present when they are ready to talk. I try to speak from my own experience and failures, just being honest when I fail and admitting that I need God's help, or talking with them about how I feel the Lord speaking to me, pointing out things that are beautiful or miraculous and giving God the credit.

—Jennifer K. Scarr
Ponoma, California

looking ahead

Next week, the children will plant small herb gardens during Create. You will need large plastic pots, dirt, a small shovel or scoop, and several kinds of herb seeds or seedlings for this project.