

Divine Diversions

St. Mary's Anglican Church, Regina

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Passages

Story: Daniel 6:1-28

Key/Memory Verse: Joshua 1:9 "Don't ever be afraid or discouraged! I am the Lord your God, and I will be there to help you wherever you go."

Purpose

Specific Objectives for Games Workshop

- Children will be able to find the book of Daniel in their Bibles, learn the sequence of events and details of the story of Daniel in the den of lions.
- Older children will read parts of the story from their Bibles.
- Children will be encouraged to pray and trust God when they are afraid.

Preparation

Review the background information and lesson materials.

Materials List

- Game Spinner
- A hat or other container
- Pre-written questions – you may add some of your own (see game options to decided at planning meeting)
- Blank slips of paper
- Pencils
- Timer
- Dry-erase marker
- Envelope for prayer slips

Concepts

- Daniel worshipped and obeyed God, not the king.
- Daniel did what he knew was right, even when his life was at risk.
- Daniel prayed and trusted God.
- God took care of Daniel.
- We can pray and trust God when we are afraid.

Presentation

Open - Introduction

1. Introduce yourself and tell the children they're going to play a game in which they'll need to know the story of Daniel in the Lion's Den in detail.
2. Open with a brief prayer, thanking God for the day and asking for help in learning.

Opening Prayer

Scripture/Bible Story

Review the story, using this summary as a guide. Unless this is the first Sunday of the rotation, let the children help you tell the story. This will give you an idea of how much they already know.

This story happened after the army of Babylon had conquered Israel and taken the Jewish people back to Babylon as captives. Daniel was a Jew who grew up in Babylon and was an assistant to the Babylonian king. Daniel did a good job and King Darius trusted him and planned to make Daniel the boss of all the other assistants.

The other assistants were jealous of Daniel and tried to figure out a reason to complain about him to the king. But Daniel hadn't done anything wrong, so his enemies set a trap for him. They persuaded King Darius to sign an order that people could pray only to the king. Anyone who disobeyed the order would be thrown to the lions.

But Daniel worshipped God, not the king, and the king's order did not stop him from praying to God. Three times a day he went to his house, where the upstairs windows were opened to face Jerusalem, and prayed. His enemies went to his house and caught him praying and told the king. The king was upset, but according to the law he had to carry out his order, so he commanded that Daniel be thrown to the lions, saying, "May your God deliver you!".

The next morning the king hurried to the lion's den and called, "Daniel, did your God save you?" And Daniel answered, "God sent an angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not hurt me."

The king was overjoyed. Daniel was freed unharmed from the lion's den and King Darius wrote a message to all the world saying, "In all my kingdom people shall fear the God of Daniel, for he is the living God, enduring for ever. He delivers and rescues, he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, he who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions."

Application

Break the class into several teams of three to five players (consider naming them "Satraps", "Medes," "Persians," "Lions," etc.). Line the teams up.

The teams will take turns spinning the game wheel, then choosing a question from the hat. Let the first person in line for the team spin and draw the question, then hand it to you without unfolding it, because the answer is also on the paper.

Read the question and let the whole team consult on the answer. Give the team 1-minute to answer the question (Get the shepherd to time the game. Adjust the time limit if it turns out to be too short/too long). After the

team's turn, the player who spun goes to the end of his team's line. Keep score on the white board.

If the team answers the question correctly, they get the number of points they spun for. If they can't answer correctly, invite the next team to answer the question. If they get it right, give them ½ the number of points (not worth as much because they had longer to think). If the second team answers the question and gets ½ the points, they still get their turn at spinning and answering their own question. (If one team is very weak, this could give the team following them the advantage of having lots of extra opportunities to answer questions. Consider rotating the second-guessing team instead of having it automatically be the next team.) You might save a big question for a tiebreaker or for use if someone lands on a big-point section of the wheel.

Two sets of questions are at end of lesson plan. They are basically the same questions but the easy format is multiple choice and true/false. Have both sets ready and be prepared to switch from one set to the other, depending on how well the children are doing in the game. And feel free to improve the questions or add some of your own!

