

THE ARMOR OF GOD (SPIRITUAL BATTLES)

ILLUSTRATION / DEMONSTRATION

PREPARATION:

Obtain a modern slingshot and a few stones (or perhaps some marshmallows; see next paragraph). Or find a photograph or illustration of a present-day slingshot.

DURING THE CHILDREN'S SERMON:

Show children the slingshot and stones. (For a fun demonstration, you could substitute marshmallows for the stones, and shoot one or two of them at a target as you speak.) Or show kids the photograph or illustration of a slingshot. Explain that this was not the kind of sling used by David, the young shepherd boy, against the giant named Goliath. Also point out that David wasn't the only person in ancient times who ever used a sling in battle. Ancient slings were a lot different than today's slingshots. And they certainly weren't toys or merely used for sport; they were real weapons!

Open the *NIV Adventure Bible* to page 292, saying to the children, "Listen to this 'Life in Bible Times' article from the *Adventure Bible*, called 'The Sling.'"

A sling had two cords tied to a small pad. A smooth stone was put into the pad and swung around and around. When one string was released, the stone flew very fast toward its target. Shepherds used slings to protect their flocks. Many armies had units of men whose main weapon was the sling.

SCRIPTURE READING

Turn in the *NIV Adventure Bible* to 1 Samuel 17, telling the children, "Let's see how David used his sling to defeat Goliath. This is from the book of 1 Samuel, chapter 17, verses 41-50. In this passage, Goliath is referred to as 'the Philistine.'"

The Philistine, with his shield bearer in front of him, kept coming closer to David. He looked David over and saw that he was only a boy, ruddy and handsome, and he despised him. He said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. "Come here," he said, "and I'll give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field!"

David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will hand you over to me, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. Today I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give all of you into our hands."

As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him. Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell facedown on the ground.

So David triumphed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone; without a sword in his hand he struck down the Philistine and killed him.

FEATURE READING / MESSAGE

Turn to page 321 in the *NIV Adventure Bible*. Tell the children, “Now listen to this ‘People in Bible Times’ article from the *Adventure Bible*, called ‘Goliath the Giant.’”

David was just a boy, but with God’s help he dared to fight the giant Goliath—who was over nine feet tall! Even the big men in Saul’s army were afraid to fight Goliath. But David knew that God was with him, so he used only a sling to defeat the giant.

Flipping over to page 322, say to the children, “And here’s a little more about David and Goliath in this ‘Live It!’ article from the *Adventure Bible*, called ‘The Bible Story Everybody Knows.’”

What is important about this story? David was able to face the giant because he trusted God. David was not afraid, because he knew that God could help him defeat Israel’s enemy.

APPLICATION

Turning in the *NIV Adventure Bible* to 2 Corinthians 10, tell the children, “David relied on two things during his battle against Goliath: his faith in God, and the weapon in his hand. Like David, you will have battles to face—spiritual battles against the Devil and his demons. Are you trusting God to help you in these battles? And are you familiar with the weapons you have for fighting them? Listen to the words of 2 Corinthians, chapter 10, verses 3–4.”

Though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power.

Say to the children, “That passage is talking about the armor of God, which is available to every Christian. This next passage has more to say about God’s armor. It’s from the book of Ephesians, chapter 6, verses 10–18.”

Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

Wrap up the sermon by saying to the children, “Truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, God’s Word, and prayer—these are the weapons we believers have at our disposal. David had a deep faith in God. He was also very familiar with his sling, having learned how to use it long before he stood up to Goliath. Put your trust in the Lord, and learn everything you can about the armor he has given you, so that when the time for battle comes, you too can boldly stand before the Enemy—and win!”