



LESSON PLAN

Scripture Texts:

Daniel 6:1-28

1 Peter 5:6-11

Session Theme:

Persistence

a. Welcome to Class

Teachers should arrive in the classroom well in advance of class. Welcome students as they enter, and inquire about their week. Pass out name tags and record attendance on a classroom chart.

b. Icebreaker: Strength Under Pressure

Bring some small blocks or other stackable items to class, as well as a ruler and several cans (tuna fish cans would work well). Build a bridge with the ruler spanning the two sides. When kids come to class, ask them if they think the bridge can support one can. How about a second can, stacked on top of the first? Etc. Ask kids why they think the bridge will or won't support this weight..

There is the idea that all stress is bad. But builders sometimes add weight to bridges, stressing them, in order to strengthen them. In today's story, a faithful man was put in a stressful and seemingly impossible situation. Would he get stronger or not? What role would faithful persistence play? Let's find out!

c. Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, you give us everything we need. During uncertain times, remind us to look to you for help and to trust that you are with us. We ask this in the name of Christ our Lord. Amen.

d. SEED Video or Song (Optional)

The teacher may introduce the lesson by playing the video clip from the SEED website. This time may also include an opening song or two, using a commercial Sunday School music CD.

Song suggestions for this lesson:

- "Be Brave! Be Bold!" (Bible camp song)
- "O God Our Help in Ages Past" (hymn)

e. Brief Bible Background

Read together the introduction to the lessons for the day, and briefly summarize the context and setting:

- Today's Lesson is from the Old Testament
- Scripture Section: Exile

God's people were attacked and conquered in the north by the Assyrian Empire, then later in the south by the Babylonian Empire. Many of the people were carried away in exile, far from home.

f. Communicate the Bible Story

Always keep in mind that the main purpose of Sunday School is to put people in contact with Bible stories. Use a version that is appropriate to the age level.

Upper Elementary: Read the Bible Story and Rhyme

Youth/Adults: Read the Scripture text from the Bible

For Upper and Lower Elementary, use the Storyteller questions to help the students think about the events of the story.

g. Complete the Worksheet(s)

Continue with the handout sheets appropriate to the age level of the students in class:

Upper Elementary: Worksheet and Drama

Youth: Bible Study (Maps, Timelines, Questions)

Adult: Bible Study Sheet (Introduction and Discussion)

h. Craft and Activity Time

If there is time after covering the Bible story, the class may move to craft and activity time, described on the following page. (Do not let the activity time supersede the actual time spent on the Scripture lesson.)

i. Summarize and Review

Before ending class, briefly summarize the day's lesson one last time. If you have not already done so, introduce the Theme Word for the week, providing the definition, and asking how the lesson connects to that theme.

Youth/Adult: Discuss "Reflection for the Week Ahead"

j. Closing Prayer

Close the session in prayer before dismissal:

Upper Elementary: Practice a prayer from memory (e.g., the Lord's Prayer, Luther's Morning Prayer, etc.)

Youth/Adult: Use the ADTRC Prayer format

Bible Study Leader's Guide

The following is a discussion and answer guide for the Youth and Adult Bible Study sheets. For all leaders, it can serve to provide some background on the Bible lesson.

Discuss: Daniel 6:1-28

1. Who were the people who wanted to get Daniel in trouble? Why do you think they did this? What was the only way they could get at him?

Though he was a foreigner, Daniel had risen to a position of power in the royal court because of his honesty, intelligence, and hard work. The other presidents and satraps were envious of Daniel, his position, and how well he did his job. However, because Daniel was honest and good, they could not accuse him of wrong-doing. They knew the only way they could get at him was through his faith. They had a law created “ex post facto” — counting on the fact that Daniel would remain faithful to his God.

2. Hearing that prayer to the Lord was forbidden, what did Daniel do? Why would he do this? Would you have the courage to do the same if our Christian faith were made illegal?

Daniel continued to pray and worship the Lord in spite of the law. While we, as believers, are called to obey authority, there are limits. When it comes to faith, “we must obey God rather than human beings” (Acts 5:29).

As our own culture becomes more resistant and hostile to religious faith, and the government seeks to curb our free exercise of worship, we pray for the same courage and faith Daniel had.

3. In what sense is our secular society resistant (or even hostile) to faith in God? Have you ever felt “targeted” for being a believer? How did you respond?

Answers will vary. Persecution can come in many forms, from the subtle disapproval of peer pressure, to the loss of jobs and opportunities for being open about our faith. Believers are often penalized by the world for sticking to what we believe.

Because of this, some will hide their faith; others will abandon faith altogether. But those who keep God's Word and stay faithful to God will not shy away from rejection and persecution, even at great personal cost.

4. How did King Darius feel about Daniel? Given his personal feelings, why did the king send him to the lions' den?

The king actually liked and respected Daniel. He had been tricked by his advisors into making the law unchangeable. So when he found Daniel accused, there was nothing he could do, legally. He was unable to revoke the death sentence.