Alternative Game Plan: For the younger children it might be better, instead of letting them draw questions from a hat, to just use the sheet of questions and call them out in order. The point is for them to learn the story, and their knowledge might be reinforced better if the questions follow the sequence of events. Take note of how much they seem to know when you review the story at the beginning of the session, and use your judgment for the game.

Grades 3-5: Break the class into several teams of three to five players. Give them pencils and slips of paper. The students are to use their Bibles, turned to Daniel 6, and think of 5 questions that will be used in the game. They should write each question and answer on a separate slip of paper, then fold the paper. After each team has 5 questions, gather all the questions and place in a hat. (If this part doesn't go well, or if you're pressed for time, use the pre-written questions. The point of having them write their own questions is to get them to read the story in the Bible.)

Play the game as described above.

Note: Be prepared to define unfamiliar words when the kids come across them in the Bible. Also be prepared to comment on the brutal end of this story if kids bring it up. Not only the bad guys but also their wives and children are thrown into the pit of lions. You might explain that in those times very cruel punishments were common, and it was also common to punish a person by killing members of his family. Note that such practices would contrast with Jewish law. "An eye for an eye" etc. would limit the punishment to the offender and also limit the punishment to fit the crime rather than imposing the death penalty for a minor offense.

Wrap-up:

1. Recite the Bible memory verse for a prize ("Don't ever be afraid or discouraged! I am the Lord your God, and I will be there to help you wherever you go.") Joshua 1:9
2. Talk about how we can be like Daniel. Use some of these questions to stimulate discussion; if the kids are non-responsive, give the suggested answers and let them "vote" for their choice :

If I had been in the den with the lions, I would probably have:

- a) been scared
- b) not been afraid at all
- c) been afraid just a little bit

When I heard about the new law saying I could only pray to the king, I would have:

- a) prayed to the king
- b) prayed to God in spite of the law
- c) stopped praying

When I'm scared I:

- a) hide
- b) talk to a parent
- c) pray
- d) other ?

Of these three things, what would be the scariest to you?

- a) A scary haunted house
- b) Being lost in a strange place
- c) Being in a lot of pain (like a broken leg or falling off your bike)

Ask the kids what is the scariest thing they've ever experienced

When I'm scared, I would be most comforted by:

- a) My mom or dad holding me
- b) An object like my blanket, a doll, or curling up in my bed
- c) Pretending whatever it was that was scaring me wasn't there!
- d) Other

A "lion" in my life right now is:

- a) someone who has been making me upset
- b) something happening at home or school that is upsetting me
- c) an illness or health problem I'm having or someone I love is having
- d) not feeling very happy these days
- e) other?)

Reflect

Discuss some of the following ideas with the children:

Ask the children to think about what their "lion" is (a problem or something they're afraid of), then write about it or draw a picture. Give the older children a separate slip of paper and ask them to also write their "lion" on it. They can put their name on the slip or leave it off. Seal the slips in an envelope.

Memory Verse

Have the children locate the memory verse in their Bibles and review it at this time.

"Don't ever be afraid or discouraged! I am the Lord your God, and I will be there to help you wherever you go."
Joshua 1:9

Closing

Closing Prayer

Younger children: Tell the children you are going to have a moment of silence for them to offer their problem to God in a prayer. End with a short prayer asking God to help us when we're afraid.

Older children: Offer the contents of the envelope to God in a prayer. Tell the children you'll give the envelope to the pastor who will read each prayer slip privately and offer a prayer for each. (Remember to follow up and actually do this!) Encourage the children to talk with one of the pastors (Claude or Bruce) about their problems.

