

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 lion’s 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

- "You Aren't Lion" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- One half of a pool noodle
- Blindfold



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- Small Group Timeline and Map Set



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- key rings, 1 per kid
- index cards, 5 per kid
- hole punch

Activity Choice (Option 2)

- play dough

Journal and Prayer

- Journal Page
- "Trust God" activity page



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)



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 “ Have you ever seen a lion at the zoo or an animal sanctuary? How would you feel if you came face to face with a lion? ”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete the “You Aren’t Lion” activity page.

SAY “ Great job unscrambling the words! Today, we will learn that **DANIEL TRUSTED GOD, AND GOD PROTECTED HIM.** ”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: SHUT THE LIONS’ MOUTHS



Choose one kid to be It and designate the remaining kids as the lions. Explain that It will sit in the middle of the room wearing a blindfold and holding the pool noodle half. The lions will roam around It, roaring loudly. It will try to tag the lions with the pool noodle without leave his spot. If he tags a lion, that lion must stop roaring and sit down quietly. Play until every lion is tagged. Repeat, choosing a different kid to be It.

SAY “ Today, we’ll see how Daniel was thrown into a lions’ den because he chose to remain faithful to God. Even more so, we’ll see how God remained faithful to Daniel and shut the lions’ mouths. **DANIEL TRUSTED GOD, AND GOD PROTECTED HIM.** ”

OPTION 2: PRAY, LIONS, KING

Lead kids to spread about the room. Tell kids that when you call out a word, they must perform the correct action. Explain the actions below:

- Pray: fall down on knees and make prayer hands
- Lions: hold up both hands like claws and make a growling face
- King: hold both hands over head as if you’re placing a crown on your head

Call out the words in random order, prompting kids to perform the correct action. Kids who perform the wrong action are out. Play several rounds, calling the words faster each time, or invite kids to call out the words.

SAY “ Today, we will hear about prayer, lions, and a king. We’ll see how a king had Daniel thrown into a lions’ den because Daniel continued to pray to God. Let’s get ready to hear more. ”

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 happy to see you. Today, we will be hearing an amazing story from the book of Daniel about God’s power to rescue His people. 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.]

As Daniel grew older, he remained in the foreign country of Babylon. Today, we’ll see how Daniel refused to stop praying to God and was thrown into a lions’ den. But **DANIEL TRUSTED GOD, AND GOD PROTECTED HIM.** [Display the Story Point Poster.] Let’s pray: ‘Dear God, You are mighty to save, and You are faithful to Your people. As we hear Your Word today, help us trust You and follow You no matter what. Amen.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “ What is the big picture question we have been learning? [Allow responses.] **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 in all circumstances. In today’s story, Daniel trusted God and obeyed Him, even when he faced certain danger. Daniel’s obedience showed that he loved God more than anything, including his own safety. Daniel’s love for God and obedience to Him glorified God. Like Daniel, we can trust God and obey Him no matter what, remembering how He showed His love for us through His Son, Jesus. Let’s say our big picture question together: **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 “ Daniel and his friends were taken to Babylon. We’ve seen how Daniel and his friends glorified God through their obedience to His commands and refused to eat the king’s food. 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, he was completely unharmed. King Darius issued a decree: “Everyone in my kingdom must tremble and fear the God of Daniel. He is the living God! He rescues and delivers!”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Active listening: Guide kids to hold up three fingers in the shape of a W. Challenge kids to listen for three W questions. **Who** wanted to get rid of Daniel? **Where** would a person who disobeyed the new law be thrown? **What** did Daniel tell the king the next morning?

Draw it: Provide kids with paper and pens. Prompt them to draw the story as you tell it.



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 “ God had given Daniel favor with King Darius, and Daniel became an important leader. What did some of the other leaders plan against Daniel? Look at Daniel 6:4-7. [Ask a volunteer to read Daniel 6:4-7 aloud.] The other leaders plotted to find a way to hurt Daniel, but they knew Daniel was an honorable man. So they convinced the king to make a law they knew Daniel would not obey. Why wouldn't Daniel obey the law to pray only to King Darius? [Allow responses.] Only God can hear and respond to people's prayers. Only God is worthy of bowing down to in prayer.

Daniel chose to pray, even though he would be punished. He trusted God and knew that God heard him when he prayed. God hears our prayers too, and He is glorified when we trust Him no matter what. **We can glorify God by loving Him and obeying Him.**

Even though King Darius was sorry he had made the law, he upheld the law and had Daniel thrown into the lions' den. What did the king say to Daniel? Look at Daniel 6:16. [Ask a volunteer to read Daniel 6:16 aloud.] King Darius recognized Daniel's faithfulness to God and hoped God would rescue him. Others recognized how Daniel loved God and served Him no matter what. Daniel's life was a witness to how God is worthy to be trusted and followed.

