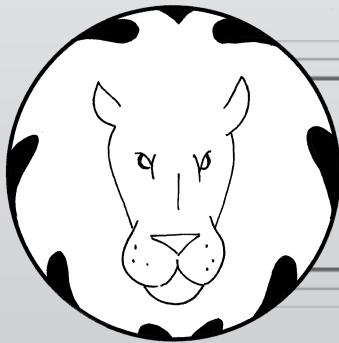


3rd-6th

Living the Word

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



Teacher's Guide

Winter Unit

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Living the Word: Teaching Kids God's Story, 3rd-6th (Narrative Lectionary, Year 3)

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Lesson #3-12

Hope in the Lions' Den

Daniel 6:6-27

3rd-6th

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:

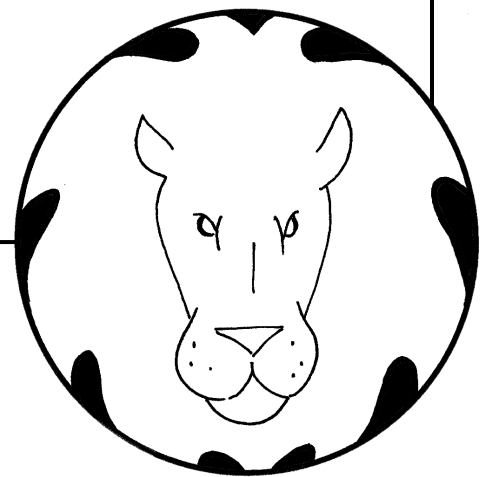
The Hope of the Messiah

Bible Nuts & Bolts:

The Exile

Spiritual Practice:

Prayer



Activities a la Carte

Activities

Supplies

Into the Story

Faithful Friends

Apply faithfulness to friendship scenarios.

10 min.

- † Activity Sheet #3-12.A
- † Scissors

Bible Nuts & Bolts

Exile

Construct a “captured” word collage.

10 min.

- † Poster board
- † Colored paper (light shades)
- † Markers
- † Glue sticks
- † Dictionary

Learning the Story

Thumbs-up Daniel

Emphasize faithfulness while studying the lesson.

20 min.

- † Bibles
- † White board or mural paper
- † Marker

Living the Story

Clapping Prayer

Applaud God’s faithfulness.

10 min.

- † None

Activities a la Carte

Additional Activities

Daniel Video

Watch and discuss *Daniel in the Lions' Den* video.

15 min.

† Internet-connected video player

Daniel Storyboard

Compile a storyboard.

10 min.

† Activity Sheet #3-12.B

† Scissors

Advent Angels

Decorate Advent angel cookies.

15 min.

† Angel-shaped sugar cookies

† Decorating gel or frosting in tubes

Advent Candle

Celebrate the first Sunday of Advent

10 min.

† Advent wreath

† Candles (battery-operated recommended)

† Paper

† Markers or crayons

† Optional: matches or lighter

Bible Book

Optional ongoing activity.

5 min.

† Bible Book page (found at end of lesson)

† Cardstock or plain paper

† Pens or pencils

† Markers or crayons

† Optional: three-ring binders, hole punch

Sending the Story

5 min.

Background for Teachers

Making Connections

In Jeremiah, God promised 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 lions' 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

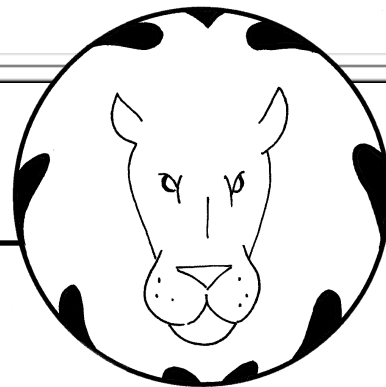
After King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon besieged Jerusalem, the Jewish people lived in exile for seventy years. Their captors expected them to live by a set of rules other than those God had given them. They were immersed in a culture that worshipped many gods. Early on, the king of Babylon selected some 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



Into the Story (10 minutes)

Faithful Friends

Apply faithfulness to friendship scenarios.

You will need:

- † Activity Sheet #3-12.A
- † Scissors

Before class:

1. Print Activity Sheet #3-12.A and cut out the cards.

During class:

1. Scatter the cards face-down on the table.
2. Taking turns, each student will choose a card, share the scenario, and discuss how friends might be faithful in the scenario. Explain that this discussion should include what would be difficult, what would be easy, and why this action would be taken by a faithful friend.
3. Encourage others to add their ideas after the student who chose the card has finished sharing.

Bible Nuts & Bolts (10 minutes)

Exile

Construct a “captured” word collage.

