



STORY 46

The Miraculous Catnap

DANIEL 6

BEFORE THE LESSON

- *Read Daniel 6.*
- *Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is, what he has done, and how they should respond to him.*
- *Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.*

THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

Throughout Daniel's life God was with him. God protected and blessed him. Even though Daniel was one of the people captured and taken from Judah, he served in very high positions of power under three different kings. After King Nebuchadnezzar died, Belshazzar became king in his place. But he was killed after his party, just like God had foretold through that hand that wrote on the wall. Remember that? Then, as God predicted, the Medes and the Persians conquered the Babylonians. A new kingdom with a new king. The new king's name was Darius (which was much easier to pronounce). Darius's kingdom had 120 states with 120 governors. And to rule over all those governors, Darius picked three men. Their names were Stan, Hann, and Dan. (Just kidding. The Bible only gives us Dan's or Daniel's name.) Daniel quickly became the favorite. In fact,

1
Read

2
Teach

Darius planned to make him rule over the whole kingdom. When the other two rulers found out, what do you think they thought? Let's listen in.

TELL THE STORY

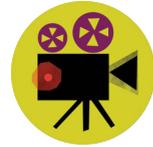
Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}



Read the Bible passage together



Read from *The Biggest Story Bible Storybook*



Play *The Biggest Story* video

TEACH THE STORY

Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}

Big Truth
Like Daniel,
we can trust
and obey God
no matter what
happens.

As you might have guessed, the two rulers who served with Daniel were jealous. Have you ever been jealous of someone? You wish you had what he had or could do what she could do? When you feel jealous, you should remember that a good God takes care of us. That is *not* what these men did. They wanted to have what Daniel had. And to get that, they needed to get rid of him. So they came up with an evil plan. They tricked Darius into signing a new law that said “whoever prays to any god or man except the king will be tossed into the den of lions” (see Dan. 6:7). Yikes! The other rulers knew that Daniel was an honest and faithful man who would not break rules. But they also knew that he would break *this* rule. Why? Because he worshiped the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He prayed to the Lord every day at three different times, and he would not stop doing that no matter what. Sure enough, one day he was caught praying “on his knees . . . before his God” (6:10).

When the king learned that his friend Daniel broke his new law, he was greatly troubled. He thought of ways to deliver Daniel from his new law, but there was nothing he could do. There was a rule that not even the king could disobey the laws he made. So Daniel was cast into the lions’ den and a stone was laid over its opening. Darius cried out, “May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you!” (6:16). And God did just that! He sent an angel and shut the lions’ mouths. When the king came the next morning to check on Daniel, he learned

Daniel was alive and well. The king was so happy! Daniel was taken out of the den and those who tricked the king were tossed in instead. “The lions overpowered them and broke all their bones in pieces” (6:24). But not Daniel. Daniel was saved “because he had trusted in his God” (6:23). We should trust God in the same way. In fact, King Darius wrote a new law for everyone in his kingdom saying that they should fear Daniel’s God because “his kingdom shall never be destroyed. . . . He delivers and rescues . . . he who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions” (6:26–27).

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.
{5 minutes}

What would you do if the government said, “Whoever worships Jesus will be sent to prison”? Would you still trust God’s word? Keep worshipping Jesus? Praying? Telling others about Jesus? Would you still act like you were a Christian? Daniel had such courageous faith. He prayed to the Lord even though he knew he would be tossed into the lions’ den. And like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, he had no guarantee from God that he would survive. He chose to worship God no matter what. He chose to worship God because he loved and trusted God with his life.

In the book of Hebrews, some people with great faith are listed. “Through faith,” we are told, these heroes of faith “stopped the mouths of lions” and “quenched the power of fire” (Heb. 11:33–34). The author is writing about Daniel and his friends! Later in Hebrews, we are told that others, because of their faith, were mistreated, mocked, tortured, imprisoned, and killed. We also read that Jesus, who is called “the founder and perfecter of our faith, . . . endured the cross” (Heb. 12:2). If we are to keep the faith like Daniel, we need to follow Jesus, who trusted God even though it led to death. And just like God delivered Jesus by raising him from the dead, he will deliver us if we keep trusting him.

DISCUSS THE STORY

Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}

- QUESTION:** What good things had happened to Daniel? What bad thing happened? How did Daniel respond to the new law? Why?

TAKEAWAY: Like Daniel, we should trust and obey God no matter what happens to us.

3

Engage

Memory Verse
Those who
know your name
put their trust
in you, for you,
O LORD, have
not forsaken
those who
seek you.

PSALM 9:10

2. QUESTION: What did the king fear would happen to Daniel? Do you think Daniel was afraid of being eaten by the lions? Why do you think Daniel chose to obey God rather than the king? Who did he fear more—the king or God?

TAKEAWAY: We should fear God, who has the power to save us even from powerful and hungry lions, more than people.

