

UNSHAKEABLE

FAITH. LOVE. CALL. RESOLVE.

LEADER'S GUIDE

4 WEEK YOUTH GROUP CURRICULUM

FROM THE LIFE OF DAVID



A WORD TO YOUTH LEADERS

Faith impacts everything. What we believe about who God is and what He wants from us shapes everything about us. Our faith drives...

- ...how we see the world.
- ...how we view ourselves.
- ...how well we love.
- ...how deeply we despair.
- ...how big we dream.
- ...how well we fail.
- ...how we view our very purpose for living.

Our faith shapes our inner thought life and our outward choices. It provides the signposts for our journey through life. It determines our eternal destiny when we die because faith is the key that unlocks our personal relationship with the God of the universe.

When I think of the great models of faith recorded in the Bible, David quickly comes to mind. He is the only person in the entire Bible who God describes as “*a man after his own heart.*” Not that David was perfect—far from it, actually, since he was an adulterer, a murderer, a liar and an incredibly lousy husband and father on numerous occasions. Yet God still called him a man after His own heart. Why?

Perhaps because David’s faith in God was unshakeable. Over and over, David ran to God and leaned his life on Him—in the midst of both his joys and his troubles. Whether standing up to the giant Goliath, or becoming king of Israel, David’s unshakeable faith shines through the biblical account. The 70+ Psalms David penned also give us an intimate glimpse into the depth of his vibrant, honest, faith-drenched relationship with God. And a natural overflow of David’s unshakeable faith was his passion for advancing the kingdom of God and broadcasting news far and wide about the God he knew and loved!

David was passionate about knowing God AND making Him known. This curriculum and supporting student devotional handouts will stretch you and your students to do BOTH, as well. Your students will be challenged not just to love God more deeply, but to talk about this Triune God they love with others who don’t know Him personally.

Throughout my 25+ years of working with students and youth leaders, I’ve discovered that one of the most effective ways to help students’ faith grow deeper is to challenge them to share their faith with their friends. It stretches them in healthy ways, helps them see their world through Jesus’ eyes of compassion and drives them to dig deeper into what they believe and why they believe it. All of which are really great things!

So get ready for an exciting adventure and pray with me that God will use these truths from the life of David to advance His kingdom both **in** and **through** your students!

Greg Stier,
CEO, Dare 2 Share

HOW TO USE THIS CURRICULUM

This Leader's Guide and companion 25-days of reproducible student devotional handouts work in tandem to drill down into four "secrets" that fueled David's deep, authentic relationship with God. Our four weekly lesson topics and their corresponding Bible passages from David's life and writings break out like this:

1. David's **UNSHAKEABLE FAITH** that God was always with him. (From the story of David and Goliath found in 1 Samuel 17:40-50.)
2. David's **UNSHAKEABLE LOVE** that kept him intimately connected to his God. (From Psalm 63 and Psalm 103.)
3. David's **UNSHAKEABLE CALL** to know God and make Him known. (From Psalm 27:4 and Psalm 63:1.)
4. David's **UNSHAKEABLE RESOLVE** to live for God and advance His kingdom—come what may. (From the story of David being installed as king of Israel in 1 Chronicles 11:1-11.)

Within each lesson, you'll find step-by-step directions that walk you through the following:

- **KEY IDEA** – A summary of the lesson's theme
- **SCRIPTURE** – The central verses your group will be unpacking
- **GEAR UP** – A handy list of what you'll need to pull this off with excellence
- **WARM UP** – A creative ice breaker activity that has a purpose and ties into your lesson content
- **LOOK UP** – The meat of your lesson, complete with teaching content and questions designed to move the lesson content from the head to the heart
- **STEP UP** – A personal application section that nudges students deeper in their walk with Jesus, or wider into the world with His message of grace and truth
- **WRAP UP** – A final prayer to ask God's help as you each become "*doers of the Word and not hearers only.*"

If your discussion times go well, there may be more content in these lessons than your group has time for, so feel free to pick and choose what to cover and what to cut. If your group is hesitant to participate in the discussion time, ask your question(s) and wait patiently for your students to engage. Waiting creates tension, and tension is a tool for change. You know your students best, so customize your use of the materials to your own situation. The detailed lessons are simply a plan that you can modify as needed. (User Note: The words in bold provide a sample script to help you, while the non-bolded words provide logistical directions for you.)

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Week 1

UNSHAKEABLE FAITH

KEY IDEA

If you're a follower of Jesus, you are never alone! God is with you and will help you battle your giants in His strength.

SCRIPTURE 1 Samuel 17:40-50; Psalm 23:4; John 14:16-17

GEAR UP

Supplies

- Chairs, trash cans, cups of water, eggs (hardboiled eggs work, if you want to reduce the mess-factor risk), masking tape, etc. to create an obstacle course
- Blindfold
- Earplugs
- Background music and audio projection equipment
- Week 1 of the reproducible *Unshakeable* student devotional handouts – one for each student

Session Outline

- Participate in a speed-driven obstacle course activity.
- Discuss the story of David and Goliath and the kinds of giants teenagers face.
- Explore the nature of unshakeable faith.
- Discuss the concept of the Trinity and the biblical assurance that God is always with us.
- Distribute copies of the *Unshakeable* student devotional and challenge students to do the daily readings and practical applications.

