Daniel in the Lion’s Den

Scripture Reference: Daniel 6:1-28

Creation Station:

Art/Prayer Lesson

This lesson plan is copyrighted and was contributed by First Presbyterian Church, Napa, CA. Adapted for use at Gloria Dei by Beth Tobin, May 2011. It may be used for non-profit uses only.

Sunday School Time Schedule:

10:00 Students meet with shepherds in workshop locations.
10:05 Lesson Begins
10:40 Closure
10:45 Closing Begins in the Choir Room Upstairs
10:55 Sunday School Ends. Parents pick up children from the Choir Room.

DANIEL IN THE LIONS’ DEN

The book of Daniel in the Old Testament is divided into 2 different sections. The first half of the book (chapters 1-6) tells how Daniel and three of his friend from Judah are taken prisoner by the Babylonian army when Jerusalem was captured and became important officials in the government at Babylon. The second half of the book of Daniel is where Daniel reports several visions and their meaning.

The section of the Book of Daniel for this unit of study will focus on Daniel 6:1-28, the story of God rescuing Daniel from the pit of lions.

Scripture: Daniel 6 and specifically, 6:1-28

Memory Verse: Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV)

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.”

In this Workshop:

Children will hear the story of Daniel in the lions’ den. The focus will be on Daniel’s devotion to God and ability to rely on God for strength in a very difficult situation. Kids will learn that they too can rely on God in every situation.

Kids will be making a “doodle drawing” while workshop leader reads the story/poem. The focus will be on prayer and discussion of the ACTS prayer (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication/Send Help). Children will be guided in a prayer labyrinth experience.
Concepts and Objectives: Faith through Prayer

By the end of the rotation, the students will:
• be able to find the Book of Daniel in their Bibles.
• memorize Proverbs 3:5-6.
• will learn about Daniel, a prophet in the Old Testament. Daniel worshipped and obeyed God, not the king. He did what he knew was right, even when his life was at risk.
• know that Daniel prayed regularly and trusted God even when it was hard. God took care of Daniel.
• know God is with us in good and bad times.
• know God listens to us when we pray.
• know God helps us when we are afraid or in trouble. (Psalm 46)
• know God answers our prayers

Prayer and the prayer labyrinth were used in this rotation at First Presbyterian Church, Napa, CA in our art workshop. The labyrinth was made using a 10’x12’ dropcloth, marked off with tape. This website was very valuable in obtaining information for Christian background on the labyrinth:
http://www.spiritworks.org/Resources/Labyrinth/default.htm

Opening Activity:
Introduce yourself and open with a brief prayer.

Hand out one piece of white paper and let them each choose 1 colored marker or crayon.

Tell them that as you read this poem story called “The Lions Weren’t Hungry Last Night” (see end of lesson) you would like them to “doodle” on their paper. Tell them to listen carefully to the words and just make designs on the paper (not a real picture of anything, just designs) that go along with the feelings they have as you read. Tell them to keep their marker on the paper at all times, not lifting it up, so it is one continuous line. Remind them there is no right or wrong way to do this.

Read the poem/story “The Lions Weren’t Hungry Last Night”.

Ask them to put down their markers.

To ask and wonder:

• Why was Daniel put in the Lion’s Den? What law did he break?
• Why were the jealous leaders so sure they could trap Daniel with this law? (he was well known as someone who was faithful to God. They made a law that tried to force him to be unfaithful).
· Look in your Bibles and read 6:10-11. What 2 things did Daniel pray for? (Thanks and help)
· How many times a day did Daniel pray? (3)
· How did Daniel pray? (on his knees)
· Why do you suppose he prayed in front of an open window where he was sure to be caught? (he did not want to hide his faithfulness to God)

· Ask the children about their prayer habits: When/where/how they pray. What do they pray for? Do they pray regularly? Just when they need help? There will be no “wrong” answers, of course.

· Daniel was in serious trouble in the den. If you were Daniel, what would you pray for? Children might answer: "Help"! Then ask: What kind of help? Wait until you get responses like: "Kill the lions", "get me out of here!" Remind them that God didn’t do that though.
· How did God help Daniel? (6:22 God shut the mouths of the lions so they couldn’t hurt him)
· Does God always help us the way we ask God to help? (God gives us the help we need. Sometimes we don’t see it that way, though.)

Continue:

Today we’re going to talk about 4 different kinds of prayers. It is always OK to talk to God and ask for help and say little one-sentence, or even one-word, prayers throughout your day. When you pray at church, before going to bed or in the morning or whenever you want to say a prayer to God, you can practice using the 4 parts.

**Here are Two forms of Structured Prayer. We will be using TRIP:**

The ACTS Prayer:
- A - Adoration (telling God how wonderful He is!)
- C - Confession (telling God we’re sorry for the things we do wrong)
- T - Thanksgiving (telling God thank you for things)
- S - Supplication or send help (asking God for help for someone else or yourself)

The TRIP Prayer or Prayer TRIP:
- T - Thanksgiving
- R - Repentance
- I - Intercession - help
- P - Praise

Amen = This is most certainly true!
Brainstorm ideas together for the 4 parts using flip chart paper.

