

Dave Danger Activity & Discussion Guide: “The Treasure in the Sand” David & Goliath Discovery

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Contents

I. Objectives (page 1)

II. Dave Danger, Action Kid! / Bringing the Comic to Life (pages 2&3)

III. The Story of David and Goliath (pages 4&5)

IV. Activities and Discussion Questions (pages 6–11)

I. Objectives

Students will:

1. learn the basic plot points and characters of the David and Goliath story;
2. interact with the “Dave Danger, Action Kid” comic strip, and analyze the different themes within the comic;
3. apply these themes to their own lives and experiences;
4. learn the ways in which we understand information from archaeological artifacts;
5. have the chance to interact with the creators of “Dave Danger, Action Kid.”

II. Dave Danger, Action Kid!/Bringing the Comic to Life

Dramatizing the Comic

15 min.

Hand out copies of “Dave Danger, Action Kid” to the students. Assign each student one character, and have students read and/or act out the comic aloud. Encourage students to be creative about roles—someone can be Robot Dog, another can be the artifact by taping a picture to her/his shirt, another can make the sounds of the motorboat, others can be David and Goliath! If the class is larger, you can divide students into several groups, and have each group perform their presentation of the comic for the class.

Questions for Students

- What was this story about? What happened?
- Who are the characters in this comic?
- Which character did you identify with the most?
- What words or names do you recognize?
- Are there any words or names you don't recognize?
- Why do you think Dr. Thanatos stole the artifact?
- Do you think Dave did the right thing by chasing after Dr. Thanatos?
- Do you think Dave did the right thing by picking up the artifact to give to his mother? Why or why not? [This could be the time to mention how archeologists protect and preserve finds.]
- Why do you think that Dave's mother was so excited about the artifact?
- Do you think artifacts should belong to just one person? Why or why not?
- Who should they belong to?
- If they belong to everyone, where should they be kept? [This could be an excellent time to talk about the benefits of visiting museums.]

What We Know

While many artifacts have been found that help to tell stories, as of yet, no one has found one which proves that the David and Goliath story really happened. However, stories can teach important lessons, even if they are not proven to be true.

Similarly, Dave Danger may just be a kid in a comic strip, but he deals with issues that matter to the way we live our lives. Sometimes we read sources for the facts—like newspapers and history books; other times we read things for what they tell us about life, people, or the meanings of events—like comics, novels, or short stories.

More Questions for Students

- Why do you think we read the story of David and Goliath?
- What do you think are the most important parts of the David and Goliath story?
- Why do you think we read the Dave Danger comic?
- What do you think are the most important parts of this episode, and why?

The Story of David and Goliath

The Story

10 min.

Read this story aloud with students, or use as notes to tell them the story. It's found in the Torah, in the book Samuel 1, chapter 17:12–17:50.

There is another “Dave,” whom the Jewish people have read about for years—long before this comic was even written. David was a young man who tended his father Jesse’s flock of sheep. He was the youngest of his father’s eight sons, and lived in the town of Bethlehem. At this time, a man named Saul was the king of Israel—in fact, he was the first king of Israel ever! The kingdom’s main prophet was a man named Samuel, who spoke often with God and advised the king as well as many other Jews. Years ago (and in a few places, still, today!) most leaders were royalty, and often people thought that God chose these kings and queens to lead the country. One ritual used to show that someone had been “chosen” to lead a people was to place oil on his/her head. This is called “anointing.”

After Saul disobeyed God, God asked Samuel to prepare to anoint another king. Samuel traveled to Jesse’s house and met his seven sons, each of whom was very strong—but God did not choose any of them. Finally, Samuel asked Jesse if he had any other sons, and Jesse said yes, but that his youngest son, David, was out tending to the sheep in the field. When Jesse brought David in, God told Samuel: “This is the one.”

Sometime after Samuel anointed him, David—who was a very talented musician—was asked to come to the palace to soothe King Saul’s restless moods by playing music (even kings don’t feel happy all the time!). David would go back and forth, from playing music at the palace to tending his father’s sheep in the field.

During this time, Israel was at war with a group of people called the Philistines. They were neighbors, and the two neighbors didn’t always get along. When all of the warriors came to battle, the greatest Philistine warrior, Goliath, stepped forward. He was an extremely large man—some say a giant!—and one of the fiercest fighters in the Philistine army. Goliath suggested that instead of everyone fighting one another, only he and one of the Israelites should fight, and whichever side won would take the other’s people as their slaves.

As you can imagine, the Israelites were terrified—no one in their entire army was as big or strong as Goliath—they were sure to lose! Meanwhile, David's father had sent him to the battlefield to bring food to his three older brothers, who were getting ready to fight. When David heard Goliath's challenge and saw how frightened all of the other soldiers were, he said that he would fight the giant.

Everyone was worried, and even the king told David that he was too small and young to fight such a great warrior, but David gave two good arguments. First, he said, in all the years he was tending his father's sheep, if a lion or bear came and took an animal, he would chase after it and fight it to rescue the sheep. So he was very fast and strong. The second argument was that God would be with him and would not let him fail.

