LESSON 5—DANIEL AND THE LION’S DEN

**Bible Reference:** Daniel 6:1-27

**Key Verse:** Philippians 2:15—“So that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe.”

**OVERVIEW**
-Bible Story
-Key Verse
-Prayer Part
-Small Group Activities

**ITEMS NEEDED:**
-Signs that say: King Darius, Daniel, Accusers, Accusers
-Signs for: The Lord’s Prayer sign
-A balloon with today’s key verse inside on a slip of paper
-Each small group will need a paper plate for each student and items to decorate their lions including construction paper, glue, tape, scissors, markers and crayons.
-A place for students to turn in prayer requests.

**BIBLE LESSON**
*(Based on Daniel 6:1-27)*

SAY: Good morning. We are so glad that you’re here this morning. Today we’re finishing our series called “No Compromise: Dare to be a Daniel.” Daniel and his friends lived lives of no compromise—In other words, they kept faithful to God and kept following God no matter what.

**CONTROL TOOL**
Anytime I say, “No Compromise!” I want you to say, “Live for Jesus!”
*Practice a few times. If you want have a boys verses girls competition to see who can be louder.*

REPEAT after me: *I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength—Philippians 4:13.*

SAY: God gives you the strength to live for Him everyday.

**Review**

ASK: What are some things we’ve learned about Daniel and his friends?

*Briefly re-cap the stories from this series with your students.*

**Bible Story**

ASK: At the end of last week’s story, what was the message that God gave Belshazzar through the handwriting on the wall? *(That his days were limited and his kingdom would belong to others.)*
SAY: In today's story, King Nebuchadnezzar is dead. King Belshazzar is dead as well. The kingdom no longer belongs to the Babylonians but has fallen to the Medes and Persians.

SAY: Today's Bible story is also the most famous story about Daniel.

ASK: Who thinks they know what it is? (Let's find out...)

SAY: The king was a man named Darius.

*Choose 1 volunteer to be King Darius*

SAY: King Darius appointed 120 leaders over the kingdom and three commissioners to oversee the 120. Daniel was one of these three. Soon the king planned to put Daniel over the entire kingdom.

SAY: But there was a problem. Others of the commissioners and leaders looked for ways to accuse Daniel. They were jealous of him. Listen to what the Bible says...

*Read Daniel 6:4 from your Bible*

SAY: They couldn't find any fault in him. They couldn't find anything wrong and they didn't have anything with which to accuse him.

ASK: If someone dug into your life to try to find ways to find fault with you, what do you think they might find? Would there be anything that you've done wrong that people could use to make you look bad? (Don't take answers—Just encourage your students to think about it.)

SAY: God wants our lives to be without fault—to be like Daniel.

CONTROL TOOL
Leader: "No Compromise!" Students: “Live for Jesus!”

SAY: And you can live for Jesus. You can be like Daniel because God gives you the strength to do what is right.

REPEAT after me: *I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength*—Philippians 4:13.

SAY: I need a few more volunteers...

*Choose 3 volunteers—give one the Daniel sign and two the Accusers signs.*

SAY: Since these accusers couldn't find anything wrong with Daniel, they decided to attack his faithfulness to God. They went to King Darius and encouraged him to make a decree that anyone who makes petition (or prays) to any god or man besides him for thirty days should be thrown into the lion’s den.

ASK: What do you think the king did?

SAY: He signed the document and according to their law, once this was signed not even the king could change it.
Once these evil men had their plan in motion, what do you think they planned to do? (They planned to catch Daniel praying and to have reason to accuse him.)

What do you think Daniel did when he learned of this decree? (He didn’t change anything but continued to pray.)

Listen to what the Bible says about how Daniel prayed—there are three things you can learn about Daniel from this verse.

Read Daniel 6:10

What are the three things you can learn about Daniel from this verse?
1. He prayed on his knees three times each day
2. As he prayed he gave thanks to God
3. This was his habit

When the Accusers saw him praying, like normal, they told the king.

How do you think the king responded? Do you think he was angry like when Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to bow to the statue? (Ask your King Darius volunteer to look angry.) Was he surprised because Daniel was such a good leader and why would he not obey? (Ask your King Darius volunteer to look surprised.) Was he disappointed because he expected more from Daniel? (Ask your King Darius volunteer to look disappointed.) What do you think?

The king was upset and looked for a way to deliver Daniel. But remember, according to their law, not even the king could change the decree. There was no way he could deliver Daniel. So listen to what happened...

Read Daniel 6:16-23

OLDER STUDENTS: Read Daniel 6:16-24

Did you hear the reason that Daniel wasn't harmed? (Because he had trusted in his God.)

Daniel was faithful to do what was right and because he trusted in God, God delivered him.

In the past few stories, when God did something incredible, what did the king usually do? (There are two things: (1) Twice this month King Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged that God was real and greater than any other; (2) They also typically rewarded Daniel and his friends, even though they disobeyed the king in doing what was right.)

In response to seeing how God delivered Daniel, the king made a new decree—that Daniel’s God is the living God whose kingdom will never be destroyed. And the Bible says that Daniel enjoyed success in the reign of both King Darius and King Cyrus, the king who followed him.

Let’s give our volunteers a hand for helping us.
KEY VERSE
EVERYBODY close your eyes...

ASK: Did you notice anything different in the room that normally isn't here? (Take a few answers.)

SAY: Open your eyes. Look around. What's new?

Choose 1 volunteer to retrieve the balloon.

SAY: You noticed the balloon. Did you know that your actions are noticed too? People notice what you do.

ASK: What are some actions that the accusers noticed about Daniel? (That he followed God; that he prayed; that there was nothing in his life that was wrong.)

