



The Shepherd Boy and the Giant

(based on 1 Samuel 17)

David had an important job. Every day, he took care of his family's flock of sheep. It was his job to keep the sheep safe from danger. Sometimes he would use his slingshot and stones to scare away wild animals who would hurt them.

David's brothers were in King Saul's army. Israel was at war with the Philistines.

One day, David's father called him in from the fields. "Please take some food to your brothers," he said. "I want to know if they are safe. Go and find out."

David set off with the gift of food. It was a long walk, but finally, he saw two armies in the distance. The king's army was on one side of a valley, and the Philistine army was on the other.

The Philistine army had a soldier named Goliath. He looked like a giant. He was enormous and powerful and a big bully. He used his size and strength to scare the Israelites.

Every day, Goliath taunted Saul's army. "Choose your best soldier to fight me. If he wins, your people will win the war. If I win, your people will be our prisoners." Goliath laughed and shouted, "I will crush you!"

Goliath terrified everyone in the king's army. (1) No one wanted to fight the giant!

David heard Goliath shouting. He went to the king. "I will fight Goliath," he said.

At first, King Saul laughed. "You don't stand a chance," the king said. "You are only a boy!" (2)

"I have protected my sheep from wild animals," replied David. "God kept me safe then. God will keep me safe now. I can defeat this giant."

Finally, King Saul agreed to let David fight. He gave David his helmet, armor, and sword to wear, but they were too heavy and much too big for him. "I can't move with this stuff on," David complained. "Let me do this my own way."

David took off the armor, ran down to the river, and found five smooth stones.

He walked toward the giant, Goliath.

Goliath was astonished. (3) "Have you come to fight me with a sling and stones?" Goliath sneered. Then he laughed and laughed.

"My strength comes from God. I am not afraid of you," answered David. (4)

He placed a smooth stone into the sling, whirled it around, and let it go with a snap. The rock shot out, zipped through the air, and hit Goliath in the forehead.

Goliath swayed and staggered, and fell to the ground. When the Philistine army saw what David had done, they ran away in fear! (5) David had defeated Goliath because he knew God was with him.



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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story with your children—imagine and wonder.
- Notice that David had practiced with his slingshot when he took care of his family's sheep. Talk with your children about how their family responsibilities help get them ready to answer God's call. Give them age-appropriate tasks to perform.
- Read *When Bear Stole the Chinook* by Harriet Peck Taylor (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1997) or watch the YouTube video "When Bear Stole the Chinook: A Siksika Tale Read Aloud" (bit.ly/BearStoleChinook, 12:52).



Responding to God's Grace

- Goliath was a giant bully. Make an anti-bullying poster or a poster promoting kind behavior.
- Increase your children's sense of empathy by talking about how to recognize bullying, and how the bullied person might feel.
- Do a role play where one person is a bully, and others offer suggestions for more considerate behavior, or how the person being bullied could respond in the situation.

Celebrating in Gratitude

- Like David, even very young people can make a difference. Notice when your children stand up for what is right, and let them know when they have done something important.
- Gather eight smooth stones. Using a paint pen or permanent marker, write the following words, one word on each stone: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart." Turn the stones over and mix them up. Turn them word-side up and place them in order of the verse.
- Pray this prayer:

God, my strength comes from you. I will not be afraid. Amen.