

date: **3/12/17****Bible Passage: Daniel 6**
(Daniel)**God Is the Living God****REMEMBER VERSE****The LORD your God is with you, the
Mighty Warrior who saves.****Zephaniah 3:17a****Inspire***Shares personal stories from fellow ministry leaders about how God has worked in their lives*

I have a friend who used to be a commercial truck driver. During one terrifying experience, he was thrown through the windshield in a crash. He said the only reason he is alive today is because “God is real.” In fact, if you spend any time with him, you’ll hear him say these three words many times to explain a host of experiences in his life and the lives of others.

The last time I saw him, he’d been praying for my husband’s rocky relationship with my father. Since then, God has healed that relationship. I thanked my friend for praying for us, and he said, “Well, I believe in the power of prayer ... God is real.”

My friend’s simple statement is inspiring and humbling. Knowing that God is the living God—that God is real—means we can pray boldly for the things we need, for the people He has put in our lives, and for the world we live in. It also means belief—believing that, because God is the living God, He will answer our prayers in powerful ways.

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Equip*Offers perspective and context to the lesson’s Bible passage*

After Daniel entered Babylon, his name was changed. This was a common occurrence for newly obtained subjects as conquerors sought to express their authority and force assimilation into the new culture. Regardless of a Babylonian name, Daniel remained faithful to his true identity and his Hebrew given name meaning “God is my judge.” Even with external influences and pressures, Daniel did not retreat or abandon his loyalty to the Lord God.

Scripture tells us that after Babylon was conquered by Persia, the Persian administrators serving under the king took issue with Daniel and were looking for ways to bring him to his demise. They went before the king requesting a law: No one would be allowed to pray to any god besides the king. As Daniel was faithful to the law of his God, the satraps (Persian officials Daniel oversaw) knew he would immediately violate this law and could then be put to death.

Daniel chose to remain faithful to his God. Reminded he was unable to reverse this edict, King Darius was resigned to uphold the law, and Daniel was seized and placed in a pit of lions. Darius was so deeply disturbed he was unable to eat or sleep. When morning came, he found Daniel alive with not one mark on his body. King Darius then blessed Daniel and proclaimed praise to the living God (Daniel 6:26–27). The king then called for all those who had conspired against Daniel and the true and living God to be thrown into the den of lions themselves.

In the face of great opposition, Daniel did not waver from who he was. He was a follower of the Most High God. This relationship superseded any human law or decree. Daniel trusted what is true: God is the living God.

Support

Provides reflection and assessment through encouragement, prayer, and time in God's Word

Most of the time, when we talk about being spiritually bold, we speak of being vocal for our faith—like Paul, who spoke to anyone and everyone who would listen. We also refer to martyrs who die for their faith in the face of opposition. We see both of these models of boldness in Scripture, such as with Daniel, who prayed to God, although forbidden to do so by decree.

We know from other sections of the book of Daniel, such as Daniel 9, that God used Daniel to intercede for God's people. Take time this week to intercede for your church, your community, your family, and your world. As Scripture says, "Approach God's throne of grace with confidence" (Hebrews 4:16). Pray for things you would normally dismiss as "too big a problem." Boldly pray to God because He is the living God.

EXPLORE::: 10 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children engage in fun, creative activities designed to pique their curiosity about the day's portion of The Big God Story.

Lions, Lions, Everywhere

Lions are a main feature of today's part of The Big God Story. As you begin, give children an opportunity to explore these animals.

SUPPLIES (per small group)

- Toy lions (stuffed and/or plastic)
- Pictures of lions (several)
- Books about lions (3–4)

PREPARE AHEAD

Find three or four children's books about lions from your local library. Print a few pictures of lions from the Internet.

SET UP

Spread out toy lions, lion pictures, and lion books on the table.

RELATE

As children gather, ask them to join you at the table and encourage them to start exploring the lion items. As they do so, engage them in conversation. **What do you see on this table?** Children answer. **Yes, lions! What are some things you know about lions? Are they big or small? What do they sound like? What do they eat? Where do they live?** Consider reading aloud a few facts about lions from the books you gathered. Be sure to engage with children's exploration and play during this time.

DISCOVER:: 25 min.

Host/Worship Leader/Storyteller

Ponder Point**God Is the Living God****Chloe's Rules**

Host/Worship Leader

SUPPLIES

- [Chloe's Rules videos](#)

RELATE

Welcome children as they're entering the large group meeting area. *Tech: Cue Chloe's Rules video.* The theme song will play as the Worship Leader/Host enters and makes his way up front, welcoming and greeting children along the way. This should be a high-energy entrance. *Tech: Cue preschool program theme song.* Choose and play two upbeat worship songs of your choice from a worship album that complements the theme and focus of the lesson.

Mail Time

Host/Worship Leader

SUPPLIES

- [Mail Time intro clip and image \(see Resources\)](#)
- [Remember Verse image \(see Resources\)](#)
- [Mail Time envelope art \(see Resources\)](#)
- Envelope (large)
- Bibles (your personal and large children's)
- Mailbox

RELATE

Tech: Cue the Mail Time intro clip and image. Choose one volunteer to hide the mail and another to find the mail. Have the "Seeker" close her eyes while the "Hider" finds a good place to hide the Remember Verse. Once the mail has been hidden, the Seeker will begin to look for the mail while the children give clues to its whereabouts by calling out "hot" and "cold."

