



Uh Oh Topher

Daniel in the Lions' Den

BIG IDEA: God's way is the best way.

BIBLE BASIS: Daniel 6

KEY VERSE: "God's way is perfect. The LORD's word doesn't have any flaws." Psalm 18:30 (NirV)

SCHEDULE

2S & 3S CLASSES

ARRIVAL & PLAYTIME

10:30-10:55

2S & 3S LARGE GROUP

10:55-11:10

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

11:10-12:00

PRE-K & K CLASSES

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

10:30-11:15

PRE-K & KINDER LARGE GROUP

11:15-11:40

REVIEW ACTIVITIES

11:40-12:00

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LEADER DEVOTIONAL

The famous basketball coach John Wooden once said, “The true test of a man’s character is what he does when no one is watching.” Our politicians are experts at smiling, shaking hands, and kissing babies when the cameras are rolling, but sadly, many prove to be amateurs when it comes to character. This was the case in biblical times as well.

In the story of Daniel and the Lions’ Den, politicians tricked the king into making a law that nearly killed one of his most trusted advisors. We are only told of a few flawless biblical characters; Daniel was one of them. From the time of his youth, when he was snatched away from his family and brought to Babylon, and through the reign of three Kings, Daniel showed himself to be a man of integrity. When the corrupt politicians tried to dig up dirt on him, Daniel 6:4 tells us, “They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent.” Deviously, they got the king to pass a law prohibiting prayer to anyone but the king himself. Daniel’s downfall would be his faithfulness to God.

Faith is putting trust into action. By refusing to follow the corrupt crowd, Daniel demonstrated his trust in God. We know the end of this famous story, but Daniel didn’t know it as he was being tossed into the lions’ den. Daniel was willing to follow God’s plan even when it proved to be most difficult. And because of that, Daniel experienced the power of God to shut the mouths of lions.

As you prepare to teach this lesson, pray that your children would experience the power of God in their lives. Pray they would resist doing what is wrong. Pray they would follow the way of Jesus. Reflect on where you have seen God’s power in your life. Where have you acted like Daniel by walking away from the crowd to follow God? Children need more than good Bible storytellers — they also need good role models.

Dan Huffman
GO! Contributor



SMALL GROUP SKILL BUILDING

Keeping Kids Engaged During Small Group

Eyes can tell you a lot about the engagement level of a kid. Is the kid staring off into the distance? Is the kid looking at the ceiling? Are the kid's eyes closed? Is the kid snoring, and does he have a bit of drool seeping from the corner of his mouth? If so, there's a decent chance you may have lost his attention! No worries, though — this can be fixed! One of your goals as a small group leader is to capture (rather than demand) the attention of your group so that life-changing conversation can happen. Here are a few suggestions to help you achieve that:

Be prepared: Your eyes are a tell-all. Are they buried in your small group lesson during group time? It probably means you didn't read the lesson carefully enough ahead of time. Read the lesson and be familiar with its activities before arriving to church. It's okay to reference the lesson during group time, but if you're reading the lesson and trying to make sense of it for the first time, it's easy to lose your group's attention.

Facilitate! Don't dominate: Learn how to facilitate conversation as opposed to dominating it. When kids don't feel like they get to talk or participate enough, they eventually begin to lose interest.

Seat the kids in a circle: When kids are seated in a clump, the kids in the back often lose interest because they feel like they are on the outside of the group (which they are quite literally). However, when kids are seated in a circle, everyone has equal access to the conversation and activities.

Keep it moving: As a wise man once said, "You've got to know when to hold 'em, know when to fold 'em." If it appears your group is totally into the conversation or activity, keep it going. If, on the other hand, they're becoming restless or bored, move on. Even the best small group lessons can be driven into the ground.

4.4 Small Group Lesson | 2s & 3s Class



☆ PLAY TIME ACTIVITY

Along with your other play time activities, present the following activity to children as they first arrive in the preschool room. Choose a leader to facilitate the activity. The activity is designed to introduce kids to the Bible story and Big Idea for the day.

KING'S DECREE

Supplies: Optional: King's crown (1)

Directions: The following game is played like "Simon Says." Put the king's crown on your head. Tell the children that you are the king and they must obey your commands, but only when you say, "King says..." If you don't say, "King says," they shouldn't perform the action. For example, if you say, "The king says touch your toes," the children should touch their toes. But if you say, "Clap your hands," the children shouldn't clap their hands because the king didn't say.

Say: When a king says to do something, everyone has to do it. But in today's true Bible story, the king says to do something that Daniel knows is not right. In a little bit, we're going to find out if Daniel does what the king says. We're also going to learn that **God's way is the best way.**

Question: What would *you* do if the king told you to do something bad?

