

Daniel 6

Aim of Lesson

To show how God continued to care for his faithful prophet.

Background study

Study Psalms 95-97 as examples of a faithful man's praise of his Creator, and his acknowledgement of God's loving care.

Suggested outline of lesson

As can be seen from the chapter, the story appears to be greatly concerned with the feelings, thoughts and actions of king Darius. Because this is a short and very familiar story, it is suggested that you might put yourself in his place and relate the story in the first person, as if you were the king. First introduce the idea by telling the class that they must imagine you to be a king who has come all the way from Babylon to tell them from first hand experience about something very extraordinary that happened. The following is a suggestion of how to proceed: "My name is King Darius. With a mighty army I conquered the great empire of Babylon, took the throne from the corrupt Belshazzar, and at once set about establishing law and order. From the start, I kept hearing about a rather special man, whose name was Daniel. Perhaps you have heard of him? ..." Encourage the children to participate in this dialogue which, in itself is a form of revision. Having thus brought the story up to the current events, continue: "Now I should like to tell you about something else which happened in Daniel's life, with which I was personally concerned".

By using this play, Darius can be shown to be a sincere and honourable man, very different from his Babylonian predecessors. His various feelings can be demonstrated throughout the account - his initial admiration and appreciation of Daniel's worth and his pleasure at the flattering suggestion of the counsellors that he should be worshipped. Convey his self-disgust on realising that he had been manipulated by a conspiracy of jealous and envious men. He was distressed that he was unable to prevent Daniel's undeserved destruction. He spent a sleepless, anxious night, desperately hoping that Daniel's God would protect his servant yet again. As soon as it was light, the king went with great urgency to investigate the outcome. Repeat his anguished but expectant cry and describe his extreme relief and delight at finding Daniel unharmed.

The conclusion of the narrative might go something like this: "I considered it right that the men who had so cruelly plotted against a fine and innocent man should be punished. I, therefore, ordered that the ringleaders should receive the same punishment that they had devised for Daniel. It is certainly true that 'seeing is believing'. I had, of course, heard about Daniel's beliefs and that his God was all-powerful. Now, having seen it for myself, I know that this is true. Unlike the idols that I had worshipped, Daniel's God is the living God who really does control the whole world. I felt urged to write to all the people to tell them so, and it is the reason I am here today. I wanted you to know about this great prophet who, by his faith, showed that God alone is the one we should worship".

RELEVANCE TO THE CHILDREN' LIVES

When you hear a story like this, doesn't it make you want to worship God, too? We worship God when we meet together to praise him in our hymns and prayers. What should we be thinking about when we sing hymns? When somebody says a prayer for us in Sunday School, how can we make it our prayer?

Worksheets

The solution to the grid is:

	T	W	E	N	T	Y
D	R	I	U	S		
J	U	S	A	L	E	M
P	S	I	A	N	S	
	T	H	I	R	T	Y
W	I	N	D	O	W	S
K	N	E	E	L	E	D
	T	H	R	E	E	
T	H	R	O	W	N	
D	E	C	R	E	E	
	L	I	O	N	S	
M	O	U	T	H	S	
H	R	T				
	D	E	N			

Prayer

Dear Lord God, how great you are. How wonderful it is that you have always watched over your people, and now watch over us. We praise and worship you as our God. Amen.

Memory verse

“Fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God, enduring for ever; his kingdom shall never be destroyed” (Daniel 6:26).