



The Shepherd Boy and the Giant

Goal: To have courage when facing bullies.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In 1 Samuel 17

The famous story of David and Goliath shows God's power in bringing victory to the one who appears weak in relation to the one who appears strong.

In a war with the Philistines, the Philistines' champion was Goliath. He was over 9 feet tall and weighed down by heavy armor and armaments (vv. 4-7). Goliath was the ultimate bully in taunting the people of Israel day and night for forty days.

When the boy David brought provisions to his brothers in the army and heard Goliath's insults, he said he could defeat Goliath. King Saul permitted David to try.

Instead of using the same kind of equipment Goliath had, David found five smooth stones to use in his slingshot. This was how he protected his sheep. David told Goliath he was there "in the name of the LORD All-Powerful" (v. 45). David used his slingshot to slay Goliath. The Israelites were able to prevail against the Philistines.

David received God's grace and protection as he stood up against a powerful enemy, a bully who brought fear to everyone. Though it appeared improbable that a young boy could overcome against a huge warrior, God's gracious power prevailed and the Israelites were grateful.

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

Bullies come in all shapes, sizes, and ages. Children know all too well through observation or their own experiences what bullies can do to people. Providing the opportunity for children to share stories is a way to help them begin to wonder about why somebody would choose to be a bully, to be mean to someone, hurting someone with words or actions. The story of David slaying Goliath is told to illustrate how God stood with and behind the Israelites, protecting them and leading them. Also important for the children is helping them name the ways that God cares for them and the places where God is working today to support the work of peacemakers.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

This memorable story about David and Goliath is one of triumph—small over big, wise over folly. It's also a story about retaliation, and in the end, good triumphs over evil, but at a cost: David kills Goliath. This point won't go unnoticed by the children. Be prepared to talk about why God would support David over Goliath. Also it will be important for the children to think about the variety of ways they can respond to a bully without being violent themselves. Helping children remember that they are not alone when they have to face something difficult, that they are surrounded by the love of their family and God's love, is very important.

God, thank you for caring for us when we have to do scary or difficult things. Thank you for caring for each of us. Amen.



Supplies

Music & Melodies
(MM) 2023–2024

Stories, Colors & More
(SCM) i–iv, 8, 8a, 16, 24

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

story audio (see p. vii)

green cloth

candle

five small stones

tape measure or yard
stick

small stone for each
child

Responding

Celebrating

pool noodles cut in half,
small ball

Offering

copies of **Grace Notes**
(GN) 1

Extra

copies of **GN 2**

GATHERING IN GOD’S GRACE

Post **SCM i–ii**, “Your Visual Schedule,” to provide clear expectations and a visual cue for the group.

See **SCM iii–iv** for the key to icons (for example, **LG** **T**) and ways to adapt for children who have special needs or disabilities.

“Celebrating God’s Grace” requires more prep.

Welcoming and Preparing

LG **A** **B** **M** **MS**

Greet the children by name and with the words “The grace of Christ be with you.” Prompt the children to respond with the same words.

Invite children to prepare the worship space. Provide a green cloth, a candle, a Bible, and five small stones.

Tape mural paper to the wall so that the top of the paper is as tall as the tallest child in the group. Invite children to take turns standing along the paper, having the top of their heads marked on the paper with a line. Once their height is marked, they may write their name vertically, from the line marking the top of their head down to the bottom of the sheet.

Ask some children to help prepare today’s “Responding in Gratitude” activities and suggest that one or two prepare to lead today’s singing. Today’s Scripture reading is lengthy. Decide if you will have several children practice reading from it or from **SCM 8**.

Encourage conversation as children prepare the space.

Singing

Gather the group together in the worship space. Play “Dance and Sing”—**MM 3**; **SCM 16**—and invite the children to sing.

Praying

Turn on the candle. Invite children to close their eyes and breathe deeply. Encourage them to feel God with them. Offer this prayer:

God, help us to trust that you are with us, especially when we feel scared or small. Thank you for your gracious presence in every part of our lives. Amen.

L *Attending to a story or comprehending instructions can be a challenge for children who struggle with attention. Some hints that may help include: clearly communicate expectations before the activity; check for understanding; provide visual support as well as verbal instructions; build movement into activities; and support transitions.*



Preparing to Hear the Story C L

Invite children to help you measure 10 feet on the floor. Use tape to mark both ends. Imagine what kinds of things are 10 feet tall.

