

The Adventures of Amari & Darius

God Can Do Anything — God Does Miracles: Joshua and the Battle of Jericho

Sunday afternoon in March in North Memphis. Amari and Darius are in the backyard enjoying the swing. They are waiting for their cousins to join them. Ghalen and Jabari are twins who live next door to each other. Soon they arrive, and playtime begins. After a while, Amari's grandmother – Memaw – appears at the door with snacks for all. Memaw tells the kids to enjoy and disappears back inside. Later that evening, after Ghalen and Jabari have gone home, Amari and Darius have a light supper with Mama and Memaw. Then it's bath time. Amari gets her stuff ready for Monday. She's excited because tomorrow brings week 2 of Street Reach. Amari and Darius love Street Reach. They meet many new people from other churches who tell great Bible Stories, have crafts, and play games. Amari is in the 4th grade at Treadwell Elementary, while her brother Darius is in the 2nd grade at Treadwell.

Monday morning arrives with sunshine. The kids get dressed and head to the kitchen for breakfast. Memaw was making pancakes and sausage for breakfast. Darius was all smiles – pancakes were one of his favorites! After breakfast, the kids gather their stuff and get to the car with Mama. She would drop them off at school on her way to work. Memaw waved bye and told the kids, "Have a fun day and behave!"

After school, Amari and Darius ride home with cousins Ghalen and Jabari. Their Gramps picks them up. Memaw is waiting on the front porch with cookies and juice boxes for all. They have their snack while waiting for the church people to arrive for the afternoon session of Street Reach.

Soon, the church people are coming down the street. Memaw speaks to them, and then they all head off to their site. This is a week and a new team, so Amari is looking forward to a new group of church people. They arrive at their site and settle into the Bible Story circle. The church leader

starts talking. "Welcome, everyone. This week, we will be talking about the power of God. He truly can do anything. We will start out with a miracle **(does everyone know what a miracle is?)**. This story is just one miracle, but there are many to read about in the Bible. So, sit back and let's get started.

And today's story goes something like this....

Joshua was born around 1355 BC (before Christ), the son of Nun. He was Moses' successor as leader of Israel, having served under Moses for many years and learning from him. When Moses was near the end of his life (Moses lived to be 120 years old!), he anointed Joshua as the new leader of the Israelites. Moses told Joshua to always trust in God and do as he commanded.

After Moses' death, God calls Joshua to lead the Israelites across the Jordan River and to take possession of the promised land. God guarantees victory in the military battle and vows never to leave the Israelites so long as they obey his laws. The people swear their allegiance to Joshua. He then sends two spies across the river to investigate the territory. The men enter Jericho, where a woman named Rahab tells the spies that the Canaanites are afraid of Israel and its great military successes. Professing belief in the God of the Israelites, she asks for protection for her family when the Israelites destroy Jericho. The spies pledge to preserve Rahab and return to Joshua, telling him of the weakened condition of Israel's enemies.

The Israelites cross the Jordan River, led by a team of priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant. As the priests enter the water, the river's flow stops, and the Israelites cross on dry ground **(does this sound familiar? Remember Moses and the Red Sea?)** Arriving on the other side, the Israelites commemorate the miracle with an altar of twelve stones from the riverbed (representing the twelve tribes of Israel).

Approaching Jericho, Joshua encounters a mysterious man who explains that he is the commander of God's army but is neither for nor against Israel. So, Joshua pays homage (**do you know what homage is?**) Following God's instructions, Joshua leads the Israelites in carrying the Ark around Jericho for six days (the city was surrounded by a wall). On the seventh day, the Israelites march around the city seven times. Joshua rallies them to conquer the city and kill everyone except for Rahab. They are to absolutely NOT take any of the city's religious items. At the sound of the Israelite war cry, the walls of Jericho collapse, and the Israelites destroy the city and everyone inside.

Joshua's fame spreads throughout the land, but the Israelites are humiliated in their attempts to take the next city. (The city of Ai) This was because Achan, an Israelite, had stolen some religious items from Jericho. You see, Joshua's success really did depend on his trusting in God's direction. After the people stoned Achan, the next attempt against Ai was successful as Joshua masterminded an elaborate ambush against the city's forces. The Israelites celebrate by building an altar to God and publicly reaffirming their trust in God and his law.

