

## Daniel Was Rescued

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Daniel 6

**MAIN POINT:** Daniel was faithful to God, and God rescued him.

**KEY PASSAGE:** Daniel 2:20-21

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** How can we obey God? We trust God to give us strength to obey Him.

**SMALL GROUP OPENING**  
(10–15 MINUTES)

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**LARGE GROUP BIBLE STUDY**  
(25–30 MINUTES)

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**SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES**  
(25–30 MINUTES)

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## Leader BIBLE STUDY

The fifth chapter of Daniel ends with the death of King Belshazzar when the Persians took over Babylon and Darius was put on the throne. Babylon was on the decline—no longer the powerful, prosperous empire it once was. By this time Daniel was an old man, probably in his early 80s. He served the new king as one of the three leading supervisors in the kingdom.

Daniel was very good at his job. So good, in fact, that King Darius planned to put him in charge of the entire kingdom. The other supervisors and governors were jealous of Daniel. They watched for him to do something wrong so they could complain to the king. Read Daniel 6:4. Daniel was

“trustworthy, and no negligence or corruption was found in him.”

Through the malevolent persuasion of the king’s leaders, King Darius passed a law that no one could pray to anyone but him, the king, for 30 days. Daniel continued to pray boldly to God.

Guide kids to imagine how Daniel might have felt. Was he worried about getting caught? Did he have nightmares about being eaten by lions? Even the king’s threat of death did not stop Daniel from praying. The jealous officials turned him in, and Daniel was thrown into the lions’ den.

As you teach kids, emphasize that Daniel was faithful to God—the true King—and God rescued Him. God’s protection of Daniel served to show all the people that the God of Daniel “is the living God, and He endures forever; His kingdom will never be destroyed, and His dominion has no end” (Dan. 6:26).

God also calls us to trust and obey Him no matter what. God sent His Son, Jesus, to rescue us from something much more dangerous than lions. Jesus rescues us from sin and death. Pray that through your faith, and that of the kids you lead, “may the name of God be praised forever and ever” (Dan. 2:20).



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### *Daniel 6*

**King Darius** (duh RIGH uhs) **was the new leader in Babylon. Babylon was a large kingdom, so Darius picked men to be leaders over small parts of Babylon.** King Darius picked Daniel to be one of the leaders. Daniel was very good at his job, so **Darius decided to put Daniel in charge of all of Babylon.**

When **the other leaders** heard about this, they were **jealous. They watched Daniel and waited for him to do something wrong so they could get him in trouble. But Daniel did what was right.**

The leaders knew Daniel obeyed God, so they made a plan to get Daniel in trouble for praying. They said to King Darius, **“King, all of your leaders think it would be a good idea to pass a new law: For the next 30 days, no one may pray to any god or man except to you. Anyone who disobeys the law will be thrown into the lions’ den.”** King Darius agreed to pass the new law.

Daniel knew the law meant he was not allowed to pray to God. Still, Daniel went into his house and prayed to God three times a day, just like he had always done.

The jealous leaders saw Daniel praying, and they told the king that they had seen Daniel praying to God.

King Darius was upset. He knew that Daniel deserved to be punished for breaking the law, but he didn’t want to punish Daniel. The king thought all day about how he could save Daniel from the lions. “The law can’t be changed,” the men reminded King Darius.

**So, King Darius ordered Daniel to be thrown into the**

**lions' den. "May the God you serve save you," he said.**

The king went to his palace for the night. He did not eat and he could not sleep. He thought about Daniel with the lions.

**As soon as the sun came up the next morning, the king hurried to the lions' den. He cried out, "Daniel, has your God rescued you from the lions?"**

**Daniel shouted back, "God sent His angel to shut the lions' mouths! I am safe!"**

The king was so happy! He ordered for Daniel to be taken out of the lions' den. Daniel wasn't hurt because he had trusted in God.

**King Darius made a new law. He wrote that everyone must respect God. King Darius wrote, "He is the living God ... He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions."**

*Christ Connection: God showed His power to rescue Daniel from the lions, but Daniel was just a small part of a much bigger story. God ultimately rescued us from a much bigger problem—sin and death—through His Son, Jesus.*



**WANT TO  
DISCOVER  
GOD'S WORD?  
GET  
ADVENTURE!**

Invite kids to check out this week's devotionals to discover that God was with Daniel in the lions' den. Believers can take courage because God promises to be with us. (Josh. 1:9) Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out [www.lifeway.com/devotionals](http://www.lifeway.com/devotionals).