Move the sheet of paper where the children's heights have been measured next to the 10-foot length. Ask:

- How does it feel to be taller or shorter?
- What are the advantages of being smaller? Middle-sized? Tall?

Talk about David as a shepherd boy. Tell the children he was the youngest of eight brothers. Wonder what that might have been like for him. Imagine what David's days might have been like as a shepherd. Ask the children how he might have defended his sheep from dangerous animals. Show the children **SCM 8a** and wonder how a slingshot helped him as a shepherd.



Today's story can be found in *Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible*, edited by Elizabeth F. Caldwell and Carol A. Wehrheim (Louisville, KY: Flyaway Books, 2018), www.pcusastore.com.

Hearing the Story B

Have a volunteer find 1 Samuel 17 in the Bible and place the open Bible on the worship table. Give each child a smooth stone to hold as they listen to the story. Have several volunteers read 1 Samuel 17 or **SCM 8**. Conclude the reading by saying, "Word of wisdom, Word of grace," and prompt the children to say, "Thanks be to God."

Draw attention to the tape marks on the floor. Comment that Goliath may have been about that tall. Wonder together what it's like to see a person that tall.

Read the story again using **SCM 8** or listen to the story audio. Invite children to make facial expressions they think match the emotions found in the story when you pause after each of the following sentences:

1. Goliath terrified everyone in the king's army.
2. At first, King Saul laughed. "You don't stand a chance," the king said. "You are only a boy!"
3. Goliath was astonished.
4. "My strength comes from God. I am not afraid of you," answered David.
5. When the Philistine army saw what David had done, they ran away in fear!

Reflecting on God's Grace C

Engage the children in conversation, using the following questions:

- What was Goliath doing each day?
- Why do you think David was the only one not afraid to accept the challenge?
- How was Goliath like a bully?
- Has someone made fun of you in a mean way? What did you do?



- What do you think this story tells us about us?
- What do you think this story tells us about God?

Tell the children that the purpose of telling this story is not to glorify war or killing, but to lift up David's belief that God's presence with him would make him succeed in a seemingly impossible situation. David did not defeat Goliath by matching his violence and intimidation, but with faith and the skills he learned doing what he did every day.

Have the children place their stones on the worship table.

Singing

Play and sing together "God's Love for Us Is Truly Amazing (El amor de Dios es maravilloso)"—**MM 29; SCM 24.**

Turn off the candle.

RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

Select activities appropriate for your group and for the time available.



Celebrating God's Grace



Before the session, cut two pool noodles in half.

Remind children that, in today's Bible story, the Israelites and Philistines were at war. Ask the children the following questions:

- How can we solve our disagreements more peacefully today?
- How are some games like war?
- How might we play them differently?

Explain that you will play a "work together" game (cooperative) rather than a "one person wins" game (competitive).

Give the first two children two pool noodle pieces each. Invite the children to stand in a line, and work together to pass a ball from one end of the line to the other using only the ends of the pool noodles. As the ball moves from person to person, pass the noodles down the line for all to share.

Make sure that no one is missed and that all are touching the ball only with the end of the noodle.

Once they move the ball to the end of the line, have them return it to the start in the same way. Encourage them to cheer for one another as they gently pass the ball.



Praying God's Grace TD

Invite children to identify bully behavior they heard in today's story. Lead a discussion on ways children have witnessed bullying:

- ▼ I wonder, "How does God feel about bully behavior?"

Provide lumps of play dough. Invite children to quietly sculpt David and Goliath. Ask that they hold their "David" and offer a silent prayer to God for those who are picked on and bullied by others. After a few moments, invite them to hold their "Goliath" and to pray silently for those who exhibit bully behavior. Finally, ask them to pray silently that God would lead them in being peacemakers and speaking up when they see others being picked on.

Offering God's Grace LD

Ask children to recall where David claimed his strength came from when he stood up to Goliath. Wonder together what it means for our strength to come from God when we stand up to bully behavior without being violent or rude. Invite children to share experiences of others sticking up for them when they were being picked on.

Provide a copy of **GN 1** to each child. Invite a child to read it to the group, and ask children to consider whether or not they are willing to sign it as a promise and offering to God.

Read it in unison once children have signed it and invite them to lay their signed sheets on the worship table as a symbol of offering.