The Israelites continue to destroy the southern and northern cities of Canaan, killing all living inhabitants, just as God has instructed. While much of the promised land still remains to be conquered, the people of Israel begin to settle in the land, dividing it among the twelve tribes. God then gives Israel rest from its enemies for many years.

Soon, an ailing Joshua knows his time on earth is coming to an end, and he makes a farewell announcement to the nation of Israel. Joshua warns the Israelites to be strong, to obey and trust God, and to throw away any idols. The people assure Joshua they will be faithful to the covenant, but Joshua is worried that obedience and trust for Israel will prove very difficult. Joshua had mostly trusted God his entire life. For years, he remained close to Moses. He watched Moses as he followed God with almost flawless obedience. He learned to pray personally from Moses. He learned to obey and trust through Moses' example. He was a true mento of Moses (**do you know what a mentor is?**) Joshua lived to be 110 years

old. When he died, he was buried at Timnath-heres, in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash.

If you are alive, you are a mentor. Someone, somewhere, is watching you. Some younger person is seeing how you live and how you trust and obey God. Someone is learning from you. Someone will follow your example. Trusting God is an important trait to teach others.

Amari was thinking that was a neat story and resolved to ask Mama about other miracle stories in the Bible. She knew Mama read her Bible a lot and would have answers for her. Meanwhile, the kids asked the church people questions before continuing their rotations. It always seemed like the afternoon was gone so fast, but soon they were walking home with the church people. Darius was walking with the twins (they're all in the second grade together) while Amari was chatting with the church leader. She told the church leader that Mama promised a trip to the Memphis Zoo if they behaved all week. The church leader smiled. "What a fun day that will be!" she said. "What's your favorite animal?" Amari thought for a minute. "I think the giraffe cause it's tall," Amari replied.

Soon they were home. Memaw was waiting on the porch for the kids. Amari and Darius went in with Memaw while the twins ran over to their house, where Gramps was waiting for them. Amari had some homework to finish before supper, so she got started.

Group Discussion Questions:

What is the Ark of the Covenant?

What is a mentor?

Do you know anyone who is over 100 year old?

What is homage?

Bible Verse:

“Be still and know that I am God.” Psalm 46:10

Word of the Day: *Homage*

Special honor or respect; in Biblical times, the worship of the risen Christ just as the Wise Men did

The Adventures of Amari & Darius

God Can Do Anything — God Gives Power: David and Goliath

Monday evening, Amari finished her homework and then went to the kitchen to help Memaw until Mama got home from work. "What's for supper?" Amari asked. Memaw smiled. "We're having some chicken and rice with green beans and cornbread", she replied. Amari loves that supper. And Memaw told her the twins were also coming over to eat. Their Mama had made peach cobbler for dessert. It was to be a big time. Amari set the table while Darius picked up their school stuff and put it on the table by the door.

Later, everyone sat at the big table to enjoy supper. They were finishing up when Gramps looked around. He asked the kids if they behaved at Street Reach. A chorus of yep and yes from all. "Well then," he said, "it sounds like a trip to the zoo this Saturday!" The kids all started talking about their favorite animal to see at the zoo. **Do you all like the zoo? What's your favorite animal?**

After supper, the twins went home with Gramps, Mama, and Daddy. Amari and Darius had their bath time and finally got into bed.

Tuesday was looking promising. They woke up to the smell of sausage coming from the kitchen. It didn't take long to dress and run down the hall to breakfast. Memaw had made breakfast sandwiches. Amari and Darius ate their sandwich, then gathered their school stuff to go with Mama to school.

After school, all the kids rode home with Gramps and had their snack on the front porch while they waited for the church people to arrive. Soon, Amari saw them, and they said goodbye to Gramps and Memaw before joining the others. It was a nice day and not too hot, so the walk was pleasant.

At the site, the kids all got into the Bible story circle. The church leader stood before them. "Today, we will talk about power," she said. "We have a story about a young man who was faithful to God and fearless. Even though he was outmatched, God was with him, and that evened things up."