Saul agreed, and gave David his armor and sword, but David—who was not used to wearing so much metal—stumbled. So he returned Saul's armor and sword, picked up his sling and a few stones, and went out to face Goliath.

When a surprised Goliath threatened the young shepherd, David told him that his God would help him win. As Goliath came toward him, David slung one of his stones directly at the Philistine's head. It landed, and knocked Goliath over. With no armor, no sword, and a lot of trust in God and himself, David beat the great warrior Goliath and saved Israel from becoming slaves to the Philistines.

After many more adventures, David eventually became king, and is known to this day as one of the greatest kings of ancient Israel. So throughout history the Jewish people have always heard stories of one "Dave Danger" or another!

IV. Activities and Discussion Questions

Seeing a Story

In the comic, Robot Dog finds an artifact, and Dave's little brother Max thinks it's a comic strip. We've all seen books, stories, or signs with only words, and we've seen them with words and pictures, but what about books, stories, or signs that only have pictures?

In ancient times, as today, people communicated with pictures to express ideas and stories. The Egyptians used hieroglyphics, and in many places people painted figures on the walls of caves.

Questions for Students

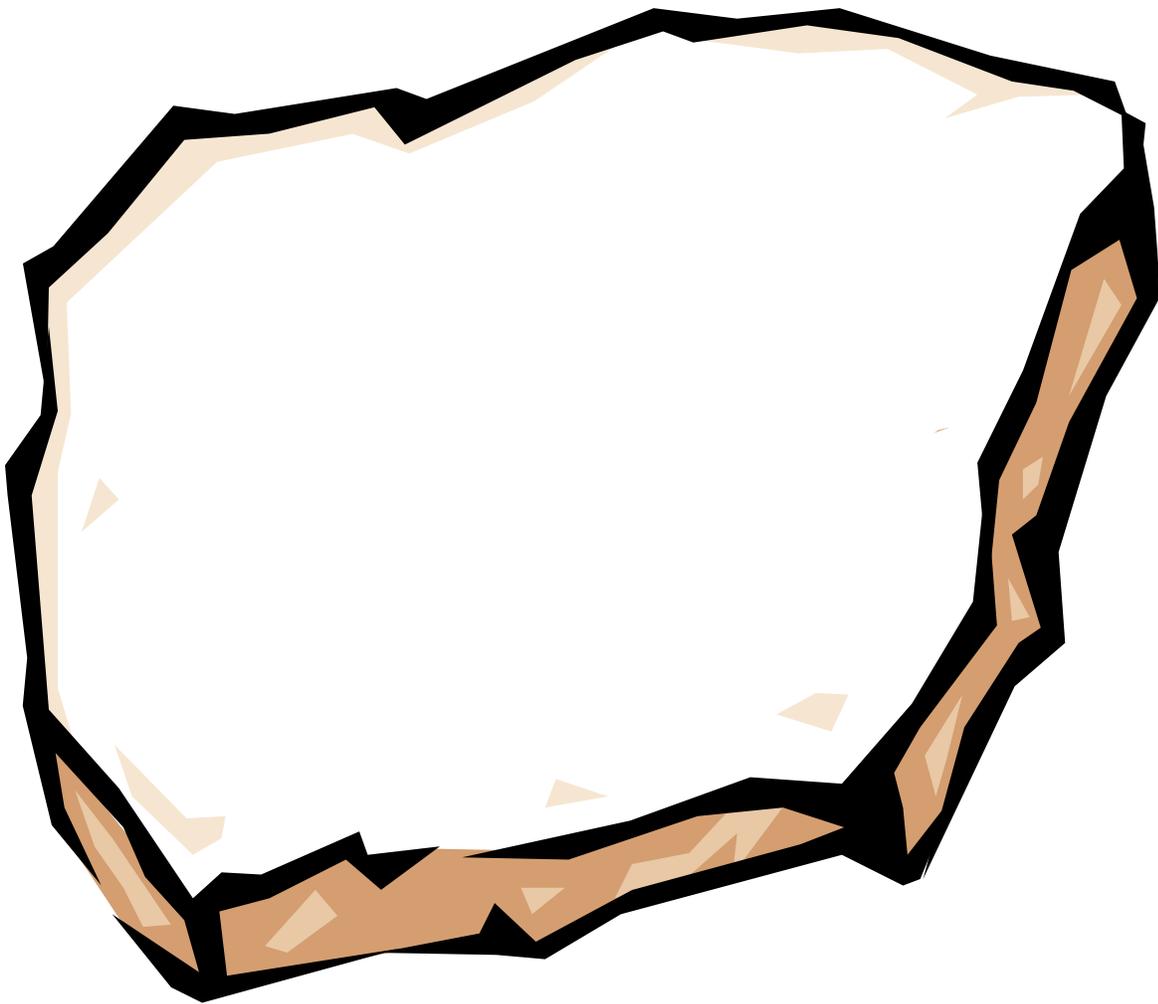
- Can you think of ways today in which we only communicate in pictures (e.g., certain road signs, stories in photographs, some cartoons, etc.)?
- You've probably heard the phrase, "a picture is worth a thousand words." What does this phrase mean?
- Do you agree with it?
- Imagine these scenarios:
 1. Your aunt gives you the final Yu-Gi-Oh! cards to complete your set. You could write "thank you" on a note, or you could send her a photograph of you, with a big smile, after you won a Yu-Gi-Oh! tournament with your friends. Which do you think she would rather get?
 2. Your teacher asks you to write your name on your paper. You could write out your name on the line, or you could attempt to draw a series of pictures that, if the teacher said them out loud, might sound like your name. Which do you think would be easier?

