

GLENVIEW NEW CHURCH SUNDAY MORNING PROGRAM
Primary Lessons: Phase 3 – Lesson 33
Daniel in the Lions' Den (Daniel 6)

I. Underlying Ideas for the Teacher

- A. The Lord is able to protect those who obey Him.
- B. Faith in the Lord makes a person fearless.
- C. A person who really wants to do right may make careless mistakes. Innocence (the willingness to be led by the Lord) is a safeguard.
- D. Basic correspondences:
 - The Medes = those who are against the truths and goods of the church
 - Lions = can picture the power of truth or the power of evil and falsity

II. Story Circle

- A. Introduce the Story
 - 1. We have been studying the story of the children of Israel. Recently we've learned about the time when the land of Israel was divided into two kingdoms called Israel and Judah. Most of the kings were bad and didn't follow the Lord.
 - 2. So the Lord sent prophets to try to turn them back to doing what was right. Can you remember the name of either of the prophets we've learned about? (Elijah, Elisha)
 - 3. Last week we heard two stories about Elisha. One story was about a man with leprosy whose name was . . . ? (Naaman) The other story was about the Syrian army, which had surrounded Elisha and his servant.
 - 4. Today we find that the kingdom of Judah had been conquered by Babylon, and then Babylon was conquered by Darius the Mede.
 - 5. Even though the Israelites were captives (like prisoners), the Lord still sent prophets to remind them to worship Him. Our story today is about the prophet named Daniel.
- B. Tell/Read the Story: Read the attached retelling of Daniel 6.

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C. Ideas to Discuss

1. Literal Sense

- a. What job did Darius give Daniel? (Governor, one of three.)
- b. The king wanted to set Daniel over the whole realm. How did the other governors and satraps feel about this? (They didn't like it.)
- c. Why couldn't they find fault with Daniel? (Because he was faithful to King Darius.)
- d. In what way did they decide they could catch him doing something wrong? (By getting the king to make a decree that everyone had to worship him for 30 days or be cast into the den of lions.)
- e. What was unusual about the laws of the Medes and Persians? (Once a decree was made it couldn't be changed.)
- f. Did Daniel obey the law about worshipping the king? (No.)
- g. How did the king feel about this law after he found out that Daniel had been worshipping his own God instead? (He was sorry that he had made the law.)
- h. How was Daniel saved from the lions? (The Lord sent an angel who shut up the lions' mouths.)
- i. What became of the men who had plotted against Daniel? (They were thrown into the lion's den.)
- J. What new decree did Darius make? (That everyone in his kingdom must worship Daniel's God.)

2. Further Ideas

- a. Darius allowed himself to be talked into making a foolish law. We, too, must learn to think first so we aren't talked into doing something foolish. Just as Darius's law could not be changed once it was made, so too, if we do something that hurts someone else, we can never undo it, even though we might be sorry we did it.
- b. But this is the most important lesson we can learn from this story: If we are faithful to the Lord as Daniel was, then He can save us from evil spirits just as He saved Daniel from the lions.
- c. King Darius decided to follow the Lord when he saw the good that came to Daniel because he followed the Lord. Do you know that you can be like Daniel? When other people see you doing what is right and good, they can decide to do the same.

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III. Enrichment Activities

A. Music

1. "Daniel prayed in the morning," LORI'S SONGS FROM THE WORD II, Side A, second song.
2. "Wait on the Lord," LORI'S SONGS I, Side B, third song. (First song is repeated).
3. "Father in heaven," HYMNAL #152.

B. Activities

Find a good line drawing of Daniel in the lions' den that the children can color while the teacher works with individuals for the play. (See Project, below.)

C. Project: A Play — "Daniel, the Lord's Faithful Prophet" (See attached.)

IV. Teaching Aids

A. Illustration(s) of Daniel praying and/or in the lions' den.

B. Photocopied drawings of this story that the children could color while play preparation is going on.

V. Further Reading for the Teacher

A. Dole's BIBLE STUDY NOTES, Vol. 4, "Daniel in the Lions' Den" (Daniel 6), pp. 111—123.

B. SOWER NOTES, Vol. III, "The Lions' Den" (Daniel 6), pp. 138—146.

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Retelling of Daniel 6

- 1 It pleased Darius to set one hundred and twenty satraps over the whole kingdom,
- 2 and three governors over the satraps; and Daniel was one of the three governors.
- 3 Then Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps because he had an excellent spirit; and the king thought about setting Daniel over the whole realm.
- 4 So the other governors and the satraps tried to find fault with Daniel, but they could not, because he was faithful.
- 5 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."
- 6 So these governors and satraps came before the king and said,
- 7 "All the governors and satraps of the kingdom have consulted together to establish a royal decree, that whoever prays to any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions.
- 8 "Now, O king, sign the decree so it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians."
- 9 Therefore King Darius signed the written decree.
- 10 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.
- 11 Then these men gathered together and found Daniel praying.
- 12 And they went before the king and said, "Have you not signed a decree that every man who prays to any god or man except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?" The king answered, "The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not change."
- 13 So the men answered and said to 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, and has prayed to his God three times a day."
- 14 When the king heard this, he was greatly displeased with himself and decided in his heart to save Daniel; and he thought about how to do this until the sun went down.
- 15 Then these men came to the king and said, "Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians cannot be changed."
- 16 So the king commanded that Daniel be cast into the den of lions. But he said to Daniel, "Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you." [Then Daniel was put into the lions' den.]
- 18 Now the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; and no musicians were brought before him. And he could not sleep.
- 19 Then the king arose very early in the morning and hurried to the lion's den.
- 20 And when he came to the den, he cried out with a sad voice to Daniel, saying, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?"
- 21 Then Daniel said to the king, "O king, live forever!