Once the Seeker finds the mail, the Host invites her to pull out the enclosed Remember Verse. Next, the Host should find the Remember Verse in his Bible and read the words aloud. Talk about the meaning of the verse while interacting

with the children.

Lead the children in reciting the Remember Verse several times together using a variety of engaging methods. Hand motions, different voices, various speeds, and character integration are all great ways to help commit the Scripture to memory. For longer verses, approach the verse one section at a time, increasing what the children repeat back each week.

REMEMBER VERSE

The LORD your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves.

Zephaniah 3:17a

REMEMBER VERSE DEFINITIONS

Mighty Warrior: A name for God that means He is powerful in battle.

REMEMBER VERSE MOTIONS

The LORD your God: Make “L” with right index finger and thumb. Move the “L” from right shoulder to left hip.

is with you: Put both hands in front of body and pull close to chest.

the Mighty Warrior: Make fists and flex to show muscles.

who saves: Make fists and fold arms across chest, then open arms.

Wardrobe of Wonder

Storyteller/Host/Worship Leader

SUPPLIES

- **What’s/it:** Lion (see optional image in Resources)
- Wardrobe of Wonder
- Small stools or chairs (2)

What’s/it: Lion

Determined to remain faithful to the living God, Daniel continued to worship and pray to the Lord God regardless of the decree royal officials had put in place. After he was placed in the lions’ den, the entrance was shut tight. God sent an angel to close the mouths of the lions. The Lord used this situation to demonstrate that He alone is the living God to whom we should pray.

RELATE

Tech: Cue the *Wardrobe of Wonder* intro clip and image. Invite a child volunteer to “spy” on the What’s/it by peeking into the wardrobe. Each time the wardrobe door opens, cue the *Wardrobe of Wonder* sound effect. Have him whisper the identity of the What’s/it in your ear to ensure he knows what it is.

Invite your assistant to sit on the stools with you. Then lead the group in asking the assistant yes-or-no questions about the What’s/it. Once the children have guessed correctly, ask your assistant to retrieve the What’s/it from the wardrobe and bring it to you. Thank your volunteer and encourage him to sit with his small group.

ASK

(Child’s name), **why do you think the What’s/it is a lion?** Allow volunteer to give suggestions. **Where can we find**

lions? Children respond. **What sound does a lion make?** Children make their loudest lion roars. **Wow, those were some pretty good roars. I wonder where we'll find our What'sIt in The Big God Story. Friends, what do you think? Let's find out, because it's time for ...**

The Big God Story

Daniel 6

God Is the Living God

Storytelling Technique: Script and Actors

SUPPLIES

- **What'sIt:** Lion (see optional image in Resources)
- Stool
- Costumes: simple robes, sashes/rope, and sandals for Daniel and the 3 officials; solid-colored royal robe and crown for King Darius
- Statue (small)
- Fancy chair

PREPARE AHEAD

Print a copy of the script for the narrator and place it in the black binder. Gather actors to play the parts of Daniel, the three officials, and King Darius (the Storyteller will be the narrator).

SET UP

Place fancy chair (throne) at center stage and stool either downstage left or right. Storyteller stands downstage center until the characters enter, then sits on stool. The tone and pacing of the beginning dialogue between the three officials and the king should be played with a light air of comedy. The storyline naturally progresses into a more serious tone. The levity of the characters at various points will engage kids without losing the integrity of the message.

Leader Tip

You may choose to use the script, and videotape ahead of time using actors or puppets, pausing for the Storyteller to narrate. Or, consider recording all the character voices in an audio format to play like an old-time radio show while using the Storyteller as a live narrator.

RELATE

Tech: Cue *The Big God Story* intro clip and image. **Hello, friends! My name is (insert name). It's so good to see you here today! Before we jump into The Big God Story, let's stop and ask God to teach us.** Lead children in a Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds.

Many years ago, there was a man named Daniel who knew God and loved Him. When Daniel was young, a king named Nebuchadnezzar brought his army into the land of Israel. Nebuchadnezzar decided to take many people with him back to his land, called Babylon. Young Daniel was one of the people taken. Last week we heard about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who also were taken by Nebuchadnezzar.

Daniel enters, looks around as if everything is new and strange. Official #1 enters and shows him small statue, pointing to it. Daniel shakes head no, crosses stage, and gets down on knees, taking posture of prayer. Daniel should be facing audience.

As Daniel grew, he stayed faithful to God. He didn't worship any of the other gods people were worshipping.

He knew that only the one true God was worthy of his love and worship. Many years passed, and a new king, named Darius, now ruled. King Darius put Daniel in charge of some very important men in his kingdom. Well, these men didn't like this. Not one bit! They tried very hard to get Daniel into trouble. But Daniel never did anything wrong. Daniel was honest, he treated people well, and he was really good at his job! Then one day ...

