

David and Goliath

Sunday Plan

SCRIPTURE

1 Samuel 17

MEMORY VERSE

1 Samuel 17:47

OPTIONAL VIDEO

Slapstick Theater — David and Goliath

<https://southside.cc/057-506>

The battle belongs to the LORD.

For the Teacher

Read this before you teach. Every kid in the room has heard this story. Most of them have heard it as a “be brave like David” story — brave shepherd boy, big bad giant, slingshot, win. That reading is not wrong, exactly. It’s just shallow. The text itself tells us why David won, and David tells us why David won, and the answer is not *because he was brave*. The answer is in verse 47.

KEY TRUTH

The battle belongs to the LORD.

David tells us the point in his own words. Before he throws a single stone, David announces what’s about to happen and why. Read verses 45–47 carefully. Three things David says: *I come in the name of the LORD* (v. 45), *the LORD will deliver you into my hand* (v. 46), *the battle is the LORD’s* (v. 47). The win is announced before it happens, and the credit is announced before the win. The sling and the stone are real, but they aren’t the cause. They’re the instrument.

Goliath’s whole speech is about names. Look at it. Goliath defies *the armies of Israel* (v. 10). David answers that Goliath has defied *the armies of the living God* (v. 26, v. 36). The fight is about whose name carries weight. Goliath comes with bronze and iron. David comes with a name. The name wins.

This is not a “self-esteem” lesson. A lot of Sunday school versions of this story land on “you can do hard things if you believe in yourself.” The text says the opposite. David does not believe in himself. David believes in *God*, and that is why he can walk toward the giant when forty thousand trained soldiers can’t. The kids need to hear that order — God’s name first, the courage afterward.

Where this connects. Three weeks ago the kids met Joshua, who was scared until God promised *I will be with you* (Q3L1). Today they meet a teenager who says the same promise out loud as he walks toward a giant. Same God. Same logic. The promise is what makes the courage possible.

What we’re skipping and why. Chapter 17 is long. The kids don’t need every verse. We’re staying in the spine: Goliath’s challenge (vv. 4–11), David’s arrival and outrage (vv. 26, 32), David’s confession (vv. 37, 45–47), and the win (vv. 49–50). We’re skipping Saul’s armor (vv. 38–39) — it’s a great detail but it pulls focus from the bottom line. We’re also skipping the Psalm 56 / Romans 8 verse stack from the source; one text done well beats three texts gestured at.

Repeat the bottom line all morning. Say it at least six times. Have the kids say it back. Write it on the board. Push past “David won because he was brave” every time it comes up. *The battle belongs to the LORD.*

MATERIALS

- Bibles for every student
- Whiteboard or large paper, markers
- Pencils, crayons or colored pencils
- A small smooth stone for each kid (river rocks work; index cards if you can’t get stones)
- A measuring tape or yardstick (for showing Goliath’s height)
- Activity sheets (printed in advance from this week’s activities — pick what you’ll use)

1. Gather

Welcome the kids and have them sit together. Tell them you’re going to tell a story today that some of them have heard a hundred times — but you want them to listen for one thing they may have missed.

ASK

What's the biggest, scariest problem you could imagine? Bigger than anything you'd ever try to fight on your own?

Let two or three kids answer. Let it get a little wild. Then bring it back: today's story is about an army that ran from a problem that big — and a kid who walked toward it. Write the bottom line on the board:

SAY

The battle belongs to the LORD.

2. The Story

Setting the Stage

Before opening the Bible, give the kids the picture. Tell them, in your own words:

SAY

The Israelites have a king now. His name is Saul. He has an army. And the army is camped on one side of a valley, staring across at another army — the Philistines, who have been Israel's enemies for as long as anyone can remember.

Every morning for forty days, one Philistine soldier walks down into the valley and yells across at Israel. He dares them to send one man to fight him, one on one — winner takes the war.

His name is Goliath. He's nine and a half feet tall.

Hold up the measuring tape and show the height — stand on a chair if you have to. Let the kids see it. Then say:

SAY

And every morning, for forty days, nobody answers him. Not Saul. Not the army. Nobody. They are terrified.

Reading the Text

Have everyone open to 1 Samuel 17. Pick a confident reader.

1 Samuel 17:4–11

After the reading, work through these questions together:

DISCUSSION

1. How tall was Goliath, and what was he wearing?

→ *About nine and a half feet. Bronze helmet, scale armor weighing 125 pounds, bronze leg guards, an iron spear with a head that weighed 15 pounds. He's a walking tank.*

2. What does Goliath defy in verse 10?

→ *"The armies of Israel." He's calling out the whole nation. He's saying: nobody on your side is strong enough to face me.*

3. How did Saul and the army react?

→ *"Dismayed and greatly afraid." They had no answer. For forty days.*

David Walks Up

Now tell the kids: into this scene walks a teenager. Not a soldier — a shepherd. His older brothers are in the army; his dad sent him with a delivery of bread and cheese. He shows up just in time to hear Goliath yelling.