And today's story goes something like this....

Saul had been king, but he kept disobeying God, so God asked Samuel to find a new king. God said to Samuel, "Go to Bethlehem, and there is a man named Jesse with eight sons. One of them will be the next king." (—now that's a lot of kids!) When Samuel first met the sons, he automatically thought that the oldest son, Eliab, would be the king that God had chosen. But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at the way he looks or how big he is. Eliab is not the one I have chosen; the way he looks doesn't matter to me, I look at the heart." Jesse brought more of his sons to meet Samuel, but none of them had been chosen by God either. Samuel asked Jesse, "Have I met all your sons?" Jesse replied, "I have one son left named David, he's the youngest, and he's out looking after the sheep. I will bring him here to meet you. "As soon as Samuel saw him, the Lord spoke to him and said, 'He is the one.'" So Samuel anointed him with oil, a special way of promising that he would be the next king. And from that day on, the power of the Lord was with David.

David continued to take care of his father's sheep in the fields. When he didn't have much to do in the field, he played the harp and wrote songs (you can find them in the book of Psalms in your Bible). Meanwhile, Saul was still king and ruled the people known as the Israelites. David and his family were Israelites too. The Israelites weren't getting along with people named the Philistines. The problem with the Philistines was that they had many giants living in their land. One of the strongest and biggest giants was named Goliath. He was over nine feet tall!!! He would've had to bend way down to get through a regular door. **(Have you ever seen anyone so tall?)**

Goliath was covered with armor to protect him and carried a big spear. Every morning and every evening for forty days, he shouted to the Israelites in his big, deep voice, "Hey, you guys! I dare you to find one man to fight me. If he can beat me, we will become your servants, but if I win, you will all become our servants."

When King Saul and all his men heard this, they were very afraid. Three of these men were David's three oldest brothers. Now, David's father, Jesse, heard about the giant and was worried about his sons. He called David out of the fields and asked him to take some food to his brother and report back on how they were doing. So, David set off to visit his brothers. As he approached them, he heard Goliath shouting his challenge like he did every morning. "Isn't someone going to stand up to this man?" David asked the men in the army. "Then I will fight this giant Philistine."

One of the men overheard this and ran to King Saul, telling him what David said. King Saul approached David and said, "You can't fight Goliath, you're only a boy, and he has been fighting for many years." But David said to King Saul, "I have had to fight lions and bears to protect my father's sheep. God helped keep me safe then, and he will help keep me safe now."

It was too bad that King Saul wasn't trusting in God to help him; he didn't know what to do to beat Goliath. Then this young boy named David came, and he knew exactly what to do in one day and trusted that God would help him. That's why God loved David's heart and wanted him to be king.

So, King Saul dressed David in heavy armor to protect him from Goliath, but David took it off. It was so heavy he could hardly walk, and he knew that God would keep him from harm. Instead, David went to a nearby stream, found five smooth stones, put them in a pouch around his waist, and, with his slingshot (**have you ever tried to use a slingshot?**), went to Goliath. As David approached Goliath, Goliath looked at David and thought it was a joke. Goliath thought that he could easily beat David, and it was funny that King Saul would send a small boy to fight him. But David

said to him with fear, "You fight with a sword, and I come with God on my side, and today everyone will know that there is one true God in this land." Goliath didn't care what David said, and he moved closer to attack him. David ran quickly to meet him. Reaching into his pouch, he pulled out a stone, put it into his slingshot, and shot it at Goliath. The stone hit Goliath right between his eyes, and suddenly, Goliath started to lose his balance. He fell with a loud thud right on his face. David had done it; he beat the giant Philistine!! When the rest of the Philistines saw this, they fled, and David became a hero to all the people of Israel.

Amari was thoughtful after this story. She looked around at the boys and thought they probably all wanted to get a slingshot to try this out. The church leader was probably thinking the same, because she said, "Do not try this yourselves!!!"

After some laughter, the kids started their rotations. It was a fun day. They were walking back home with the church people. Amari asked the church leader if there were still giants like Goliath in the world. "Hmmm," the church leader was thinking. "Maybe somewhere in the world. I've not been everywhere. We do know there were giants back in the day of David because the Bible said so, and the Bible is the truth." Amari shook her head in agreement. More discussion stuff to have with Mama, she thought. For later this evening.

