

# Daniel In The Lions' Den

Daniel 6:1-28

## **MEMORY VERSE**

DANIEL 6:26

“For He is the living God, and steadfast forever.”

## **WHAT YOU WILL NEED:**

Pencils and paper to write or draw on.

Crayons or colored pencils, a “Lion’s Mask” template for each child, scissors, poster board, glue stick and tongue depressors.

## **ATTENTION GETTER!**

### **A Den Full of Creative Writing/Drawing Ideas**

To begin class today have the children do a creative writing or drawing project. The writing would be appropriate for older ages and the drawing for younger ages. You will need pencils and paper to write or draw on. The stories should be about a paragraph long. You can display the writing or pictures on the bulletin board in your classroom if you like. An idea might be to display the children’s work on large paper boulders cut out from construction paper to make a den. Possibly a student or you could draw a lion.

Here are some suggestions to get started on the stories:

1. DANIEL’S DIARY – Pretend to be Daniel. Write a diary entry Daniel might have written after finding out about the new law. Write another entry Daniel might have written after spending a night with the lions.
2. A LION’S PRAYER – Write a prayer you think would be appropriate for a lion to pray before meals.

3. DANIEL'S DILEMMA – Write a skit entitled “Daniel’s Dilemma” about Daniel’s experience. Choose some classmates to help you to perform the skit.

4. BIBLICAL LION TAMER – Describe what you imagine the scene was like when God sent an angel to close the mouths of the lions (\*good one for drawing).

5. PRAYER SCENE (for drawing) – Draw a picture of Daniel praying to his God with his window open towards Jerusalem.

## LESSON TIME!

Have you ever done something wrong, and had to be punished for what you had done? It has happened to all of us. Have you ever been punished for something that you did right? Sometimes that also happens to us, especially as Christians. In today’s lesson we will see that Daniel faced the death penalty, not because he did something wrong, but because he did something right in God’s sight.

There is a saying that we need to ponder in our lives that says, “If you were arrested for being a Christian would there be enough evidence to convict you?” In Daniel’s life there truly was. Is there in yours? Today we are going to see what happens as Daniel stands up for his belief in God. **We should always do what is right no matter what happens.**

### DANIEL 6:1-3

It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps, to be over the whole kingdom;

and over these, three governors, of whom Daniel was one, that the satraps might give account to them, so that the king would suffer no loss.

Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm.

After the death of King Belshazzar, Darius ruled the kingdom. Darius appointed 120 princes, or satraps, over the Babylonian kingdom. A satrap was a Persian official who could rule over a large province or over a small group of people. Darius also appointed three men to oversee the satraps so “that the king might not suffer loss” (possible political power and loss of money).

Darius placed Daniel as chief officer over the whole of his realm and by doing so, he caused the other high officers of state to be jealous and hate Daniel. Verse 3 says an important thing about Daniel, “an excellent spirit was in him.” Daniel had an excellent attitude. It does not appear that Daniel felt threatened by or jealous of the other two overseers. Darius planned to promote Daniel to a position of authority in Babylon second only to his.

What a good example Daniel is for us. His life causes us to examine our own lives. Do we have a good attitude when we are working or serving people? Do we have a good attitude towards those in authority over us? Daniel’s good attitude came from his relationship with God, for he loved God with all of his heart, mind, soul, and strength. **We should always do what is right no matter what happens.**

#### DANIEL 6:4-9

So the governors and satraps sought to find some charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find no charge or fault, because he was faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him.

Then these men said, "We shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find it against him concerning the law of his God."

So these governors and satraps thronged before the king, and said thus to him: "King Darius, live forever!

"All the governors of the kingdom, the administrators and satraps, the counselors and advisors, have consulted together to establish a royal statute and to make a firm decree, that whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions.

"Now, O king, establish the decree and sign the writing, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter."

Therefore King Darius signed the written decree.

Imagine doing a good job, being faithful, kind, diligent and wise and yet everyone is upset with you. What would you do? Daniel had a good attitude at work. Because Daniel excelled above all the princes, the king thought to set him over the whole kingdom, second only to himself.

