

PK-2nd

Living the Word

*Teaching Kids God's Story
Narrative Lectionary, Year 3*



Teacher's Guide

Winter Unit

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Lesson #3-12

Hope in the Lions' Den

Daniel 6:6-27

PK-2nd

Key Verse:

"[God] delivers and rescues, [God] works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth; for [God] has saved Daniel from the power of the lions."
Daniel 6:27

The Point:

We can trust in God's faithfulness.

Making Connections:

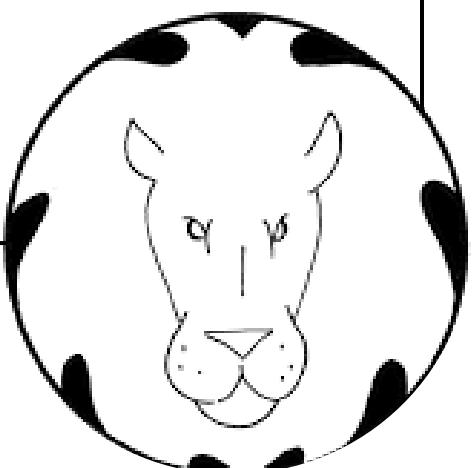
The Hope of the Messiah

Bible Nuts & Bolts:

The Exile

Spiritual Practice:

Prayer



Activities a la Carte

Activities

Supplies

Story Centers (PK-K)

15 min.

Kingly Clothing

Dress up like royalty.

† Shawls, hats, paper crowns

Animal Kingdom

Tame God's lions.

† Stuffed animals, lions

King of the Jungle

Draw lions.

† Paper
† Markers or crayons

Into the Story (PK-2nd)

10 min.

Make the Rules

Create rules for the classroom.

† White board
† Markers

Bible Nuts & Bolts (1st-2nd)

10 min.

Exile

Find no way out.

† None

Learning the Story (PK-2nd)

20 min.

Daniel and the Lions' Den

Acting out the story.

† Bibles
† Stuffed animal lion (or lion picture)
† Paper crown
† Paper halo
† Photo of a crowd

Activities a la Carte

Living the Story (PK-2nd)

Thank-you Prayer

Finger prayer.

10 min.

† None

Singing the Story (PK-2nd)

The King's New Rule

Sing a piggyback song to the tune of “Three Blind Mice.”

5 min.

† None

Additional Activities

God Keeps Daniel Safe (PK-2nd)

Practice the key verse.

10 min.

† None

Prayer and Praise Party (PK-2nd)

Eat angel cookies at a praise party.

10 min.

† Angel-shaped cookies

† Napkins

† Optional: Christmas music, music player

Advent Candle (PK-2nd)

Celebrate the first Sunday of Advent.

10 min.

† Advent wreath

† Battery-operated candles

† Paper

† Markers or crayons

Activities a la Carte

Additional Activities

Bible Book (PK-2nd)

Optional ongoing activity.

5 min.

- † Bible Book page (found at end of lesson)
- † Cardstock or plain paper
- † Markers or crayons
- † Optional: three-ring binders, hole punch

Sending the Story (PK-2nd)

5 min.

- † None

Background for Teachers

Making Connections

In Jeremiah, God promises a new covenant, in which our relationship with God will be based on God's works, not on anything we do. In the meantime, the Israelites continued to disobey. The consequence for their disobedience was being captured and exiled by the Babylonians. While in exile, some Israelites who remained committed to God—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—were falsely accused of disloyalty to the monarch, and were delivered from the fiery furnace. This is followed by Daniel's deliverance from the lion's den, another illustration of the hope of a powerful God.

Story Summary:

Hope in the Lions' Den

King Darius of Persia was pressured by his officials to make a law saying that anyone caught praying to anyone other than the king would be thrown into a den of lions. Daniel believed in God and trusted God's faithfulness. No human law was going to stop him from praying to God. Daniel continued to pray to God three times a day.

Those who conspired against Daniel reported this to King Darius. The king knew Daniel to be a good man. He did not want to throw Daniel to the lions, but the leaders insisted the signed law be enforced. Even as the king regretfully gave the go-ahead for Daniel to be dropped into the den of lions, he hoped Daniel's God would be faithful. His words to Daniel all but called upon God's faithfulness.

