David and Goliath November 1, 2020

**Bible Verses:** 1 Samuel 17 (selected verses)

**Spark Story Bible:** pages 130 to 135

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Overall Lesson Takeaways

* **We can do amazing things with God’s help.**

Last week, we met David when he was just a kid… and he is still very young in our story today! The idea that a kid would win against an experienced warrior like Goliath would have been almost inconceivable – the odds would have been something like 1 in 1,000 (or more!). But because David trusted in himself, and that God would be with him, he was able to shock everyone and become known as the ultimate “underdog” – so much so that we still talk about David and Goliath upsets in things like March Madness or other sporting events! Focusing on the improbability of what David did isn’t really the point, though – it’s focusing on the decisions that he made and the trust that he had in God to help him. This can be an opportunity to talk to kids about big dreams or ideas that they might have, either for themselves or others, and to encourage them to have faith in themselves and trust God will be there to help.

* **Don’t try to be something you’re not – be proud of who you are!**

After David volunteers to take on Goliath and everyone tells him that he’s nuts, King Saul tries to give David his armor and sword to help make it a fair fight. But David dramatically tells him, “I cannot walk with these; for I am not used to them” (1 Sam 17:39), and instead chooses to use only a sling and five stones. To me, this is one of the most noteworthy parts of the entire story! He doesn’t try to approach this problem by doing what everyone else would do – no matter how much armor he puts on, he’ll never match Goliath’s strength and power. Instead, David chooses to use *his* gifts and advantages – namely, his speed and his practice hunting with a sling. This decision to stay true to himself, rather than do/act how others want him to, can be instructive for all of us. All of us have gifts and special talents that we can share, so we should be proud of those gifts and talents – not just try to imitate someone else!

* **You can trust in God, even when things aren’t looking good.**

Even beyond David’s particular talent with a sling, though, was his trust that God would watch over him – even during a battle that every single person thought that he would lose! We obviously don’t condone violence in Sunday School (or getting into fights) but the overall message of trusting in God even during times when things look hopeless or really bad is one that we keep coming back to this year. We trust that God is watching out for every single one of us, and that trust can help us get through situations that we might find scary or uncertain.

Checking In

**Before the reading:**

* **Check in with the kids – welcoming any newcomers warmly.**
	+ Names; it’s All Saints’ Day – ask kids about someone they admire
	+ Younger kids: Show and Tell of favorite Halloween candy
	+ Older kids: Highs and Lows from their past week
* **When was the last time that something really surprised you? What happened, and what made it so surprising?**

Bible Lesson / Discussion

**Reading the Bible:**

* Last week, we learned about God picking David to be king even though he was the youngest of 8 brothers… and David surprised everyone again!
* **Read the text together, either in the Bible, or the Spark Story Bible.**
	+ You’ll need to screen share the passage for the day in Zoom.
	+ Feel free to stop and ask questions during the reading, if helpful.
	+ Afterwards, take time to explore what that passage might mean, and know there's no one *correct* way to read these passages!

**Questions About the Passage** (see next page for PreK/K questions)

* Everyone was afraid of Goliath – with good reason! – but David didn’t seem to be scared. Why do you think he felt so confident?
* How would you have felt if you were David going up against Goliath? Have you ever done something that made you scared or nervous?

**Connections to Our Lives**

* Saul tried to dress David in his adult-sized armor, but it was way too big for him! Instead, David trusted the things he was good at. What are some things that you’re good at? How could we use our gifts and strengths to solve problems creatively?
* Have you ever been asked to do something that you thought was too hard or maybe even impossible? What can help us try our best?

**Biblical/Church Connections**

* Today is “All Saints Day”, which is a day that remembers and celebrates saints who have passed away – and in our church tradition, we believe that anyone can be a saint. This can be a chance to talk to kids about role models for them, or ways that they can be role models for others.

**Alternate Preschool and K/1st Questions**

Younger ages, particularly those in our preschool class, may have a hard time discussing the biblical text for very long (if at all). My hope is that these questions (and especially the activity) can help with engagement!

**Opening Questions**

* What does it mean for something to be fair?
* Who do you think would win in a race: an Olympic sprinter, or you? Does that sound like a fair competition?
* How about you riding your bike racing someone driving a car… does that sound fair?

**Fun Activity**

* Our Bible story today had to do with a competition between David and Goliath – one that didn’t seem very fair at all. I thought it would be fun to play a game that gives everyone a chance: Rock, Paper, Scissors
* (Explain the basics of Rock, Paper, Scissors – and then explain that you are the person that kids are competing against. Have everyone count together and then show what they picked on screen…)
* Try to do this a handful (ha!) of times so that every kid has a chance to win at some point.

**Bible Discussion/Questions**

* Goliath from our Bible story today, was really, really tall – maybe 7 feet or taller! What do you think it would be like being really, really tall?
* In our Bible reading today, David had to compete against Goliath – someone who was much taller and much stronger than him. Does that sound fair to you?
* The good news is that God helped David win, even though no one thought that David could. What is something that you’d like God’s help with?

