

Daniel in the Lions' Den

Sunday School Lesson for Kindergarten to 2nd Grade, 45 minutes

Main point: Keep praying and stay faithful to God, even when it's hard. 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, 8 paper lion faces (or yellow paper circles), a marker, tape, crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child. If you have them: a blanket for a "den."

Before class: write the memory verse on the 8 lion faces (see part 4). Put a bookmark in your Bible at Daniel 6:10.

1. Opening game: Sleeping Lions (5 minutes)

Kids lie down on the floor as "sleeping lions" and stay perfectly still and quiet. You walk around and try to make them giggle or move, but you never touch them. Anyone who moves gets up and helps you. Then ask: *Was it hard to keep your mouth shut?* Say: "Today we will hear about real lions whose mouths God kept shut, and a man who kept praying no matter what."

2. Bible story: Daniel Keeps Praying (10 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to Daniel 6, so the kids can see the story comes from God's Word. Tell it in your own words:

There was a king named **Darius**. He chose 120 princes to help him rule his big kingdom, and three leaders over the princes. **Daniel** was the first of those three leaders (Daniel 6:1–2). Daniel did such a good job that the king planned to put him in charge of the whole kingdom (6:3).

The other leaders were jealous. They watched Daniel's work very closely to find something wrong, but they could not find anything. Daniel was faithful and honest in everything (6:4). So they said, "The only way to catch Daniel is with the law of his God" (6:5).

They went to the king and said, "King, make a new law. For thirty days, nobody may pray to any god or any man except you. Whoever does will be put into the den of lions." A den is a big pit or cave where lions live. King Darius signed the law, and a law like that could never be changed (6:6–9).

Daniel heard about the law. What did he do? **Read Daniel 6:10 from your Bible:** "Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime." Say: "That means Daniel went home, knelt down by his open window and prayed three times a day, just like he always did. **Aforetime** means before."



The story continues: The jealous men came and found Daniel praying to God. They ran to the king and said, "Daniel doesn't obey your law! He still prays three times a day" (6:11–13). King Darius was very upset with himself, because he liked Daniel. He tried all day, until the sun went down, to find a way to save him (6:14). But the law could not be changed (6:15).

So Daniel was put into the den of lions. The king said to Daniel, "Your God, whom you serve all the time, will rescue you!" (6:16). A big stone was rolled over the opening of the den, and the king sealed it with his own seal (6:17).

The king went home, but he would not eat, and he could not sleep all night (6:18). Very early in the morning he hurried to the den (6:19). He called out in a sad voice, "Daniel, servant of the living God, was your God able to save you from the lions?" (6:20).

And Daniel answered! **"My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions mouths,** that they have not hurt me" (6:21–22). The king was so glad! Daniel was taken up out of the den, and he was not hurt at all, because he believed in his God (6:23). Then King Darius wrote to all the people in his kingdom: everyone should honor the God of Daniel, "for he is the living God" (6:25–27).

3. Questions to ask (5 minutes)

1. How many times a day did Daniel pray? (*Three times, Daniel 6:10*)
2. What did the new law say? (*Nobody could pray to anyone but the king for thirty days, 6:7*)
3. Where was Daniel put? (*In the den of lions, 6:16*)
4. Who shut the lions' mouths? (*God sent His angel, 6:22*)
5. Was Daniel hurt? (*No, not at all, because he believed in his God, 6:23*)

4. Memory verse: Lion Faces game (5 minutes)

Tape the 8 lion faces up in order: *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. Daniel 6:22.* Explain the old words: **hath** means has, **forasmuch as** means because, and **innocency** means being innocent, doing nothing wrong. Read the verse together. Then flip one lion face over ("shut its mouth") and read it again. Keep flipping one lion face each time until the kids can say the verse by themselves. The last part of the verse ("and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt") is for kids who want an extra challenge.

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 very much. But everyone has done wrong things. The Bible calls that sin: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God who came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus died for our sins, He was buried, and He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! The Bible tells us how to obey the gospel, the good news about Jesus: '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 we are sorry for our sin and we turn away from it. We are **baptized**, buried all the way under the water, in Jesus' name, so our sins are washed away (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). **Remission** means God takes our sins away. And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, His own Spirit, and we speak in other tongues, words God gives us, just like the believers did in the Bible (Acts 2:4)."

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: pick three times each day to talk to God and thank Him, like Daniel did. Try morning, lunch and bedtime.

6. Activity (10–15 minutes)

Choose one: the **Daniel in the Lions' Den word search** (vbshq.com/puzzles/daniel-and-the-lions-word-search), the coloring page or craft (vbshq.com/bible-stories/daniel-and-the-lions), or **Lions, Freeze!** Kids prowl around the room on hands and knees and roar like lions. When you call out "God shut the lions' mouths!" everyone freezes with their mouth shut. Anyone who roars or moves becomes your helper for the next round.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that You are the living God and You hear us when we pray. Help us keep talking to You every day 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 whether God always rescues people who obey Him: be honest and gentle. God always sees us, loves us and is with us, but He doesn't always take hard things away right away. Daniel's friends Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego once told a king that God was able to save them, "but if not," they would still serve only God (Daniel 3:17–18). God is always good, and we can always trust Him.