



Session 1 – What brings you Joy? 1 Samuel 17 David and Goliath

Goal: Understanding what it means to have joy, get students talking about being joyful and what it means to find our joy in the Lord.

Takes some time, if you need it, to introduce yourself to your students; do your best to learn their names and one or two things about them.

Use conversation starters to get your group warmed up and talking. When you are ready to jump into the lesson, read this prayer. Have a different student read it in each session:

“Jesus, as a light, illuminate and guide us. Jesus, as a shield, overshadow us. Jesus under us; Jesus over us; Jesus beside us on our left and our right. This day, be within and without us, lowly and meek, yet all-powerful. Be in the heart of each to whom we speak, in the mouth of each who speaks unto us. This day, be inside and outside of us, lowly and meek, yet all-powerful. Jesus as a light; Jesus as a shield; Jesus beside us on our left and our right.”

- What was one of your best days ever? Did you help win the big game? Finally master that skill you’ve been practicing? Or did you just have a lot of fun hanging out with your friends?
- Why was it your best day?

For David, one of his best days was probably the day he defeated Goliath. He was about 15 and saved the nation of Israel from the Philistines.

READ 1 Samuel 17:3-11 (NIV)

³ *The Philistines occupied one hill and the Israelites another, with the valley between them.*

⁴ *A champion named Goliath, who was from Gath, came out of the Philistine camp. His height was six cubits and a span. ⁵ He had a bronze helmet on his head and wore a coat of scale armor of bronze weighing five thousand shekels; ⁶ on his legs he wore bronze greaves, and a bronze javelin was slung on his back. ⁷ His spear shaft was like a weaver’s rod, and its iron point weighed six hundred shekels. His shield bearer went ahead of him.*

⁸ Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, “Why do you come out and line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not the servants of Saul? Choose a man and have him come down to me. ⁹ If he is able to fight and kill me, we will become your subjects; but if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our subjects and serve us.” ¹⁰ Then the Philistine said, “This day I defy the armies of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other.” ¹¹ On hearing the Philistine’s words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified.

Goliath was huge! Depending on who you ask, he was between six and half and eight feet tall, decked out for battle, and taunting the lowly Israelite army. He was standing there like the final boss of a video game challenging the Israelites to send a warrior for a one-on-one battle. He said, “If your best warrior beats me, we all surrender, but if I beat him you all surrender.”

- Have you ever been as sure of yourself as Goliath? Thought that you were so well prepared, so strong, so innately skilled that nothing could touch you? Only to find out later that you weren’t prepared at all? What happened?

In walks David, coming in to check on his older brothers and deliver cheese (1 Samuel 17.18). David was the youngest, the weakest, and the smallest of his family. When he gets there, his brothers act the way older brothers do, asking, “Why are you here, go home, stop following us around.”

All of the Israelite army is afraid to face Goliath, but David stands up, saying that he is willing to fight Goliath. He tells the king...

READ 1 Samuel 17.34-37 (NIV)

³⁴ But David said to Saul, “Your servant has been keeping his father’s sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, ³⁵ I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. ³⁶ Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. ³⁷ The Lord who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine.”

Saul said to David, “Go, and the Lord be with you.”

We don't know why Saul the king said yes. Maybe the Lord moved in his heart or maybe he just saw this as a way to surrender without losing any of his "real" soldiers.

They tried to give David all the gear that you would think a soldier would need to go and fight such a mighty opponent, but it was too much for him, and he couldn't move. The gear seemed like what we would expect a great warrior to wear, but David said, "I can't use this, I don't know how to use it." He went back to what he knew: five smooth stones and a sling.

ACTIVITY: (Leaders be aware of your surroundings and don't let anything get broken during this.) Have your students find a rock or rock substitute and try and hit a target the size of a face from ~10 feet away.

- Can anybody do it on his or her first try?
- Why was it hard to hit the target?
- If someone does hit the target dead on, ask him or her what made him or her able to do it?

David, as a shepherd, was able to do it because he used a sling every single day. Sitting around watching the sheep all day was seen as a low job. But this low job had prepared David to save the nation of Israel from destruction by the Philistines. Taking a low position as the family shepherd allowed David to come through for all of Israel. This was definitely the best day of David's life so far (he was approx. 15 at the time). Even though he was young, he was able to do something great.

- David and all of Israel celebrated their victory over the Philistines; they were overjoyed. What is the difference between being happy and being joyful?
 - *Leaders, try to steer your students to realize that happiness is situational while joy is a state of being. We can have a bad day and be upset, but there is still joy in our core that we are loved by God.*
- What makes you joyful? Why?
- David fighting Goliath seemed like an impossible task. What impossible tasks have you faced/overcome in your life?
- What are things that try and take your joy? How do you react? How should you react?