People of Faith

In addition to reading our weekly Bible story, I'd love for our older grade school students to learn more about people whose lives were changed by their faith in Jesus. We'll lift up a new person each Sunday, trying to connect their story to our Bible passage as much as possible!

**Bayard Rustin (*buy-erd rust-inn)***

When we think of modern day “saints”, we often think of well-known, famous leaders like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, Mother Teresa, and others – but there are plenty of saints out there who do their best work behind the scenes… perhaps even so much so that no one even knows about them!

Bayard Rustin is one great example of this. The 9th of 12 children, Rustin was mostly raised by his grandparents in West Chester, Pennsylvania. His grandmother was Quaker and his grandfather belonged to the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, and their faith was a big part of their upbringing. Rustin fused his religious upbringing with political activism, and soon found himself organizing strikes, boycotts, and marches on a wide variety of important causes, such as ending racially discriminatory laws and segregationist practices.

His work in organizing the Freedom Riders (challenging the practice of segregated buses after the Supreme Court declared that segregation unconstitutional) eventually led to a wider involvement with the Civil Rights movement – culminating in Rustin organizing the 1963 “March on Washington”, in which Dr. King delivered his famous “I have a dream” speech, and which is widely credited as helping pass the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

Although perhaps well-known in organizing circles, Rustin maintained a fairly low public profile for someone so instrumental in helping bring about this momentous and important victory. One major reason for this is that Rustin was both black and gay, which unfortunately meant that he suffered discrimination both for the color of his skin, as well as his sexual orientation. Nonetheless, Rustin was a tireless advocate for those who were marginalized – working for decades on behalf of civil rights, gay rights, and many other humanitarian causes up until his death in 1987. He was posthumously honored with the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2013, and his previously under-the-radar contributions to human rights have become increasingly known and celebrated.

Crafts / Activities

**Paper Sling**

**(Ages 5+, 5 mins)**

Supplies Needed:

* [Craft Template](https://biblecraftsbyjenny.weebly.com/uploads/1/0/1/2/101295324/david_goliath_paper_sling_pdf.pdf)
* Scissors
* Glue/Tape
* Luck, and/or patience

Instructions:

* It is admittedly really hard to find printable crafts for David and Goliath, but feel free to give this a try (if for no other reason than to see kids try to spin these paper slings around)! It’s a simple cut and tape craft, but being able to actually throw crumpled up balls of paper is a true challenge.

**David and Goliath Picture**

**(Ages 5+, 5 mins)**

Supplies Needed:

* Printed Handout
* Pen/Pencil/Crayons

Instructions:

* This is a pretty open-ended craft in which kids are asked to use their imaginations and draw the biggest thing they’ve ever seen.

**David and Goliath Word Scramble**

**(Ages 7+, 5 mins)**

Supplies Needed:

* Printed Handout
* Pen/Pencil/Crayons

Instructions:

* This craft will work best with 2nd graders and up; have the kids try to unscramble several words, either alone, or screen-sharing as a class.

Biblical Background – David[[1]](#footnote-1)

We covered this the past two weeks, but the books of 1 and 2 Samuel cover the time period after the Judges ruled Israel – roughly from the middle of the 11th century BCE to the middle of the 10th century BCE – and many scholars believe that Samuel is part of a wider arc known as the Deuteronomistic History. Precise dating of David’s reign remains something of a mystery, but scholars believe his 40 year reign took place somewhere in the neighborhood of 1,000 BCE (a nice round number that kids can remember!) and was a time period in which Israel was transforming from being largely tribal to one ruled by a king.

This time is often referred to as the “United Monarchy”, a sort of golden era in which the more powerful northern kingdom of Israel and the smaller southern kingdom of Judah were united under Saul, David, and Solomon. The biblical text records this time period as one of explosive growth, as Israel (meaning Israel and Judah) managed to expand well beyond its limited borders into the territory of rivals like the Philistines, the Amalakites, and others. Today’s passage records one such instance, as the Israelites and Philistines were fighting over territory using the ancient practice of having two “champions” fight one another to determine the outcome of the battle. Although this sounds bizarre, it was actually mutually beneficial when two armies were of roughly equal strength -- rather than exposing both armies to heavy loss of life, this one-on-one combat would minimize bloodshed while giving a definitive outcome. The problem, of course, came when one army had an amazing champion like Goliath who seemingly couldn’t be defeated (at least by conventional means).

David’s willingness to trust in God – and trust in himself and his skills – continues to feed into the author of 1 and 2 Samuel’s depiction of David as a sort of archetype for how a king should lead. His leadership was defined by that willingness to listen to – and trust – God and that’s a lesson that all of us can take away for our lives today – whether we’re in a leadership role or not. We covered last week (and it’s worth reiterating) that David was not perfect by any means, but his willingness to follow God helped Israel find itself in a rare position of strength in the middle and end of his tenure as king – and that will continue as we learn about his son, Solomon, next week.

1. Your ability to share this info with kids will vary depending on their age – this section is mainly written for teachers and parents to learn a bit more about the background to each week's passage! [↑](#footnote-ref-1)