

DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

DANIEL 6



KEY PASSAGE: 1 Corinthians 10:31

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How can we glorify God? We can glorify God by loving Him and obeying Him.

CHRIST CONNECTION: Daniel continued to trust God, even though it meant he might be thrown into the lions' den. Jesus was faithful to follow God's plan, even though it meant He would die on the cross for sinners.

STORY POINT: Daniel trusted God, and God protected him.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

As Daniel grew into an older man, God continued to show him favor as Daniel served under a new king—King Darius. Yet, Daniel’s place in the government of Babylon was a subject of jealousy. In an attempt to trap Daniel, royal officials petitioned Darius to enact a law that forbade anyone from praying to any god other than the king. Just as the officials suspected, Daniel continued praying to the one true God.

The Bible points out that Daniel prayed as an act of defiance to the new law. When Daniel was faced with the possibility of death if he prayed, he made a courageous decision. Daniel 6:10 says, “When Daniel learned that the document had been signed, he went into his house. The windows in its upstairs room opened toward Jerusalem, and three times a day he got down on his knees, prayed, and gave thanks to his God, just as he had done before.” Instead of hiding his prayers, Daniel boldly walked in obedience, knowing his life would be put in danger.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus faced a similar decision with even greater consequences. Following the Last Supper, Jesus spent time with the Father in prayer. Jesus wrestled with His coming death as He asked the Father to take the cup from Him if possible. Luke describes the agony that Jesus went through in this decision by telling us that Jesus’ sweat fell like blood due to the intensity of His time with God. Jesus surrendered to the will of the Father even though it led to death. God honored the obedience of both men. He delivered Daniel from the lions’ den, and He delivered Jesus—the only person to always obey God perfectly—from the grave in victory over death.

One final detail of this story should challenge us in our walk with God: Darius was rooting for Daniel. Right before Daniel was thrown into the lions’ den, the king hoped out loud that Daniel’s God would deliver him from death. Eventually, after Daniel’s deliverance, the king declared that all people must respect Daniel’s God. This week, encourage the kids in your class to live a life that honors God, even when others around them are making different choices. May we model lives that are so honorable to God that even people who disagree with us might want us to be right about God.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10–15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25–30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- "Trust and Pray" activity page

Session Starter (Option 2)

- construction papers, 1 per kid



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- Small Group Timeline and Map Set (optional)



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- countdown video
- Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- "Daniel in the Lions' Den" video
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Questions from Kids

- "Unit 16, Session 3" Questions from Kids video

Key Passage Activity

- Key Passage Poster
- "For the Glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31)" song
- worship song of your choice (optional)



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 2)

- plastic cups, 20
- orange and yellow cupcake liners (optional)

Reflection and Prayer

- Bible story coloring page



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

| **SAY** “What is the scariest animal you can think of? Why do you think this animal is scary?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete the “Trust and Pray” activity page.

| **SAY** “In today’s story, we’ll learn how God protected Daniel from scary lions and how Daniel trusted God.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: GET TO SAFETY!



Form kids into two teams. Assign one of the teams as the “animals.” Set up a row of chairs at one end of the room, making sure there is one less chair than the number of kids on the “non-animal” team. Direct the “animals” to line up on either side of the row of chairs. Direct the other team to line up at the end of the room opposite the chairs.

Tell the “animal” team that you will call out an animal for them to pretend to be such as a “lion.” When you say “go,” the “non-animal” team will try to run to safety by sitting in one of the chairs. The other team will pretend to be lions while trying to tag kids from the other team before they can sit in a chair. Kids who are tagged are out. Play as time allows, removing a chair or chairs each round, depending on the number of kids remaining. Consider choosing new animals and allowing kids to switch teams.

| **SAY** “If we were being chased by scary animals like lions, we’d want to get to safety. Today, we’ll see how Daniel was thrown into a lions’ den. **DANIEL TRUSTED GOD, AND GOD PROTECTED HIM.** God kept Daniel safe and showed that He is the God who saves.”

