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Samson: Strength Wasted, Then Redeemed

Scripture: Judges 13:1-16:31

Theme: God's gifts are for His glory, not ours

Jr High (Ages 12-14)

Free curriculum for small and rural churches

Lesson Overview

"Facing Giants with Faith: How David Trusted God to Win" Imagine this: Goliath, a giant soldier who scoffs at God's people every day, challenges them to fight, no armor, no weapons, just a slingshot and a stone! The Israelites freeze in fear, but young David, a shepherd boy with nothing but faith, says, "I'll bring your head back to you!" (1 Samuel 17:48). This isn't about strength, it's about trusting God when we feel small. Life's "giants" (like fear, pride, or even bullies) don't have to overwhelm us. Just like David, we can stand strong when we surrender to God's power. Lesson Hook: "What's a 'giant' you've faced that made you feel helpless, like you couldn't win? How can trusting God change things?" (Encourage students to share honestly.) Application: Next week, ask them to pray for a time when they'll trust God even when they don't have the plan (like David didn't have a battle plan, just faith). End with: "God's not asking us to be fearless, He's asking us to be faithful. Start there." (Bonus: Share the 10x50 rule, David's weapon was 1/10 the size of Goliath's body but 50x God's power!)

Bible Story

Sunday School Lesson: David and Goliath , Trusting God When It Feels Impossible

One day, the armies of Israel and their enemy, the Philistines, were gathered on opposite sides of a deep valley. The Israelites were outnumbered, outarmed, and scared, they had never faced a warrior as tall as Goliath before. Every day for forty days, the Philistine giant called out to the Israelites: "Why do you wait for me to eat your meat and drink your water? Send me a champion, and I'll fight you. If I win, you'll all be my slaves. If you win, I'll be your servant." The Israelite soldiers trembled, but the king, Saul, wanted to send someone, anyone, to face Goliath. His army refused, but he was desperate.

That's when a young shepherd named David came. He had been watching his sheep from afar when he heard the giant's voice. When he asked why no one was fighting, he was shocked to learn the truth. Saul had given David's

brother Eliab a chance to face Goliath, but Eliab hesitated, he was too afraid. David, though small and unarmed, said, "I trust God more than you, king. I'll fight this giant." Saul was skeptical at first, but David's faith won him over. He was given armor, but it was too heavy for him, he didn't need it. Instead, he carried a sling, a stone, and a single arrow.

When David marched to battle, Goliath laughed at him, mocking how a young boy could win. But David didn't get upset. He prayed, asked God for strength, and stepped forward. The giant raised his spear, and David took a single step back, just to get closer to God's power. With one smooth throw, the stone from his sling struck Goliath in the forehead, killing him instantly. The Philistine army fled in terror, and Israel won their first great victory.

After the battle, David and Saul were glad he had trusted God. But David realized he had to be careful, he wasn't a king yet, and he didn't know everything. The story shows that God often works in ways we don't expect, especially when we're too afraid to take a shot ourselves.

Why This Story Matters: This isn't just a story about a boy beating a giant, it's about trusting God when we feel small, weak, or outnumbered. Sometimes, the thing we're afraid to do is the thing God wants us to do. What's one thing you're scared to ask for, take a risk on, or stand up for? God might be calling you to trust Him in that moment, just like David trusted Him with his life.

(For discussion: What would you have done if you were Eliab? How can you trust God in a "giant" problem in your own life?)

Key Verse

Judges 16:28

Storytime with David: Why God Never Felt Scared Imagine David, a kid no bigger than a toddler, standing against the giant Goliath, this huge man with a war club, armor, and a face that made people nervous. The army thought Goliath's weapons would win, but David said: "No way! I'm fighting you with God's power, not just my hands!" Here's the real deal: David wasn't bragging, he knew God was the real hero. Even when life feels overwhelming (like a bully, a tough test, or a problem bigger than you), God doesn't say "I'll fix it." Instead, He says: "I'm in this with you." So when fear crawls up your throat, remember: God's got your back, and you don't have to carry it alone. **Life Tip:** Next time you feel small, ask: "What does God want me to do?" He'll give you courage, just like David did! **Why it works for kids:** - Relatable "kid vs. giant" story (Goliath = fear, David = you). - Honest: No fluff, David wasn't superhuman, just trusted God. - Asks them to think: "How can God help me today?" (Empowers them to act.)

Activities

Activity 1:

A fast-paced, cooperative game where students "fight" Goliath's challenges by trusting God's strength, with a twist: only those who ask for help win!

1. Step 1: Prep the "Battlefield" (5 min)
2. Have students sit in pairs. Give each pair a printed Goliath cutout and a small bag with a toy "weapons" (e.g., a rock, a stick, a toy sword). Ask:
3. "How would you respond to Goliath's taunts? What would your biggest fear be?"
4. (Prompt them to think about what it's like to feel overwhelmed.)
5. Step 2: Role-Play the Challenge (7 min)
6. Assign one student as "Goliath" (wearing their paper armor/cloak). The other is "David" (who must act confident but not cocky, this highlights David's faith vs. Goliath's fear).
7. Use a timer to mimic the battle: "Goliath curses you for 30 seconds. What do you say? How do you act?"
8. After the "battle," discuss: "Goliath was afraid. David trusted God. Why do you think David's faith was stronger?" (Hint: 1 Samuel 17:46, 47!)