Daniel faced certain death, but God was mighty to save him. **DANIEL TRUSTED GOD, AND GOD PROTECTED HIM.** After seeing that God shut the mouths of the lions to save Daniel, King Darius acknowledged the Lord as the living God who rescues and delivers. ”

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. Because Jesus obeyed God and died for our sin, we have been given the way to be saved. Have you repented of your sin and put your faith in Jesus to save you? ”

(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?

**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, for people new to City Church, and for 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 “ God deserves all glory for who He is and what he has done to save us from sin. We can glorify God through our obedience, which shows that we love God. ”

Form kids into pairs and provide them with paper and a pen. Lead pairs to write the key passage on their paper. Then guide them to “quiz” each other on the key passage. One kid will prompt his partner to say the key passage, offering help as needed. Then kids will switch roles. Repeat as time allows.

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 “ Dear Lord, thank You for showing Your love for us by sending Jesus to die for our sins. Please help us love You and follow You no matter what. In Jesus’ name, amen. ”





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. Tell kids that the book of Daniel helps us understand what it looks like to remain faithful to God, even when living in a place opposed to God. Discuss how the Babylonians wanted Daniel to be conformed to their culture, but God helped Daniel be faithful to Him.

Consider pointing out the nation of Babylon (E11) on the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Daniel 6:10 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verse aloud.

SAY “ Daniel knew the law the king had commanded, but Daniel didn’t stop praying to the one true God. He trusted God and knew only God deserves glory. Daniel wasn’t ashamed of his faith, and he was willing to be seen praying because he knew that obeying God was more important than being afraid of people.

Others may mock us for our faith in Jesus or dislike us because we follow Jesus. Yet, God will help us remain faithful as we trust in Him. The Bible tells us that God is not ashamed to be called the God of those who trust in Him (Hebrews 11:16). ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “ Will obeying God always be easy? Why not? ”

Discuss how God doesn’t promise that obeying Him will be easy. Even Jesus, who obeyed God perfectly, faced persecution and death. The Bible says following God will cost us, but He is worth it. Remind kids that believers have a secure future with Christ no matter what they face on this earth. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 8:38-39.)

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. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 1 John 5:3-4.)

SAY “ How can we stay true to God and not become like the world? ”

Point out how Daniel remained faithful to God, even with the pressures of the king’s law and others. The Bible tells us not to be conformed to the world but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. Share how knowing God’s Word and the power of the Holy Spirit will help us be transformed to be like Jesus. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read. Rom. 12:1-2.)

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: WHEN I AM AFRAID

Provide each kid with a key ring, five index cards, a Bible, and markers. Lead kids to look up each reference and write the Bible verse on an index card: Psalm 23:4; Isaiah 41:10; John 14:27; Hebrews 13:6; 1 John 4:18.

Provide kids with a hole punch and direct them to punch a hole in the top left corner of key card so they can insert them on the key ring. Discuss how Daniel's trust in God helped him not fear people. Share how these verses can offer encouragement and remind us to trust God when we are afraid.

SAY “**DANIEL TRUSTED GOD, AND GOD PROTECTED HIM.** God doesn't promise we won't ever face troubles, but He does promise to be with us and help us trust Him. In Christ, believers have nothing to fear because their greatest danger—punishment for sin—has been taken away through Jesus' death and resurrection. I encourage you to read these verses when you are afraid or are tempted to let fear keep you from trusting God.”

OPTION 2: TRANSFORM NOT CONFORM



Provide each kid with a small lump of play dough. Prompt kids to apply pressure to their play dough and flatten it into a “cookie.” Then tell kids to shape their play dough into a ball. Next, tell kids to squeeze the ball into a long “snake.” Discuss how conforming to the world means thinking and acting in ways that do not follow God's ways. Tell kids that if we are not being transformed by the Word of God and the Holy Spirit, we'll allow ourselves to be conformed to the world, just like the play dough was shaped by their hands. Then prompt kids to think of something that is transformed into something new, like a caterpillar into a butterfly. Discuss how God transforms us to be like Jesus as we surrender to His ways and walk in His truth.

SAY “Daniel trusted God and didn't conform to the ways of Babylon. He prayed to God and allowed his mind to be transformed by truth. God can transform us to become more like Jesus.”

2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray, thanking God for His faithfulness and saving those who trust in Jesus. As time allows, lead kids to complete “Trust God” on the activity page.