

The Giant, the Slingshot, and the Future King

By Tamar Stein | Illustrated by Dodo Maeder

READING GUIDE

About the Book

Young David felt stuck tending his family's sheep every day—yes, the sheep were important, but they were also boring, stubborn, and had no sense of humor. David wanted excitement. He found that excitement when a mountain lion carried away one of the lambs. David vowed to never let that happen again and set about learning to defend the rest of the lambs, using a slingshot. But a slingshot is no easy weapon, and it took David a long time to learn to use it well enough to make a difference. When the lion returned, David used his slingshot to scare it away for good. But that was not the only threat.

The Israelites were at war with the Philistines, who had a mighty warrior. Goliath was a giant with incredible strength, making him unbeatable. David knew someone had to fight the giant, and David was confident he could save his people. David faced Goliath and took down the giant! Because of his determination, practice, and persistence, David set himself on the road to saving the Israelites from the Philistines, and eventually became king.

This easy-to-read chapter book follows young David on his path of learning and practice as he develops the skills that will make him a courageous warrior, a talented musician, a faithful friend, and eventually, king.

A historical note at the end explains archeological evidence about the actual reign of David, and an author's note discusses the persistence and patience David needed to achieve his goals.



Key Themes:

Determination; practice; persistence; fighting for justice; courage; friendship; following dreams

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Ages 6–8years

Discussion Questions The Giant, the Slingshot, and the Future King

Use these questions to preface and conclude a reading of this book with children.

Encourage them to share their observations as you read the book together, and take time to linger on pages or spreads that generate more discussion.

Before Reading

- What do you know about the story of David and Goliath? What are you curious about?
- Look at the cover and read the title carefully. What do you see? What do you think is important? What do you think the story is about?
- This story takes place thousands of years ago, in the 11th century BCE. What does that mean? In what ways do you think your life might be different from life in the ancient past? How might it be similar?

After Reading

- How does David train to use the slingshot? What does he use as targets? Why do you think he chose those targets?
- Why do you think David volunteers to fight Goliath? If you were King Saul, would you let David fight? If you were one of David's brothers, would you let him fight? Why or why not?
- After David moves into the palace, he feels lonely and out of place. Why? How do those feelings change over time?
- David and his sheep are mentioned a lot throughout the story. Track how many times the sheep are mentioned. What does David feel toward the sheep? What does he learn from being a shepherd?

Optional: Extension Activity

David practices a lot. He practices playing the harp, practices singing, practices writing songs, and he practices using his slingshot. Make a list of all the things you're good at. How long did it take you to get to where you are now? How did you get good at those things?

Now make a list of all the things you want to be better at doing. What can you do improve? How long do you think it will take? Make a practice plan and share it with your class. See if someone has some advice for you, or if you have advice for them!