OPTION 2: PRAYER HANDS

Provide each kid with a piece of construction paper, markers, and a pair of scissors. Instruct kids to fold their paper in half. Then lead kids to trace their hand on the folded paper, lining their pinky finger along the folded edge. Next, guide kids to cut out their hand shapes, being careful to not cut the folded edge of the paper. Kids should create a hand shape that can be opened to reveal two hands.

Inside their hand shape, invite kids to write a prayer to God or draw a picture of a prayer request. On the outside, kids may write “My Prayer.” Invite kids to share their “prayer hands” with the group, if desired.

| **SAY** “Prayer is one way we show we trust and depend on God. God wants us to pray to Him, giving Him praise and thanks while also telling Him what we need or confessing how we’ve sinned. Today, we will see how Daniel showed he trusted God by continuing to pray to Him, even when the king made praying to God against the law. Daniel knew that trusting God was most important no matter what.”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “ Welcome, kids! My name is [your name], and I’m so excited to explore another story in the book of Daniel with you! If you brought your Bible, will you please take it out? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one. Invite kids to turn to Daniel 6.]

Together, we have learned how Daniel and his friends trusted God and refused to disobey Him. Today, we’ll see how Daniel was faced with a scary situation. But **DANIEL TRUSTED GOD, AND GOD PROTECTED HIM.** [Display the Story Point Poster.] Let’s pray together before we open God’s Word: ‘God, through these true stories, we have been reminded that You are always with those who trust in You. As we hear Your Word today, challenge us to obey You in all circumstances. Amen.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “ We’ve been asking the question: **How can we glorify God?** Does anyone remember the answer? [Allow responses.] The answer is, **We can glorify God by loving Him and obeying Him.**

God receives glory when we obey His commands out of a love for Him and a desire to honor Him. In today’s story, Daniel trusted and obeyed God, even when he faced certain danger. Like Daniel, we can trust God and obey Him no matter what, remembering He loves us. Let’s say our big picture question: **How can we glorify God? We can glorify God by loving Him and obeying Him.** ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “ After King Nebuchadnezzar attacked Jerusalem, Daniel and his friends were taken to Babylon. The king provided food for the young men, but Daniel knew that eating the king’s food broke God’s law. Daniel and his friends glorified God through their obedience to His commands, and God blessed them with wisdom.

Then we learned how King Nebuchadnezzar had a golden statue built and commanded the people to bow down to it in worship. However, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to bow down, and God protected them from the fiery furnace. Today, we will hear how Daniel trusted God and continued to pray to Him, even when he was told not to. ”



LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Daniel 6. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Daniel in the Lions’ Den.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

DANIEL IN THE LIONS’ DEN

“ King Nebuchadnezzar, who brought Daniel and his friends from Judah to Babylon, had died. The new king, **King Darius, appointed Daniel as one of three main leaders over the whole kingdom.** King Darius was especially impressed with Daniel and planned to put him in charge of the whole kingdom!

The other leaders were jealous of Daniel. They wanted to find something Daniel was doing wrong so they could tell King Darius. But Daniel was an honorable man. He lived according to God’s laws and was trustworthy. The leaders said, “We will never find any charge against Daniel unless we discover something that goes against his God.”

They went to King Darius and convinced him to make a new law that would last 30 days. **The law said that if anyone prayed to any god or man except the king, they would be thrown into the lions’ den. King Darius signed the new law** so that it was a permanent law and could not be changed.

When Daniel learned of this new law, he went upstairs to his house. He went to his window that looked toward Jerusalem, **got down on his knees, and prayed and gave thanks to God,** just as he had done three times a day, every day. **The other leaders went as a group and found Daniel praying to God, so they approached King Darius and told him that Daniel had broken the law.**

When King Darius heard this, he was very displeased. He was sorry he had made the law, but he could not undo it or take it back! So, **the king gave the order, and the leaders brought Daniel and threw him into the lions’ den.** King Darius said, “May your God, whom you serve always, save you!” The lions’ den was sealed with a large stone.