Pick a confident reader.

1 Samuel 17:26, 32, 37

DISCUSSION

1. In verse 26, what does David call Goliath?

→ *“This uncircumcised Philistine” who has defied “the armies of the living God.” David hears the same words Saul heard — but he hears them as an insult to God, not just to Israel.*

2. In verse 37, why does David say he can fight Goliath?

→ *Because the LORD rescued him from a lion and a bear when he was protecting his sheep — so the LORD will rescue him from this Philistine. David is remembering what God has already done.*

3. Notice what David is *not* saying. Is he saying “I’m strong enough”? “I’m a great fighter”? “I have a secret weapon”?

→ *No. He’s saying “God did it before, God will do it again.” The confidence is in God’s track record, not David’s.*

The Showdown

Have the kids stay in their Bibles. The most important verses in the chapter are coming up.

1 Samuel 17:45–47

ASK

What does David say in verse 47? Read the second half of that verse out loud, all together.

The class should land on it: *“the battle is the LORD’s.”* Write it on the board next to the bottom line. Underline it.

DISCUSSION

1. In verse 45, Goliath comes with sword, spear, and javelin. What does David come with?

→ *“The name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.” Goliath has weapons. David has a name. David thinks the name is more powerful than the weapons.*

2. In verse 47, who does David say the battle belongs to?

→ *The LORD. Not David. Not Israel. Not the sling. The win belongs to God before the fight even starts.*

3. Why does David tell Goliath all this *before* he throws the stone?

→ *Because David wants everyone watching to know who really wins this fight. When the giant goes down, nobody gets to say “wow, that kid was lucky” or “wow, that kid was tough.” They have to say “wow, God did that.”*

TRANSITION

This is the hinge of the whole story. David announces who wins before the fight happens. The stone is real. The sling is real. But the stone and the sling are not the reason David wins.

The Stone Falls

Read the ending.

1 Samuel 17:48–50

One stone. One throw. The giant falls. The army that was scared for forty days suddenly has its courage back — because the battle was never theirs to begin with. It was the LORD's.

3. The Point

Say the bottom line again, with the kids:

SAY

The battle belongs to the LORD.

The Memory Verse

Have everyone turn to 1 Samuel 17:47. Have a student read it aloud:

SCRIPTURE

1 Samuel 17:47

And that all this assembly may know that the LORD saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our hand.

Then read it three ways together: all together normally, all together with their hands open (palms up), all together pointing up on the word *LORD's*.

SAY

"Not with sword and spear." That's the part you don't want to miss. The world thinks battles are won by who's bigger, who's tougher, who's louder. The Bible says battles are won by who's with the LORD. Goliath had the sword. David had the LORD. The LORD won.

The Stone in Your Hand

Hand each kid a small stone. Tell them:

SAY

David picked up five stones from a stream that morning. He only needed one — but he came ready, because he wasn't pretending the fight wasn't real. The fight was real. The giant was huge. He just trusted that the LORD was bigger.

You're going to have giants too. Real ones. A test you're scared of. A friend who's hurting you. A new school. A sick person in your family. The giants are real. Hold this stone for a second and remember: the battle isn't yours. It's the LORD's.

NOTE

Let the kids hold the stones quietly for a beat. If a class can sit in that silence for ten seconds, it'll land harder than another sentence will. Don't rush.

Pray over the stones:

PRAY

God, you fought for David against a giant. You fight for us against every giant we face. Help us remember today that the battle isn't ours — it's yours. Help us walk toward hard things in your name, not in our own strength. Amen.

Tell them they can take the stone home or leave it in their Bible.

4. The Work

Pick one or more activities from this week's menu. Print enough copies for each kid in advance. The kids don't have to do all of them — pick what fits the group's energy and what time you have left.

The menu for this week:

- **The Battle Is the LORD's** — coloring page reinforcing the showdown scene and the bottom line.
- **In the Name of the LORD** — word search with names, places, and key words from 1 Samuel 17.
- **My Giant This Week** — drawing prompt connecting the lesson to the kid's own life.
- **Remember the Battle** — fill-in-the-blanks recall using the kids' Bibles (1 Samuel 17).

The full production specs for each activity are in this week's activities file.

NOTE

While the kids work, sit with them. Ask one or two what they're working on. Reinforce the bottom line one more time before class ends. If you finish early, have a few kids share what they made. If you run long, send the activity sheets home.

What Comes Next Week

David grows up. He becomes king. And one day, sitting in a palace made of cedar, he tells God he wants to build him a house — and God answers with a promise that reaches all the way to Jesus. The kids will see what God says when a king tries to do something for him, instead of trusting what he's already done.