

A Good Shepherd  
Sacred Story

**Daniel and the Lions**

Adapted by:  
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**Jennifer Schoeneberg**

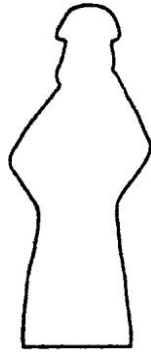
2nd Edition  
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## **DANIEL AND THE LIONS .... MA TERIALS**

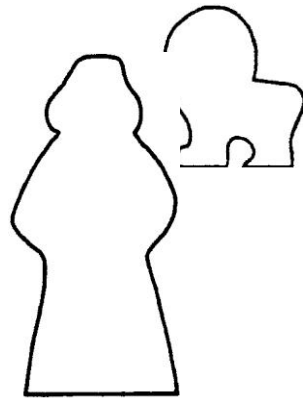
- medium wicker basket to hold:
  - wooden Daniel figure (jointed at knees to pray)
  - wooden King Darius
  - 3 wooden lions
  - 3 wooden leader figures (men)



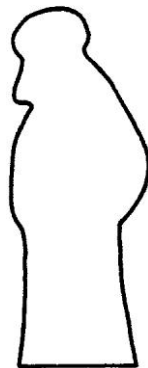
Daniel



King Darius



Lion



Leaders

DANIEL AND THE LIONS ••• DANIEL 6:1-23

ACTIONS

After speaking, walk to the shelf and get the story. Carry it carefully back to the circle and set it in front of you as you sit down.

After speaking, allow 10-15 seconds of silence as you touch one or more of the wooden pieces reverently, centering yourself and the children.

Move your hand slowly from center to the right.

Place King Darius to the right of center.

Place Daniel and the three leaders just left of Darius.

Touch the Daniel figure gently.

Set Daniel a little apart from the group. Move the other three away together.

Move Daniel to upper center and move the three leaders next to King Darius.

WORDS

Watch carefully where I go to get this story so you will know where to find it if you choose to make this your work today or another day.

All the words to this story are inside of me. Will you make silence with me so I can find all the words to my story, please?

The people of God were still in exile in Babylon. They had been taken from their city and it had been burned along with the temple.

But now a new king ruled Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar was no longer king. The king's name was Darius.

King Darius made four people leaders of his country.

One of those people was a man named Daniel who was one of the people of God.

Daniel became the best leader the king had. But the other men became very jealous.

They decided to find a way to get rid of Daniel.

Together they went to the king and said, "We all think you should make a law that no one can pray to any other god or man for thirty days. If they do, they would be thrown into the lion's den."

Make a motion with both hands as though pushing. Place the lions at upper left of your area.

Rest your chin in your hand as though considering the request. Nod your head in agreement.

Touch the Daniel figure gently. Kneel Daniel down and fold your hands in prayer.

Bring the other leaders near Daniel and then quickly to the king.

Shake your head slowly.

Raise both shoulders and hold both hands with palms up in a gesture of helplessness.

Move Daniel to be in among the lions.

Put one hand over your heart.

Roll an imaginary stone over the front of the lion's den. "Seal" it with an imaginary ring.

Move the king back to right of center, but keep walking him around and shake your head.

Move the king quickly to the lions.

Cup your hands around your mouth to call.

King Darius listened to them and then signed the law so no one could pray to any god or man except Darius for one month.

Daniel heard about the law.

But he still went to his room every day and got down on his knees by his window to pray to Yahweh.

The other leaders saw Daniel praying and went quickly to tell the king.

The king was very sad when he heard about Daniel. He liked Daniel and wanted to save him.

But he had signed the law and he had no choice but to put Daniel in with the lions.

That night Daniel was put in the den of lions.

The king said to him, "I hope the God you serve will save you. "

Then he sealed the stone put over the door to the lion's den with his own ring so no one could set Daniel free.

Then the king went back to his palace, but he couldn't eat or sleep.