This made all the others very angry. They tried to find reasons to accuse Daniel in regard to government issues. Yet they could not. They tried to find any fault with Daniel they could so he would be fired, but they had no success. Daniel remained faithful in his work and to his God. Because of his faithfulness to God he was able to be faithful in his work. As we are faithful to God, He helps us to be faithful in all we do.

Since the men could find no fault with Daniel in his position, they looked at his private life. They discovered no negligence or corruption in him. Not only did Daniel display integrity at work by being faithful, but he also possessed personal purity. It is a good thing to check our lives and see if we say we believe one thing but then we do something else totally different from what we say. The Lord desires us to strive for purity in both our public and private lives. James 1:22 tells us, “But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”

The only way these men knew they could find some kind of charge against Daniel was in regard to his God. These men being very proud themselves, appealed to King Darius’ pride. First they lied to him saying that all the governors, princes, counselors, and administrators had agreed to not allow the worship of anyone except the king for thirty days. They added that being thrown into the lions’ den would punish any violators of this law. Daniel of course was not included in this consultation.

They also deceived the king by concealing from him the intention of the decree, for they did not want to worship Darius. Next, in order to be sure their evil intent is secured, they ask the king to put the edict into writing, so that it might not be changed in any way according to the law of the Medes and Persians. In those days when the king signed a law nothing could change it because the king was thought of and honored as the incarnation of deity or a god.

Did King Darius blindly sign the document without thought of what would happen? Such is the way with pride and flattery; it is only consumed with self. The satraps knew that flattery would persuade the king. It teaches us to be so careful of those who would flatter us. Truly Daniel was put in an interesting situation. How would he react? **We should always do what is right no matter what happens.**

## DANIEL 6:10-15

Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.

Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God.

And they went before the king, and spoke concerning the king's decree: "Have you not signed a decree that every man who petitions any god or man within thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?" The king answered and said, "The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter."

So they answered and said before the king, "That Daniel, who is one of the captives from Judah, does not show due regard for you, O king, or for the decree that you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day."

And the king, when he heard these words, was greatly displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him; and he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him.

Then these men approached the king, and said to the king, "Know, O king, that it is the law of the Medes and Persians that no decree or statute which the king establishes may be changed."

Verse 10 is an important verse to read. “Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his house toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.” This shows us that Daniel was a man who was steadfast in prayer. Steadfast can be defined as, “firmly fixed or established; steady; constant.”

Daniel’s relationship with the Lord was consistent. Daniel had a place where he regularly met with God in prayer, no matter what. Remember that the only way the satraps knew that they could find any fault in Daniel was in his devotion to God. They knew that Daniel would pray to God because of his love for God. Daniel loved God more than he loved his own life. Daniel’s enemies knew that he would continue praying, though there was a law against it now.

Daniel did pray, even though it was against the law, because if he stopped praying because of the law he would have been denying his faith and sinning against God. His enemies secretly watched him and immediately reported his disrespect of the king’s command to the king. They reminded the king of his law, and showed him that Daniel, one of the captive Jews, had not regarded the king’s command, but had continued during the thirty days to pray to his own God breaking the king’s law. **We should always do what is right no matter what happens.**

What is interesting is that King Darius did not get angry with Daniel for praying to his God but was very sad that he had made that law. The king knew and valued Daniel very highly. Daniel’s excellent work and godly character caused the king to be very distressed. Verse 14 tells us the king was “deeply distressed and set his mind on delivering Daniel; and even until sunset he kept exerting himself to rescue him.”

Darius’ governing officials would not give up. They came to the king and said, “Recognize, O king that it is a law of the Medes and



Persians that no injunction or statute, which the king establishes, may be changed.” Both Darius and Daniel knew that they had been legally trapped. Daniel knew the king had to obey the law he made, but it did not stop Daniel from praying to the Lord.

