


the  
Jesus   
Storybook  
Bible  
Curriculum

# Daniel and the scary sleepover

Daniel and the lions' den, from Daniel 6

☉ Please see the curriculum Introduction .pdf for more guidance on praying with your group and on Scripture memory.

☉ The total allotted time per lesson is 45 minutes. This is the minimum amount of time it would take to complete the whole lesson. The time can easily be extended to increase the lesson to as much as 1.5 hours. If you have more than the allocated 45 minutes, please use the extra time to extend the time for activities, to learn the memory verse, and to pray.

☉ The “Notes for Teachers on the Text” section is intended as explanation of the Bible text and advance preparation for you only; it is not expressed in terms or language the children could understand.

*The Jesus Storybook Bible Curriculum*  
By Sally Lloyd-Jones and Sam Shammas

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## Recap of the Previous Story

3 min. 

☉ Welcome the children and ask them to sit in a circle.

☉ Briefly recap the main point of the previous story: “Last time we met Isaiah and we heard how God told Isaiah his rescue plan. So Isaiah wrote that in the future a Rescuer King Servant Light Lamb Shepherd will come to earth and do many amazing things, but then he will suffer and die. But he won’t stay dead; God will make him alive again, and he will rescue his people and one day make the world perfect again. We also memorized a verse from Isaiah about this rescue.”

☉ Ask them to recite together the verse they learned at home about the story. “Isaiah 53:6 — ‘The LORD has laid on him the sin of us all.’”

☉ To lead into the theme of today’s story, say: “Today’s story comes from the book of Daniel in the Bible. We are going to meet Daniel. One of the things we will discover about Daniel is that he had a good habit. What is a habit? Correct, a habit is something you do or repeat all the time. Daniel’s habit was to pray every day. Do you have any habits? Raise your hand if you have any habits. Thank you, hands down.”

## Activity Introducing the Story

10 min. 

**Aim:** To expend energy and introduce the idea of habits.

**Materials:** None.

1. Say: “We all have habits. We all have things we do every day. For example, we all have the habit of brushing our teeth every day. Let’s race to see how many habits we can think of.”

2. Assign half the circle as team 1 and the other half as team 2. Explain the game: The first person in the team jumps up and silently pretends to do something that people do every day, a habit. For example they can pretend to brush their teeth. The other team members have to guess what the habit is. When they guess correctly, that player runs to the back of the room, touches the wall, runs back, and sits in their place in the circle. The next person jumps up and pretends to do another habit.

3. Say: “The team that guesses the most habits during 5 minutes wins. But you must pick a real habit and everyone has to pick a different habit. Once someone has brushed their teeth, no one else can do that.”

4. Make sure the teams are running to opposite walls so they don’t bump into one another. Assign a teacher to monitor each team. Call out, “Ready? Go!”

5. Monitor the teams to make sure they are naming real habits and that they are miming the habit, not talking about it.

6. After 5 minutes, announce the winning team and ask everyone to sit back down in the circle. Say: “You came up with lots of habits. I saw you [name a few of the habits they mimed during the game]. In our story today, Daniel’s habit — praying every day — gets him into trouble. Let’s find out why.”

**For larger groups:** You may want to divide up the circle into more teams so that the children can take turns more often.

Join the children in the circle and announce the title of the story. Read aloud pages 152–159 from *The Jesus Storybook Bible* or listen to CD2 track 5.

### A Note for Teachers on the Text

Daniel was one of the Israelites exiled and living in Babylon after the fall of Jerusalem to Nebuchadnezzar in the sixth century BC. A few notes on Daniel's character:

Daniel was a man of prayer. Daniel 2 is the first time we see Daniel at prayer, but it won't be the last. One of the main lessons of the book of Daniel is the importance and centrality of prayer. In chapter 6, verse 10 we read that Daniel prayed three times a day, regularly. We are told that Daniel always opened his windows toward Jerusalem and prayed daily. This was a very public act and generally known—that is why the officials were able to “target” this practice in their legislative decree. In Daniel 9 we have a long version of one of the great prayers of the Bible.

