TEACHER GUIDE · 1 SAMUEL 17:1-51; 1 SAMUEL 16:1-13

David and Goliath



God saves His people by His own power, through the champion He chooses.

PRINCIPLE: TRUST · We can trust God with battles that are too big for us, because the battle belongs to Him.

Creation God made it	Fall We broke it	**Redemption** **Jesus fixes it**	Restoration Jesus makes it new

God is rescuing His people. Here He gives them a champion to win a battle they could not win, a picture of the greater rescue He would bring through Jesus.

MEMORY VERSE

“It is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle belongs to the LORD.”

1 Samuel 17:47 BSB

CHRIST CONNECTION · BETTER THAN

Israel needed a champion to fight the enemy they could not beat. Jesus is the better champion: He defeated sin and death for us, and His victory becomes ours.

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Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14-15

Class plan

Welcome and opening hook	5 min
Bible story	10 min
Talk about it	8 min
Activity or skit	12 min
Review game	5 min
Live It and prayer	5 min
Total	**45 min**

Before class

☐ Read 1 Samuel 17:1-51 and 1 Samuel 16:1-13.
☐ Print one handout per child for their age group.
☐ Mark a line 9 ft 9 in long on the floor with masking tape (Goliath's height).
☐ Fill a grocery bag with heavy books for the object lesson.
☐ Tape a paper "Goliath" (a big sheet of paper with a drawn face) above a bin for the review game.

Supplies

Craft sticks · Rubber bands · Plastic spoons · Cotton balls or pom-poms · Paper cups · A tape measure · Masking tape · Printed handouts (one per child) · Crayons · Pencils · Masking tape · Tape measure · Bibles (one per child in 3rd–6th grade) · A grocery bag of heavy books · Scrap paper · A bin or bucket · Large sheet of paper and a marker · Paper crown

HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT

Israel already had a tall champion. He stayed in his tent.

Israel had asked for a king who would "go out before us and fight our battles" (1 Samuel 8:20), and God gave them Saul, who stood head and shoulders above everyone (9:2). If anyone in Israel looked built to face a giant, it was Saul. Yet in the valley Israel's tallest man stays in his tent, and God's chosen king-in-waiting, the youngest brother, goes out and fights the battle for his people.

Then notice who *we* are in this story. Not David: we're the frozen soldiers on the hillside. We don't defeat the giant; we receive the victory our champion wins. That's why the hero is God, and why the story points straight to Jesus.

Background

God had already chosen David to be Israel's next king (1 Samuel 16:1-13), but no one outside his family knew yet. Saul was still king, and the Philistines, Israel's strongest enemy, had come to fight.

The two armies faced each other across the Valley of Elah. Instead of a full battle, the Philistines sent out one champion. Whoever won the fight between the two champions would win for his whole army (17:8-9). For forty days Goliath stepped out and dared Israel, and no one went to meet him (17:16).

Notice what bothers David most: Goliath is defying "the armies of the living God" (17:26). David's confidence isn't in himself. He remembers how the LORD rescued him from a lion and a bear (17:37), and he tells Goliath the reason for the whole fight: "that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel" (17:46).

A note on height: the Hebrew text most Bibles follow says "six cubits and a span" (about 9 ft 9 in). Some ancient copies say "four cubits and a span" (about 6 ft 9 in). Either way, Goliath towered over Israel's soldiers.