3. QUESTION: How does the story of Daniel and the lions' den remind you of Jesus? What's different? What do both stories teach us about trusting and obeying God?

TAKEAWAY: If we follow Jesus, who is the author and perfecter of our faith, we will be delivered—even from death.

ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from TheBiggestStory.com, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

Option 1: Pass the Lion

Supply List: stuffed lion, music, two gloves

Before Class: Gather supplies.

Have children sit in a circle. Give one glove to the person who will start the game with the lion and the other glove to the person to her left. When the music begins, the children should pass the lion clockwise. The lion may only be touched by a gloved hand, so once a child has passed the lion, he must take off the glove and pass it to the next person in the circle who does not have one. When the music stops, the person holding the lion is out. Continue play until there is a winner.

Option 2: Watch Out for Lions!

Supply List: adhesive bandages or stickers (two per child)

Before Class: Gather supplies. Mark off a "lion's den."

Assign two children to be the lions. Give each of the other children two adhesive bandages or stickers. The lions' goal is to tag ("bite") the other children. If someone is bit, he must stop and put an adhesive bandage / sticker on the spot where he was tagged and then hold his hand on that spot as he continues to run. When a child is bit a second time, he must put the other adhesive bandage / sticker on that spot and his other hand must cover that spot while he continues to run. If bit a third time, the child must go to the lions' den and he is out of the game. Continue play until everyone is in the den or a set amount of time has elapsed.

3rd–5th

Option 1: Lion's Paw Relay

Supply List: paper

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make copies of a lion's paw print (two per team).

Divide children into teams. Give the first person on each team two paw print papers. Explain that these children need to get to the other end of the room (the lions' den) by placing the paw prints on the ground one after the other. They must only step on the paw print papers; if they step on the floor, they have to go back to the starting line and start again. Once they get to the opposite side, they can pick up the paw prints, run back, and hand the paw prints to the next person in line. The first team to have all their team members go to the lion's den and back is the winning team.

Option 2: Pass the Lion

Supply List: stuffed lion, music, two gloves

Before Class: Gather supplies.

Have children sit in a circle. Give one glove to the person who will start the game with the lion and the other glove to the person to her left. When the music begins, the children should pass the lion clockwise. The lion may only be touched by a gloved hand, so once a child has passed the lion, he must take off the glove and pass it to the next person in the circle who does not have one. When the music stops, the person holding the lion is out. Continue play until there is a winner.

CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

Option 1: Lion Mask

Supply List: cardstock, scissors, glue sticks, crayons, orange and yellow yarn, sandwich bags (one per child), craft (one per child), clear tape

Before Class: Gather supplies. Print and cut a simple lion face out of cardstock (one per child). Cut out eye holes. Cut 2-inch pieces of yarn (twenty per child, place in sandwich bag). Make a sample craft.

Give each child a lion face mask, bag of yarn, and a craft stick. Set glue sticks and crayons on each table. Have each child color the lion face with crayons, then use glue sticks to attach the yarn around the outside of the face to look like a lion's mane. Tape a craft stick to the bottom of the back of the lion so they can hold it up to their face. Tell children the mask can remind us of the miraculous way that God protected Daniel from the lions.

Option 2: Lion's Face Picture

Supply List: paper, glue sticks, wiggly eyes (two per child), yellow and orange washable paints, paper plates (one per table), plastic forks (one per child), wipes

Before Class: Gather supplies. Print papers with the Memory Verse on the bottom and a simple lion face in the center. Put paint on paper plates for each table. Make a sample craft.

Give each child a lion face paper, two wiggly eyes, and a fork. Place glue sticks and paint on each table. Have children glue the wiggly eyes onto the lion's face. Then have the children dip their forks in the paint and gently press it around their lion's face to make a mane. Provide wipes to clean fingers as needed.

Option 1: Paper Plate Lion

Supply List: paper plates (one per child), wiggly eyes (two per child), yellow and orange construction paper, glue sticks, markers, pencils, scissors

Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut construction paper into 4" x 1" strips. Make a sample craft.

Give each child a paper plate and pencil. Set paper strips, glue sticks, and markers on each table. Have children draw a simple lion's face in the center of the paper plate, using glue to attach the wiggly eyes. Next have them gently wrap each strip of construction paper around a pencil to make the paper curl. Then have them glue the curled strips around the lion's face to make a mane.

Option 2: Praying Hands

Supply List: paper (one per child), pencils, scissors (one per child), colored pencils, glue sticks

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a sample craft.

Give each child a piece of paper and a pencil. With the help of a friend, the children should trace both of their hands with a pencil, making sure that the four fingers are together when tracing. Have children cut out their traced hands and glue them together to form "praying hands." Have them write the Memory Verse on the hands and decorate with colored pencils.



Visit TheBiggestStory.com for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.