The next morning, as if he expected this to be the case, the king went to the den to see if Daniel's God had delivered him. And indeed, in faithfulness and mercy, God had sent an angel to shut the lions' mouths. The king was delighted and relieved to find Daniel alive. Daniel was removed from the den, and the king had Daniel's accusers thrown to the lions. The king made a decree that people should worship Daniel's God.

The Point

We can trust in God's faithfulness. Young children often hear "No," or "Stop that!" or "Do what you are told." They are accustomed to what may appear to be conditional approval or disapproval. They may think that God's love and faithfulness are also conditional. The point of today's lesson is that it is not our actions that make God faithful to us, but rather God's faithfulness that helps us to know how to act. We can be courageous like Daniel, relying on the fact that we are in the hands of a faithful God whose love is unconditional.

Bible Nuts & Bolts:

The Exile

After King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon besieged Jerusalem, the Jewish people lived in exile for seventy years. Their captors expected them to live by a set of rules other than those God had given them. They were immersed in a culture that worshipped many gods. Early on, the king of Babylon selected some of the promising Israelite youth to serve in the palace. Daniel was one who was selected to serve the king. While Daniel did his duty and served the king, he stayed true to God. He knew that God was with him even when he was living in exile. Knowing this, he lived his faith boldly, counting on God's faithfulness to manage the details.

Spiritual Practice: Prayer

Daniel was in the habit of offering prayers of praise to God morning, noon, and night. Although praying three times a day is not a formula for getting prayers answered, it is an example of maintaining communication as part of a close relationship with God. That regular connection with God can keep students focused on God, preparing them to live courageously, counting on God's love and faithfulness to support them.



Lesson Plan



Story Centers (PK-K; 15 minutes)

Story Centers are mini-activities designed specifically for preschool and kindergarten students. Depending on the size of your class, you can set these up as centers for in-class rotations or do them as a whole class one after another. In most preschool and kindergarten classes, these centers along with a snack, the “Learning the Story” activity, and the “Living the Story” activity will fill the education time, but feel free to choose any activity you think would be fun and appropriate for your class.

Kingly Clothing

Dress up like royalty. Students will dress up in shawls, hats, and crowns. They will pretend to be the royalty in charge of the land. Later, they will hear about a king and his officials and how they ruled the land. They will also learn that our faithful God rules them.

Animal Kingdom

Tame God’s lions. Students will play with stuffed animals, including lions. They will try to tame the dangerous animals. Later, they will hear about an angel keeping Daniel safe from the lions. They will learn that our faithful God sent that angel of protection.

King of the Jungle

Draw lions. Students can draw their own big, strong, hungry lions. As the students color or draw their lions, they can talk about what it might be like to meet a lion. Later, they will hear about an angel keeping the lions from eating Daniel. They will learn that our faithful King (God) protected Daniel from the king of the jungle (the lions).

Into the Story (PK-2nd; 10 minutes)

Make the Rules

Create rules for the classroom.

You will need:

- † White board
- † Markers

During class:

1. Ask the students to make rules for the classroom. They may need hints. Examples may include: share toys, be kind, keep hands to themselves, listen, use indoor voices. As they come up the rules, write them on the board.
2. **Why do you think these rules will be good for our classroom?** *[Answers will vary.]*
3. **What should we do if a rule is broken?** *[Answers will vary.]*
4. Today we will learn about the exile, when people who refused God's rules were captured by their enemy and sent away. We also hear about some officials who convinced the king to make a new rule. We see that we can be faithful to follow God's rules.

Bible Nuts & Bolts (1st-2nd; 10 minutes)

Exile

Find no way out.

You will need:

† None

During class:

1. Make a circle of students holding hands with one student in the middle. Tell the student to imagine there is no way out. Ask what it feels like to be told that. Let others take a turn in the middle.
2. **Does anyone know what exile means?**
3. **Exile is like being captured with no way to get back to your own house or way of life. You have to live according to the capturer's rules. Everything you once owned is gone.**
4. When most of the Israelites turned their back on God for a long time and kept refusing to obey, God allowed their enemies to capture them. They had to live in exile, in a foreign land, for seventy years.
5. Daniel, whom we will learn about today, is a man who loved God but was captured and lived in exile for seventy years.

Learning the Story (PK-2nd; 20 minutes)

Daniel and the Lions' Den

Acting out the story.

