

DAVID, THE GIANT FIGHTER

1 Samuel 16-18; 2 Samuel 21 and 23

STRUCTURE

Key-persons: David and Goliath

Key-locations: Battle field

Key-repetitions:

- Fear: Saul and all the Israelite soldiers were terrified when they heard Goliath's challenge (1 Sam 17:11); the Israelites ran from Goliath in fear (1 Sam 17:24).
- David's conquest: he killed both a lion and a bear (1 Sam 17:36); he killed Goliath (1 Sam 17:51); he was successful when Saul sent him into battle (1 Sam 18:5).
- Armies of the Living God (1 Sam 17:26, 36, 45).
- David criticized by: brother (1 Sam 17:28-32), King Saul (1 Sam 17:33), and Goliath (1 Sam 17:43-44).

Key-attitudes:

- Saul and the Israelite soldiers' fear of Goliath.
- David's confidence in God.
- David's courage to confront danger.
- Love felt for David.
- Conflict.

Initial-situation:

King Saul was Israel's first king. On two occasions, King Saul disobeyed the Lord. Prophet Samuel informed King Saul that since Saul had rejected the Lord's command, the Lord had rejected Saul as king.

Initial-problem:

The Lord asked Prophet Samuel how long he would mourn for Saul. The Lord told Samuel that he had rejected Saul as king and had chosen one of Jesse's sons to be king.

Final-situation:

David was successful in different battles, and Saul gave him a high rank in the army. This pleased all the people.

BIBLE STORY

Saul was the first king of Israel. On two occasions, King Saul disobeyed God's commands. The Lord told Prophet Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul? I've rejected him as king of Israel. Fill your flask with oil and go. I'm sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I've chosen one of Jesse's sons to be king."

Prophet Samuel went to Bethlehem and looked over seven of Jesse's sons. Samuel told Jesse, "The Lord hasn't chosen any of these. Aren't there more sons?"

Jesse answered, "There's the youngest, but he's out tending the sheep."

Samuel requested, "Send for him."

Jesse sent for the youngest, who was named David. He was the picture of health, tanned and good looking.

The Lord told Samuel, "Get up and anoint him; he's the one."

Prophet Samuel took the flask of oil and anointed David with his brothers watching. The Lord's Spirit entered David and empowered him for the rest of his life. Samuel returned home (1 Sam 16:1-13).

The Philistines prepared for war against Israel. King Saul called up his troops to oppose them. The Philistines were on one hill and the Israelites on an opposing hill with the valley between them (1 Sam 17:1-3). Jesse's three oldest sons went with King Saul to war (1 Sam 17:12-15).

The hero of the Philistine camp was Goliath, a giant who was over nine feet tall. He had a bronze helmet on his head and was dressed in bronze armor. He wore bronze shin guards and carried a bronze sword. His spear was like a fence rail; the spear tip weighed over fifteen pounds. Goliath shouted a challenge to the army of Israel, "No need for the whole army to fight. Choose one man to fight me. If he kills me, the Philistines become your slaves; but, if I kill him, you become our slaves. I dare the army of Israel: Send one of your men to fight me!"

King Saul and his troops heard Goliath's dare and were terrified (1 Sam 17:4-11).

Each morning and evening for forty days Goliath came forward and made his speech.

Jesse told his youngest son David, "Take food to your brothers in King Saul's camp. Check on them and bring me back some news." Early the next morning David loaded up and set out. He arrived at the camp just as the army was moving into battle formation. Israel and the Philistines were forming their lines facing each other. David left the food with the keeper of supplies, ran to the battle line, and greeted his brothers. David and his brothers were talking when giant Goliath stepped forward and shouted his usual dare, "I dare the army of Israel: Send one of your men to fight me!"

Saul and his troops heard Goliath's dare and were terrified. David heard Goliath's dare.

The Israelite troops talked among themselves, "This giant keeps coming out to challenge Israel. The king will give great wealth to the man who kills him. He'll also give him his daughter as a bride, and will exempt his father's family from paying taxes."