As you can see, there are times when pictures work better, and times where words work better, but often, they both work best together...like in a comic!

Telling a Story: Words and Pictures

Use the lines below to write out one of your favorite Jewish stories; then draw that story on the artifact, using as few words as possible. Or, you can try it in the reverse order, drawing first!

Compare the two stories—one with words, and one with pictures. What are the different things you learn from each way of telling a story?



Go on a Dig!

15 min. (without object preparation time)

Have students bring in Jewish objects that are important to them, or have them prepare objects as described in the next activity. Alternately, teachers can prepare objects which encompass different parts of the lesson.

One exciting way is to order a blank puzzle [order from <http://www.papergoods.com/colored-puzzles.shtml> or <http://www.orientaltrading.com>, or type “blank puzzle” into Google]. Write and/or draw the story on it, and then separate the puzzle into pieces to be used in the dig. That way, after students find all of the pieces, they still have to put them in order to find the message—much like real archaeologists!

Gather several large, ideally very deep, boxes or containers. Fill them with Styrofoam peanuts or recycled shredded paper bits, with the objects or puzzle pieces buried inside.

Place the boxes in a room—or in several rooms around the synagogue, depending on how much movement you would like to have happen. This room is now the “desert.” Lead students to the desert and give them their assignment, as archaeologists.

Take pictures as they rummage through the boxes and piece the objects together, so you’ll have an album of the dig!

Create a Synagogue Museum

20 - 25 min. (not including object preparation)

This activity can be done in several different ways. If you want to familiarize students with their synagogue, teachers can choose the areas, ritual objects, and artifacts from the synagogue’s history and create a mini-museum for students. The other option, and the one we’re focusing on, is to have students create artifacts for a museum that they, their classmates, and even their families can “tour.”

Ask how many students have ever been to a museum. Have the students who say yes talk about the museums they’ve been to and their favorite exhibits.

Explain that museums are (usually!) buildings where special, important, and interesting objects are kept and taken care of, so that everyone can have a chance to see them and learn about them. There are art museums and history museums, science museums and nature museums, and many others!

One of the best aspects of many museums is that they help us to understand where we come from. The museum in the Dave Danger comic is similar to many of the museums containing objects from Jewish history in the land of Israel.

Provide students with clay, papers, markers, scissors, posterboard, and any other interesting crafts you choose. At your discretion, focus the design theme on the David and Goliath story, the David and Goliath artifact Dave and Cathy found in Israel, or key objects in other Jewish stories. For example, students could draw or create David's slingshot, an original dreidel, an idol from Abraham's father's shop, the veil Leah wore to disguise herself at her wedding, etc.

After creating the objects, help students to design explanation cards to go with them which tell what the object is, who used it, and when and where it comes from.

Set these up around a room, and have the students give museum "tours" to other grades, faculty, and families!

Themes in the David and Goliath Story

Shepherds as leaders.

The youngest or smallest as leaders.

Taking a risk.

Proving oneself through a task.

Using creativity to solve a problem that seems impossible.

Themes in the Dave Danger Episode

Recognizing the importance of history.

Young people as leaders.

Working together.

Taking a risk.

Proving oneself through a task.

Using creativity to solve a problem that seems impossible.

Questions for Thought and Discussion

- The David and Goliath story that Dave Danger found is written in the book of 1 Samuel. The book is named after the great prophet...Samuel! What is a prophet? Do we have prophets today?
- Why do you think God didn't replace Saul as soon as he disobeyed God?
- Why didn't God immediately make David king?
- The story talks about David being young. Do you think it was a good idea to wait until he was older before he became king? Why or why not?

- David was willing to go into battle against the giant because he trusted in God so much, he felt everything would be okay. Do you trust anyone or anything that much? Who or what?
- Do you think it was a good idea for David to go into the battle without armor?
- Why do you think that in the Torah people who are shepherds often become important leaders?
- Why do you think there are so many stories about the youngest or smallest becoming the greatest heroes?
- Today, some people still choose to prove themselves in battle, but many others prove themselves in other ways. How did Dave Danger prove himself in the comic?
- What ways have you seen people prove themselves?
- Have you ever had to prove yourself? What did you do?
- Do you think there are times when people or countries *have* to fight? When? Why?
- In that case, is it better for just one person from each side to fight each other to determine the winner? Why or why not?