King Darius was worried about Daniel all night long. **As soon as the sun came up, Darius hurried to the lions’ den. He cried out, “Daniel, servant of the living God! Has your God been able to rescue you from the lions?”**

Daniel replied, “May the king live forever. My God sent his angel and shut the mouths of the lions. They haven’t harmed me for I was found innocent before God.”

The king was overjoyed. When Daniel was brought up from the lions’ den, all could see that he was completely unharmed. King Darius then issued a new decree: “Everyone in my kingdom must tremble and fear the God of Daniel. He is the living

STORYTELLING TIPS

Roar like lions: As you read the story, invite kids to “roar” each time they hear the word “lion.” Encourage kids to consider how God has control over all His creation, even the scariest animals.

Read Matthew 6:5-6: Read these verses in the New Testament, where Jesus taught how to pray. Remind kids that Daniel was not praying to be seen like the religious leaders in Jesus’ story. Instead, Daniel prayed to God by faith and for the glory of God.



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

God! He rescues and delivers!”

Christ Connection: Daniel continued to trust God even though it meant he might be thrown into the lions’ den. Jesus was faithful to follow God’s plan even though it meant He would die on the cross for sinners. ”

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ Daniel became an important leader in the kingdom of Babylon. Daniel’s importance brought jealousy from the other leaders. Knowing that Daniel would not disobey His God, the other leaders encouraged King Darius to write a new law. What did the new law say? [Allow responses.] The new law stated that anyone who prayed to anyone except the king would be thrown into the lions’ den!

What did Daniel do when he found out about the king’s new law? [Allow responses.] Daniel continued to pray to God just as he had done before. Daniel didn’t turn away from trusting God, even though he was commanded not to pray to Him. Like Daniel, we are called to trust God and obey Him in all circumstances. God will help believers and give them the courage to follow Him no matter what.

When the leaders told the king what Daniel had done, he was thrown into the lions’ den. What happened when King Darius came to the lions’ den the next morning? [Allow responses.] God had closed the mouths of the lions and kept Daniel safe! **DANIEL TRUSTED GOD, AND GOD PROTECTED HIM.** God proved He is the God who saves! ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ Daniel continued to trust God, even though it meant he might be thrown into the lions’ den. Jesus was faithful to follow God’s plan, even though it meant He would die on the cross for sinners. When we trust in Jesus, we are saved from the power of sin and death. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 16, Session 3” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. Are the stories in the Bible real? How do we know?
2. God’s Word is always true. What Bible story can you tell a friend to help them know about God and His Son, Jesus?



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Tell kids that City Church is one of the churches Dan and Tara Byrd partner with in Manchester, England. The church is committed to teaching people the good news about Jesus. City Church wants to welcome and reach out to people who are new to England.

SAY “ One way City Church seeks to reach the people of Manchester is through a program called First Connect. First Connect is designed for new Christians, people new to City Church, or people who will only be in the area for a short time. It is a 10-week program to help connect with other people, find ways to serve at the church, and make new friends while learning more about God’s Word. ”

Pray that City Church will be able to reach more people and share the gospel. Pray that people new to Manchester will be able to connect with City Church through programs like First Connect.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud 1 Corinthians 10:31 together.

SAY “ Daniel continued to faithfully pray, and God was glorified! Our key passage reminds us that we can glorify God in whatever we do, whether that be through prayer or being kind to others. ”

Write two words of the key passage on individual sheets of paper. Choose five or six kids to line up at the front of the room and hold each paper, making sure the key passage is out of order. Challenge the remaining kids to unscramble the key passage. Once unscrambled, instruct the kids holding the words to turn their papers so the words are hidden. Challenge kids to recite the verse aloud. Repeat as time allows, inviting new kids to hold the papers.