Questions (older grades)

- What was the king's name?
Daniel 6: 6 (and elsewhere) King Darius
- At the beginning of the story, what was the king's plan for Daniel?
Daniel 6: 3 To put him in charge of the whole kingdom
- Who didn't want Daniel to be in charge?
Daniel 6: 4 The king's other assistants.
- What did Daniel's enemies FIRST try to do?
Daniel 6: 4 Find some reason to complain to the king about Daniel.
- Daniel's enemies got the king to sign a decree. What did it say?
Daniel 6:7 That people could pray only to the king.
- How often did Daniel pray?
Daniel 6: 10 three times a day
- Where did Daniel go to pray?
Daniel 6: 10 To his house
- What was special about the place where Daniel prayed?
Daniel 6: 10 The upstairs windows were open to face Jerusalem.
- How did the king feel when he found out that Daniel had broken the law by praying?
Daniel 6:14 Distressed
- Why didn't the king change the law to save Daniel?
Daniel 6: 15 Once he had signed the law it could not be changed.
- What did the king say as Daniel was thrown to the lions?
Daniel 6: 16 "May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you!" (accept paraphrases)
- How was the opening of the lion's den closed?
Daniel 6: 17 With a stone.

- What did the king do while Daniel was with the lions?
Daniel 6: 18 He fasted all night.
- What did the king do the next morning?
Daniel 6: 19 He hurried to the lion's den to check on Daniel.
- How did God protect Daniel?
Daniel 6: 22 God sent an angel to shut the lions' mouths.
- How did the king feel when he found Daniel was safe?
Daniel 6:23 Very happy
- What did King Darius say about God?
Daniel 6: 26 He is the living God, enduring forever....etc. (accept paraphrases)

Questions (Younger Grades)

- The king's name was:
 - a) Daniel
 - b) Satrap
 - c) Darius
- True or False – Daniel was the king's favorite assistant. (true)
- At the beginning of the story, the king wanted to:
 - a) Put Daniel in charge of the whole kingdom
 - b) Make Daniel marry his daughter
 - c) Throw Daniel to the lions
- True or False – The king's other assistants liked Daniel and were happy that he was going to be their boss. (false)
- True or False – When Daniel heard that praying to God had been forbidden, he stopped praying because he didn't want to break the law. (false)
- True or False – When King Darius found out that Daniel had broken the law, he said, "No problem, I'm the king, so I'll just change the law." (false)
- Daniel's enemies got the king to sign a decree. It said:
 - a) That people could pray only to the king.
 - b) That all Jews should be thrown to the lions.
 - c) That all lions should be kept on leashes.
- How often did Daniel pray?
 - a) Three times a week
 - b) Three times an hour
 - c) Three times a day

- Where did Daniel go to pray?
 - a) To his house
 - b) To the temple
 - c) To the king's palace

- What was special about the place where Daniel prayed?
 - a) The Ark of the Covenant was there
 - b) The upstairs windows were open to face Jerusalem.
 - c) The walls were covered in gold

- How did the king feel when he found out that Daniel has broken the law by praying to God?
 - a) Distressed and upset
 - b) Happy and excited
 - c) He didn't care

- What did the king say as Daniel was thrown to the lions?
 - a) "Goodbye, Daniel, I'll miss you!"
 - b) "Forgive me Daniel, I didn't mean for this to happen!"
 - c) "May your God deliver you!"

- How was the opening of the lion's den closed?
 - a) With an iron gate
 - b) With a stone
 - c) With a padlocked door

- After Daniel was thrown to the lions, King Darius :
 - a) went to a party
 - b) went home but didn't eat or sleep all night.
 - c) prayed and sang hymns all night.

- After Daniel spent the night with the lions, what did the king do the next morning ?
 - a) Got up and ate a big breakfast.
 - b) Left for a vacation in Egypt.
 - c) Hurried to the lion's den to check on Daniel.

- How did God protect Daniel?
 - a) Sent an angel to shut the lions' mouths
 - b) Gave Daniel a slingshot to kill the lions
 - c) Sent an earthquake to open up the den so Daniel could escape.

- How did the king feel when he found Daniel was safe?
 - a) Angry
 - b) Overjoyed
 - c) Puzzled

- At the end of the story, what did King Darius say about God?
 - a) "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."
 - b) "Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth."
 - c) "He is the living God, enduring forever...He delivers and rescues, he works signs and wonders..."