5. What did God do to protect Daniel in the lions' den? Do you think Daniel knew this would happen, or did he simply trust in God? What is the difference?

Daniel told the king: “My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm” (Daniel 6:22).

Daniel had no assurances or guarantees; he knew that he might die for refusing to give up his faith. He trusted his life to God, regardless of the consequences.

6. What effect did all this have on King Darius? When we know that God has saved us and done great things for us, why is it natural for us to want to tell others?

When he saw that Daniel was alive, the king was so amazed, relieved, and thankful, he wrote to tell everyone what had happened. When Daniel gave his Lord the glory, the king came to acknowledge the one true God. That's the same reason we tell others about Jesus! Because of the great things he has done for us — not the least of which is his grace and salvation — we can't help but want to share the good news!

7. Read 1 Peter 5:6-11. Scripture compares the devil to a prowling lion, “seeking someone to devour.” In what sense is the power of evil a reality in this world? What practical and spiritual caution does this require of us in everyday life?

As believers, we acknowledge that sin, evil, and the power of the devil are very real forces in the world. We must be watchful and aware of what we face, but do so without fear. Jesus has already won the final victory over the devil, and our Lord will not let the devil have the final word. We trust our souls into God's care, knowing that our champion Christ will not fail us.

8. How has the promise of Christ given you hope and confidence in the face of danger? Can you give an example? Is it possible to have fear and doubts, yet still trust and believe in God?

Answers will vary. Sometimes we are unaware of how God is at work to save when we are in the midst of trouble and only recognize in retrospect what he has done for us. Faith is not the absence of doubt and fear; it is trust in God despite all evidence and feelings to the contrary.

Classroom Craft and Activity Page

Listed below are in-class activities and craft projects related to the theme for the day. Choose one of the following based on the age and capabilities of the students. (Never let the activity or craft time take precedence over the biblical story.)

Activity 1: Lion's Den Craft

Materials Needed:

- White, gray, blue and black construction paper
- Pencils
- Scissors
- Glue or glue sticks
- Black markers



Instructions:

Give each child a pencil and one piece each of black, blue, gray, and white paper.

Invite kids to draw a wavy or jagged line near the top of the blue paper, to look like rocky outcroppings in a lion's den. Cut along the line.

Take the large piece of blue paper and lay it on top of the black paper so the bottoms line up and some of the black is showing through at the top. (See illustration above.) Glue the blue paper on top of the black paper.

Take the piece of gray paper and make a wavy or jagged line a little lower than you did on the blue paper. Cut along the line. Lay the gray paper on top of the blue paper so the bottoms line up. Glue the gray paper on top of the blue paper.

Repeat this process with the white paper, drawing the jagged line a little lower than you did for the gray paper. Cut along the line. Lay the white paper on top of the gray paper so the bottoms line up. Glue the white paper on top of the gray paper. Take a pencil and draw the outline of Daniel and one or two lions on the white paper. Trace over the pencil with black marker. Color in the figures with black marker so you have silhouette figures.

Now kids will have an interesting picture of Daniel in the lions' den. Encourage them to use it to tell today's Bible story to friends and family!

Activity 2: Slogans for Strength Activity

Materials Needed:

- Index cards
- Pencils or pens
- Markers

Instructions:

Most modern people will never be thrown into a lion's den, as Daniel was, but we still experience upsetting or stressful situations quite regularly.

This activity will help kids think of motivating phrases they can say to themselves to help them face challenges with faithful persistence and courage.

Divide the class into pairs. Give each person an index card and a pencil or pen.

Ask everyone to make a list of things that intimidate them on one side of their index card. Ideas might include: Public speaking, joining a new group, taking a test, going to the doctor or dentist, riding the bus, etc.

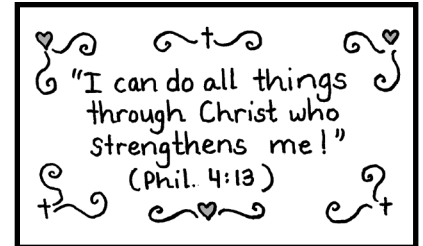
Have kids share some or all of the items on their list with their partner and see if they have any anxiety producing items in common. Often, it is a comforting surprise for kids to realize they are not alone in their fears.

Next, have kids circle the situation they find most difficult.

Working with their partner, have pairs brainstorm some faithful "slogans for strength" they can say to themselves when faced with their scary situations. Write these ideas on the other side of the index card. Bible verses could be very helpful here, and could be shortened for this purpose if need be. For example, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

When pairs have decided on a slogan (or verse), give each person a second index card and have them write their shared slogan on their new index card in nice print. Decorate around the card with markers.

