



LESSON 4 FOR LEADERS

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Can Protect Us in Amazing Ways

SCRIPTURE: Daniel 6

WORD OF WONDER: Hebrews 13:5b

When my son was two years old, we went to the zoo and saw the lions. Huge, majestic-looking creatures—safely behind a wall of thick glass. As my son stood with his face pressed to the glass, a lion suddenly leaped toward him, and with a giant crack, the lion's teeth hit the glass! The huge animal fell back a little, stunned. I have never been more glad for the protection of "lion-proof" glass.

When I read Daniel 6, I don't see any lion-proof glass. As you read this chapter, put yourself in the place of King Darius. After being tricked into enforcing his decree against Daniel, he was distressed and determined to rescue Daniel ... but the damage had been done. As the stone is put over the opening

to the lions' den, he calls out, "May your God ... rescue you!" (Daniel 6:16, NIV). He then can't sleep all night, worrying about his best advisor. He runs to the den in the morning, calling out in an anguished voice, "Has your God ... been able to rescue you?" (Daniel 6:20, NIV).

God had done what the human king could not do. Daniel trusted in his God, and no wound was found on him.

What do you need to be rescued from? Have you tried to find your own way out and felt like King Darius—distressed, worried, anguished? What could happen if you trusted in your God's protection for no wound to be found on you?

—**Courtney Wilson**

Children's Pastor

Contributor to Wonder Ink

LESSON 4 FOR LEADERS DANIEL AND THE LIONS' DEN

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

Daniel's life is featured in the book of Daniel. Along with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, he was taken from his home in Jerusalem and moved to Babylon. Daniel was a dream interpreter, and he remained committed to Yahweh even in a foreign land.

WHAT?

Daniel is well liked by King Darius, but Darius is tricked into passing a law prohibiting prayer to anyone other than the king. Daniel continues to pray to God and is caught. He is thrown in the lions' den, but God protects him from harm.

WHERE?

The story takes place in the great city of Babylon. The Babylonians and Assyrians were known for capturing lions and keeping them for pets, and these royal pets had a special role of acting as a means of execution.

WHEN?

The book of Daniel spans from about 605 to 536 BC. Daniel 6 takes place after the Persian kingdom conquered Babylon in 539 BC. The prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel were contemporaries of Daniel.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

When King Darius sees Daniel's salvation from the mouths of the lions, he proclaims that Daniel's God is the living God, who acts on behalf of His people. Jesus is the ultimate example of God being alive and acting within human history.



LESSON 4 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Curiosity Activity: Lion Training

SUPPLIES: cubical cardboard box, paper (6 sheets), black marker, tape, dice (optional)

Set out the dice. **If we were going to face real lions, we would prepare our minds and bodies ahead of time! Let's pretend we are getting ready to face the lions!**

Invite kids to stand up and spread out. **When I roll the dice, we'll do a training exercise for whichever number is rolled. Each number corresponds with a different way to train to face a lion. Some help get your body ready to face the lions. Some help prepare your mind.** Roll the dice. Encourage the kids to do the corresponding action for the number rolled:

1. Jump: **If you're going to jump over a lion, you need to have good jumping skills. Jump as high as you can!**
2. Touch the floor: **If you're going to get away from a lion, you have to move fast. Touch the floor as fast as you can.**
3. Run in place: **If you're going to outrun a lion, you have to be quick. Run in place as fast as you can.**
4. Stand still: **If you're going to stare down a lion, you have to be still. Stand still like a statue.**
5. Rub your head and touch your nose: **If you're going to outsmart a lion, you need to be able to think fast and do more than one thing at a time. Rub your head and touch your nose.**
6. Say something kind: **If you're going to tame a lion, you need to speak softly and encourage the lion. Finish the following sentence by saying something kind, "Lion, you are ____." Say as many encouraging words as you can think of to the lion.**

Have the kids complete each task where they are standing. Call on a volunteer to roll the dice. Play until the dice has been rolled six times.

In God's big story today, we're going to learn about a man who came face-to-face with a den of lions! But he didn't have to do any training exercises to protect himself. God protected him in an amazing way!



Curiosity

Belief

Faith

Identity

LESSON 4 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words: **God, please show us Your love today. We ask for Your Holy Spirit to guide, teach, and lead us as we learn about Your love and protection. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

God's Big Story

Pull out the Bible

Ask: What is this called? The Bible

Ask: Why is the Bible special? Because it is God's word. Everything in it is true. It really happened.

Tell the Bible story

The Beginner's Bible, pages 251-256
Daniel and the Lions

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Whom did Daniel worship? (*God*)
- Why did the other leaders in the kingdom want to get Daniel in trouble? (*They were jealous of him.*)
- What amazing thing did God do to protect Daniel? (*He sent an angel to shut the mouths of the lions.*)
- Even though Daniel knew the king's command, he chose to worship only God. What do you think you would have done if you were Daniel?
- Why do you think King Darius was so surprised God had protected Daniel from the lions?
- When has God protected you or someone you know in an amazing way? How does this experience show us God's love and care?

We might not face a den of lions like Daniel did, but we will face hard things. God promises to be with us. He can protect us in amazing ways. Even when we get hurt or feel sad, God loves us and is with us.

WORD OF WONDER

God has said, “I will never leave you”

— Hebrews 13:5b

Encourage the kids to do the motions and say the Word of Wonder with you.

Gather kids to discuss these questions:

- **God says He will never leave you. How does it make you feel to know God is always with you?**
- **Think about other stories in the Bible. What are some other examples of times when God was with His people during tough situations?**



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LESSON 4 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Craft: Lion Puppet

SUPPLIES: coloring utensils, glue sticks, kid-safe scissors (1 per kid), brown paper lunch bags (1 per kid plus 1 extra)

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Lion Puppet Sheet (1 per kid plus 1 extra)

Before kids arrive, print a Lion Puppet Sheet for each kid and one for yourself. Set out coloring utensils, glue sticks, and kid-safe scissors. Make a sample lion puppet to show kids.

As you begin, hand out a Lion Puppet Sheet and brown paper bag to each kid.

In God's big story, we learned how God protected Daniel by shutting the lions' mouths. Today we're making a lion puppet! You'll color your lion, cut it out, and glue it onto the brown paper bag. You'll glue the lion's head to the small part of the bag. You'll glue the mouth and body of the lion onto the bigger part of the bag. Show the sample lion puppet. **Then your lion's mouth**

can open and close! Ensure that the kids glue the body of lion to the part directly underneath the "opened" part of the bag where the bag's bottom folds, to make the lion's mouth open and close when kids put their hands inside the bag.

Demonstrate opening and closing the lion's mouth using the sample lion puppet. Walk around the room to help kids glue the lion's head and mouth and body onto the bag in the right spots, as needed.

You can take your lion puppet home later to help you remember how God can protect us in amazing ways! Gather the lion puppets and keep them nearby to use during the Closing Game.