SAY: They couldn't find any fault with him and the Bible says that God wants our lives to be without fault too. That brings us to today's verse, but before we hear it, we need to pop this balloon.

Hold the balloon for your volunteer and let him pop it. (You might provide a pen for him to pop it with or have some fun letting him try to pop it in any way he chooses.)

READ today's verse (Philippians 2:15) to your class and have them repeat it after you.
(Anytime students repeat a verse, you can increase their memory of it by having them repeat it several times in different ways—i.e., loudly, in a whisper, in a country voice, in a weird voice, in an accent, etc.)

CONTROL TOOL
Leader: "No Compromise!" Students: “Live for Jesus!”
PRAYER PART—“Your kingdom come...Your will be done”

SAY: We've been saying the “Lord’s Prayer” each week using posters but today we're going to try to say it without using the posters. As I say it, I want you to try to say it with me.

Say the Lord’s Prayer together (Hide the posters!)

ASK: What do you think this sample prayer means when it says, “Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”?

SAY: A common prayer among the Jews in Jesus’ day was for God’s kingdom to reign and His Messiah to come. John the Baptist preached, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand.” And God’s kingdom did come when He poured out His Holy Spirit to those who believed after Jesus died and rose again.

ASK: What people does God want to be in His kingdom? Some people, rich people, smart people...all people? (God wants ALL people to be saved. The Bible is very clear that He doesn’t want any to perish.)

SAY: Our prayer today should be that that the kingdom of this world should become Christ’s kingdom and all people be brought to Him and become obedient to His will.

SAY: Doing God’s will simply means that you're doing what He wants.

ASK: Do all people who come to Christ live for Christ and do God's will? (It's sad but not everyone who comes to Christ always lives for Him but God wants all who are in His kingdom to live obediently to Him.)

KEY: God is holy and God has called us to be holy too—To live lives, like Daniel, that are set apart for His purpose, so much so that we continue to do God’s will even if every one else is doing what is wrong.

PRAY
SAY: Everybody bow your heads and close your eyes. Now with your heads bowed and your eyes closed, before we pray together, I want you to tell God some specific ways that you want to do God’s will—to do what God wants.

SAY: Now I'm going to call out some of today's prayer requests and as I do, I want you to pray silently for them. (Pause...Call out some of the prayer requests and then pray.)

Dismiss to Small Groups
SAY: Right now it is time for our small groups, so I'm going to dismiss you one row at a time.

Dismiss rows of chairs to the tables in the rooms. Give them specific directions where to go.
“Daniel & the Lions Den” Activity

FOR OLDER STUDENTS—

Be Bold Tag
Create a rectangle. Make sure the boundary lines are clearly marked either using cones or tape. Choose one person to be in the middle and put everyone else on the outside. Tell the students that this is a test of their boldness. When the game begins, their goal is to see how many times they can cross the rectangle without being tagged.

For a practice, during the first game, when they are tagged, they are out of the game. Use this to warm them up. After a few minutes begin a new game and make a change: Anytime you are tagged, you join the person in the middle and try to tag others as well. See who can be the last person. Then have a conversation about boldness—Were they the last person because they didn’t take risks? Who crossed the rectangle the most? Who crossed the least? What does it take to be brave? How did Daniel show boldness and bravery? What kind of boldness does it take from someone to live for Jesus?

If you have time, play the game again. Choose a new volunteer to be in the middle and for variety, make adjustments to the game: Everybody hops on one leg or the person tagging is blindfolded—would they sneak across or dart across? How did it feel to not be able to see? How did it feel to be all alone? Do you think Daniel felt alone? Sometimes in life you can’t see the outcome, but like Daniel, you can always keep trusting God.

The “Daniel & the Lions Den” Craft

SMALL GROUPS

FOR YOUNGER STUDENTS—

Craft
SAY: Today we’re going to make Lion plates to take home to remind us to always follow God and do what’s right.

[By the way, you can use the craft to review last week’s lesson too: What did we do with plates last week? How does the word “Lion” fit with last week’s verse? Because God always wants you to tell the truth—to never be found “lion” (lying).]

Craft Options:
(1) Make a Lion—Use the plate, as seen in the picture below, for the lion’s body. Ask your kids to cut feet, a tail and a face from construction paper. Then to create their own personal lion. In it’s mouth they can even write today’s verse.
(2) Make a Lion’s Face—Use the plate to decorate and color a lion’s face, complete with a construction paper mane. Your students can either color or use the construction paper to make eyes, a nose and mouth too.

(3) Be a Lion’s Face—Use the plate to make a lion’s mane but cut a hole big enough for your craft to be a mask that your student can put up to his face. (NOTE: If you want, you can even use some face paint to create a classroom on lions—your own lion’s den!)

*The above images are from an unknown internet source.*
Discussion Questions:
Below are questions that you can discuss with your students before, after or while making the craft:

Read today's key verse:
Philippians 2:15—“So that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe.”

-How can a person be blameless and pure? What would this person be like?
-Is someone knew everything about you, would they find "fault" in your life? Or would you be like Daniel, with nothing to use to accuse you?
-How is our world a “crooked and depraved generation”? What does that mean?
-When you live for Jesus, how are you like stars that shine in the universe?
-If you had been in Daniel’s situation, what would you have done? Do you think you would have hidden that you were praying?
-How do you think Daniel felt when they put him in the Lion’s Den? (We actually only know what the Bible tells us which is that Daniel trusted God.)
-What can you do this week to become like Daniel and to do what’s right even if it might come with harsh consequences?

Prayer—Take prayer requests and pray with your students. Pray specifically for your students to always live for Jesus.
Key Verse Slip of Paper:

*Philippians 2:15—“So that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe.”*