

Daniel in the Lions' Den

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

Main point: Make talking to God a daily habit, and stay faithful to Him even when it costs you something. God is able to rescue us.

Bible passage: Daniel 6:1–28. Read it before class.

Memory verse: "My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt."

Daniel 6:22 (KJV)

You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.

Before class: write the memory verse on the board.

1. Opening game: The Law Can't Change (5–10 minutes)

Choose one child to be "king." The king makes up a silly law for the class, like "Everyone must stand on one foot" or "Everyone must pat their head." Everyone obeys. After 20 seconds, say: "King, please change the law. We're tired!" Then tell the class: "Sorry! In this kingdom a law can never be changed." Keep going for another 20 seconds, then let a new king make a law. Ask: *How did it feel when the law couldn't be changed? What if a king made a law that said you could not pray to God?* Say: "That is exactly what happened to a man named Daniel."

2. Bible story: Daniel Stays Faithful (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Daniel 6. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

The new king. Years before, Daniel had been taken from Jerusalem to Babylon as a young man, along with other young men from Judah (Daniel 1:1–6). Now Darius the Median was king (5:31). Darius set 120 princes over the kingdom, and over them three **presidents** (top leaders). Daniel was the first of the three (6:1–2). **Look up Daniel 6:3.** ("Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him." **Preferred** means honored above the others.) The king planned to put Daniel over the whole kingdom.

The trap. The other leaders were jealous. **Look up Daniel 6:4.** They looked for an **occasion**, a reason to blame Daniel, but they found no fault at all, because he was faithful. So they decided to catch him with "the law of his God" (6:5). They went to King Darius and asked him to sign a law: for thirty days, whoever asked anything of any God or man except the king would be cast into the den of lions (6:6–7). They said it must follow "the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not," which means it could never be changed. The king signed it (6:8–9).



Daniel keeps praying. Look up Daniel 6:10. Daniel knew the law was signed. He went home, opened the windows of his room toward Jerusalem, knelt and prayed and gave thanks to God three times a day, "as he did aforetime," just as he always had. He didn't hide, and he didn't stop.

Caught. The men found Daniel praying and making **supplication** (asking God for help) (6:11). They reminded the king of his law and told him that Daniel prays three times a day (6:12–13). The king was **sore displeased with himself**, very upset at himself. He worked until the sun went down to find a way to save Daniel (6:14), but the men reminded him that the law could not be changed (6:15).

In the den. Look up Daniel 6:16. Daniel was cast into the den of lions, and the king said, "Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee." (**Continually** means all the time; **deliver** means rescue.) A stone was laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his **signet**, his own seal, and the seal of his lords, so no one could change what was done to Daniel (6:17). The king went to his palace. He **fasted** (went without food), had no music brought in, and could not sleep (6:18).

Morning. The king got up very early and hurried to the den (6:19). **Look up Daniel 6:20.** He cried out with a **lamentable** (sad, crying) voice, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?" **Look up Daniel 6:22.** God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths! The king was exceeding glad and had Daniel taken up out of the den. **Look up Daniel 6:23.** No hurt at all was found on him, "because he believed in his God."

The king's letter. King Darius wrote to all people in every nation and language (6:25). **Look up Daniel 6:26.** He made a decree that people should fear (deeply respect) the God of Daniel, "for he is the living God, and stedfast for ever." **Stedfast** means He never changes. God "delivereth and rescueth" (6:27). Daniel **prospered**, which means he did well, while Darius and then Cyrus the Persian were king (6:28).

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

Thinking questions (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. The leaders couldn't find anything wrong with Daniel's work (6:4). Why does being honest matter, even when no one is checking?
2. Daniel prayed "as he did aforetime," the same as always (6:10). How did his everyday habit of prayer help him when trouble came?
3. Daniel didn't close his windows or hide. When is it hard for you to let others know you love God?
4. King Darius liked Daniel but still signed a bad law (6:9, 6:14). What can we learn about agreeing to things too fast?
5. At the end, a whole kingdom heard about the living God (6:25–27). How can God use a hard time for good?

Recall questions

1. How many days did the law last? (*Thirty days, Daniel 6:7*)
2. Which way did Daniel's windows face when he prayed? (*Toward Jerusalem, 6:10*)
3. What was laid on the mouth of the den? (*A stone, 6:17*)



4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **hath** means has, **forasmuch as** means because, **innocency** means being innocent, doing nothing wrong, and **before thee, O king, have I done no hurt** means "I haven't done anything wrong to you, King." Read the verse on the board together. Erase two words and read it again. Keep erasing two words at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner.

5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "God rescued Daniel from the lions, and He wants to rescue us from sin. God loves you. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). How do we obey the gospel? 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5)."

Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

This week: choose three set times each day to pray and give thanks, like Daniel. Keep it up even on busy days.



6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10–15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point.

1. Daniel 6:1: How many princes did Darius set over the kingdom? *(An hundred and twenty, which is 120)*
2. Daniel 6:3: Why was Daniel honored above the others? *(An excellent spirit was in him)*
3. Daniel 6:4: What fault did the leaders find in Daniel? *(None. He was faithful.)*
4. Daniel 6:8: Whose law could not be changed? *(The law of the Medes and Persians)*
5. Daniel 6:10: How many times a day did Daniel pray? *(Three times)*
6. Daniel 6:17: What did the king use to seal the stone? *(His own signet and the signet of his lords)*
7. Daniel 6:18: What did the king do all night? *(He fasted, had no music, and could not sleep)*
8. Daniel 6:28: Which two kings did Daniel prosper under? *(Darius and Cyrus the Persian)*

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that You are the living God and You hear us every time we pray. Help us make prayer a habit, be honest when no one is watching, and stay faithful to You even when it's hard. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks what happened to the men who accused Daniel: this lesson leaves out Daniel 6:24. Read it yourself before class. Answer simply: the king punished the men who had tried to have Daniel killed. God is always good and fair.

If a child asks whether God always rescues people who obey Him: be honest and gentle. God is always with us, but He doesn't always take hard things away right away. Daniel's friends Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego told a king that God was able to save them, "but if not," they would still serve only God (Daniel 3:17–18).