Group Discussion Questions:

Do you think David was afraid to fight Goliath? Would you be afraid?

Have you ever tried to use a slingshot?

Do you think David had faith?

Do you know anyone over 9 feet tall?

Bible Verse:

**“And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ Then I said, ‘Here am I! Send me.’”
Isaiah 6:8**

Word of the Day: *Faith*

Belief and trust in and loyalty to God

The Adventures of Amari & Darius

God Can Do Anything — Jonah

Well, Tuesday night was taco night at Amari and Darius's house. Memaw was not a big fan but enjoyed watching the kids eat them. Amari and Darius didn't have homework that night, so they helped get supper ready, and as soon as Mama got home from work, they all sat down to eat. The kids talked about giants and slingshots.

After supper, Mama suggested that Amari and Darius get the twins and play for a while in the backyard while the sun was still out. They didn't need coaxing on that! They got the twins and played on the swings. After a while, it started to get dark. Mama opened the back door and told them it was time to come in. Darius walked the twins home. Amari got her bath and selected her favorite book to read for a few minutes before lights out. Darius got his bath but wasn't so interested in reading. He went right to sleep!

On Wednesday morning, Amari awoke first and got dressed. Darius was slower today, but knew there was lots of fun ahead with another day of Street Reach. The kids went to the kitchen where they had cereal for breakfast. Mama was getting ready for work, and Memaw was already busy in the kitchen.

Soon, the kids left with Mama for school. It was an uneventful day, although when they went to specials, the library lady had a display about zoo animals. Amari loved it as she knew (fingers crossed!) this weekend would be a zoo trip! There was a big poster with a giraffe. She thought they were so beautiful. **(who here likes a giraffe?)**

After school, Gramps was waiting patiently to cart all the kids home, where they enjoyed their snack on the front porch. Soon, the church people were coming down the street. Amari and the younger kids joined the church people for the walk to their site. At the site, everyone quickly formed a

circle for the Bible Story. The church leader smiled. "Today, we will be talking about a man who didn't listen to God and a big fish!

And today's story goes something like this....

One day, God asked a man named Jonah to go to Nineveh and tell the people there to stop being bad. The only problem was that Jonah didn't want to help the people there. He knew they were bad and wanted them punished for their mistakes.

So instead of listening to God, Jonah thought he would run away from Nineveh and not do what God asked him. He ran to the sea, where he found a ship bound for another city. He paid the captain, went to the lower part of the boat, and fell asleep.

Shortly after the boat left the shore, a severe storm hit and started tossing the boat around. All the men were very afraid, so they started to throw all their packages and bags overboard in hopes that they wouldn't drown.

The captain soon went to find Jonah, who was still sound asleep in the boat. He said to Jonah, "How can you sleep? Get up and pray to your god, maybe he can help us!" The captain didn't realize that Jonah didn't just believe in any God but the one true God and that He could help them. Meanwhile, the other sailors decided that the storm was Jonah's fault. He must have done something wrong to make his god so angry. So, they asked Jonah, "What have you done? What god do you believe in? What can we do to make this storm stop?"

Jonah told them, "I believe in the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the land, and I am running away from something God asked me to do. It is my fault this is happening. If you throw me into the sea, the storm will stop."

The men didn't want to hurt Jonah by throwing him overboard, so they tried to row as best they could, but the storm just got worse. So, they picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea. The storm immediately calmed, and the sea became still. The men on the boat realized that Jonah believed in the one true God and prayed to Him.

Then the captain and the crew looked out to sea as a whale came and swallowed up Jonah. God sent the fish to keep Jonah from drowning. Jonah stayed in the fish for three days and three nights.

Just think for a second what it would be like to be inside a fish. There are no windows, and lots of strange things floating around that you can't see because it's so dark. Other than that, I'm not sure what it would be like, but Jonah probably didn't know if he would ever see daylight again.

While Jonah was trapped inside the fish, he prayed to God a lot. He asked God to forgive him for running away. He also thanked God for not allowing him to drown.