The next morning the king rushed from the palace to the den of the lions.

When he reached the lion's den he called out, "Daniel, who serves the living God, has your God been able to save you from the lions?"

Nod your head and smile.

Smile as you remove Daniel from among the lions and set him before the king.

Nod your head slowly and smile.

Put all wooden figures back into the basket one at a time.

After speaking, carry the basket back to the shelf. Return to the circle and sit down.

Dismiss the children ONLY after everyone has had time to choose their work.

Daniel called back, "My God sent an angel and shut the mouths of the lions. I've not been hurt."

Then the king was happy and commanded that Daniel be taken out of the lion's den.

So Daniel was taken out of the lion's den and wasn't hurt at all, because he had trusted in God.

#### WONDERING QUESTIONS:

I wonder what words Daniel prayed by his window?

I wonder what the lions thought when they couldn't open their mouths?

I wonder what Daniel did all night in the lion's den?

Watch carefully how I put these materials away so you will know how to use them if you choose to make this your story today or another day.

Watch carefully where I return this story so you will know where to find it if you choose to make this your work today or another day.

I wonder what you will make your work today? We have many things to do. Will you paint, or do the craft? Or will you work with a story to make it your own? Let's go around the circle and choose our work.

## DANIEL AND THE LIONS •... TEACHER HELPS

This, like the story of the Three Men in a Furnace, is from the book of Daniel and is set, supposedly, in the time of the Exile. The overall emphasis of the story again is that God rewards faithfulness to God, even, or maybe especially, in times of oppression.

Daniel is shown as a righteous man who manages to adapt to his society and become successful in a foreign land, while still keeping his religious principles and practices. If the evil called jealousy had not reared its ugly head, Daniel would have been OK to the end of his time in Babylon. But it is the others, who are jealous of Daniel's success, who decide to find something he does wrong that can be reported to the king.

The three leaders (called presidents in the book of Daniel) go to King Darius and play on his ego. They suggest he make a law, an edict, saying that no one may pray to any god or any other man for thirty days. This would assume that King Darius was god enough for all the kingdom for at least a month. Darius falls into their trap, either not knowing Daniel's practice of prayer or not remembering.

The three men then set their plan into action and Daniel is thrown in among the lions. But once again God is faithful and Daniel comes through his ordeal unharmed.

Through the whole story we have the feeling that King Darius is as much the victim as is Daniel. This can be a very subtle shade of gray for the children to begin to understand. Sometimes circumstances, even those we've gotten ourselves into willingly, can become a problem.

I have chosen to leave out Daniel 6:24 which talks about the king throwing the men who had plotted against Daniel into the pit, along with their children and wives only to be killed immediately by the lions. I do not feel it is necessary for the story. The story is about the faithfulness of Daniel and God and not about the destruction of others.

It will be interesting to hear what the children say about the words Daniel prayed to God. He knew about the edict and knew he could be killed for what he was doing. Be open even to responses that seem off track or out of place. Many times they are a stepping stone to another understanding.

The second question that wonders about the lions and what they thought is supposed to be just fun. You may want to act the lion's part and try to talk with your mouth shut, as though you are unable to open it.

The third question will bring many responses. Maybe he slept, prayed, sang, talked to the lions or played tic-tac-toe in the dust. Some may believe Daniel was worried while others will be sure Daniel knew God would be with him.



This story needs to be told with an emphasis on the loving God who cares about God's people and will protect them. That is the reason it came to be part of our Scriptures and will serve that purpose over and over in history.

**SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR OLDER CHILDREN:**

Daniel felt so strongly about praying to his God that he was willing to risk his life to do it. What might be so important to you that you would risk your life for it?

In the story King Darius liked Daniel, but he had made a rule he couldn't change if he wanted to stay king. Think of a time when you said something and then wished you could change what you said. Why didn't you? What happened as a result?

There are still people who are willing to face death for their religion. I think that would be very hard. Can you ever imagine yourself doing that?