You will need:

- † Bibles
- † Paper crown
- † Paper halo
- † Stuffed animal lion (or lion picture)
- † Photo of a crowd

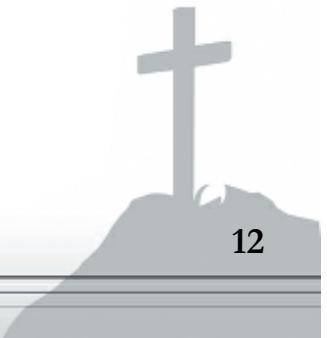
Note: Use anything simple that you have for the crown and halo. A strip of brown construction paper can be a crown, and a strip of white can be a halo.

During class:

1. Introduce the characters in today's story as the following:
 - The officials (photo of crowd)
 - The king (put on the crown)
 - Daniel (kneel on the floor to pray)
 - The lions (stuffed animal or picture)
 - Angel (put on the halo)
2. Tell the Bible story to the students, using props and actions (crown, kneeling to pray, picture of lion, etc.). Advise the students that they will retell the story later, so they need to pay close attention to all of your words and the props that are used.
 - **A man named Daniel** (get on your knees) **was captured when the Israelites were taken over by the Babylonians.** **Daniel lived in exile, in a foreign land that believed in many gods, but Daniel believed in the one true God.** **It was Daniel's job to serve the king** (get up and put on the crown) **of this foreign land.** **He did his job, but he always put God first.**
 - **Our story is in the Old Testament book named Daniel. It begins in Daniel chapter 6, verse 6.**
 - As you or the older students slowly read the verses, use this prop plan to assist you. Take this slowly, adjusting the associated prop before reading the verse. There are a number of switches ahead.

Daniel 6:6-8 – show the picture of the crowd (hold the lion at verse 7)
Daniel 6:9 – put down the picture, put on the paper crown
Daniel 6:10 – remove crown, get on your knees
Daniel 6:11 – stand, show the picture of the crowd
Daniel 6:12 – put down the picture, put on paper crown and hold up the lion
Daniel 6:13 – remove crown, show the picture of the crowd
Daniel 6:14 – put down the picture, put on paper crown
Daniel 6:15 – remove crown, show the picture of the crowd
Daniel 6:16 – remove picture, put on crown and get on knees and hold lion
Daniel 6:17-18 – stand, keep wearing crown
Daniel 6:19-20 – keep wearing crown and hold up lion
Daniel 6:21-22 – get on knees and hold up lion
Daniel 6:23 – put on crown and get up
Daniel 6:24 – keep crown and hold up picture of crowd and lion
Daniel 6:25 – crown only
Daniel 6:26-27 – take off crown and hold it up to God

3. Now, go through the props only, following the list above, and ask the students to tell the story. You may need to give some hints along the way.
4. **Why do you think Daniel was able to stand strong in his faith?** *[He knew God would be faithful.]*



Living the Story (PK-2nd; 10 minutes)

Thank-you Prayer

Finger prayer.

You will need:

† None

During class:

1. Teach the prayer and pray it with the students:

One, two, three (one finger, then two, then three)

Pray with me (make prayer hands)

One, God is faithful (hold up one finger)

Two, God is love (hold up two fingers)

Three, I can trust in God up above (hold up three fingers)

One, two, three (hold up one finger at a time)

Pray with me (make prayer hands)

Thank you God, you are faithful (hold up one finger)

Thank you God, you are love (hold up two fingers)

Thank you God, I can trust you (hold up three fingers)

To give me strength (flex arms) **from up above** (point up)

One, two, three (one finger, then two, then three)

Pray with me (make prayer hands)

One, God is faithful (hold up one finger)

Two, God is love (hold up two fingers)

Three, I can trust in God up above (hold up three fingers)

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Singing the Story (PK-2nd; 5 minutes)

The King's New Rule

Sing a piggyback song to the tune of “Three Blind Mice.”

