

Become a Person after God's Own Heart: The Life of David, the Boy (By Annette Gulick)

Lesson 2. A Heart Fixed on God: Unmoved by Fear, Pressure or Criticism

Lesson Objective: That students learn how to not lose heart when they face fear, pressure or criticism.

Bible Passage: 1 Samuel 17:1-32

Bible Truth: David was not intimidated by fear, peer pressure, or criticism.

Memory Verse: Psalm 18:2

What you need: 9 ft tall drawing of Goliath, 2 bandana "slingshots", 2 "balls" of paper; (optional for Bible Application: materials like construction paper, tin foil, etc. so students can create props like cheese, bread, armor, crown, etc.); pieces of paper and colored pencils or magic markers; copies of reading handout for week 2.

Opening

Please Note: Before class create a 9 ft (3 meter) drawing of Goliath. If you were born with limited artistic talent recruit someone to help, preferably from the youth group. Put together several large pieces of paper and draw an intimidating giant sized man dressed in armor as described in 1 Samuel 17:4-7. It is important for the students to be able to visualize the immensity of Goliath, so please prepare this ahead of time. If you simply cannot find paper large enough, look for creative ways to give the same effect, for example you could draw on the outside of a building with chalk, or place a drawing of the mean-looking face of a giant on a wall 9 ft up. If you really want to get into this you could even create a 3 dimensional giant out of paper maché and use him to decorate the youth room.

You will also need two 'slingshots' and 'stones.' Since safety is a high priority, we recommend using a bandana (or other similarly shaped cloth) as the slingshot and a wad of paper as the stone in the following way: fold the bandana in half from corner to corner to make a triangle, then roll or fold it to make a long, thin cloth. Wrap one end of the bandana around your index finger several times to secure it, then cradle the ball of paper in the middle of the cloth and hold the other end between your thumb and the index finger wrapped in the other end. Swing the 'slingshot' underhand, as if you were pitching for slow pitch softball, and release the corner of the bandana held by your thumb, thus throwing the paper ball. Practice this until you get the hang of it, so you can show the students how to do it.

Before class hang the 9 ft Goliath on the wall (if your room does not have a high enough ceiling, you may need to use the outside wall of a building.) Divide the students into two equal teams (they will remain in these groups until after the Bible Application section of the lesson) and give each team a bandana and a ball of paper. Show them how to use the 'slingshot' and explain that the goal is to hit Goliath with the "stone." A hit to his body is worth one point and to his head is worth three points. Decide how long they will play based on the number of students, allowing for each student to have at least two tries. Keep score and call an end to the game when the time is up. Ask the students to sit down in their teams then discuss the following questions as one group,

- ***Who is the tallest person you have ever seen?***
- ***How do you feel standing next to a person who is a lot taller than you are?***

Explain that you have based the size of your drawing of Goliath on the Biblical record of his actual height and get some feedback from the students as to whether they are surprised by how big he was. Remind them that David was probably only an adolescent when he fought Goliath. Then say,

Today as we continue our study of the life of David, we are going to see that he didn't only have to have the courage to go out and fight Goliath when all the other men in the Israelite army were scared to death, but he also had to be strong in the face of criticism and ridicule. Let's try to discover how he did this to help us face the "giants" in our own lives.

Interactive Learning

Have students form a circle with their group. Explain that each person will share with the others in their group their name and one of the scariest moments in their lives. You can give several examples, like being home alone when the lights went out, or having to confess something to a teacher or your parents. Share your own scariest moment and then give the groups time to share. When they have finished have them remain in their groups. Ask a few volunteers to share their responses and then discuss the following questions:

- ***What helped you, or would have helped you, not feel so scared in the situation you shared?***
- ***Did any of you ask for and receive help from God in these situations? If so, could you tell us about it?***
- ***Would you rather be in the position to face something physically dangerous or an interpersonal conflict? Why?***

Bible Application

Assign one group to be the Israelites and the other the Philistines and explain that after you read the Bible passage out loud, they are going to briefly act out the story in today's lesson. Ask them to close their eyes while you read. As they listen they should try to visualize what is happening and imagine how the different characters are feeling. Explain that that after they act out the story you will interview them about their character's perspective on the events.

Read I Samuel 17:1-32 very clearly and slowly, preferably from a modern translation or paraphrase. After you have finished reading, explain that each group will choose someone to be their groups 'champion' (David, Goliath). The Israelites should also choose someone to play David's brother Eliab and someone else to play King Saul. Emphasize that every person must participate in the drama. The groups may create any props they wish to out of the materials you have available for them. Give them a few minutes to prepare, and then direct them in the drama, helping it develop smoothly.

When they have finished have them sit with their group while you interview them, asking several people from each group the following questions:

- ***What are your feelings about this military confrontation? Why?***
- ***What do you think about this kid David? Why?*** (Among those you ask, be sure to include Eliab and Goliath)
- ***Why do you think he wants to fight Goliath?***
- ***Do you think he stands a chance? Why or why not?***

God's people were in a tough spot -- intimidated, dismayed, and terrified. They couldn't go home and they couldn't fight without someone facing Goliath. Then David showed up. No one expected anything from him; he was just a delivery boy. He didn't have a sophisticated understanding of hand-to-hand combat, of giants, or even of war in general, but he had a very straightforward, even simplistic, view of the situation: "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?" (v. 26b)

David didn't limit his view of the situation to a "common sense" assessment of the situation; he didn't compare himself to Goliath or analyze how he measured up in terms of strength or combat training. Instead he saw things from God's point of view: Goliath rejected the one true God, all he had going for him was his size and his armor, but the Israelites had all of the power of the living God behind them. All they had to do was trust God and move forward bravely. This is the kind of thinking we need when we face "giants" in our lives. We need to be able to see things from God's point of view.

Commitment

Many people think of God as someone far away, who we can "ring up" when we really need help. We hope that the call "gets through" and that God fixes our problems or at least make things work out for us in the end. Other people see God as a buddy, a best friend, who hangs out with them, is a really good listener and does what he can to lend them a hand. But David paints a different and very vivid picture of God in Psalm 18. We're going to spend a few minutes now studying how David viewed God.

Make sure each student has access to a Bible. Pass out pieces of paper and colored pencils or magic markers to each student. Explain that you will read part of Psalm 18 together and then each student will draw the scene that David describes. Ask someone to read Ps. 18:1-4, and then ask someone else to read v. 4-6, another to read 7-10, a fourth to read 11-13, and finally another to read 14-19. When they have finished, encourage the students to refer to the verses in their Bibles as they draw the scene. Give them 5 or so minutes to create their drawings. When they have finished allow several people to show their drawings and explain them to the group. Then discuss the following:

- ***Which of these images do you particularly like?***
- ***Which ones would you find comforting if you feel "torrents of destruction overwhelming you?"***
- ***What relationship do you see between David's view of God's reaction to his prayers and his boldness in facing Goliath?***

Closing

Ask students to draw a picture of a "giant" they are facing in their life. Explain that this might be something they are afraid of, something they are feeling pressured to do, or someone who is criticizing them for doing what is right. Give them a few minutes to work in silence. While they work you can move around the room and encourage students who don't seem to be connecting with or doing the activity.

When most students appear to have finished, explain that you are going to give them some time to talk personally with God about this "giant". Ask them to kneel in front of their chairs for this prayer time and after a few minutes of silence, close in prayer, asking for God's help for the students and thanking Him for the assurance of his love.

Before they leave pass out copies of the reading handout for the next week. (See in separate pdf file of reading handout.)