Lead kids to sing “For the Glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “ God, thank You for the example that Daniel set for those who trust in You. Guide us to faithfully obey Your commands every day and let our actions point others to Your glory. Amen. ”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to Daniel 6. Explain that the book of Daniel is in the Major Prophets division in the Old Testament. The book of Daniel covers the time period of the exile, when God's people were taken captive in Babylon.

Consider pointing out the nation of Babylon (E11) on the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Daniel 6:4-5 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verses aloud.

SAY “ The other leaders knew that Daniel was faithful to God. They understood that Daniel would not disobey the king unless the king's order went against Daniel's faith in God. It's amazing that Daniel's faithfulness to God was noticed by all those who were around him! Daniel didn't do anything that the world would consider heroic or extraordinary. Instead, he did what he had always done: he prayed to the one true God. And this brought God glory.

How can we give God glory in our lives everyday? [Allow kids time to think.] We probably won't face a den of lions, but we do live in a world that wants to turn us away from God. Even our own sinful hearts turn us away from God. But through faith in Jesus, we can live to bring God glory. Christians desire to live for God, showing God is worthy of all worship. ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

| **SAY** “ Why do we pray to God? ”

Tell kids that we pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us. God always answers our prayers, even when He gives an answer we do not expect. Whenever God does something differently from how we expect, we can trust that God's way is much better than ours. Prayer shows our dependence on God and how we want to live for His will rather than our own.

| **SAY** “ Why do you think Daniel obeyed God rather than King Darius? ”

Guide the kids to see that God is the one true King; He is our ultimate authority. We are called to obey God above any earthly leaders. Daniel would have sinned against God if he chose to follow the king's law. Obeying God will always be for our good.

| **SAY** “ How did Daniel's obedience bring God glory? ”

Remind kids that God was glorified because Daniel's obedience showed he loved God more than anything else. Share how Daniel's obedience also glorified God because even though Daniel was thrown into the lions' den, this event allowed God to display His mighty power to save. King Darius praised God as the living God who rescues and delivers.





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: SET APART



Instruct kids to form a circle and link arms with one another facing the inside of the circle. Choose one kid in the group to turn and face the outside of the circle, with his or her arms still linked with the other kids. Stand on one side of the room and challenge the kids to move as a group toward you. Encourage the kid facing the opposite direction to try pulling the group in his direction. Repeat, allowing different kids to feel the pressure of trying to pull the group in the opposite direction.

SAY “ You experienced what it felt like to be pulled in the opposite direction. Likewise, Daniel was pressured to disobey God. But **DANIEL TRUSTED GOD, AND GOD PROTECTED HIM.** God also calls us to obey Him, even if this means being different from those around us. God tells Christians to be holy or set apart, showing the world what He is like. When we trust God and live set apart, we glorify God. ”

OPTION 2: SHUT THE LIONS' MOUTHS

Before the session, consider creating a “mane” around the open-end of plastic cups. Use orange and yellow cupcake liners to create the mane, gluing the cupcake liners around the lip’s edge. Create 20 “lion” cups.

Place 10 cups for each team at one end of the room on a table. Be sure to set the cups with the open end up. Form kids into two teams and lead them to line up at the end of the room opposite the cups. On your start, each team will send one kid to turn a cup over and “shut the lion’s mouth.” When the first kid returns to her team, the next kid will go. Play continues until one team is the first to turn all the cups over. Play again, if time allows.

SAY “ God sent His angel to shut the lions’ mouths, and they didn’t hurt Daniel. Daniel also said that he was found innocent before God. Daniel was innocent because he trusted God. We are only found innocent before God when we trust in Jesus. Like God saved Daniel from the lions, Jesus saves believers from sin and death. ”

2 REFLECTION AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper and pencil to each kid. Ask kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Who can I tell about this story?

Be sure to send the sheets home with the kids along with the activity pages so parents can continue to discuss the Bible story with their kids. If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page. Pray for your group.