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Children in Texas have recently faced the testing program called Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills. Although I know that learning needs to be evaluated, I am concerned about the level of anxiety among children, parents and teachers. So much rides on the score that the test has become a monster. Scripture offers a way to overcome that monster the next time it appears.

Perhaps when David, the shepherd king, saw Goliath, the giant took on the attributes of a monster. He was big and well armed. He also had developed a reputation as someone to be feared. For several days, he had shouted his challenge to the Israelites causing them to be terrified.

However, David had courage because he put his trust in God. No matter how many times I read his words, they never fail to thrill me. “David said to the Philistine, ‘You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.’” I Samuel 17:45. When I picture the young, courageous boy standing bravely before the menacing giant, I am reminded that with God, we too can face giants.

As parents, it is our responsibility to be sure that our children have the knowledge and skills needed for the test. If they are not prepared, the wise parent will either tutor or find someone else to help. However, many children fail the TAKS, not because they lack skills, but because they lose courage. The monster, like Goliath, is large, well armed (The State of Texas stands behind it.) and has a reputation as something to fear.

If your child has test anxiety, read him the story of David. Pretend the TAKS is a big giant that must be overcome. Have your child tell you about how he has prepared and how well he has been doing on the practice tests. That is what David was doing when he told Saul about his skills. I Samuel 17:34-37a. Trust his preparation. That means that you will not try to cram more knowledge in the night before the test. David went to battle just as he always went to the fields. He refused Saul’s extra armor.

Finally, have him proclaim his belief that God will help him overcome the monster. As the test is handed to him, he can think to himself, “TAKS, you come with only questions on printed pages. I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty!” That is a conquering attitude!