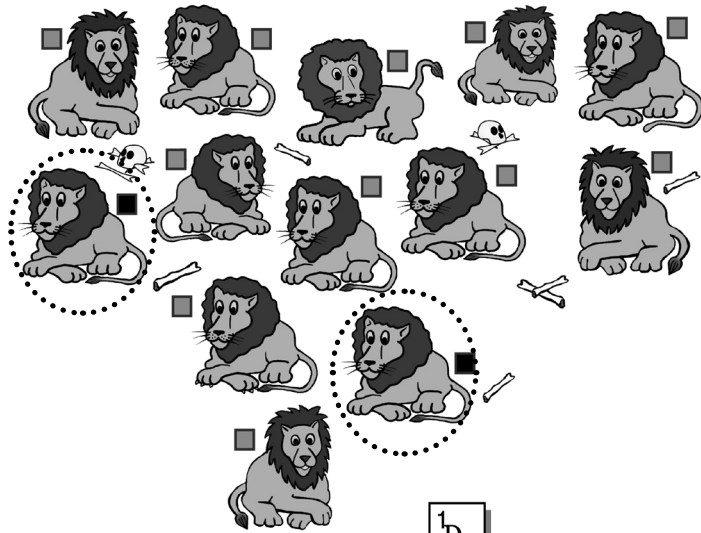
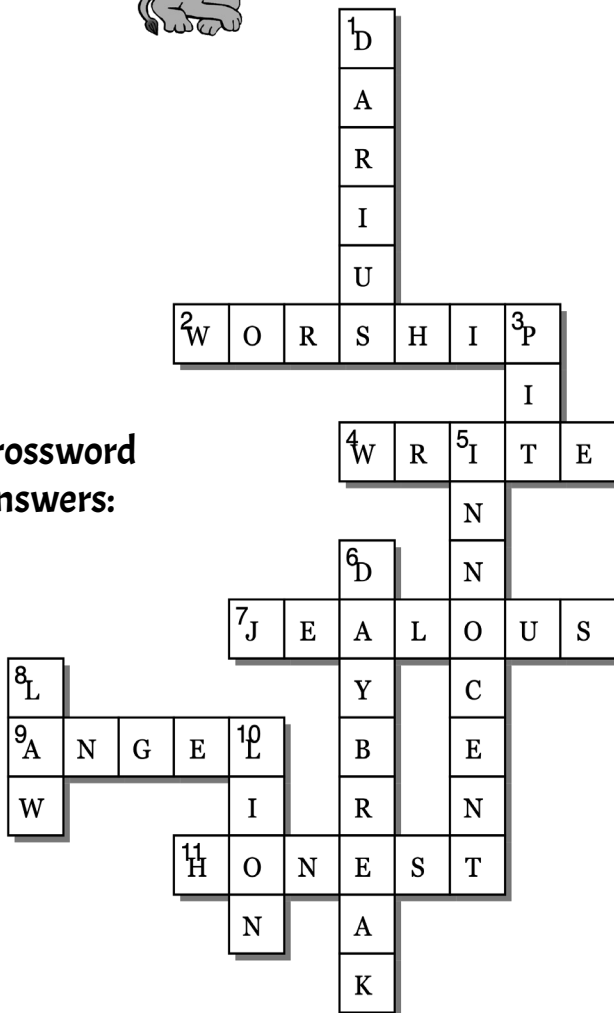
Encourage kids to tuck their index cards into a backpack, drawer, or book where they will come across it regularly. When they do, they can remember their friend who faces challenges just as they do. More importantly, they can remember that God is there in every situation! Their own courage may fail, but they can always count on God.



Worksheet Answer Key

Below are the answers to the children's worksheet for this week's lesson:

Matching Lions:

Crossword
Answers:

Vocabulary Word for the Week:

Teachers may want to introduce the theme word for the week to help expand students' biblical vocabulary:

Persistence

to not give up on a task
and to keep doing what is right

*Daniel did not stop praying
and believing in God, even though other
people didn't like it and tried to stop him.*

Reflection for the Week Ahead

Persistence is to keep working at something, even when it would be easier to give up. You do it anyway because it is the right thing to do. Sometimes, we need to make a promise with ourselves that we will keep going and do what it takes to get a job done. More importantly, in our story today, Daniel was keeping a promise to God!

- Talk together about a time when you had to have courage to overcome some sort of trial in your life.
- Who is the most courageous person you know? Why did you choose this person?

For Daniel, it took great courage to go against the law that said he could not pray to the Lord. Can you even imagine that you wouldn't be allowed to pray? No way! Knowing that some people around the world are forbidden to practice their Christian faith might help us to be more grateful for our religious freedom.

Talk about on how important it is that we have the freedom to worship Jesus without fear in our country. What could it be like if this were not the case?

The Practice of Prayer

On the lines below, write a prayer praising God for saving Daniel and others like him who were persecuted for their faith. Ask the Holy Spirit to grant you a faith so strong that no threats or harsh words could make you stop believing in Jesus.

Practice using the ADTRC Prayer Form: Address, Description, Thanks, Request, Conclusion.