# Small Group OPENING

**SESSION TITLE:** Daniel Was Rescued

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Daniel 6

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**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** How can we obey God? We trust God to give us strength to obey Him.

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## Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. As kids arrive, ask them if they have ever seen a lion in real life, perhaps at a zoo. Ask them what was most impressive or scary about the animal.

**SAY** • Today we will be learning about man who had a very dangerous sleepover. He spent the night with a group of lions! You may have heard of him; his name was Daniel.

## Activity page (5 minutes)

- “What Did Daniel See” activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete the “What Did Daniel See?” activity page. Ask them to connect the dots in order to reveal a picture.

**SAY** • Daniel prayed only to the one true God. When the king made a law that people could only pray to him, Daniel remained faithful to God. What do you think happened to Daniel as a result of his obedience to God instead of the king?

## Session starter (10 minutes)

**OPTION 1:** What time is it, Mr. Lion?

Select one kid to be *Mr. Lion*. *Mr. Lion* will stand at one end of the room, facing away from the other kids. The other kids will stand at the far end of the room and will ask in unison, “What time is it, Mr. Lion?” *Mr. Lion* will respond with a time (1 o’clock, 2 o’clock, and so forth). The kids must then each take that many steps toward *Mr. Lion*.

The goal is to reach *Mr. Lion* without him knowing and tap him on the shoulder. At any point, *Mr. Lion* may choose to respond with “dinner time!” and turn around to chase the kids. Any kid he tags is out of the game.

**SAY** • Lions usually eat other animals. But if they get hungry and there are people around, lions are big and dangerous enough to eat humans. Today we will learn about Daniel, who had to spend the night with hungry lions as punishment for praying to God. Do you think God could rescue Daniel?

**OPTION 2:** Play dough lions

Provide play dough for the kids and ask them to sculpt a lion or a person. See if they can act out the events of Daniel’s plight before hearing it to see who is already familiar with this story.

**SAY** • The story we will hear today is fairly well known. Many people already know the basics of what happened. What you may not know is what our story has to do with Jesus. In large group, we’ll learn what Daniel in the lions’ den has to do with Jesus.



- play dough
- play dough utensils (optional)

## Transition to large group

# Large Group LEADER

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## Countdown

• countdown video

Show the countdown video as your kids arrive, and set it to end as large group time begins.

## Introduce the session (3 minutes)

• leader attire

• binder labeled

*Employee Handbook*

*[Large Group Leader enters wearing an apron and chef's hat, carrying a binder that says Employee Handbook.]*

**LEADER** • You kids aren't going to believe this. The rules in this employee handbook just get stranger and stranger. Take this for example:

“All employees must refer to the back office as the Lions' Den. Failure to comply will result in immediate disciplinary action as offending employee will be forced to wear a lion costume for the duration of his shift. Kitchen employees are excused from wearing the costume gloves and headpiece due to food safety concerns.”

I heard a story about a customer finding a bit of fur in his calzone, but I had no idea what that was about. Until now I thought he was *lion*. Get it?

Anyway, I clearly have my work cut out for me. Some of these rules are just so silly, I can't believe

Papa Roni ever thought these rules would be good. I bet his poor staff spent all their time worried about following rules and couldn't really do their jobs.

You know, this actually reminds me of yet another Bible story about a king implementing a bad rule. Let's head to our timeline!

## Giant timeline (1 minute)

**LEADER** • Babylon was eventually conquered by another nation called Persia, but Daniel was so faithful and good at his job, even the new kings wanted to keep him around! That's where our story today picks up. It's called "Daniel Was Rescued."

• Giant Timeline

## Big picture question (1 minute)

**LEADER** • Despite a new king, our big picture question is still the same. ***How can we obey God?*** Do you remember the answer? [*Allow kids to answer.*] Great job! ***We trust God to give us strength to obey Him.***

## Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Daniel 6. Tell the Bible story in your own words, or show the Bible story video "Daniel Was Rescued."

