

SHEPHERD

SESSION 4

DAVID DEFEATED A GIANT

FOCUS

David defeated Goliath. The children should be able to tell the story of David and Goliath in their own words.

GETTING READY

The story of David's defeat of Goliath has an important place in both Hebrew and Christian tradition. Children often like the story of the young shepherd boy, with his slingshot and smooth stones, bravely facing the huge giant and coming out triumphant.

The account is in *I Samuel 17:1-58*. The scene is set in the hill country between Israel and Philistia. The opposing armies of the Israelites and the Philistines took their positions facing each other across a valley (perhaps a river bed that was dry in the summer).

In Old Testament times, occasionally issues were settled by a contest between strong individuals. This story is an example of such a face-off. King Saul and the Israelites are discouraged by the odds against them, and none of the soldiers in Saul's army are willing to face the giant.

David, however, is strong in his resolve to face Goliath even though he is much smaller and not skilled in warfare. We have no sympathy for Goliath, who taunts the young shepherd with derisive remarks. We rejoice with David that God has enabled him to be the victor. The Philistines are defeated as a result.

The reason for the story in the record of David's life is to underscore God's presence in his life. Without the Lord's help, he could not have accomplished such a heroic task.

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us in safety to this new day: Preserve us with your mighty power, that we may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all we do, direct us to the fulfilling of your purpose; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A Collect for Grace

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 100

TEACHING TIP

Even though monsters and "things that go bump in the night" are fantasy, children sometimes believe them to be real. Children's fears may not be revealed in class discussion but may show up in nightmares or other signs of

distress at home. When sharing biblical stories such as the one about David and Goliath, focus on the heroic deed and God’s presence.

GATHERING

Obtain a sheet of wrapping paper (or butcher paper) that is long enough to represent the height of a giant. Goliath was approximately 9.5 feet tall. More than likely, the classroom ceiling will be lower than that, so you may have to settle for a shorter giant. Mount the sheet on the classroom wall.

As the children arrive, ask each one to stand in front of the sheet and be measured. Make marks over the heads of the children, and write their names next to these. Ask whether anyone has seen a person as tall as the sheet of paper. Provide puzzles and books for children as well.

When all are present, gather the group and say:

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

STORY (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Introduce the story by reading from the Bible. To do this, gather the children in a circle, open the Bible, and let the children see where the reading is. Read *I Samuel 17:50a* (adapted):

“So David . . . (defeated Goliath) with a sling and a stone.”

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.

Children respond: Thanks be to God.

Display the picture of David and Goliath from Poster No. 3 in the Teacher’s Packet. Tell a short story, based on *I Samuel 17*, using your own words. David, a shepherd, was strong and brave. When his sheep were threatened by fierce beasts, David protected them.

- Three of David’s brothers were in the army. One of their enemies was a fierce, huge man named Goliath. He had a helmet, metal armor, and a big sword. Goliath was very mean, and all the soldiers were afraid of him. No one would fight Goliath.

- When David heard that everyone was afraid of Goliath, he told King Saul that he would fight Goliath. Everyone laughed at David because he was small, and Goliath was a giant. The king gave David his own helmet, metal armor, and sword, but they were too big. So David fought Goliath with only a sling and some stones.

- Goliath laughed when he saw that David was just a boy. But David said, “God will help me fight you.” So David killed Goliath with the sling and the stones. When enemy saw that Goliath was dead, they ran away.

(Remind children to look at the story of David and Goliath in the children’s book *David*, pp. 6-13, when they go home.)

CREATING (*Time: 15 minutes*)

Option 1. David and Goliath

Make a photocopy for each child of the David and Goliath figures provided on Poster No. 3 in the Teacher's Packet. Glue the figures to a piece of construction paper. Invite the children to use crayons and markers to fill in the background scene and to color the figures. The background could contain hills and the armies in the story. Review the story as the children work.

Option 2. King Saul's Helmet

Obtain enough paper grocery bags for each class member. Make a helmet by cutting a bag along its seam two-thirds of the way from the opening. Where the slit ends, cut horizontally four or five inches in each direction. Fold back the flaps to form the opening of the helmet. Use markers, crayons, and paint to decorate the king's helmet.

GAME (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Play "Sometimes I'm Tall." One child is chosen to be the one who guesses. The "guesser" stands away from the group, with eyes closed.

The group chants and acts out the following:

Sometimes I'm very, very small; (*children make smaller by crouching down*)

Sometimes I'm very, very tall. (*children stretch as tall as they can*)

Sometimes small, (*children bend down again*)

Sometimes tall. (*children stretch as tall as they can*)

Guess what I am now? (*children choose to be small or tall*)

Without turning around, the guesser calls out small or tall. If the guess is correct, the guesser joins the group and chooses another child to take a turn at guessing.

DOING (*Time: 15 minutes*)

Help the children to dress up like shepherds in David's time, using costumes of robes and cloth headpieces. Suggest that they role-play scenes from David's life as a shepherd, and as the brave youth who faced Goliath.

WONDERING (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Wonder with the children about what it feels like to be very very tall and very very small. Wonder what it feels like to be scared. To feel safe again.

MUSIC (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Sing again "The King of love my shepherd is" (*The Hymnal 1982, 645; We Sing of God, 97*). Repeat the motions introduced in Session 3. Listen to the tape *Children Sing!*

CONVERSATION (*Time: 10 minutes*)

David was a very young person, and he did something very hard and

frightening when he faced Goliath. David knew that God was with him. Talk with the children about times when they may have done something that was very hard (like the action of a grown-up). Examples: Caring for the house when a parent was at home sick; going on an urgent errand; making a phone call to deliver a message.

TAKE-HOME CARD

Card 4 has a picture of David and Goliath, a Scripture verse, a prayer, and a note to parents. Remind the children to take their card home, show it to their families, and keep it safe to look at again.

SAYING GOODBYE

Say the following prayer of thanksgiving. Add any line that seems appropriate.

Thank you, God, for being with David.
Thank you for hearing our prayers.
(Pray for any concerns the children may have.)
Watch over us as we go,
And keep us in your care. Amen.

Hold hands in a circle and say:

Teacher: Let us bless the Lord.

Children: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S REFLECTION

Reflect on how the children reacted to the story of David and Goliath. Had they heard it before? What details seemed to capture their interest? Do the class members think of David as a heroic figure?

LOOKING AHEAD

The focus of the next session is David's love for music. Take time to notice the effect that music has in your own life. How does it make you feel? Are there special feelings you associate with certain music?