Daniel was incorruptible. One of the problems with the government in that time was that those who got into power became corrupt and cheated both those under them and those over them of their due. Part of Daniel's incorruptibility is his willingness to be a straight shooter. In Daniel chapters 1–2 and 4–5 we find that he is absolutely fearless and willing to tell the truth even when it is dangerous.

Daniel was diligent. The two reasons mentioned in chapter 6, verse 4 for Daniel's effectiveness was that he was “neither corrupt nor negligent.” That means that he overlooked nothing, worked extremely hard, and was highly conscientious.

Daniel was “exceptional.” In chapter 6, verse 3 we are told Daniel distinguished himself “by his exceptional qualities.” This is how the NIV translates the text, which older versions render:

“because of the excellent spirit that was in him.” The word means “excelling” or “surpassing,” and it probably has to do with leadership. His wisdom, ability, character, and vision were overwhelming; and those around him sensed it, bowed to it, and followed it.

It is amazing that the officials could devise a decree that would trap only Daniel because he was a man of such integrity. The decree they proposed was unenforceable, and any ordinary man would have simply closed his windows and prayed privately for 30 days and kept out of trouble. But they must have known that Daniel was such a man of principle that he would not change his prayer practice at all—even under the threat of death.

A few notes of comparison:

☉ As with Jesus, Daniel was hated without cause. He was hated simply because he was light, and the darkness hates exposure.

☉ As with Jesus, Daniel was attacked by high officials and people in power. Jesus, a religious leader, was envied and resented by other religious leaders, so Daniel, a civic leader, was hated by other civic leaders.

☉ As with Jesus, Daniel was condemned by law in a miscarriage of justice.

☉ As with Jesus, Daniel did not protest and accuse his accusers in any way.

☉ As with Jesus, his enemies thought that that would be the last they would ever have to see of him.

☉ As with Jesus, the stone over Daniel's “grave” is rolled away and he comes forth.

# Understanding the Story

15 min. 

**Aim:** To understand that Daniel obeyed God whatever the cost.

**Materials:** Crayons; copies of the handout (the last page of this document).

1. At the end of the story, say: “That’s how Daniel’s habit got him into trouble. I’m going to say some things about Daniel’s story. Some of the things I say will be true and some will not be true. I will then say ‘Go!’ If what I say is true, stand up and raise both your hands in the air. If what I say is not true, then curl up into a ball. Ready?”

2. Read aloud the statements in the following table, saying “Go!” after each one. When the children have either stood up or curled up, use the questions/comments to check understanding. After commenting, ask them to sit down or uncurl. Say “Ready?” and announce the next statement.

STATEMENT	ANSWER	QUESTIONS/COMMENTS
Daniel had a habit; he prayed every day.	TRUE	It is true; you should be standing with your hands in the air. Daniel prayed every day because he loved God and obeyed him.
Because Daniel was very clever, King Darius sent him to school.	NOT TRUE	Not true; you should be curled up. King Darius didn’t send Daniel to school; he made Daniel his most important helper.
The other helpers liked Daniel and were happy he was in charge.	NOT TRUE	How did they feel about Daniel? Raise your hand if you think they wanted to get rid of Daniel. Good, hands down.
The other helpers spied on Daniel and tried to find things that were wrong with him.	TRUE	Raise your hand if you would like people watching everything you did all the time. That’s what the helpers did to Daniel.
Daniel had done nothing wrong.	TRUE	It is true. The helpers could not find anything Daniel had done wrong.
The helpers knew that Daniel prayed to God every day.	TRUE	Is it good that people knew that Daniel prayed every day? Raise your hand if you think yes. Hands down. Yes, we should not hide the fact that we love God and others should see that we do.
The helpers set a trap for Daniel. They got the king to chase Daniel with a huge net.	NOT TRUE	Not true.
The helpers got the king to make a new law that no one is allowed to pray to anyone except the king.	TRUE	Yes, it is true.
If you broke the law you’d be sent into time-out.	NOT TRUE	What would happen? Yes, you’d be thrown to the lions.

