

31. Protection



BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

Daniel 6:1-28

Daniel is thrown into the lions' den for disobeying the king's law and continuing to pray, but God protects him



AIMS

To help the children think about situations we might face where we have the choice to follow God or do our own thing, and to reflect on how God's promises can help us in these situations.

Daniel had a difficult choice: to obey the king, or to stay true to God and risk being thrown into the lions' den. He chose to obey God, and experienced God's power and protection.



PREP FOR LEADERS

Read through the Bible passages for this session and reflect:

- What do you think enabled Daniel to make the choice to obey God rather than the king?
- What does Daniel's story teach us about God?
- What difficult choices might we face as Christians today, and how can God help us in these?

Take some time to pray for your group.



GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Choose one of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

▶ Sleeping Lions

All the children are lions apart from two who are hunters. The lions lie on the floor and their aim is to stay still and quiet. Meanwhile, the hunters can move around, trying to get the lions to move or make a noise. They are not allowed to touch the lions, but they can move around, talk to them, make noises etc. Any lion who moves or makes a noise joins the hunters. The winner is the last child to remain a lion.

▶ Lions' Den Game

Get all the children to line up against the wall at one side of the room. Choose one child to be a lion and get them to stand in the middle of the room. When the leader tells them to go, the children have to run across the room to the opposite wall, trying not to be caught by the lion. Anyone who is caught has to stop and stand still in the place where they were caught.

When the leader tells them, the children who were not caught have to run back to the other wall again. This time as well as being caught by the lion, they can also be caught by the children who are standing still, having been caught by the lion in the previous round. However, these children can only catch others by reaching out with their hands; the lion is the only

(continued overleaf)

one who is allowed to run or move their feet.

Continue the game in this manner with the children running from one wall to the other until everyone has been caught apart from one child who is the winner.

▶ **Protect The President**

You will need: a soft ball

Get all the children to stand in a circle, and choose two children to stand in the middle of the circle: one as the President and the other as the Bodyguard.

The children forming the circle have to throw the ball, attempting to hit the President, while the Bodyguard tries to defend the President.

If the ball touches the President, they are no longer the President and they have to join the circle. Meanwhile the child who was Bodyguard becomes the new President, and the child who threw the ball when it hit the President becomes the new Bodyguard.



▶ **Recap/ Introduction**

You will need: print-out of the word "faithful" (from additional document: Faithful) - optional

Last time we heard about how the people of Judah were taken away as slaves to Babylon because they kept on disobeying God.

You could display the word "faithful" to remind the children of the key point from last week's session.

We heard about a man called Daniel and his three friends and how they wanted to stay faithful to God even though they were in a strange land.

They chose not to eat the king's food but to eat vegetables and drink water. God was faithful to them too, and he helped them become strong and healthy and good at their work. When their training was complete, they were given good jobs by the king.

▶ **Daniel in the Lions' Den Story**

You will need: robe (optional) and crown for King Darius, words for Daniel and King Darius (from additional document: Daniel words), lion masks, scroll containing new law - this can simply be a rolled-up piece of paper or card

You can buy cardboard crowns to decorate from Baker Ross: <https://www.bakerross.co.uk/card-crowns> or you can make your own.

You can find a template to make lion masks here: <https://www.firstpalette.com/printable/lion-mask.html>

A document containing the words for the scroll can be found in additional document: New law

Daniel was taken to Babylon as a young man, but the most famous story about him is something that happened many years later after a new king had taken over in Babylon.

Get some volunteers to act out the story as you tell it - choose people to be Darius, Daniel, two or three other workers and two lions.

Give Darius a crown and robe to wear and let him sit on a chair to represent his throne. Give words to Daniel and King Darius. Give masks to the lions.

Get the lions to stand on the opposite side of the room from King Darius' throne in an area representing the lions' den. You

could ask them to make a roaring sound every time the words "lions" or "lions' den" are mentioned.

The King at this time was called Darius. Because of Daniel's good work the king had promoted him to a high position in the land. But some of the other workers got jealous of Daniel and decided to look for a way to get him into trouble.

They couldn't find a way because Daniel worked hard, he was reliable and responsible, and they couldn't see anything that he was doing wrong. They knew that although Daniel had been in Babylon for a long time, he still put God first, so they decided to use that against him.

One day the men went to Darius and bowed before him. Then they showed him a new law that they thought should be put into place in the land.

(Give them the scroll and get someone to open it and read the law.)

"For the next 30 days, no-one is to pray to any god or any person apart from the King. Anyone who does will be thrown into the lions' den."

The king liked this idea, so he signed the law and it was announced to the people.

When Daniel heard about the law, he had a choice to make. Would he follow the king's law, or would he keep praying to God?

He decided to go home and do what he did every day. He knelt down in front of his window and he prayed to God. Of course, the men saw him, and they went to tell King Darius.

The King was upset. He didn't want to throw Daniel into the

lions' den because he liked Daniel and he was his best worker, but he'd made the law and there was no way that it could be changed. He ordered for Daniel to be arrested and thrown into the den of lions.

(Get other workers to throw Daniel into lions' den.)

That night the king couldn't sleep because he was so upset and worried about Daniel. Early the next morning he went to the den and called out, "Daniel, was your God able to save you?"

To his surprise, Daniel walked out and he said, "Yes, I'm fine. God sent his angel to close the lions' mouths so that they wouldn't hurt me."

The king was pleased, and he gave orders that everyone in the land should follow Daniel's God because of his great power. Then he ordered for the men who had tried to trick him to be thrown into the lions' den, and the lions pounced on them straight away and tore them apart. Darius announced to all the people that everyone should worship God because of his amazing power.



REFLECT & RESPOND

▶ Reflection

Talk together:

Why do you think Daniel chose to keep praying even though he knew he risked being thrown to the lions?

Do you think he knew that God would keep him safe from the lions?

I think he knew God could, but I'm not sure he knew that God definitely would. But I think, for Daniel, it was more

important to keep praying and to keep doing what he believed was right even if it meant that he died.

Daniel was in a powerful position in the kingdom, and we live in a world where we often see people being dishonest or using their power for their own gain, but Daniel wanted to put God first and stay true to him.

All of us have to make difficult choices sometimes. We probably don't face being killed, but sometimes we have to make a decision about whether we're going to follow God or whether we're going to do our own thing.

Maybe there is someone in your class that people make fun of and you know you shouldn't join in but it's quite hard to stand out and be different. Maybe your friends are doing something you know is wrong and they want you to join in with them.

God can help us in those times, just like he helped Daniel.

▶ Prayer Activity

You will need: lion pictures (from additional document: Lions, large sheet of paper (optional), Blu tack, pens or pencils, Bible, printout of Daniel 6:26-27 (from additional document: Daniel 6)

Get the children to think about things that they might worry about when they feel under pressure or face a difficult choice, e.g. being left out, people making fun of them, making the wrong decision. They can also write emotions they might feel such as fear, anxiety, confusion...

Get someone to write each idea they come up with on one of the lion pictures (from additional document: Lions). You could stick them on the **wall or on a large sheet of paper.**

Point out that it can feel scary when we are in a situation like that, but that we can remember how God showed his power in Daniel's story.

Read out the words that King Darius spoke at the end of the story from Daniel 6:26-27.

God was with Daniel, and God showed that his power was greater than anything else.

All through the Bible, God makes promises to be with his people and to help them.

Take the printout of Daniel 6:26-27 and stick it in the middle of the lions that were stuck on the wall or the sheet of paper.

Lead the children in prayer, asking for courage in situations where they are under pressure or face difficult choices about whether to obey God.