The king's new rule

The king's new rule

No prayers to God (shake finger, no)

No prayers to God (shake finger, no)

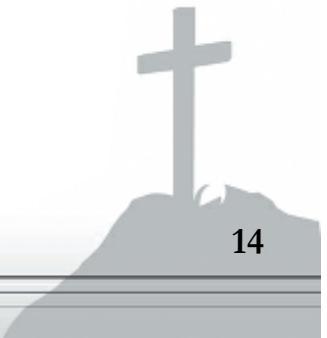
Daniel prayed to God anyway (prayer hands)

He prayed and prayed three times a day (prayer hands)

God in his faithfulness made a way (point to heaven)

For Daniel to pray

Pray! Pray! Pray! (one finger, then two, then three)



Additional Activities

God Keeps Daniel Safe (PK-2nd; 10 minutes)

Practice the Key Verse.

You will need:

- † Nothing

During class:

1. Divide the class into three groups.
2. Practice the key verse: “[God] delivers and rescues, [God] works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth; for [God] has saved Daniel from the power of the lions.” Daniel 6:27
3. Group one will practice: “God delivers and rescues”
4. Group two will practice “[God] works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth”
5. Group three will practice “for [God] has saved Daniel from the power of the lions.”
6. After they practice reciting their portions for a while, ask the groups to sit.
7. When you point to a group, the students should stand and say their part.
8. **One wonderful thing about our God is that** (point to group one). After they recite their part, they sit.
9. **God is so powerful that** (point to group two). After they recite their part, they sit.
10. **We know God is faithful** (point to group three). After they recite their part, they sit.
11. **When we find ourselves in a problem** (point to group one). After they recite their part, they sit.
12. **When we find ourselves in a struggle** (point to group two). After they recite their part, they sit.
13. **God is able to help us** (point to group three). After they recite their part, they sit.

Prayer and Praise Party (PK-2nd; 10 minutes)

Eat angel cookies at a praise party.

You will need:

- † Angel-shaped cookies
- † Napkins
- † Optional: Christmas music, music player

Before class:

1. Prepare or purchase angel cookies.
2. Locate Christmas music if desired.
3. Before serving any food, always check with participants or caregivers for students who have food allergies. Provide an alternative if necessary.

During class:

1. **Today, we are going to have a prayer and praise party.**
2. Begin by saying grace.
3. Turn on the music, but play it softly.
4. Give each student a cookie. Remind them: **God sent an angel into the lion's den to protect Daniel from the lions.**
5. **Before each bite, we will stop and thank God for something.** The students will determine what those things will be.

Advent Candle (PK-2nd; 10 minutes)

Celebrate the first Sunday of Advent.

You will need:

- † Advent wreath
- † Battery-operated candles
- † Paper
- † Markers or crayons
- † White board and marker

Before class:

1. Set up the advent wreath
2. Make sure there are working batteries in the candles.

During class:

1. Share your faith tradition for the first Sunday of Advent, explaining why you use a particular color.
2. Light the first candle. It is recommended for safety reasons that you use a battery-operated candle.
3. Ask the students to draw and color one candle using the color that your church uses.
4. Write the word “Hope” on the board. **Write the word “hope” beneath the candle you just drew and colored.** The younger students may need some assistance. Note: if the first candle symbolizes something other than hope in your tradition, use that word instead.

Bible Book (PK-2nd; 5 minutes)

Optional ongoing activity.

You will need:

- † Bible Book page (found at end of lesson)
- † Cardstock or plain paper
- † Markers or crayons
- † Optional: three-ring binders, hole punch

Before class:

1. Make copies of this week's Bible Book page on cardstock or copy paper for each student.

During class:

1. Pass out Bible Book pages.
2. Read the bottom of the Bible Book page aloud, reminding students of what they learned in the lesson.
3. Have them put their names on their pages, and draw a picture of something they particularly liked or remember from story in the middle of the page.
4. Optional: Collect and three-hole punch the pages, and put them in individual binders for each student to be kept at church until the end of the year. If you wish, you can investigate other options for binding the Bible books through a local print shop at the end of the year instead of using a three-ring binder.

Sending the Story (PK-2nd; 5 minutes)

Celebrate the first Sunday of Advent.

Remind the students that Daniel was able to trust God because he knew that God is always faithful and loving. **How can you know that you can count on God to help you be bold? How will you be brave for God this week?**

Prayer

Before ending class, make a point to come together to pray. Use the following or say your own prayer.

Students start in a circle holding hands. One is in the middle. Everyone pray, **Thank you God that you are faithful.** Drop hands. The one in the middle can run out and change places with another. Repeat this form of prayer until everyone has had an opportunity to be set free while praying a thankful prayer.

