

Bible Background

1 Samuel 17:1-50a

Everyone loves an underdog, and “David and Goliath” is the ultimate underdog story. On one side is Goliath, a man who was more than nine feet tall. A giant! On the other side stands David, just a shepherd boy holding a sling and some stones. But why were the two fighting in the first place?

Goliath’s people, the Philistines, were the enemies of David’s people, the Israelites. It was common for armies to choose representatives to fight one another. A win for an army’s champion was counted as a win for the whole nation. Israel’s problem was that no one wanted to fight Goliath! Not even King Saul was brave enough to face him.

In the midst of this standoff, David presented himself as a representative for Israel. David was an unlikely hero. The youngest son of Jesse, David was no fighter (unless you count the wild animals he would fight to save his father’s flocks). Saul tried to persuade David not to face Goliath, but he eventually allowed it and gave him his personal armor to wear. David was just a boy, so the armor was too cumbersome. Instead, David went into battle with just a sling and five smooth stones.

In the fight between David and Goliath, the old adage “the bigger they are, the harder they fall” proved true. Goliath tried to intimidate David, but he was unsuccessful. Goliath came at David with insults, the tactics of a bully. David came with the power of God: “The LORD owns this war, and he will hand all of you over to us” (1 Samuel 17:47).

The battle was swift. David swung his sling, launching one smooth stone into the air. The stone landed on Goliath’s forehead, and Goliath fell to the ground. This story marked the beginning of David’s reputation as a leader and warrior.

David didn’t have any physical armor to wear. Instead, he was protected by a sense of justice and righteousness. For David, insults about his stature were taken on the chin. What really bothered David was that the name of the LORD was being insulted. Goliath stood as a threat to David’s family and neighbors.

Children can relate to the story of David and Goliath. When you are small, the world can feel as though it’s full of giants. Grown-ups sometimes use big words and big thoughts that children find confusing or even scary. But children and adults can remember to “be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power” (Ephesians 6:10). Our God is a God of justice.



Bible Story

David Defeats Goliath

1 Samuel 17:1-50a

Castle Callout

Armor Up with Justice!

Additional Bible Reading

📖 1 Samuel 16

📖 Micah 6:8

📖 Teacher Tip

This Bible Background feature is a supplemental aid provided for you, the leader, to give context for each session’s story before you teach on it. You may share this information with your Knights if desired, but it is not a recommended portion of the intended lesson.