After the third day, God told the fish to spit Jonah out onto dry land. And the fish did just that. Jonah was happy to be out of the dark belly of the fish, but boy, did he need a shower. He was slimy and smelly.

Then the Lord told Jonah a second time to go to Nineveh and tell the people there to stop being bad. This time Jonah obeyed God and left for Nineveh right away.

When Jonah got there, he told the people what had happened to him. He warned them that God said they should stop doing bad things, or else the city and everything in it would be destroyed in forty days. To Jonah's surprise, the people listened to him, prayed to God, and apologized for all the bad things they had done.

Soon, the king of Nineveh heard what was happening, and he ordered everyone to listen to God and stop doing bad things. And when God saw

that they were trying to do good rather than evil, He felt love for them and did not destroy their city.

That could be the end of the story, except Jonah left the city very angry. He was mad that God didn't punish the people. He knew that God was loving and didn't want to destroy anything unless he had to.

So Jonah went on a hill and sulked. God saw Jonah and knew how he was feeling, so he explained to Jonah that He loves everyone (after all, He made us). He doesn't like to destroy people who are doing things badly. God would rather see us turn from our bad ways and do good again.

Amari wondered what kind of fish could have swallowed a whole person. She was very curious about that. But she knew the story's purpose was to show that God was a loving God who needed to be obeyed. They went on to their rotations and had a great

time. On the walk back home, Amari asked the church leader about her thoughts on the fish. The church leader talked about being obedient to what God wants from each of us. She was trying to explain how we need to be patient. The church leader told Amari her favorite verse was "Be still and know that I am God."

That's something to be considered.

They finally got home, and the twins headed for their house. Amari and Darius went inside to see what was going on.

Group Discussion Questions:

What did God ask Jonah to do?

Did Jonah think he could run away from God?

Can we really hide from God?

Is there anyone you find it hard to be kind to? Why?

Is God asking for our obedience?

Bible Verse:

“Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights.” Jonah 1:17

Word of the Day: *Obedience*

Submitting to the will and commands of God

The Adventures of Amari & Darius

God Can Do Anything — God Gives Wisdom: Belshazzar and the Writing on the Wall

Well, Wednesday night was fried chicken night! Amari has been learning to cook a bit with Memaw, so she was able to do more in the kitchen. Memaw was careful, though, to make sure Amari was not near the hot grease. During supper, Mama was talking about the weekend plans – specifically the trip to the zoo. “Memaw is doing laundry tomorrow, so make sure your Memphis Zoo t-shirts are clean for Saturday. Amari knew her shirt was clean and ready to go. Darius looked like he’d better check. Amari smiled, such a boy, she thought. Can't remember anything. She knew she’d go check later. After all, what are big sisters for?”

After supper, Amari chose to help with cleanup while Darius got his bath early and worked on spelling words, since he had a spelling test tomorrow. Memaw would help him prepare. Amari was proud of her little family. They always helped each other get over the little humps of life.

As the evening wound down, the kids got their school stuff ready for tomorrow and finally went to bed. Darius said softly, “I can’t believe it’s almost the end of week 2 already. I’m really enjoying this week. These church people are a lot of fun!” he said. Amari agreed. “They have had some good stories!” she said.

Thursday arrives. Darius had his spelling test and did well – only one error. Gramps was waiting after school to pick up the twins, as well as Amari and Darius. They were soon home and having the snack from Memaw. And then the church people showed up. Off they went, excited for the last day and hopefully an exciting story. They quickly formed their story circle. The church leader stood with a smile. It’s been so much fun to be with you all this week. We are sorry to be leaving and hope to see you all again next year.

"Today's story is very strange. Do you all believe in magic?" She asked.
"This is not magic, but some may think that. Let's dive right in for this story."

And today's story goes something like this....

