

# Explore It

## FOR LEADERS



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## SECURITY

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### Daniel 6 Daniel and the lions

Tricked by those he worked with, betrayed and thrown into a lions' den – surely this would be the end of the road for Daniel. Where would all his prayers and faithfulness get him, now he was faced with snarling beasts and certain death? What difference would his obedience and refusal to compromise make, now he was trapped and alone? But for Daniel, the place of certain death turns into the place of greatest victory. There was no human way to escape from the lions' den, yet he emerges unharmed and praising God for his delivery.

When we feel the most frightened and alone, our natural response is to decide that God has abandoned us. Sometimes we feel such despair that it seems God could never bring good out of the situation; we feel confusion and fear when we find ourselves, like Daniel, trapped in a dark place confronting angry lions. This session helps us to think about our security and how we respond when our world has been turned upside down.

Each child will need:

- A4 coloured card, plus yellow and orange paper, scissors, glue, something circular to draw round, pens/pencils
- A Bible
- A prayer from the Prayer handout

You will need:

- A yellow tail, made out of rope/ribbon/felt with a knot at the bottom (optional) – see Start It section
- A toy lion (optional) – see Start It section
- Image of the painting *Daniel's answer to the king* by Briton Rivière  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Daniel%27s\\_Answer\\_to\\_the\\_King.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Daniel%27s_Answer_to_the_King.jpg)
- Learn how to make a friendly lion out of paper *Lion craft* by Krokotak  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LOkFL4Nyaew>
- Print out prayers from the Prayer handout – four prayers per sheet

## Start It

Choose an activity to start.

### Option one – lion, lion, hyena

This is like the game *Duck, Duck, Goose*. Everyone sits in a circle except for one child who is the lion, who tucks the yellow tail behind them. The 'lion' walks around the circle, tapping each child (ideally on the shoulder) as they say, 'Lion'. If they say, 'Hyena', then this child chases the lion and tries to grab the tail. If they're successful, they become the lion.

### Option two – lion's cub

One child sits with their back to everyone, with the toy lion, their cub, behind them. Another child is selected to steal the cub. They return to their place and hide the cub behind them. The leader signals to the lion that it's their turn. The lion says, 'Roar! Where is my cub!' The thief replies with, 'Roar! Here I am!' (Silly, scary, strange voices are encouraged.)

The lion turns around and has three guesses who said it and has the cub. If they're unsuccessful, the thief becomes the lion. If the lion is too good at guessing, reduce the number of guesses.

🗨 **Say:** Today we are going to discover the story of Daniel in the lions' den.

## Sing It

🗨 **Say:** Today's song gives you a sneak preview of the story we'll be learning about today.

'Lyrics (Daniel song)' by Saddleback Kids (1 min 52 secs)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j0R0VaRYOTI>

## Tell It

🗨 **Say:** Our story today is found in the book of Daniel, chapter 6 in the Old Testament. By now Daniel had served many kings and lived in Babylon for a long time. He was well respected in the royal palace and the current king, King Darius, often came to Daniel for advice. The rest of the king's advisers became increasingly jealous and hatched a plot to get rid of him. Watch the clip to discover what happened to Daniel.

### Video

*Daniel in the lions' den* by Saddleback Kids (3 mins 49 sec)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bEM\\_X25DWPk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bEM_X25DWPk)

**Ask:** Why do you think the King's advisers were jealous of Daniel?

🗨 **Say:** Sometimes we get jealous of people when we see they are doing well, or we think that they are better than us at something.

**Ask:**

→ Have you ever felt jealous of someone?

→ What does jealousy feel like?

🗨 **Say:** Sometimes we get jealous of other people when we don't feel confident about ourselves. Rather than recognising how much God loved and valued them, the royal advisers felt insecure and looked for approval from King Darius. They tried to get Daniel into trouble. Getting him out of the way meant they wouldn't have to watch him succeed any more.

**Ask:**

→ How did the royal advisers get Daniel into trouble?

→ How did King Darius react once he discovered his mistake?

🗨 **Say:** King Darius couldn't find any way to save Daniel from the lions' den.

🗨 **Say:** Daniel prayed to God every day and yet he still had to face the lions' den.

