



God Hears Daniel's Prayers

(based on Daniel 6:6–23)

Many years ago, there lived a young man called Daniel. Daniel lived in a country called Babylon. He had been captured in Jerusalem and carried off to a strange new land. It was hard to be so far from home, but Daniel worked hard in his new home. King Darius (duh-RYE-uhs) noticed his hard work and invited him to come to the palace as one of his chief officials.

Some of the other officials in the palace hated Daniel. “Daniel works so hard that he makes the rest of us look bad,” they grumbled. “We have to do something about him.”

The officials noticed that Daniel prayed to God every day, so they came up with a devious plan.

They went to the king and said, “O great king, you are like a god to us. We all agree that you should write a new law. Everyone must pray to you and nobody else. Anyone who breaks this law must be thrown into a pit of lions.”

King Darius liked this idea, so he signed the decree. It became the law of the land that could never be changed.

Daniel heard about the king's new law. However, Daniel wanted to follow in God's way, so the next morning he went to pray, just as he did every day.

The other officials were waiting, and as soon as Daniel started to pray, they ran straight to the king. “Daniel doesn't obey your law!” they shouted. “He must be thrown into the lions' den.”

When King Darius heard this news, he was sorrowful. He knew that Daniel was a good and honest man, who served him well. He tried hard to find some way to rescue Daniel, but he couldn't.

The king had no choice. Daniel was thrown into the lions' den. The king was sure the lions would eat Daniel.

“I hope your God looks after you and saves you from the lions,” he cried.

That night, the king could not sleep at all. The next morning, just as the sun was beginning to rise, the king ran to the lions' den.

“Daniel!” he yelled. “Did your God save you from the lions?”

There was a moment of silence.

“Yes,” Daniel called from inside the lions' den. “God sent an angel to shut the lions' mouths!”

The king was jubilant. He ordered his servants to pull Daniel from the lions' den straight away. There wasn't even a scratch on him. Everyone saw that Daniel had trusted God, and God had saved him.



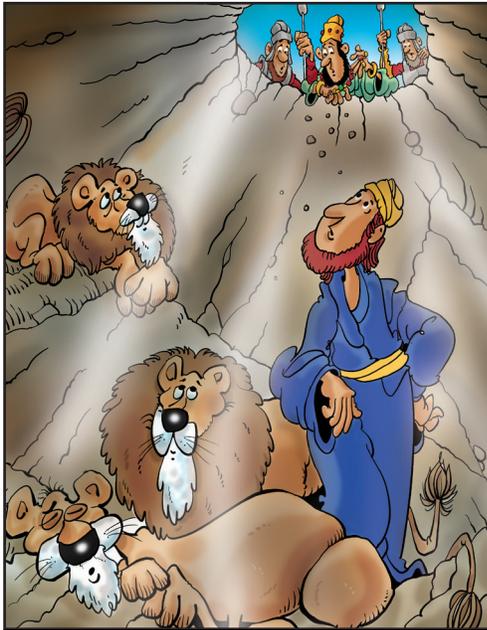
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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story with your children—imagine and wonder.
- Play “Mouths Closed” charades. Write the names of animals on cards. Let your children choose a card and act it out, keeping their mouth closed, just like the lions in the den.
- Put the description of a problem around the necks of some of your stuffed animals. Scatter the animals around the house. Let your children search for the animals, then discover the problem described and discuss a solution together.



Responding to God's Grace

- The king's advisors were tricky people and led him to put his friend Daniel in great danger. Talk with your children about protecting themselves from tricky people.
- Ask your children if they know what jealousy is. Ask if they have ever seen its impact at school, in sports, or somewhere else.
- Ask your children when Daniel demonstrated faith. Was it only when he was in the lions' den, or was it also when he prayed to God, even when it was against the law?

Celebrating in Gratitude

- Help your children make paper-plate lions. Search the Internet for examples of masks or crafts. Invite your children to be the lions before Daniel entered the den and after. What changed the lions?
- Search the Internet for lion cupcakes. Choose one that you and your children can make together.
- Pray:

God, thank you for saving me. I will trust in you. Amen.