Ask: At the end of a prayer we say what? Amen! It means “So be it!” or “This is most certainly true!”

Tell them that God ALWAYS answers our prayers! Sometimes the answer is not what we expect or want! God answers our prayers in different ways. God answers either:
Yes! No! Wait, not yet! Or I have a better way!

Back to the story - Ask:
If Daniel prayed to God to get him out of the lions’ den or kill the lions, which of these did God answer? What did God do instead?

Tell them that many people, adults and kids, like to keep prayer journals. By writing down the things we ask God for in prayer and putting the date by it, after God answers that prayer, we can go back and look at our prayer and see how God answered it. It’s a way to really see how God is working in our lives. And then to be able to share that with others so they can see God working in your life.

**Prayer Activity:**
Think right now about something that you or someone you care about needs God’s help with. Write it down on a slip of paper and include today’s date. Tuck the paper in your pocket or sleeve. (For kids who can’t write, have them draw a picture of something that reminds them of what they’d like to pray for)

Pass out Prayer T.R.I.P. Booklets. Share with students some ways they might like to use this book throughout the summer. There is a page for each letter of this formal prayer and space for them to note things they are thankful for, need help with etc. and a place to mark how their prayers have been answered. Students will work on their booklets while other students go through the labyrinth. They can decorate their booklet as desired.

**The Prayer Labyrinth:**
Has anyone ever heard of a labyrinth? It’s not a maze, a race, a game or a puzzle … it’s something that Christians have been using to help them in their prayer time for many years. It is a form of art.

(NOTE: At this time, tell kids some of the key comments that you’d like to share with the kids from the attached packet on prayer labyrinths (obtained from the spiritworks website). You can show pictures of the labyrinth and explain that ours is much smaller.)

Say: Take a look at your doodle drawing – if you kept the marker on the page for a long time and made a winding doodle line, it’s kind of like a labyrinth.
Walk the Labyrinth:

Tell them that you will be going to another where there will be a prayer labyrinth set up.

Before you go tell them that there are some ground rules they have to follow or they will be asked to sit out:

This is a quiet time of prayer and they need to be respectful of each other and quiet time with God.

Tell the kids that they will begin walking and they should leave space between them so they don’t bunch up. It’s NOT a race! It’s a time to be quiet and talk to God.

When you get to the center where the cross is, stop and take out the slip of paper you wrote the prayer on, kneel down, and talk about it to God.

Workshop leader notes: When you arrive, begin the CD. Keep the lights off. Kids should take their shoes off. You should only take a manageable size group at a time (3 or 4). You will need to stagger the kids as they enter the labyrinth. The rest of the class can work on their T.R.I.P. prayer booklets until it’s their turn to go to the labyrinth. Tell them that since this is a time to focus 100% on God as they walk the labyrinth, they might want to choose some words to say over and over and "meditate" on in their minds ... such as "God is good", or "Jesus", or "Praise the Lord" or their own choice. It will help them focus.

As the first kids finish, have them go back to the workshop so they’re not a distraction to the others.

Afterwards, distribute and explain “finger labyrinths” to the kids. Since we all don’t have labyrinths at home, they can use these anytime.

------


Some of the discussion ideas used in this lesson were obtained from lesson plans at rotation.org.
The Lions Weren’t Hungry Last Night

Song lyrics to ‘The Lions Weren't Hungry Last Night’ - children's song about the Biblical story of Daniel and the lions' den

There once lived a good man named Dan
The best man that lived in the land
So honest and just that King Darius
Made Daniel his next in command

But there were some very mean men
Who did not like Dan the king’s friend
So jealous were they that they planned out a way
To throw Dan in the lion’s den

The lions are hungry tonight they sang
The lions are hungry tonight
They’ve not eaten dinner
We think that they might
The lions are hungry tonight they sang
The lions are hungry tonight

The king was as sad as could be
But could not reverse the decree
He prayed the night through and skipped dinner too
Then ran the next morning to see

The lions are hungry tonight they sang
The lions are hungry tonight
They’ve not eaten dinner
We think that they might
The lions are hungry tonight they sang
The lions are hungry tonight

The king cried Oh Daniel my friend
I’m wondering how have you been
And how is the weather
Are you still together?
Did God keep you safe in the den?

And then the most wonderful thing
That’s ever been heard by the king
Down deep in the den stood ol’ Dan with a grin
And this is the song he did sing
The lion’s weren’t hungry last night, oh king
The lion’s weren’t hungry last night
My guardian angel has shut their mouths tight
The lion’s weren’t hungry last night, oh king
The lion’s weren’t hungry last night

The story has something to tell
A lesson to learn from Daniel
When others mistreat you like lions that eat you
It doesn’t help much if you yell

And so when your back’s to the wall
Be good and love God through it all
And then in the end you can sing with a grin
Cause God’s always near when you call

The lions weren’t hungry last night you’ll sing
The lions weren’t hungry last night
My guardian angel has shut their mouths tight.
The lions weren’t hungry last night you’ll sing
The lions weren’t hungry last night

Like kittens they purr through the night you’ll sing
Like kittens they purr through the night
My guardian angel has shut their mouths tight
The lions weren’t hungry last night you’ll sing
The lions weren’t hungry last night