**Ask:** Does that sound fair to you? If not, why not?

🗨 **Say:** Sometimes when we are facing difficulties, we can feel like God has forgotten us.

**Ask:** What did Daniel do differently?

🗨 **Say:** Read Daniel 6:16-23 (*ICB*) to find out how Daniel reacted.

**'So King Darius gave the order. They brought Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. The king said to Daniel, "May the God you serve all the time save you!" A big stone was brought. It was put over the opening of the lions' den. Then the king used his signet ring to put his special seal on the rock. And he used the rings of his royal officers to put their seals on the rock also. This showed that no one could move that rock and bring Daniel out. Then King Darius went back to his palace. He did not eat that night. He did not have any entertainment brought to entertain him. And he could not sleep.'**

'The next morning King Darius got up at dawn. He hurried to the lions' den. As he came near the den, he was worried. He called out to Daniel. He said, "Daniel, servant of the living God! Has your God that you always worship been able to save you from the lions?"

'Daniel answered, "My king, live for ever! My God sent his angel to close the lions' mouths. They have not hurt me, because my God knows I am innocent. I never did anything wrong to you, my king."

'King Darius was very happy. He told his servants to lift Daniel out of the lions' den. So they lifted him out and did not find any injury on him. This was because Daniel had trusted in his God.'

## Discuss

Show the children the picture Daniel's answer to the king. Discuss how the picture depicts Daniel and how the children would feel if they were in Daniel's position.

Suggested prompts:

- Why does Daniel seem so calm when the lions are so dangerous?
- Discuss the expression on Daniel's face and where he is looking.
- How does the picture show that Daniel knows he is going to be OK?
- 🗨 **Say:** Daniel trusted God in the most difficult of times. He knew that if he trusted God, he would be safe and secure.

## Action It

### Lion craft

For this activity the children are going to create a lion to remind them of God's faithfulness to Daniel in the lions' den. The clip below shows you how to make the lion. Ideally the lion will be created on an A4 piece of card folded in half like a greetings card. Make sure the mane is made up of at least ten strips of paper.

*Lion craft* by Krokotak

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LOkFL4Nyaew>

Write words of encouragement around the lion from Daniel 6:16 and Scripture verses to explore when they are facing challenging times. On the inside of the lion's mane write the following Scripture verse (one word on each part of the mane).

**'May the God you serve all the time save you!'**

— Daniel 6:16 (ICB)

Here is a selection of Bible verses that could also be used in this activity. Look them up with the children and then write the reference around the lion's mane. The children can take their lion home and refer to it when they are facing challenging circumstances.

- Psalm 34:4-5
- Luke 14:27
- Joshua 8:1
- Isaiah 41:10
- Isaiah 41:13
- Psalm 91:4-5
- Psalm 115:11
- Matthew 10:26

🗨 **Say:** Whenever you feel frightened and alone, remember that God is with you, just like he was with Daniel. Use your friendly lion to remind you that you are safe and secure in his love.

## Pray It

🗨 **Say:** There are lots of situations we face where it can feel like nothing good could ever come out of it. That's how Daniel could have felt in the lions' den, but he made a different choice.

**Ask:**

- What did Daniel choose to do instead?
- What can we learn from Daniel about trusting God in challenging situations?

- 🗨️ **Say:** Today you have created a friendly lion that you can use whenever you are having a tough time. The Bible verse on the lion's mane reminds us that Daniel trusted God when it seemed like there was no hope. You can also use the Bible verses to dip into when you feel afraid.
- 🗨️ **Say:** Finally, we are going to stick a prayer on the inside of your card that will help you to pray when you feel worried or afraid.

Read through the prayer with the children and discuss some of the worries they are facing. Pray the situation through with them and then give each child a copy of the prayer to stick inside their friendly lion card.

**Dear God,**

**When life gets difficult and the world is a scary place, I can sometimes feel like I am alone in the lions' den. When I feel like that, Lord, remind me that you are always with me no matter what I face. Just like Daniel, I can bring all my worries to you, and you will be with me.**

**Right now, I am worried about ... *(tell God what challenges you are facing at the moment)*.**

**I trust you in these difficult situations, God, and thank you for being with me in the lions' den.**

**Amen.**

## Explore It

Remember to send home the Explore It (For Me) and Explore It (Together) ideas for children and families.