WARM UP

Upfront “Obstacle Course”

Select a person who can take a joke and has a lot of upfront confidence. Take him or her out of the meeting room and have someone pump them up about how they’re going to need a great memory and a lot of agility and skill to do the upcoming obstacle course activity blindfolded and with earplugs in place. Explain that they will get 60 seconds to memorize the course once they return to the room before a blindfold and earplugs will go on them. Then they will need to walk the course and maneuver through it from memory, without spilling, breaking or bumping into anything.

In the meantime, have the rest of the group set up an obstacle course with eggs, balloons, cups of water, chairs, etc., with masking tape strung to mark the edges of the course. Once the course is built, turn on some background music and bring your competitor back in and allow them a 60 second look at the course so they can memorize its pattern. Then blindfolded, ask them to walk the course from memory, without touching ANYTHING along the way. Right before they start have the other students (very quietly!) begin removing all the obstacles, so that there is no way the contestant could spill water, break the eggs or bump into anything at all. As they pass through the course, quietly place the objects on the course back just as they were, so that when the blindfolded student has finished and removed their blindfold, they will look back and actually think they maneuvered the course as a result of their own fantastic memory skills. Encourage the crowd to cheer and congratulate the person as they walk through the course and finish it flawlessly. Make sure you pick someone who can take the joke as the lesson progresses and the truth is revealed.

Transition

EXPLAIN

Our obstacle course activity was all in good fun, but sometimes our real lives can feel like we’re maneuvering through our own obstacle course, can’t it? And we sometimes wish that someone would step in and mysteriously remove the obstacles for us, so that we never bump into anything that might trip us up or make a mess in our lives—like what just happened in our activity. ____ (student’s name) ____, did you know that while you were blindfolded we quietly removed all the obstacles within the course so that you couldn’t run into anything? And then we quietly put them all back before you took your blindfold off.

But real life doesn’t work that way, does it? The obstacles along our path through life don’t just mysteriously disappear for us. We have to face them and learn how to maneuver through them, so we can come out the other side stronger.

Yet taking on our real life challenges is rarely fun. They can loom large in our lives and they sometimes leave us feeling helpless, hopeless, alone and overwhelmed. So that’s what we’re going to be talking about today as we begin our new four-week series based on the life of the Old Testament character David—you know, the famed slingshot slinger David from the story about David and Goliath.

When the teenaged David took on the warrior-giant Goliath, the obstacle David faced was a literal giant. But giants actually come in all sorts of shapes and sizes, so you might say that many of us are facing “giants” in our own lives, as well.

But before we launch into our discussion time about what we can learn from David when battling our own giants, let's pause and open with prayer.

You might pray something like this:

Dear God, help us each learn one new truth from the familiar story of David and Goliath that we can walk away with today. Would You please show us one thing that will help us battle our own giants more effectively as we lean on You to help us? Teach us truths that will help us maneuver through the obstacles we might be facing. And would You help us take these truths we learn seriously so that we can do a better job of walking alongside others who are facing their own giants too? Help us help them, as well. In Jesus' name, amen.

EXPLAIN

All of us, at one time or another, have probably experienced feeling overwhelmed by something tough we're struggling with. We've all faced giants, haven't we?

ASK

- **PAIR SHARE: What kinds of things come to mind for you when you think of some of the different kinds of giants teenager might battle?** [After a minute or two, gather your students' attention back up front.]
- **What are some examples you and your partner came up with?** [Encourage answers such as parents' divorce, unhealthy relationships, porn, addictions, not making the team, failing a big test, peer pressure or getting bullied.]

↑ **LOOK UP**

EXPLAIN

Right about now you might be thinking, "This sounds like a pretty heavy, depressing topic," and you're right, it is heavy. There is no doubt that there will be moments when your back is against the wall as you face a giant, but here is the good news: [Pause.] There are a few key secrets to conquering life's giants.

And I'll also give you a candid heads up that often times many adults don't know or live by these key secrets. Yet if they did, there's no doubt in my mind that they would be better equipped to face down the giants that sometimes smash into their lives. So trust me when I say that it will help you all your life if you can learn how to live by these four key insights that we're going to be unpacking from the life of David across the next few weeks. Just like young David, if you align your life with these truths, you'll be leaps and bounds ahead of many adults when it comes to standing up to the giants in your life. And you'll be better able to help your friends face their giants too.

So let's start by taking a fresh look at the familiar story of David and Goliath. But first, here's a little back story on what's going on in this passage...

It's roughly 1000 B.C. This is the era when the weapons of war were swords and spears, bows and arrows, sieges and starvation. The Philistine and Israeli armies are at war.