Hope in the Lions' Den

Daniel 6:6-27

The Point:

We can trust in God's faithfulness.



The Story @ Home

PK-2nd

Living the Word: Teaching Kids God's Story

Narrative Lectionary, Year 3 (2020-2021)

Lesson #3-12

Daniel 6:6-27

Last Week

The prophet Jeremiah has a message calling an unfaithful people to repentance with promises of forgiveness. The king burns the prophecy, but the prophet just writes it again (Jeremiah 36:1-8, 21-23, 27-28; 31:31-34).

This Week

The people did not listen to the prophets and are sent into exile. Daniel refuses to stop worshipping the God of Israel, so he is thrown into a lions' den. God keeps him safe throughout the night (Daniel 6:6-27).

The Point

We can trust in God's faithfulness.

Story Summary

Hope in the Lions' Den

King Darius of Persia was pressured by his officials to make a law that anyone caught praying to anyone other than the king would be thrown into a den of lions. Daniel trusted God's faithfulness, so he continued to pray to God three times a day. The officials reported this to the king. The king did not want to, but he followed his law and threw Daniel to the lions. The next morning, the king went to see that Daniel was alive. God had sent an angel to keep him safe. The king was delighted and relieved to find Daniel alive. Daniel was removed from the den, and the king had Daniel's accusers thrown to the lions. The king made a decree that people should worship Daniel's God.

Bible Nuts & Bolts

Exile

To live in exile is to live as a captive. When Babylon attacked Jerusalem, the enemy took the people captive. Those in exile lived in a new culture and had to follow their laws. They were forced to leave their ways behind and to be loyal to the king. Although we may not be captured by a physical enemy, there may be other influences that hold us captive. Like Daniel, we can hold fast to a faithful God who will lead us.

Practice: Prayer

Daniel's habit of praying to and praising God three times a day is an example of his devotion to God. Daily prayer can also keep families focused on God. Make prayer an active part of your family's everyday life, thanking God aloud for various things throughout the day. See how many things you can praise God for throughout the day.

Next Week

The prophet Joel addresses those returning from exile, but it is the gracious and merciful nature of God that will see the people through their difficulties, just as God saw Daniel through the lions' den (Joel 2:12-13, 28-29).

Family Discussions

Use the questions below or other questions you think of to discuss today's Scripture reading (listed above) with your family.

- † What is the positive message in these verses—one that tells us a good way to live our lives?
- † What is the negative message in these verses—one that might help us know what not to do?
- † What reminder can we make up to help us think about what we read as we live our lives this week?

Family Devotions

As you hear and study these stories each week, consider what God has to say to you and your family. What is God's message to us? How should we respond?

Sunday—Read Daniel 6:6-27

Here we see hope in the midst of the lions' den. Make a lions' den out of pillows. Get inside the den and thank God for being faithful to us. Then, jump out of the den.

Monday—Read Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14

These are Daniel's visions of judgment. Before reading, use a video recording device (phone, tablet, etc.) to privately record each family member describing God. Come together to watch the entire recording and to read the Scripture.

Tuesday—Read Daniel 9:1-6

This is Daniel's prayer for the people. If practical and safe, go for a family walk and pray for your neighborhood. Otherwise, look out the windows and pray for your neighborhood.

Wednesday—Read 2 Timothy 4:16-18

This Scripture tells of God protecting Paul, standing by him, giving him strength. Work together to memorize 2 Timothy 4:17a: "But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength." Plan to say that together when any family member faces a challenge.

Thursday—Read Psalm 7:1-5

This is a prayer for protection from our enemies and an examination of our hearts. What are some positive things you would like for your family? Who are the people that do not like you or who you do not like? Pray those positive things for your named enemies.

Friday—Read Joel 1:1-12

This passage is Joel's lament at the thought of judgment for unrepentance. Play follow the leader. Then, pray for our nation's leaders, that they will follow God's leading. Pray that the rest of us will follow God's direction, too.

Saturday—Read Joel 1:13-14; 2:1-2, 15-16

This is a call to repentance and prayer. It is about being truly sorry for sin. Take turns sitting in a time-out chair or wherever someone goes when they are in trouble (even the adults!). No one is perfect. Take time out to pray and repent. Ask for forgiveness for sin and for help to obey more.