

“After God’s Own Heart,” Lesson 3, Leader’s Guide
Courage, 1 Sam 17

Central theme: God’s kind of man is courageous, especially when God’s name is on the line

For Starters –

Hand out the game sheet found at the end of the lesson and have each person in your group try to answer the question in each box. Give them 2 minutes or so to fill out the whole sheet. After they’ve finished, reveal the answers.

Supplies:

Game sheet (one for each person)
Pencils/pens

Answers:

Courage, the Cowardly Dog	Braveheart	Scarecrow
The Cowardly Lion	University of Maryland	The Brave Little Toaster
Braves	Red Badge of Courage	Scarer

Hand out a funny “prize” to the winner (if it’s something related to “heart,” e.g. artichoke hearts, even better). After finishing, ask them if they sense a theme to the pictures (the theme is bravery, courage, fear).

Look at the Book – 1 Sam 17

As we look this week at another episode in the life of David, we’re going to see that one thing that God values is courage.

Last time we saw that God had chosen a new leader for his people. This man was David and he would replace Saul because, as God put it, David was a man after his own heart. Let’s read together about what happened to the people of Israel shortly after David was anointed as the new king of the people.

Read **1 Samuel 17:1-12**

Explain to your group that the Israelites had a history of conflict with the Philistines. Some of it took place as early as Genesis (see **Genesis 26**, where the prosperity of Isaac leads to trouble with the Philistines), and was especially intense during the time that the judges ruled over Israel (see **Judges 3:31** and the story of Samson in chs. **13-16**; especially **13:5**, “the boy is to be a Nazirite, set apart to God from birth, and he will begin the deliverance of Israel from the hands of the Philistines” and **16:23-30**, in which Samson destroys many Philistines through his own death).

So, this scene isn’t exactly new or surprising. Israel was once again in battle against the Philistines, but this time is different. This battle would not be fought by entire armies. Instead, the Philistines sent out a champion. This term, “champion,” isn’t used anywhere

else in the Old Testament and it literally means, “the man who stands between two armies.” The role of a champion was to walk out to represent the entire army in battle.

To illustrate what this would have looked like, show this clip from the movie Troy (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=buPRU02T0fU&feature=related>). Be sure to use THIS version of the clip in order to avoid some unfortunate nudity. In this scene two armies come to battle and choose to have the battle decided by the conflict of two champions.

This is the same type of thing that happened in 1 Samuel 17. Goliath, the champion of the Philistines, came out each day and challenged the Israelites. Yet, the people of Israel didn't send a warrior. Instead, the Bible tells us in verse 11, “Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified.”

Into this scene comes David, who was sent by his father to bring food to his brothers and a report of their welfare back to him. David did as his father asked, and while he was there, he witnessed the scene they had been living in for over a month.

Read [1 Samuel 17:23-27](#)

After hearing the taunts of Goliath, David decides to respond.

Read [1 Samuel 17:32-37](#)

Handout: After reading these verses, what do you think it was that gave David such confidence? **(God's previous faithfulness in dangerous situations)**

Handout: Look at the description of Goliath in 17:4-7 and then at David's description of him in verses 26 and 36. How did the army of Israel view Goliath? **(As a great champion, towering in height and strong enough to wield mighty weapons)** How did David view him? **(As a “disgrace,” an “uncircumcised Philistine” who was defying “the armies of the living God.”)**

Saul attempts to give David his own armor, but, not surprisingly, it doesn't fit. Instead, David decides to take on the giant using the tools he was already familiar with from serving as a shepherd.

Read [1 Samuel 17:40](#)

(Optional teaching direction: You could talk to your group about having the courage to be authentic. Trying to be someone else or doing things outside of who you really are in order to fit in are signs of cowardice rather than courage. In the face of the battle, it took tremendous courage on the part of David to resist the ill-fitting armor.)

Now, comes the real conflict.

Read [1 Samuel 17:41-54](#)

Handout: Look again at the verbal battle between David and Goliath. What did Goliath see when he looked at David? **(A young man without impressive weapons.)**

Handout: What was the reality behind David's courage in this fight? **(The power and faithfulness of the Lord; verses 45-47)**

Although David is the main figure in the story, the real hero of the battle is the Lord himself. David didn't go into battle with Goliath because he believed that he was a superior fighter. No, he went into battle because he knew that God was on his side and would bring him the victory.

When God's name and reputation are on the line, he acts decisively. Look at [Acts 12:19b-23](#). It seems that God takes his reputation and his glory very seriously!

God's commitment to act for the sake of his own reputation should give us confidence and courage when we see that his name and his reputation are on the line. We likely won't face nine-foot champions, but we may find ourselves in tough spots, nonetheless.

Handout: List some situations in which the Lord's name and reputation might be on the line and it would take courage to stand up for his name's sake. Can you think of any that might occur in your day-to-day life?

Close by praying with your group that they would be men after God's own heart by demonstrating courage, especially when God's name and reputation are on the line. Have them pray about specific situations they listed on their sheet.

Optional activities:

- Have your group participate in activities like trust falls and blindfolded walks. This can be a helpful intro to talking about fear and courage.
- If you've got the time, you can schedule your group to participate in a team-building type of activity. (UCSB has a ropes course that costs some money, but is a pretty cool experience.) This type of experience can also help intro the concept of doing difficult or scary things.
- Plan a "Fear Factor"-like experience for your group. Have them eat weird foods, do scary tasks, etc. It will take some coordination (and parental consent!), so plan ahead! Alternatively, you can make it a mock version and have the activities not be scary, but outrageous (eating a can of Spam, doing handstands for minutes at a time, sticking their hand into a bowl full of gummy worms to retrieve a marble, etc.)
- One of the major themes of the film "Batman Begins" is fear. You could preview the film and select a scene or two with on the topic of fear.



This character's name:



The title of this film:



This villain's name:



This character's name:



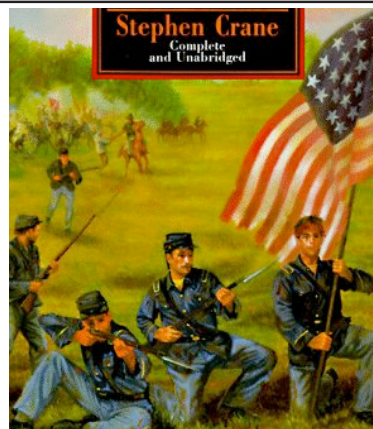
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