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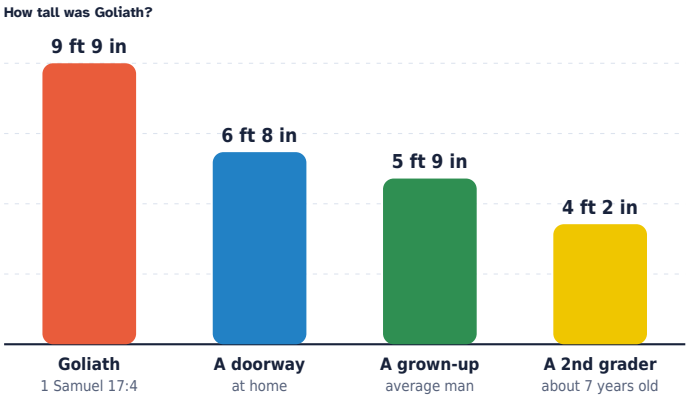
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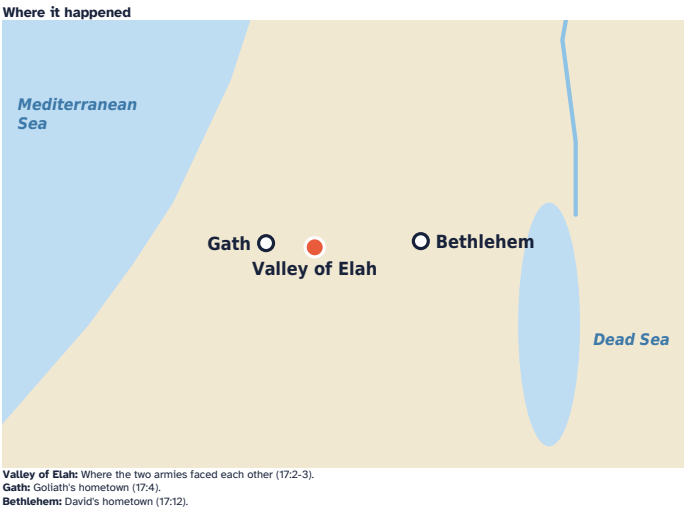
Israel couldn't win this battle. They needed one champion to fight in their place, and when he won, the victory belonged to everyone who had been too afraid to fight.

That is a picture of what Jesus does for us. We can't defeat sin and death on our own. Jesus fought that battle in our place and won (Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14-15), and His victory becomes ours. Help kids see that the hero of this story is God, who saves His people, not David's bravery.

Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14-15

The New Testament doesn't make this connection directly; teach it as an illustration of what Jesus does.





Bible Times

A sling, not a slingshot

A sling was two long cords with a little pouch in the middle. A shepherd put a stone in the pouch, swung it around, and let one cord go. The stone flew fast and far. Shepherds used slings to protect their sheep, and armies had trained slingers.

Shepherds kept sheep safe

Shepherds stayed with their sheep day and night, leading them to grass and water. In David's time, lions and bears still lived in the land, and a shepherd had to protect the flock (1 Samuel 17:34-35). It was often the youngest son's job.

One champion for everyone

Sometimes, instead of two whole armies fighting, each side sent out one champion. Whoever won, his whole side won (1 Samuel 17:8-9). That's why Israel needed someone to face Goliath.

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Who were the Philistines?
The Philistines lived near the sea in five big cities: Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath and Ekron. Goliath came from Gath. They knew how to make iron weapons, and Israel did not (1 Samuel 13:19-22).



Dasch Digs Up: Did You Know?

Goliath was "six cubits and a span" tall. That's about **9 feet 9 inches**, taller than any doorway in your house!
1 Samuel 17:4

Goliath's bronze armor weighed 5,000 shekels, about **125 pounds**. That's like wearing a big grown-up on your back!
1 Samuel 17:5

The iron tip of Goliath's spear alone weighed about **15 pounds**, as much as a bowling ball.
1 Samuel 17:7

Some soldiers in Israel were so good with slings they could "sling a stone at a hair and not miss."
Judges 20:16

David was the **youngest of eight brothers**. His three oldest brothers were in Saul's army.
1 Samuel 17:12-14

Words to know

Champion	One person who fights for a whole group.
Philistines	A people near the sea who were enemies of Israel.
Sling	Two cords and a pouch used to throw a stone fast and far.
Armor	Heavy metal clothes that protect a soldier in battle.
Defy	To stand against someone and insult them.
Anointed	Chosen by God, shown by pouring oil on someone's head.

Say it right

Philistines: FILL-uh-steens **Goliath**: guh-LIE-uth **Elah**: EE-luh **Jesse**: JESS-ee **Eliab**: ee-LIE-ab

Object lesson

Who carries the heavy bag? 5 min

You'll need: A grocery bag of heavy books

1. Ask a volunteer to carry the heavy bag across the room. Let them try, then stop before anyone strains.
2. Ask, "Was that too heavy for you?" Then pick up the bag yourself and carry it easily.

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3. Say, "Some battles are too big for us. Israel's soldiers knew Goliath was too big for them. But David knew the battle belonged to the LORD."

The point: We aren't strong enough for our biggest battles, but God is. He fights for us, and Jesus fought the biggest battle of all.