Now close your eyes and picture this. These two armies are camped out on opposite sides of a wide valley. Smoke is rising from hundreds of early morning campfires. Flies buzz. With so many soldiers encamped in the same place for weeks on end, the smell of horse and human dung is in the air. Why have they been stuck in the same place for so long? Because the war is stalled out.

For the past 40 days, the Philistine giant Goliath has been stepping out onto the battlefield between the two warring camps and taunting the Israelite army. Each day he's challenged the Israelites to send one man forward to fight him. And the rules of engagement are that whichever side wins that single man-to-man combat will be the total victors, while everyone on the loser's side will become life-long slaves of the victor's side.

But Goliath is a HUGE, battle-tested, trash-talking, God-insulting giant of a man. So for 40 days, no one on the Israelite side has been willing to step up and take him on.

Now imagine yourself as young David—who is most likely a teenager at this point in time. You're running an errand for your father that's brought you to this battlefield on this particular day. Basically you're functioning as the Domino's pizza delivery boy, taking bread and cheese to your older brothers who are serving in Israel's army.

During your delivery run, you hear Goliath hurling his daily taunts, insults and battle challenge. But the Israelite soldiers around you do nothing! They're immobilized by their fear of this giant. How would you react? Would you feel frightened? Confused? Outraged? Or something else?

ASK

- Seriously, open your eyes now and give me a few one word responses to how you think you would personally react in this kind of situation?
- Now, based on what you already know about this story, what does David actually end up doing here?

EXPLAIN

And one of the things that makes David's offer to fight the giant so extraordinary is that here we are 3,000 years later and virtually everyone in our culture—Bible-believing or not—has heard of the battle between David and Goliath.

So let's pick up the story in 1 Samuel 17:40-50. Could I please have a couple volunteers read this passage aloud for us? And as you hear it read, listen carefully and see if you can spot the secret to young David's courage when battling this giant—the key that all the adults on the scene have totally missed.



BIBLE BOX

⁴⁰ He picked up five smooth stones from a stream and put them into his shepherd's bag. Then, armed only with his shepherd's staff and sling, he started across the valley to fight the Philistine.

⁴¹ Goliath walked out toward David with his shield bearer ahead of him, ⁴² sneering in contempt at this ruddy-faced boy. ⁴³ "Am I a dog," he roared at David, "that you come at me with a stick?" And he cursed David by the names of his gods. ⁴⁴ "Come over here, and I'll give your flesh to the birds and wild animals!" Goliath yelled.

⁴⁵ David replied to the Philistine, "You come to me with sword, spear, and javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of Heaven's Armies—the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. ⁴⁶ Today the Lord will conquer you, and I will kill you and cut off your head. And then I will give the dead bodies of your men to the birds and wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel! ⁴⁷ And everyone assembled here will know that the Lord rescues his people, but not with sword and spear. This is the Lord's battle, and he will give you to us!"

⁴⁸ As Goliath moved closer to attack, David quickly ran out to meet him. ⁴⁹ Reaching into his shepherd's bag and taking out a stone, he hurled it with his sling and hit the Philistine in the forehead. The stone sank in, and Goliath stumbled and fell face down on the ground.

⁵⁰ So David triumphed over the Philistine with only a sling and a stone, for he had no sword (1 Samuel 17:40-50).

ASK

- **So what do you think? How would you explain what David's secret was when it came to engaging this giant? What truth did David stake his life on that all the adults around him missed?**

EXPLAIN

The last sentence of verse 47 points us toward David's secret when he says: "This is the Lord's battle, and he will give you to us!"

David took on Goliath with an unshakeable faith in His God. He stepped out with full confidence that the battle was the Lord's, and that God would be with him. So David's first secret to battling giants well is this: You need UNSHAKEABLE FAITH in God, so that you can face your giants knowing that you are not alone, knowing that God is with you.

And like David could face his giant because he had unshakeable faith that God was with Him, you can walk in that certainty too! How do I know? Because God tells us in the Bible that if we've put our faith in Him, He will always be with us—through thick and thin.

Let's look at just a couple places where we can see this truth laid out in Scripture. Could someone please read Psalm 23:4? These words were actually written by David later in his life.

BIBLE BOX

⁴ Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me. Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me (Psalm 23:4).

ASK

- **Why isn't David afraid when he walks through the darkest valley?**
- **What gives him comfort?**

EXPLAIN

God's presence is very real to David, isn't it? Next, could someone please read John 14:16-17 out loud for us? This is Jesus talking here to His disciples right before He heads off to His crucifixion and death.

BIBLE BOX

¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, ¹⁷ even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you (John 14:16-17 (ESV)).

ASK

- **What names for the third person of the Trinity do we see in Jesus' words here?**
- **As Christians, how do we experience God being "with us"?**

EXPLAIN

And if those words about God's continual presence with us aren't enough, here's the one that caps it off. God declares in Hebrews 13:5: *"I will never fail you. I will never abandon you."* Never. Did you catch that? Never, never...

If you've put your trust in Jesus, you have a personal and permanent relationship with the One who made you, died for you and is coming back for you. Stop and think about what this means for a minute: You are not alone, and you never will be. In the midst of school and sports and struggles and