You will need:

- † Poster board
- † Colored paper (light shades)
- † Markers
- † Glue sticks
- † Dictionary

During class:

1. **If you were captured and your belongings were taken from you, what would you miss the most?** *[Answers will vary.]*
2. **Is there anything that you would be able to keep with you that no one could ever take from you?** *[Answers will vary, but may include: God, memories, love.]*
3. Ask if anyone knows the word “exile”. Define “exile” using Webster’s Dictionary: “a situation in which you are forced to leave your country or home and go to live in a foreign country.” Add that this situation is most likely not of a person’s choosing and can be the result of capture or other catastrophe.
4. **Do not say it out loud, but what word comes to your mind when you hear the word exile, or captured?** Distribute colored paper and markers. **Write the word on this paper and then cut it out using whatever shape you’d like.**
5. **When your word is cut out, come up and glue it to this poster board. It is okay for words to overlap some, because this is a collage, but please do not hide anyone else’s entire word.**
6. After all of the words are on the board, talk about the words in the collage.



Learning the Story (15 minutes)

Thumbs-up Daniel

Emphasize faithfulness while studying the lesson.

You will need:

- † Bibles
- † White board or mural paper
- † Marker

Before class:

1. Write the following words on the board in two columns.
 - Column 1: jealousy, peer pressure, conspiring
 - Column 2: faithfulness, trusting God

During class:

1. **The Israelites turned away from God, focusing only on themselves. They were disobedient to God and refused to listen to warnings to change their ways. As a result of this, they were conquered by the Babylonians and taken away from their homes and land. They were exiled. Their exile lasted for seventy years.**
2. **Daniel was a young man whom the Babylonian king wanted to teach and then use in his kingdom. Although Daniel was held in a foreign land where many gods were worshipped and the laws and lifestyle were not God's way, Daniel stayed true to God while he did his job and served the king. Daniel did a good job and the king promoted him as a chief government official. The king liked Daniel very much. Other officials seemed to be annoyed by the way the king liked Daniel. They also knew about Daniel's faith in God.**
3. **As we read this story, listen closely for the following words or ideas: jealousy, peer pressure, conspiring. When you hear them, put your thumbs down. (You may need to define conspiring: secretly working together for something against the rules.)**
4. **As we read the story, listen closely for words or ideas related to faithfulness or trusting God's faithfulness. When you hear them, put your thumbs up.**
5. Ask volunteers to read various portions of the following Scripture, giving time for thumbs up or thumbs down on the verses marked below.
6. Daniel 6:6 – thumbs down.
7. Daniel 6:7-9. **If the king liked Daniel and knew Daniel believed in God, why do you think he signed the ordinance (law)?** *[The officials*



implied that all of the leaders were in agreement on this.]

8. Daniel 6:10 – thumbs up. **Would you have continued your current prayer practices after the ordinance was announced?** *[Answers will vary.]*
9. Daniel 6:11 – thumbs down and thumbs up. **This sounds like a set-up!**
10. Daniel 6:12-13. **Why do you think the conspirators reminded the king of the ordinance and its consequences before telling them Daniel is the one who broke the ordinance?** *[To keep the king from being nice to Daniel.]*
11. Daniel 6:14 – thumbs up.
12. Daniel 6:15
13. Daniel 6:16 – thumbs up. **Why did the king go through with this?** *[He had to keep his word; he had signed the law in front of many and it was announced to everyone; he was unwilling to take a stand that could jeopardize his position.]*
14. Daniel 6:17-19. **From a human perspective, what hope is there for Daniel?** *[None.]*
15. Daniel 6:20 – thumbs up.
16. Daniel 6:21-23 – thumbs up.
17. Daniel 6:24 – thumbs down.
18. Daniel 6:25-26
19. Daniel 6:27 – thumbs up.
20. **After reading this, what are your thoughts about the power of those who conspire against us?** *[Answers will vary but might include: that they think they are powerful, but our powerful God is faithful to deliver us; they are jealous of us.]*
21. **After reading this, what are your thoughts about God's faithfulness?** *[Answers will vary.]*
22. **If we know that God is faithful, what are your thoughts about being able to be faithful to God?** *[If we know God is going to have our back, then we can be courageous in life for God.]*



Living the Story (10 minutes)

Clapping Prayer

Applaud God's faithfulness.

You will need:

† Nothing

During class:

1. Lead a discussion asking the students to share ways that we can see God's faithfulness.
2. **We are going to pray in a creative way to thank God for being faithful.**
3. **Each time someone stands up, claps twice, and says something that shows God's faithfulness, we will all then say "Thank you, God, that you are faithful." Then we will all clap for God's faithfulness.** Suggestions might include ideas like seeing a rainbow.
4. **You can jump up as soon as something comes to your mind. If someone is already up, please wait your turn until we have all clapped and thanked God.**



Additional Activities

Daniel Storyboard (10 minutes)

Compile a storyboard.

You will need:

- † Activity Sheet #3-12.B
- † Scissors

Before class:

1. Print one copy of Activity Sheet #3-12.B for each team.
2. Cut out the cards.
3. Shuffle each team's set of cards.
4. The cards are in the correct order on the Activity Sheet, read left to right.

During class:

1. Divide the class into teams.
2. Without looking in the Bible, each team will work together to put the cards in order based on today's story.
3. If they find this easy, randomly remove one card from each team's set of cards and shuffle the cards. This time, not only will they organize the storyboard, but they will also identify the missing card.



Advent Angels (15 minutes)

Decorate Advent angel cookies.