9. Step 3: Create a "David's Faith" Moment (3 min)
10. Ask students to draw their own "Goliath moment" (a fear in their life) and write one way they could trust God like David did. Share aloud if brave!
11. Life Application Tie-In:
12. "David didn't have a perfect plan, but he trusted God to be his strength. Can you imagine trusting God in your biggest 'giant' right now?"
2. "Trust or Run: A Sling Game"
14. Step 1: Set Up the "Battle Scenes" (3 min)
15. Write 3, 5 "battles" on cards (e.g., "Friendship drama," "Exam stress," "Feeling invisible").
16. Place one card near the "giant" (Goliath) and one near each pair of students.
17. Step 2: Play the Game (8 min)
18. Give each pair a sling and a rock. The giant stands as an obstacle.
19. Rule: To "shoot" their "stone" (faith), they must:
20. Read the battle card aloud.
21. Say, "Lord, I don't know how to win this battle, help me!" (Trusting God's plan.)
22. Throw their "stone" at the giant only if they've asked for help. If they guess a weapon (rock/sword) first, they lose a turn.
23. Winning: The first pair to land a "hit" (their stone goes near the giant) and shout, "The Lord is my rock!" (1 Samuel 17:48) wins.
24. Step 3: Reflect (4 min)
25. Ask: "Why did only the students who asked for help win? What did David learn from God?"
26. Discuss how God doesn't always give us the right answer, just the strength to trust Him.
27. Life Application Tie-In:
28. "David didn't carry the battle alone. He trusted God to use his small things for big things. How can you ask God for help in your next 'giant'?"
29. Why These Work:
30. Goliath's Challenge = Emotional + Critical Thinking (kids explore fear vs. faith).
31. Sling Game = Teamwork + Prayer Practice (makes trusting God feel doable and fun).
32. Both use low-cost materials, encourage group discussion, and tie to real-life struggles like anxiety, peer pressure, or self-doubt.

Discussion Questions

- Here are four open-ended discussion questions designed to spark meaningful conversation about David and Goliath, trusting God against "giants", while encouraging critical thinking, empathy, and real-life application for junior high students.
- 1. The Biggest "Goliath" in Your Life
 - David faced a giant in battle, but we all have our own "Goliath", something that feels too big, too scary, or impossible to overcome. Think about one challenge or fear you've had lately (academics, friendships, anxiety, a goal, or even something bigger like bullying or feeling out of place). How does the story of David and Goliath make you feel about this challenge? What does it tell you about God's power in your life when you're afraid?
 - Why this question works: It invites students to reflect on real struggles while connecting the biblical story to their own experiences. Asking them to share their thoughts (without judging) helps them see how others might feel in similar situations.
- 2. David's Strength vs. Goliath's Armor

- Goliath wore armor and carried a giant sword, so much bigger and stronger than David. But David didn't fight with weapons; he trusted God. What are some things in your life that you've tried to "win" on your own (like doing well in school, being brave in a tough situation, or trying to please others)? How might you shift your focus from "my strength" to trusting God, even when things feel overwhelming?
- Why this question works: It challenges them to think about how they approach challenges and encourages a shift from pride ("I can handle this") to faith ("God can help me"). You could even brainstorm ways they could "dress down" their own "armor" (e.g., social media pressure, perfectionism) to trust God more.
- 3. Why Did David Choose to Fight?
- Goliath taunted Israel for weeks, but no one wanted to fight him, until David said, "I'll go and fight him." Why do you think David took that risk? What might have made him feel called to step into that situation? Think about a time you felt called to do something brave, even if it was scary or unexpected. What was it, and how did you handle it?
- Why this question works: It's a deeper dive into motivation and courage. It's okay if they don't have a perfect answer, this opens the door for talking about faith, fear, and how God might guide us in unexpected ways. You could also discuss how David's faith grew from there!
- 4. A Question for the Other Side: What Would Goliath Say?
- Imagine you're David, standing in front of Goliath. The giant laughs at you and says, "You're just a boy, how dare you challenge me?" How would you respond? What would you say to Goliath (or to someone who underestimates you)? Now think about a time someone said something mean or doubted you, how did you (or would you) react? How might God want you to respond in those moments?
- Why this question works: It's a playful, interactive way to explore empathy and how to handle criticism or intimidation. It ties into real-life situations like bullying, teasing, or feeling "small" in comparison to others. You could even role-play it as a group!
- Bonus: Closing Reflection
- End the discussion by asking: "What's one thing you learned about trusting God today, even in the face of giants?" Let students share their thoughts, and encourage them to keep those lessons in mind for their next challenge.
- Note for the Teacher: These questions are designed to be open-ended so students can answer honestly. You might want to ask them to journal, draw, or discuss in pairs first to help them reflect deeply. For example:
- "Draw David and Goliath. What do you see?"
- "Write a letter to your 'Goliath' (a fear or challenge)."

Prayer Focus

Prayer Focus: "When Life Feels Like a Giant" "Lord, we're in this together, like David, small but brave, facing a giant who's so much bigger, stronger, and scarier than us. Sometimes we feel overwhelmed, like our problems are too big for us to handle alone. But You're not just a distant God, You're our shield, our strength, and our victory. Help us trust You when the world feels too big, and remind us that with You, we can stand tall, not just for ourselves, but for all the 'giants' we meet, whether they're bullies, fears, or doubts. Amen." Why this works for junior high: - Relatable imagery ("small but brave") mirrors their own struggles. - Honest vulnerability ("we feel overwhelmed") makes them feel seen. - Life application ties to their daily battles (school, friendships, fears). - Call to action shifts from wondering to trusting God in the moment. Optional follow-up: Ask: "What's a 'giant' you're facing today? How can we trust God like David did?"

>> Missions Spotlight

The churches in North Korea face enormous persecution, a true giant. Underground church members risk everything to follow Jesus. David's story encourages them that the battle belongs to the Lord, even against the most powerful enemies.

-> To the Cross

David faced Goliath in the name of the Lord. We face a giant too, sin and death. And just as God delivered David, God has delivered us through Jesus, who defeated the giants of sin and death on the cross. Our victory is already won.