David asked the men standing near him, "Who does this pagan Philistine think he is, defying the armies of the living God?"

David's remarks were reported to King Saul. Saul sent for David. Young David told King Saul, "I, your servant, will go and fight this Philistine."

King Saul replied, "You can't fight this Philistine; you're only a boy. Goliath has been a warrior since his youth."

David answered, "I tend my father's sheep. Whenever a lion or a bear took a sheep from the flock; I chased it, attacked it, and rescued the sheep. I've killed both a lion and a bear. I'll do the same to this pagan Philistine who's challenging the armies of the living God. The Lord delivered me from the lion's teeth and the bear's claws. He'll deliver me from this Philistine."

King Saul told David, "Go, and the Lord be with you."

King Saul outfitted David in his own armor.

David told King Saul, "I can't move with all this stuff. I'm not used to it." So he took it off. David took his shepherd's staff, selected five smooth stones from the creek, put them in his shepherd's pouch, and with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine giant.

Meanwhile, giant Goliath kept coming closer to David. Goliath saw that David was only a boy. He ridiculed David, "Do you think I'm a dog, that you come after me with a stick?" Goliath cursed David and said, "Come here, and I'll give your flesh to the buzzards and the beasts of the field!"

David answered, "You come against me with sword, spear and battle-ax. I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you curse. Today the Lord will give you over to me. Then all the world will know that there's a God in Israel. It isn't by sword or spear that the Lord saves; the battle belongs to the Lord."

Goliath moved closer to attack. David ran toward the Philistine, took a stone from his pouch, slung it and hit Goliath in the forehead. The stone sank into Goliath's forehead, and Goliath fell facedown on the ground. David ran to the giant Philistine, took Goliath's sword and cut off his head (1 Sam 17:1-51).

The Philistines saw their hero dead! They ran for their lives. The men of Israel rushed forward, chased the Philistines and left many dead scattered along the roads (1 Sam 17:52-58).

After this, King Saul kept young David with him and didn't let him return to his father's house. Saul sent David to fight in different battles. Young David was so successful that King Saul gave David a high rank in the army. This pleased all the people and Saul's officers as well (1 Sam 18:1-5).

GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. What catches your attention in the story? | 5. How did the characters face their problems? |
| 2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand? | 6. How have you faced similar problems? |
| 3. Who are the main characters in the story? | 7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you? |
| 4. What problems did the characters face? | 8. What does the story tell about God? |

SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How did Saul and the Israelites respond to Goliath's challenge?
2. What gave David confidence to face the giant Goliath?

3. What can we learn from David that will help us face our giants?
4. Who do you most identify with:
 - Saul who was terrified of the giant?
 - Soldiers who believed their peers who said the giant couldn't be defeated?
 - David who believed God would enable him to defeat the giant and who inspired others to become mighty warriors?

LIFE-LESSONS

1. **Viewing difficult situations from God's point of view helps a person put giant challenges into perspective.** Goliath challenged the Israelites; Israelite soldiers saw a giant, while David saw a mortal man defying almighty God (1 Sam 17:26).
2. **Gigantic challenges are a reality.** David faced many problems, but he only fought one giant. Most problems are not of gigantic nature, but some are.
3. **People, faced with a giant challenge, tend to either flee or face it.** Saul withdrew in terror from the giant. David rushed to meet him.
4. **Criticism should not prevent God's servant from taking on a challenge.** Criticism didn't prevent David from facing Goliath, the Philistine warrior. David faced the giant even though he was criticized by his brother (1 Sam 17:28-32), by King Saul (1 Sam 17:33), and by Goliath (1 Sam 17:43-44).
5. **Past experiences prepare a person to face future challenges.** David had tended his father's sheep; he'd killed both a lion and a bear. The Lord delivered David from the lion's teeth and the bear's claws, and David believed that God would deliver him from the giant.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Role-playing Drama:

Invite two participants to imagine that they are Israelite soldiers discussing the rewards that the soldier who kills giant Goliath will receive. Then each justifies why he doesn't volunteer to fight the giant.