Theo's Workshop Build challenge

Giant-sized challenge 15 min

You'll need: Craft sticks, Rubber bands, Plastic spoons, Cotton balls or pom-poms, Paper cups, A tape measure, Masking tape

1. Run a strip of masking tape up a wall to 9 feet 9 inches high. Say, "This is how tall Goliath was!" (1 Samuel 17:4). Have kids stand next to it.
2. Teams build a launcher. Stack and band craft sticks together, add a plastic spoon on top with a rubber band, and test it.
3. Stack paper cups into a "Goliath" tower. Each team gets three launches from behind a line to knock it down.
4. Measure how far each team's best launch flew, and cheer for the winner.
5. Read 1 Samuel 17:45-47. Ask, "Did David win because he had the best sling?"

How it works: A launcher works like a lever. When you push down on one end, the other end moves faster and farther. A sling works in a similar way, making a stone move much faster than a hand could throw it. Shepherds practiced for hours, and some slingers in Bible times could hit a target the width of a hair (Judges 20:16).

The point: David was skilled, but he knew the battle belonged to the LORD (1 Samuel 17:47). He went out in God's name, not in his own strength. Jesus is the greater champion who fought our biggest enemies, sin and death, and won for us.

Safety: Launch only cotton balls or pom-poms, and never aim at people. Grown-ups handle the rubber bands for young kids.

Act it out: The giant and the shepherd

Parts: Narrator, Goliath, David, King Saul, Eliab, Soldiers (everyone else) · **Props:** Paper crown

NARRATOR
For forty days, a giant came out to shout at God's people.

GOLIATH
Send someone out to fight me!

SOLDIERS
Not me! Not me!

NARRATOR
One day young David came with food for his brothers.

ELIAB

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Why are you here? Go back to your sheep!

DAVID
Who is this giant to insult the armies of the living God?

KING SAUL
You're only a boy. At least wear my armor.

DAVID
I can't even walk in this! The LORD saved me from the lion and the bear. He will save me now.

NARRATOR
David picked up five smooth stones.

GOLIATH
Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?

DAVID
You come with a sword and spear, but I come in the name of the LORD!

NARRATOR
David swung his sling... and down went Goliath! (Goliath falls slowly, dramatically.)

EVERYONE
The battle belongs to the LORD!

Review game

Stone toss 5 min

You'll need: Scrap paper, A bin or bucket, Large sheet of paper and a marker, Masking tape

1. Each child crumples a sheet of scrap paper into a "smooth stone."
2. Ask a review question. Whoever answers gets to toss a stone at the paper Goliath above the bin.
3. After every toss, everyone shouts, "The battle belongs to the LORD!"

Snack idea: Five smooth stones
Give each child five round crackers or pieces of round cereal on a napkin. Count them together and say the memory verse before eating. Check for allergies first.

Tips by age

Preschool	Keep the battle short and calm. Spend your energy on "God is bigger!" and let kids shout it every time.

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K–2nd	Let kids lie down along the tape line. Seeing how tall Goliath was makes the story real.
3rd–4th	Kids this age want to be brave on their own. Keep steering back to who David trusted.
5th–6th	Ask what Goliath trusted in and what David trusted in. The two speeches (17:43-47) are the heart of the lesson.

Song ideas

♪ **My God Is So Big** Preschool, K–2nd · Traditional; big motions
♪ **Only a Boy Named David** Preschool, K–2nd, 3rd–4th · Traditional
♪ **Our God** 3rd–4th, 5th–6th · Modern worship song
♪ **Mighty to Save** 5th–6th · Modern worship song

Song titles only. Use any recording or songbook your church has permission to use.

Activity sheet answers

K–2nd	Big Story: Redemption
3rd–4th	Crossword: 3 across SLING, 4 across ARMOR, 5 across PHILISTINES, 6 across DEFY, 1 down CHAMPION, 2 down ANOINTED · Fill in the verse: sword, spear, battle, belongs
5th–6th	Fill in the verse: sword, spear, LORD, saves, battle, belongs · Big Story: Redemption

Note for parents

Today we learned that **the battle belongs to the LORD**. Israel's soldiers were too afraid to face Goliath, but God saved His people through David, a young shepherd who trusted Him.

Ask at dinner: *What is something that feels too big for you right now? What does this story tell us about God?*

Memory verse: "It is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle belongs to the LORD." (1 Samuel 17:47)

Going deeper: 1 Samuel 16:7; Psalm 20:7; Romans 8:31-37

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