David and Goliath

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

Main point: The battle is the LORD's, so we can face big problems trusting God, not our own strength.
Bible passage: 1 Samuel 17:1–52. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD'S, and he will give you into our hands." *1 Samuel 17:47 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), a ball of string, masking tape, a yardstick or tape measure, a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the board. Measure 9 feet 9 inches on the floor and mark it with tape.

1. Opening game: Measure the Giant (5–10 minutes)

Kids work in pairs. Each pair measures one partner's **cubit**, from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger, with string, and cuts it. Then they use that string to measure six cubits along the floor and add one **span**, the width of a spread-out hand from thumb tip to little finger tip. Mark the end with tape. Compare everyone's marks with your 9 feet 9 inches mark. Say: "The Bible says Goliath was 'six cubits and a span' tall (1 Samuel 17:4). How would you feel if he shouted at you every day? Israel's whole army was afraid. One young man was not. Let's find out why."

2. Bible story: The Battle Is the LORD's (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to 1 Samuel 17. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

The giant. The Philistines came to fight Israel. They camped on one mountain and King Saul's army on another, with the valley of Elah between them (1 Samuel 17:1–3). **Look up 1 Samuel 17:4.** Goliath of Gath was a **champion**, one soldier who fights for a whole army. He wore a helmet of brass, a coat of mail (armor made of small metal pieces) that weighed five thousand shekels of brass, about 125 pounds, and brass **greaves**, armor for his shins (17:5–6). His spear was as thick as a weaver's beam, the heavy wooden roller on a loom, and its iron head weighed six hundred shekels, about 15 pounds. A soldier carrying a shield walked in front of him (17:7). Goliath shouted, "Choose a man to fight me. If he wins, we will serve you. If I win, you will serve us" (17:8–9). **Look up 1 Samuel 17:11. Dismayed** means they lost their courage. Goliath came out morning and evening for forty days (17:16).

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David comes to the camp. Jesse had eight sons. The three oldest, Eliab, Abinadab and Shammah, were in Saul's army, and David, the youngest, kept his father's sheep (17:12–15). Jesse sent David with an ephah of **parched corn** (roasted grain) and ten loaves for his brothers, and ten cheeses for their captain (17:17–18). David left the sheep with a keeper and got up early to go (17:20). He heard Goliath and saw Israel's soldiers run away scared (17:23–24). The soldiers said the king would give great riches and his daughter to the man who beat Goliath, and would make his father's family free in Israel (17:25). **Look up 1 Samuel 17:26. Defy** means to dare and insult. **Uncircumcised** meant Goliath was not one of God's covenant people.

Doubted by everyone. David's oldest brother Eliab got angry and accused him of pride and of only coming to watch the battle (17:28). David answered, "What have I now done? Is there not a cause?" and kept asking (17:29–30). King Saul sent for David. David said he would fight, but Saul said, "Thou art not able... for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth" (17:32–33). David told how he saved a lamb from a lion and a bear (17:34–36). **Look up 1 Samuel 17:37. Delivered** means saved.

Five smooth stones. Saul put his helmet and coat of mail on David, and David put on a sword. But David took them off: "I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them." **Proved** means tested; he wasn't used to them (17:38–39). **Look up 1 Samuel 17:40.** A **scrip** is a shepherd's bag.

The giant falls. Goliath looked down on David because he was young, and cursed him by his false gods (17:42–44). **Look up 1 Samuel 17:45.** The **LORD of hosts** means the LORD of armies. David said all the earth would know there is a God in Israel (17:46). **Look up 1 Samuel 17:47.** David ran toward Goliath, took a stone from his bag and slung it. The stone sank into Goliath's forehead, and he fell on his face to the earth (17:48–49). David won with a sling and a stone, with no sword in his hand (17:50). When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they ran, and Israel chased them (17:51–52).

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3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

Thinking questions (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. The whole army was afraid (17:11), but David asked who Goliath was to defy "the armies of the living God" (17:26). What was David looking at that the soldiers forgot?
2. Eliab put David down (17:28) and Saul said he was too young (17:33). How did David answer? What do you do when people doubt you for doing right?
3. David remembered how God helped him with the lion and the bear (17:37). How can remembering what God has already done help you now?
4. Why do you think David took off Saul's armor (17:39)?
5. What is a "giant" problem kids face today? What would it look like to say "the battle is the LORD's" about it?

Recall questions

1. How tall was Goliath? *(Six cubits and a span, about 9 feet 9 inches, 1 Samuel 17:4)*
2. How many days did Goliath come out? *(Forty, 17:16)*
3. What did David take to meet Goliath? *(His staff, five smooth stones in his bag, and his sling, 17:40)*

4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **assembly** means everyone gathered there, and **saveth** means saves. Read the verse on the board together. Erase two words and read it again. Keep erasing two words at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "David didn't win by his own strength, and we can't beat sin by our own strength either. God loves you. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). How do we obey the gospel? 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5)."
Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.
This week: name one "giant" you are facing. Each day, pray about it and say, "The battle is the LORD's."

6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10–15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point.

1. 1 Samuel 17:4: What city was Goliath from? *(Gath)*
2. 1 Samuel 17:12: How many sons did Jesse have? *(Eight)*
3. 1 Samuel 17:13: What were the names of David's three oldest brothers? *(Eliab, Abinadab and Shammah)*
4. 1 Samuel 17:17: What food did Jesse send to David's brothers? *(An ephah of parched corn and ten loaves)*
5. 1 Samuel 17:18: What did Jesse send to the captain? *(Ten cheeses)*
6. 1 Samuel 17:20: Who watched the sheep while David was gone? *(A keeper)*
7. 1 Samuel 17:40: Where did David get his stones? *(Out of the brook)*
8. 1 Samuel 17:50: What was not in David's hand? *(A sword)*

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that the battle is Yours. When we face giant problems, help us remember what You have already done and trust You instead of our own strength. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks "Is it okay to fight someone who is mean to me?": answer simply. Goliath was an enemy soldier in a real war, and he defied God (1 Samuel 17:10, 17:26). David wasn't picking a fight; he trusted God to protect His people (17:45–47). When someone is mean to us, we tell a grown-up and pray, and we trust God with our battles.

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