Officials enter talking and stop center stage.

Official 1: **We'll never find anything to get Daniel in trouble with the king.**

Official 2: **Unless ...**

Officials 1 and 3 (leaning in eagerly): **Yes ...?**

Official 2: **Unless it has something to do with the law of his God** (walking and tapping head as if thinking). **I've got it! We could get the king to make a law that would force Daniel to choose between the law of the king and the law of his God! Daniel will choose to follow the law of his God and will break the king's law. That will get him into trouble!**

Officials 1 and 3: **Brilliant!**

Officials exit stage right. King enters stage left and sits on throne center stage.

Storyteller: **So, the men went to see the king.**

Officials enter stage right and approach the king.

All Officials (bowing deeply): **O, King Darius, live forever!**

King Darius (waving hand as if to speed them along): **Yes, yes, yes, what is it?**

Official 1: **Well, we've all been talking and well, you see, O King, we think, I mean, it would be best if ...**

Official 2 (moving Official 1 to side as he speaks): **What he's trying to say, O King, is that all the servants in your courts have agreed that you, the king, should issue a law. A rule that can't be broken ...**

Official 3 (interrupting excitedly): **Yes, a law that would say that anyone who prays to any god or man except you in the next 30 days would be ...**

All Officials (in unison): **... thrown into the lions' den!**

All freeze and hold position as lights fade. Then exit stage left as lights come up on Storyteller. If stage lights unavailable, freeze in position until Storyteller begins to talk and then quietly exit stage left.

Storyteller: **So, King Darius put the decree into writing. The laws of the land couldn't be changed!**

Daniel enters stage right looking deep in thought. Crosses stage and gets down on knees, taking a posture of prayer. Daniel should be facing audience.

Storyteller: When Daniel learned of the new law, he went to the upstairs room in his home where the windows faced his homeland of Jerusalem. Daniel knew God and trusted Him because there is no one like God. He is the one true and living God. So Daniel got down on his knees and prayed three times a day, giving thanks to his God just as he'd always done.

Officials enter stage right and stop, huddled together watching Daniel.

The men came and found Daniel praying and asking God for help. Immediately, they went to the king to tell him what they'd seen, and reminded him of the royal law.

Officials turn around and exit stage right. Daniel exits.

They asked the king, "Didn't you make a law that said if anyone prays to anyone except you in the next 30 days, they would be thrown into the lions' den?" The king answered, "Yes, once that was made into a law, it can't be changed." "O King," they said, "Daniel still prays to his God three times a day!" This made the king very upset. He wanted to save Daniel from being thrown into the lions' den, but there was nothing he could do.

Officials enter stage right with Daniel looking as if his hands are bound behind his back. King walks slowly and sadly behind them as they all walk Daniel across stage, exiting stage left.

With a very sad heart the king gave the order, and the men took Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. The king called out to Daniel and said, "May your God rescue you!"

Storyteller stands and comes to sit on edge of stage, closer to children.

The king returned to his palace and was very, very upset. He couldn't eat or sleep. Nothing could cheer him up. As soon as the sun began to rise the next morning, the king ran to the lions' den. He called out, "Daniel, servant of the living God, did your God save you from the lions?" And what do you think happened? Allow children to respond. You're right! God had saved him! Daniel answered the king and said, "Yes, O King! My God sent an angel to shut the mouths of the lions. They didn't hurt me. God knows that I didn't do anything wrong."

The king was so happy, he ordered Daniel taken out of the lions' den. When he came out there wasn't one mark on him. Not even a little scratch! All because Daniel was faithful to God and trusted Him. God protected Daniel because God is more powerful than anyone or anything. There's no one like Him. He is the one true living God.

RESPOND:: 20 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children reflect on what the Holy Spirit is teaching them and respond through creative activities and games.

Wonder Questions

Small Group Enhancements, coloring pages, and discussion questions help your group go deeper into today's portion of The Big God Story.

SUPPLIES (per small group)

- [Wonder Questions coloring pages](#) (see Resources)
- Crayons

RELATE

Today in **The Big God Story**, we heard how Daniel worshipped the one true God. Daniel trusted his whole life to God, even when there were people around him who didn't want him to. God saved Daniel from the lions because He is the living God!

I wonder ... How did Daniel feel while he was in the lions' den?

I wonder ... What did Daniel think when he saw the angel God sent to shut the lions' mouths?

I wonder ... When was a time God saved or protected me?

I wonder ... How do I know that God is alive?

BLESS:: 5 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children receive a blessing from their leaders and sometimes one another. A blessing may be a prayer of commission, a portion of Scripture, or words to encourage and guide.

SUPPLIES (per small group)

- [Remember Verse cards](#) (see Resources)

RELATE

Today, send your little ones out with a blessing by praying Scripture over them. Read the Remember Verse over children: **"The LORD your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves"** (Zephaniah 3:17a). You may choose to read through the Scripture more than once as God's Spirit leads you.

When you're finished reading the Remember Verse, gather children around you for a group blessing.

Children, may you know our God is the one true living God and you belong to Him!