**LEADER** • Once again, Daniel was forced to make a choice between obeying God and obeying a human king. The punishment for disobeying the king was severe, but Daniel knew that God is more powerful than any earthly king. Daniel chose to disobey the king in order to obey God, and the king had to punish Daniel.

The king did not want to punish Daniel, but

• Bibles  
• "Daniel Was Rescued" video  
• Big Picture Question Poster  
• Bible Story Picture Poster



Daniel had broken the law. The king cared about Daniel and hoped God would protect him. Thankfully, that's exactly what God did! **Daniel was faithful to God, and God rescued him.** But even Daniel's obedience was a result of God's power. God had been working in Daniel's life to give him the strength he needed to obey even if it meant spending a night with hungry lions.

God showed His power to rescue Daniel from the lions, but Daniel was just a small part of a much bigger story. God ultimately rescued us from a much bigger problem—sin and death—through His Son, Jesus.

We disobey God's rules when we sin, and so we deserve the punishment of our sin, which is death. But because God loves us, He sent His Son, Jesus, to die in our place and come back to life on the third day. God knew that we could not obey Him on our own, so He provided the way for us to be rescued from sin. God fills us with His power through the Holy Spirit. ***How can we obey God? We trust God to give us strength to obey Him.***

Ask the following review questions:

1. Who was the king that Daniel served in this story? (*Darius, Dan. 6:1*)
2. What did the other officials convince Darius to do? (*pass a law saying that people could only pray to him for 30 days, Dan. 6:7*)
3. Did Daniel stop praying to God? (*no, Dan. 6:10*)
4. Did the king want to punish Daniel? (*No, but he could not change the law; Dan. 6:14-16*)
5. How did Daniel survive? (*God shut the mouths of the*

*lions to protect Daniel, Dan. 6:22)*

**6. How can we obey God? We trust God to give us strength to obey Him.**

**The Gospel: God’s Plan for Me (optional)**

Use Scripture and the guide provided with this session to explain to boys and girls how to become a Christian. Assign individuals to meet with kids who have more questions.

Encourage boys and girls to ask their parents, small group leaders, or other Christian adults any questions they may have about becoming a Christian.

Tip: Provide *Am a Christian Now* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

**Key passage (5 minutes)**

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together Daniel 2:20-21. Then sing “Name of God.”

**LEADER** • Our key passage teaches us that God has all wisdom and power. He can set up kingdoms or tear them down. He is in control of all things, and when we trust Him, He gives us strength to obey.

- Key Passage Poster
- “Name of God” song

**Discussion starter video (4 minutes)**

**LEADER** • Is disobedience still wrong when you have good intentions? Think about that as you watch this video.

Show the “Unit 16, Session 3” discussion starter video. Talk to kids about what counts as disobedience. Ask them if there are situations when disobedience is OK. Ask them whom they have to obey.

**LEADER** • We are called to obey God all the time, but we often fail to do that. It can be very difficult to do what God says is right. Thankfully, we know that God offers forgiveness freely because Jesus already died for sin. When we trust Jesus, He fills us with the

- “Unit 16, Session 3” discussion starter video

Holy Spirit and gives us strength to obey! God is so good and wonderful.

### **Sing (4 minutes)**

• “It Is Well” song

**LEADER** • Our God is so good and loving. He rescues His people. Let’s praise Him together!  
Sing together “It Is Well.”

### **Pray (2 minutes)**

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to small groups.

**LEADER** • God, we love You and praise You. We know that we cannot obey You perfectly, and we ask You to forgive us for disobeying. Thank You for sending Jesus to rescue us from sin and death. Give us strength to obey You. Amen.

### **Dismiss to small groups**

## The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



**God rules.** Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



**We sinned.** Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



**God provided.** Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



**Jesus gives.** Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



**We respond.** Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus.

# Small Group LEADER

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## Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- "Name of God" song (optional)

Form two groups of kids. Invite the first group to say the key passage, one phrase at a time. Between phrases, ask the second group to echo the first group. After kids complete the verses, switch the groups so that the second group says the key passage first and the first group echoes. Then sing the key passage song.

**SAY** • God is our trustworthy King of everything. These verses teach us that nothing is beyond God's control; God even chooses who becomes king or ruler of a land. He saved Daniel from the lions, and He can give us the strength to obey Him because He controls all things.

## Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Main Point Poster
- "Story Sequence Cards" printable

Before class, print the "Story Sequence Cards" and cut them apart. For large groups, form teams of five kids and print one set for each group. Mix up the cards and give the kids time to rearrange the cards in order of events in the story. If multiple groups are playing, see who can finish first. Review the story with the kids, showing each picture as you go.

**SAY** • Daniel knew about King Darius's new law, but he

also knew that it was a sin to pray to anyone besides God. Daniel chose obedience to God despite the punishment he would face. Daniel did not even try to hide his obedience to God. He prayed with the windows open, where anyone could see his faithfulness. **Daniel was faithful to God, and God rescued him.**

Jesus did not deserve punishment, but He also faced it willingly. He knew that obeying God meant suffering on the cross and dying for our sins. Now, when we trust in Jesus we have new life! We can live with God forever because Jesus obeyed God perfectly and died on the cross, rising again on the third day.

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

## Activity choice (10 minutes)

### OPTION 1: Lion masks

Give each kid a paper plate and large craft stick. Help the kids to cut out eye holes in the paper plate, if desired. Provide glue and string for the kids to make lion manes around the edges of the plate. Allow them to color and decorate their plates with markers or crayons, drawing whiskers, a nose, a mouth, or teeth. Help the kids glue the large craft stick to the bottom of the mask to serve as a handle. Talk about what the story might have seemed like from the lions' perspective.

**SAY** • The Bible doesn't explain what the lions might have thought when Daniel stayed the night with them. What the Bible *does* tell us is that God shut their mouths. It's very possible that the lions wanted to eat Daniel, but they couldn't! God is in control. He has power over everything. **Daniel was faithful to God, and God rescued Daniel.** We can be faithful

- paper plates, 1 per kid
- large craft sticks, 1 per kid
- scissors (optional)
- glue
- string
- markers or crayons

and obedient to God, too, because of Jesus. Jesus was perfectly obedient and died on the cross anyway. Jesus rose again so we can be forgiven and made new. ***How can we obey God? We trust God to give us strength to obey Him.***



LOW PREP

- pen or pencil
- large sheet of paper
- crayons or markers
- paper

**OPTION 2:** Class letter

Tell the kids in your class about a missionary family that your church supports. Give kids some information about where the missionaries serve and the people whom they serve. Help the children think of ways to encourage the missionary family to obey God and remember His love. Write their sentences on a large sheet of paper, and then allow the kids to write their names at the bottom. Provide paper and coloring utensils so the kids can write cards or draw pictures for the missionaries. Work with your church to find a way to send these encouraging notes, perhaps with a care package.

**SAY** • Daniel was from Judah but was living in a land that was filled with people who didn't know or love God. Daniel's enemies knew about his faithfulness to God. They wanted him to die so that they could take his place as the king's most trusted advisor. That's why they came up with a plan to make it illegal to pray to God; they knew that Daniel would continue praying to God anyway! What they didn't know was that God would rescue Daniel from the lions.

Missionaries often live in very dangerous parts of the world where they could be arrested or even killed for talking about Jesus or worshiping Him. However, missionaries still obey God. ***We trust God to give us strength to obey Him.*** God sent Jesus to die for our

sins. When we trust in Jesus, God gives us new life.

## **Journal and prayer (5 minutes)**

Distribute each child's journal. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture showing one way they can be faithful to God. Ask them to think about ways they can honor God and grow closer to Him. Encourage them to be honest with themselves about their weaknesses and the ways they fail to honor God.

### **SAY • Daniel was faithful to God, and God rescued him.**

But even Daniel was not perfect. All of us fall short of God's glory and fail to honor and obey God in different ways. Because of Jesus, we can be forgiven and cleansed of our sin. God loves us, so we can show we love Him through obedience. Even after we trust Jesus, we will not always obey perfectly; thankfully, God never stops loving us, and we can always pray to ask Him for more help obeying. When we trust in Jesus, God works in us to make us more and more like Jesus. That means we can love God and obey Him better each day!

Make sure each child secures this week's sheet in the journal, and then collect them. Keep the journals in the classroom so they will be available every week or as often as you wish to use them.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page provided with this session. Pray, asking God to draw the kids in your group near to Jesus. Thank Him for giving us strength to obey Him.

- pencils and crayons
- Journal Page
- Bible Story Coloring Page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.