2s & 3s – Large Group at 10:55
Pre-K & K – Large Group at 11:15



★ SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

After the Large Group story time is over, help the children transition into the small group activity time. There are multiple activity options designed to help kids remember the Bible story and Big Idea, discover personal application, and respond to God through art, prayer, and Bible reading. Offer as many activities as your time and space allows.

LION'S DEN IS FALLING DOWN (Application Activity)

Supplies: None

Say: In today's true Bible story, Daniel was thrown into a lions' den for praying to God, but God protected him. We're going to play a game that helps us remember how God protected Daniel.

Directions: Have the children create a lion's den by standing in a circle. Choose one child to be Daniel and one child to be the lion. Have Daniel and the lion stand or kneel in the middle of the circle. Lead the children in saying the rhyme below to the tune of "London Bridge is Falling Down" while holding hands and walking in a circle around Daniel and the lion. At the end of the last verse, have the children in the circle fall down and release hands so that Daniel can escape. Repeat multiple times and let other children have a turn being Daniel and the lion.

Verse 1: Daniel in the lion's den, lion's den, lion's den. Daniel in the lion's den, God will save him.

Verse 2: Angel shut the lion's mouth, lion's mouth, lion's mouth. Angel shut the lion's mouth, God will save him.

Verse 3: Daniel left without a scratch, out a scratch, out a scratch. Daniel left without a scratch, God did save him.

Question: Why do you think it's important for us to pray to God?

FREEZE LIONS (Application Activity)

Supplies: None

Say: In today's true Bible story, Daniel knew that **God's way is the best way**. That's why he wouldn't pray to the king even though he was thrown into a lions' den. Let's play a lion game that helps us think of some things we can talk to God about.

Directions: Tell the children that they are the lions and you are the angel. Have the lions get on their hands and knees in a circle. Choose one child to be Daniel. Have Daniel stand in the middle of the lions. Ask "Daniel" the question below. After answering, prompt the lions to begin roaring at Daniel. After a moment, walk around the circle and tap each lion on the head while saying, "Freeze lion!" When tapped, the lion must freeze in place and close his or her mouth. When all of the lions are frozen, Daniel can escape. Repeat until each child has had a turn as Daniel.

Question: What do you want to say to or talk about with God?

4.4 Small Group Lesson | 2s & 3s Class



SAY IT LIKE (Bible Memorization Activity)

Supplies: Picture Dice (1 per group)

Today's Bible verse:

*"God's way (walk in place)
is perfect (two thumbs up).
The LORD'S word (cup hands around mouth like you're calling out)
doesn't have any flaws (brush hands off).
Psalm 18:30 (extend hands like you're holding a book)."*

Directions: Practice the Bible verse together until the children can remember it. When ready, choose a child to roll the picture dice, then have all of the children say the Bible verse like they are the picture that is face-up on the dice. If the dice lands on Topher the Gopher, have all of the children say the verse with buck teeth like a gopher. Continue playing until all of the children have had a turn rolling the dice.

UH OH TOPHER! (Bible Story Review Activity)

Supplies: "Uh Oh Topher" story review page (1 per group), Topher the Gopher character cards (1 per child)

Say: I'm going to read you today's Bible story again, but there's a little problem. Topher the Gopher got into the story and chewed up some of the words, and then he replaced them with the wrong words. Listen carefully to see if you can hear the wrong words. If you hear something that is wrong, hold up your "Topher the Gopher" card, then say, "Uh Oh, Topher. That's not right!" Then you can tell me what really happened in the story.

Directions: Use the "Uh Oh Topher" story review page to read today's story to the children. The page will indicate in bold which words are wrong, followed by the right words. If necessary, help the children remember what really happened in the story.

I CAN PRAY (Response to God Activity)

Supplies: GO! Home Guide (printed on back of coloring sheet, 1 per child), crayons.

Directions: Give each child a GO! Home Guide and some crayons or markers. The sheet will have a space for children to draw. Tell the children to draw a picture of themselves praying. When finished, have the children show their drawings to the group.

Say: Just like Daniel, we can pray to God anytime, anywhere, and about anything. In fact, let's do that right now. We're going to say a prayer and you can tell God anything you want.

Prayer: Begin by asking if any of the children would like to pray. Allow any children who want to pray the opportunity to do so. When they're finished, thank God for listening to you and the children when you pray.

Question: What was your favorite part of today's Bible story? Why did you like that part?

Question: If you were Daniel, would you have still prayed to God if it meant you could be thrown into a lions' den? Why or why not?