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- 22 “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.”
- 23 Then the king was exceedingly glad and commanded that they should take Daniel out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no injury whatever was found on him, because he believed in his God.
- 24 And the king gave the command, and they brought those men who had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions; and the lions overpowered them, and broke all their bones in pieces before they ever came to the bottom of the den.
- 25 Then King Darius wrote:
To all people, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth:
- 26 I make a decree that in my kingdom men must tremble and fear before the God of Daniel.
For He is the living God;
- 27 He delivers and rescues,
Who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.
- 28 So Daniel prospered while Darius was king.

DANIEL, THE LORD'S FAITHFUL PROPHET

A Play for 6 or More Children

Characters (Besides teacher/narrator)

Daniel

Darius

Satraps and governors (2 or more)

Lions (2 or more)

Costumes (optional)

Daniel: necklace with some kind of emblem robe or fancy shirt

Darius: simple crown

Lions: lion masks (Use paper plates. Draw simple lion faces on them. Cut eye and mouth holes. Punch holes in both sides and run string through holes to tie around child's head. Teacher could make one ahead of time and let children make more before the play.)

Props

throne chair

piece of paper rolled up like a scroll

Preparing the children

1. Decide who will play what part and pass out any costumes.
2. While the other children are coloring their pictures, take aside the children, who have lines to say, one by one, and teach them their lines. The satraps and governors can be taught together. For those who can read, you could write their lines on a piece of paper and send them to a corner with another friend to learn their lines together.
3. Gather children together and designate areas of the room to be called:
 - a. Darius' palace (use chair for throne)
 - b. meeting place for satraps and governors
 - c. Daniel's house
 - d. lions' den
4. Read the play once through for them, leaving out any stage directions. Tell the children when you narrate the play that you will indicate with your hands when and where they are to move, and when they are to say their lines. Encourage them to put life into their characters as much as possible; e.g. the lions could growl and circle around Daniel.

Suggestions (optional)

Repeat the play a couple of times, but have children play different characters. Do the play for any parents who come to get their children at the end.

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The Play

Darius the Mede was the king in Babylon. He set over his kingdom satraps to help rule. And over these he set three governors. The Israelite, Daniel, was one of these governors. Daniel was an excellent governor because the Lord was with him.

One day King Darius was sitting on his throne. Some of his satraps and governors were with him. [Indicate that these should gather around Darius.] Darius said that he was thinking of having Daniel govern his whole kingdom. The satraps and governors were so jealous! They gathered together by themselves and plotted against Daniel. One of the satraps said:

(1st) Satrap: How can we get Daniel into trouble with the king?

(1st) Governor: I don't know.

(2nd) Satrap: He is always faithful to the king, and he never breaks any laws.

(2nd) Governor: I have an idea!

[Narrator] And he told them his idea. They all nodded in agreement. Off they went to see the king. One of the governors approached the king and said to him:

(2nd) Governor: Everyone agrees that you should make a new law.

(1st) Governor: All people in your kingdom must worship only you for 30 days.

(1st) Satrap: And if someone worships another god, he shall be cast into the den of lions.

[Narrator] Darius was flattered. He liked the idea. He took a piece of paper and wrote and signed the new law, which could not be changed after he had signed it. [Indicate that he should pick up the rolled-up scroll and pretend to write on it.]

Daniel heard about the new law. But what did he do? He went to his house and knelt down and prayed to the Lord. Then the satraps and governors went and looked in at his window and saw him worshipping the Lord. So they hurried to the king and told him what they had seen and reminded him that he could not change the law after he had signed it.

Darius looked very sad, and he sent for Daniel. [Darius could point towards Daniel's house now.] The satraps and governors went and seized Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. But the king went to the lions' den and called to Daniel:

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Darius: Your God will deliver you!

[Narrator] And after the mouth of the den had been closed up, they all went to the palace for the night. And the king lay down to sleep. But Darius was troubled. He tossed and turned but could not sleep.

When it was morning, the king ran to the lion's den and cried out to Daniel:

Darius: Daniel, has your God delivered you from the lions?

[Narrator] Then Daniel said to the king:

Daniel: My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths. They have not hurt me.

[Narrator] Then the king was so happy! Daniel was brought up out of the den, and no injury whatever was found on him because he believed in his God.

And the king gave a command, and all those who had accused Daniel were cast into the den of lions. They tried to defend themselves against the lions, but the lions overpowered them and ate them up!

The king returned to his palace and wrote a new law that everyone in his kingdom must worship Daniel's God because his God had rescued Daniel from the lions.