Have you ever written on a wall? I bet you got in trouble for that, didn't you? Well, did you know that one time GOD wrote on a wall? (He's God, so HE can do whatever He wants.) And this was a very important message He was writing. After Nebuchadnezzar died, his son Belshazzar became the king. One night, King Belshazzar had a big fancy dinner for 1,000 royal guests! He gave orders to bring the special gold and silver cups that his father, Nebuchadnezzar, had taken from the Temple in God's City. (Do you know what city that was?) Then, King Belshazzar and his royal guests drank from those cups that came from God's House. As they were drinking, they praised their false gods. That was VERY offensive to God. Suddenly, the fingers of a person's hand appeared out of nowhere and began writing on the wall! All the dinner guests could see was a hand! King Belshazzar was frightened. His face turned white. His knees knocked, knocked, knocked together, and he could not stand up because he was too weak. Thud!

The king called for the magicians, wise men, and wizards of Babylon and said to them, "Anyone who can read this writing and explain it will receive purple clothes and a gold necklace. And I will make that person the third-highest ruler in the kingdom."

Then all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the writing on the wall or tell the king what it meant. King Belshazzar became even more afraid, and his face became even more white. Then the king's mother, who had heard the voices of the king and his royal guests, came into the banquet room.

She said, "Oh, King, live forever! Don't be afraid or let your face be white with fear! When your father was king, there was a man named Daniel who

could understand such things. He was very wise, with knowledge and understanding. He could explain dreams and secrets and could answer very hard problems. Send someone to get Daniel. He will tell you what the writing on the wall means.”

So, they brought Daniel to the king; Daniel is now nearly 90 years old, and the king asked, “Is your name Daniel?” Are you one of the captives my father, the king, brought from Jerusalem? I’ve heard that God is with you and that you have an extraordinary understanding. The wise men and magicians could not explain his writing on the wall to me. But I have heard you can explain what things mean and find answers to hard problems. Read this writing on the wall and explain it to me. If you can do it, I will give you purple clothes fit for a king and a gold necklace to wear. And you will become the third-highest ruler in the kingdom.”

Then Daniel answered the king, “You can keep your gifts for yourself, or you may give those rewards to someone else. I don’t really care about those. But I will read the writing on the wall for you and explain to you what it means.

So, Daniel looks at the writing on the walls and says to the king, “O King, the Most High God made your father Nebuchadnezzar a great, important, and powerful king. But your father became too proud and stubborn, so God brought him down low. (What does that mean?) Your father, Nebuchadnezzar, had to live by himself outside with the animals, and he became like an animal. Remember?”

Daniel continued, “But Belshazzar, you already knew these things because Nebuchadnezzar was your dad! He told you about these things. He warned you! But you didn’t learn from your father’s mistakes. Instead, you have set yourself against God. You ordered the drinking cups from the Temple of the Lord to be brought to you, and you drank from them when you knew they were His. You even praised fake gods! You did not honor the real God, who has power over your life and everything you do. So, God sent the hand that wrote on the wall.”

King Belshazzar sat in stunned silence.

Daniel continued, "These are the words that were written on the wall: 'Mene, mene, tekel, parsin.'

This is what the words mean. Mene: God has counted the days until your kingdom will end. Tekel: You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting. Parsin: Your Babylonian kingdom is being divided and will be given to the Medes and the Persians."

Then King Belshazzar ordered Daniel to be dressed in purple and a gold chain put around his neck. He declared Daniel to be the third-highest ruler in the kingdom, just as he promised.

But later on, that very same night, Belshazzar, king of the Babylonians, was killed.

Then Darius the Mede became the new king.

Amari looked around to see if Darius had caught the name of the new king. Judging from his startled face, she guessed he caught it!

This was one of the most startling images for Amari – the handwriting on the wall. It's hard, she thought, for anyone to imagine God not being all-powerful. She was going to talk to Mama about this. In the meantime, it's Thursday, and on Saturday, there was the trip to the Memphis Zoo and Amari's beloved giraffes. She was so excited.

See everyone next week for another Street Reach Adventure!!!

Group Discussion Questions:

Who was King Belshazzar's grandfather?

What appeared in the banquet hall?

Who was able to tell King Belshazzar what the message meant?

How long did it take for God's message to come true?

Bible Verse:

"This is the inscription that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN." Daniel 5:25

Word of the Day: *Humble*

Having or showing a modest estimate of your own value or important; not arrogant or self-important