In our lives do we pray everyday to the Lord, or only in emergencies? Is our relationship to God the most important thing in our lives? Notice that because Daniel had an intimate relationship with God, he did not get scared when his faith and life were in danger. Daniel turned to God and trusted Him as he had always done before. We can also experience peace and strength in the darkest trials of our lives. Daniel definitely had enough evidence of his relationship with God. Would his faith bring him the death sentence? **We should always do what is right no matter what happens.**

## The Lion Game

Choose four children to be lions and one child to be Daniel. The remainder of the children will surround Daniel. Have Daniel stand in the middle of the room. The remaining students (non-lions) will form a circle around Daniel facing out. Their job will be like the angel in our story, to protect Daniel from the lions. The four children chosen to be lions will be outside of the circle. They will try to tag Daniel through the circle of protection.

When you say go the lions can try to get to Daniel any way they can by reaching through the line of protection. They cannot however hit or break through. They can only tag Daniel either over the children in the line or under (legs, feet, etc.).

Keep playing, using different lions and different Daniels until the children tire of the game.

## DANIEL 6:16-22

So the king gave the command, and they brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions. But the king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you."

Then a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signets of his lords, that the purpose concerning Daniel might not be changed.

Now the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; and no musicians were brought before him. Also his sleep went from him.

Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions.

And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel. The king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?"

Then Daniel said to the king, "O king, live forever!

"My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you."

King Darius did everything possible to spare Daniel from execution, but Daniel was found guilty. The law the king signed was clear; for thirty days, anyone who made a petition to any god or man other than Darius would be punished by death in the lions' den. The king could not change the law once it was decreed, so he

could do nothing but carry out the punishment. Thus, soon after sunset, Darius commanded that Daniel be cast into the lions' den. **We should always do what is right no matter what happens.**

An Old Testament scholar, C. F. Keil, describes what archaeologists have discovered about lions' dens in ancient Morocco, giving us a good idea of their design during Darius's reign. The lions' den "consists of a large square cavern under the earth, having a partition-wall in the middle of it, which is furnished with a door, which the keeper can open and close from above. By throwing in food they can entice the lions from the one chamber into the other, and then having shut the door, they enter the vacant space for the purpose of cleaning it. The cavern is open above, its mouth being surrounded by a wall of a yard and a half high, over which one can look down into the den."

We see a side of King Darius here after Daniel is thrown into the den of lions, for he says, "Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you!" The king knew that he could not deliver Daniel, but he knew that Daniel's God could. Perhaps Darius had heard of God's mighty hand in the days of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Somehow he knew that Daniel could trust in his God and that everything would turn out all right.

The king was distressed and could not sleep or eat because of Daniel. He went to the lions' den first thing in the morning and with a very heartbreaking voice called to Daniel, hoping that his God might deliver Daniel. Imagine how happy the king was when he heard Daniel say, "O king, live forever! My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you."

It does not seem that Daniel was worried or afraid of being in the lions' den. Although he was still standing in the den with the lions, Daniel carried on a calm conversation with Darius, who was

looking down on him from a position of safety. The king could not save Daniel from the lions' den, but Daniel's God could and did save him.

We can learn many lessons from this story, such as the character of Daniel. Daniel had an excellent attitude in his work and life. He was always faithful in his work, and in his personal life, a life of purity. Daniel had a consistent walk with God that grew in intimacy and trust in the Lord. Daniel was steadfast in his prayer life, no matter what would happen. He did not need to defend himself when he was wrongly accused, for his trust was in the living God. Daniel trusted God for deliverance. Daniel's faith was also a testimony to Darius. Do our lives testify to others of the greatness and goodness of God? When the trials come into our lives, and they will, let us pray that we will remain steadfast in prayer and trust God as Daniel trusted God. **We should always do what is right no matter what happens.**

## Lion Mask

For this craft you will need crayons or colored pencils, a template for each child provided in the curriculum, scissors, poster board, glue stick and tongue depressors.

Give each child a template. Allow them to color and decorate their lion any way they wish.

After decorating, have them cut out their lion. Next they should paste the lion onto poster board (NOTE – as an option you can copy the templates onto white cardstock and avoid this step).

Cut out the lion design from the poster board.

Next cut out holes where the eyes are. Glue a tongue depressor to the bottom of the lion. You now have a lion mask.

## **PRAYER**

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to stand up for what is right. No matter what happens, when we serve the Lord, He will be with us. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.

