

PREPARING AT HOME

June 18-24, 2018

Focus reading: 1 Samuel 17: (1a, 4–11, 19–23), 32–49 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?q=389335962>)

Other lectionary readings: Psalm 9:9–20; 2 Corinthians 6:1–13; Mark 4:35–41

Theme: Agents of God

Last week we saw David, a young shepherd, secretly anointed as king. Thus, God has elevated one of the weakest in society to the most powerful position in the land. This week's story provides another example of reinterpreting understandings of weakness and power. The Israelites are at war with the Philistines, represented in this story by the formidable Goliath. King Saul and his army are gripped by fear, unable to respond to the taunts hurled by the menacing Goliath. When David learns of the situation, he volunteers to fight Goliath. Saul is not convinced that that his young servant and errand boy is a match for the champion of the Philistines; but David points out his experience in killing lions and bears in order to protect the sheep in his care. You probably know the rest of the story: David defeats Goliath with only his slingshot and a single stone – that and his reliance on the God of Israel. This is a story of contrasts. We get the obvious contrast between a vulnerable young boy armed with a sling and the intimidating champion of the Philistine army, but there is also the contrast between David and Saul and his army. Saul and his army are paralyzed by fear, but David is a man of courageous action. His courage comes from his reliance upon the power of God. It is God who saved him from lions and bears and God who will save him yet again. David chooses not to use the weapons Saul offered to him, but to go with the gifts God has given him. He will be true to himself and to God, relying on God's strength alone.

NOTE TO PARENTS: Unfortunately, violence is part of our world, just as it was part of David's world in this story. This is a war story, not a story about children on the playground. Talk about how we might creatively and nonviolently solve bullying situations. Emphasize how David's faith and trust in God helped him to stand up for what was right.

BEING BRAVE

King Saul and his people were afraid of the gigantic warrior, Goliath. Who or what might people be afraid of today? Invite your child to talk about his or her fears, saying "Is there anyone or anything that you are afraid of?" "What helps you to be brave?" Take a stone and write a word on the stone that will help you to have courage when faced with something difficult.

PRAYER

Powerful God,
sometimes we are afraid and feel very small,
but you are strong,
Be with us as you were with David.
Give us strength and courage to stand up for what is right.
Amen.

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