You will need:

- † Angel-shaped sugar cookies
- † Decorating gel or frosting in tubes

Before class:

1. Purchase or make angel-shaped cookies.
2. Purchase tubes of colored cookie-decorating frosting or gel in the color that your congregation uses to celebrate the first Sunday of Advent.
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. While the students are decorating the cookies, talk about Christmas as a season of hope based on God's faithfulness in sending Jesus. Explain the meaning of the color frosting being used.



Advent Candle (10 minutes)

Celebrate the first Sunday of Advent.

You will need:

- † Advent wreath
- † Candles (battery-operated recommended)
- † Paper
- † Markers or crayons
- † Optional: matches or lighter

Before class:

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

During class:

1. Share your congregation's 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 battery-operated candles.
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" below the candle that 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 (5 minutes)

Optional ongoing activity.

You will need:

- † Bible Book page (found at end of lesson)
- † Cardstock or plain paper
- † Pens or pencils
- † 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. Hand out Bible Book pages.
2. **What are some of the important things we have learned from today's story?**
[Answers will vary.]
3. **On the bottom of your page, please write one or two important things that you have learned from the story today. In the middle of the page, draw a picture from the story or illustrate one of the important things you've learned. Don't forget to put your name on the back of the page, please!**
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 (5 minutes)

A point for us to remember today 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. In what ways did you see Daniel step out in faith because he knew that God would be faithful to him? *[He continued to pray; seems to have been fearless when he went in the den; told of his faith.]* In what ways might you do the same?

Prayer

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

Close with lions' den prayers: Form a circle to make a lions' den. One student stands in the center. Pray for that student by name. That student is freed from the den, and another takes that position. Continue until everyone has been prayed for.

Sample prayer for the class to pray together:

Faithful and loving God, please show [Name] that they can trust you because you are always faithful to us.

Faithful Friends

Apply faithfulness to friendship scenarios.

Some of your friends talk poorly about another friend behind their back.	You are bored by field hockey, but one of your friends plays on the team.	You have a friend who has never been to church before.
A friend shares a secret that is so funny that you want to tell just one more person.	You and a friend did something wrong. Your friend got caught, but you did not.	A friend struggles with the fear of trying to do something that you love to do.
A friend tells you a secret that you think an adult should know about.	Your friend is running late, and the seats in the cafeteria are filling up.	A friend forgot to bring lunch.
You really want to watch a TV show, but your friend needs to talk.	You and your friend get in a huge argument.	Your friend is being picked on and made fun of.

Daniel Storyboard

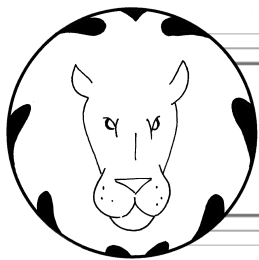
Compile a storyboard.

A law is written: Everyone can only pray to the king.	Daniel continues to pray three times a day.	The leaders see Daniel praying.
The leaders remind the king of the law.	The leaders accuse Daniel of breaking the law.	The king hopes Daniel's God will be save Daniel.
Daniel is thrown into the lions' den.	The king does not sleep.	The king hurries to the den of lions.
Daniel says God's angel protected him.	Daniel's accusers are thrown in the den.	An announcement is made that people should worship Daniel's God.

Hope in the Lions' Den

Daniel 6:6-27

I Learned:



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 had a message calling an unfaithful people to repentance with promises of forgiveness. The king burned the prophecy, but the prophet just wrote 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.

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.

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.

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.

- ✚ If this were to happen today, how would you respond in words and actions?
- ✚ What in this reading reveals something to you about God that you did not know before?
- ✚ What questions do you have about this reading?

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. People today are persecuted for their beliefs. Make a lions' den out of a clean food can. Place loose strips of paper inside. Remove one paper (rescue) from the den each time a prayer is said for the persecuted.

Monday—Read Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14

These are Daniel's visions of judgment. After reading, how do you imagine God? Allow ten minutes for each family member to go to a different room and imagine. Then come back and share.

Tuesday—Read Daniel 9:1-6

This is Daniel's prayer for the people. Rewrite this prayer for modern times. The focus can be on the individual, the family, the church, the school, or the nation.

Wednesday—Read 2 Timothy 4:16-18

This Scripture tells of God protecting Paul, standing by him and giving him strength. Take turns standing by and protecting another family member while a rolled up sock is tossed (gently) in your direction. Each time the sock is blocked, thank God that God protects us.

Thursday—Read Psalm 7:1-5

This Psalm is a prayer for protection from our enemies, but the writer's own heart is also examined. List those who you might consider your enemies. After praying for deliverance from them, pray for them. Brainstorm for ways that you can bless your enemies and plan to carry them out.

Friday—Read Joel 1:1-12

This passage is Joel's lament at the thought of judgment for unrepentance. Pray for our nation, that it would not turn its back on God. Pray that we can set an example.

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

This is a call to repentance and prayer. It's about being truly sorry for sin. As part of mourning their sin and returning to God, the people were supposed to fast. Choose a meal where your family will eat a thin soup and pray about being right with God.