Extra Activity LD F LG A

Distribute copies of **GN 2** and crayons or markers. Ask volunteers to read the situations one at a time. Pause and offer quiet time for children to decide if it describes a bully or a buddy and color in the corresponding icon. Then let those who wish to say why they made their choice.

For a challenge, cut apart a copy of **GN 2**. Form small groups to perform each situation. If it is a bully situation, wonder together about how they might stand up to the bully.

LD *A child with learning disabilities may be no less able than other children; they just receive, process, and/or respond differently. If writing or reading is difficult for a child, allow them to participate verbally.*



Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so you can send the Grace Sightings link, or invite them to visit www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads. Remind the parents and caregivers about the story audio (see p. vii).

LOVING AND SERVING GOD

LG

Invite the children to gather, and lead them in cleaning up the worship space. Give the children their copies of **GN 1** for them to take home and display as a reminder of their promise.

Give the children the stones they held as they heard the story. Suggest that they drop the stones in the bottom of their school backpacks so they will be reminded each day when they see or feel it that, like David, they are not alone in difficult situations. Comment that these are reminder stones of God's presence, not to be used in a slingshot as David did!

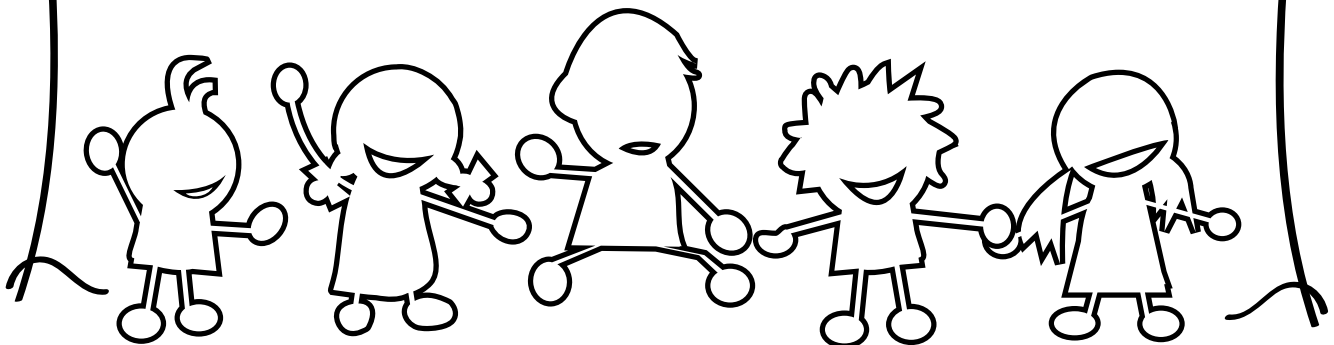
Offer this blessing and benediction to the children:

You are surrounded by the love of your family, this group, and God. Go, knowing that you can stand up for others, even when you feel scared or small.

I,

a child of God, believe that all people are created in God's image. I believe that the love of God, the example of Jesus, and the power of the Holy Spirit guide me. Therefore, I promise:

- ... to treat others the way I would want to be treated;
- ... to do my best to see others the way God sees them;
- ... to show love, kindness, and respect to all people; and
- ... to stand up for others who are being bullied.

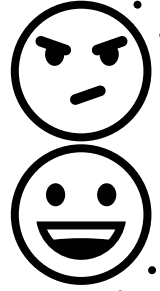


Bully or Buddy?

Sarah starts a rumor about Jason that makes other kids dislike him.



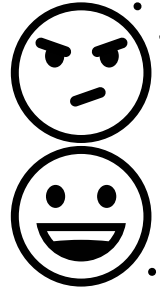
Sandy invited Tasha to go to the park with her.



John drew an embarrassing picture of Carla and put it on the door of their classroom.



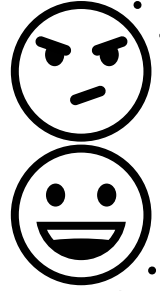
Kenny tells all the boys to ignore Andrew because he likes to draw flowers.



Shawna makes fun of Kim because she now wears glasses.



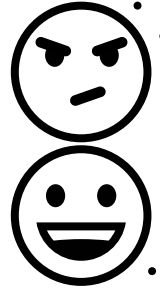
Every day at school, Pat demands that Shirley hand over her lunch money.



Janet offers to help Walt with learning a prayer.



Carrie and her friends always leave Jessica out when they play.



Carl calls Scott a baby because he won't play football with the other kids.



Kyle tells Karen she looks pretty.