STATEMENT	ANSWER	QUESTIONS/COMMENTS
Daniel knew it was wrong to pray to anyone except God. He had to obey God, whatever it cost him.	TRUE	Daniel knew that he could be thrown to the lions for praying to God, but he prayed anyway because he loved God and wanted to obey him.
The helpers told the king that Daniel was praying to God and the king changed the law to save Daniel. *	NOT TRUE	Not true; the king could not change the law. The helpers had tricked him.
Daniel was thrown to the lions, but the lions weren't hungry so Daniel was rescued. *	NOT TRUE	Of course it's not true.
Daniel was thrown to the lions, but God sent an angel to close the lions' mouths so Daniel was rescued.	TRUE	Who rescued Daniel? Say it together. Correct, God.

**Note:** \* Indicates statements to skip if you are running out of time.

3. At the end of the activity, give each child a copy of the handout and a crayon. Say: "On your paper you can see a thought bubble near Daniel. Write down what Daniel might have been thinking in the den with the lions."

4. You may want to allow them to work in pairs. After 1 minute, ask a few of the children to share their answers. (You may want to ask the children who are struggling to draw rather than write what Daniel was thinking.)

5. Say: "Daniel chose to keep praying to God, to obey God, even though he knew it would cost him. And it did! It got him thrown to the lions. Are there times today when bad things happen to people if they obey God? Raise your hand if you think there are times today when bad things happen to people if they obey God. Thank you, hands down."

6. Say: "There are some places in the world where you can be sent to jail if you obey God. Some people who obey God today can lose their jobs or their friends. Because you obey God, other people may laugh at you or ignore you or, like with Daniel, try to get you into trouble. The question is: will you obey God even when it might cost you?"

**For larger groups:** You may want to divide the group into smaller circles, each with a teacher. Each teacher can then work with their circle on understanding what is true and not true.

## Drawing the Story to a Close

1 min. 

Say: “Do you remember the end of the story: ‘The time was coming when God would send another brave Hero, like Daniel, who would love God and do what God said – whatever it cost, even if it meant he would die.’”

Ask: “We all know who that is, right? Say it together. Yes, Jesus is the brave Hero who, like Daniel, would love God and do whatever God said – whatever it cost, even if it meant he would die.”

## Jesus in the Story

2 min. 

Ask: “What did we discover about Jesus from today’s story?”

Get a few children to share their answers aloud, commenting appropriately; then ask everyone to write an answer in the space on their handout.

## Praying about the Story

5 min. 

Pray aloud, thanking God that Jesus loved and obeyed even though it meant he would die. Ask God to forgive you and the children when you have not obeyed him. Ask him to help you and the children to love and obey him even when it is costly.

Ask the children to think of a time when they find it hard to obey God; then ask them to pray that God will help them love and obey him whatever the cost.

## A Verse from the Story to Learn at Home

2 min. 

☉ Introduce the verse: “In our story today God rescued Daniel from the lions. We have discovered this again and again in our stories – that it is God who saves. Next time we will meet Jonah, who prayed some great words about this.”

☉ Announce the verse: “So, your verse to learn at home is Jonah 2:9 – ‘Salvation comes from the LORD.’”

☉ Read the verse out loud together as a group. Explain that the word “salvation” is just a longer word for saving or being rescued.

☉ Remind the children to give the handout to their parents and to memorize the verse for next time.



© Jesus in the Story



What did you discover about Jesus from this story?

Jesus

© A Verse from the Story to Learn at Home

Salvation comes from the LORD. (Jonah 2:9)



Notes for parents: From the story we learned that Daniel obeyed God even though he knew it would cost him. We also learned that Jesus would obey God, whatever it cost, even if it meant he would die. Please help your child to memorize the verse and the Scripture reference for next time. Please review with them the place of the book of Jonah, using the diagram above.

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