



GOD'S INCREDIBLE PLAN

Unit 9 • The Dispersion of the Jews

UNIT DESCRIPTION

In this unit we begin with events that took place at about 550 BC. Our last unit ended during the time of Daniel, under Babylonian captivity. The southern kingdom, Judah, had been overthrown by the Babylonians and subsequently deported to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, the ruler of the Babylonian world empire.

This unit illustrates God's accomplishment of His sovereign plan through willing servants. Through Daniel, Esther and Nehemiah, God preserved the Jews and brought them back to the land of Israel after nearly a century of dispersion in the Babylonian/Persian land.

As an uncompromising man of the scriptures and prayer, God used Daniel mightily. Through Daniel, the Babylonian leadership began to respect the God of Israel. Through Daniel, God preserved the Jews and revealed many prophecies to come, including the specific time frame for the coming Messiah.

Through Esther's step of faith, God prevented a complete genocide of the Jews during the Persian rule.

Through Nehemiah's courage, prayer and diligence, God enabled the Jews to rebuild Jerusalem and facilitate the return of many additional Jews to their land.



DANIEL IN THE LION'S DEN

God's Incredible Plan • U9#1 1st-3rd Grade • Mar. 15, 2026

Concept

God is always sovereign.

Goal

Students will learn that God will give us what we need.

Passage

Daniel 6:3-28

Key Verse: "God rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions." Daniel 6:27 (NIV)

Planning Ahead

Lesson Supplies	Craft Supplies
<p>Activity Stations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Daniel and the Lions' Den" skit, 3 copies/class <p>Introduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>World map</i> <p>Learning Activity #1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Find a prop or two in the storage room that will enhance evil appearance of Dufas and Duffer• White butcher paper from the storage room• King's crown	<p>Activity Stations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lion with key verse printed on cardstock, 1 lion/student• 3" x 1½" red construction paper strips, 1/student• Scissors• Markers• Glue sticks• Transparent tape

*TEACHERS PLEASE NOTE

For clarity, the italicized areas in the Planning Ahead section indicate supplies that are in—and should be returned to—your classroom SHARED SUPPLY bag.

Background Information/Teacher Helps

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"The account of Daniel being cast into the lions' den is one of the most familiar stories of the Old Testament. The fact that such an event should be given the same amount of space in Scripture as the panoramic view of world history recorded in chapter 7 leads to the conclusion that, from God's viewpoint, this was an important event not only to Daniel but to all students of Scripture."^[1]

"The excellent services and integrity of Daniel under King Darius makes him the target of jealous fellow officials in the kingdom. Thus, they hatch the plot that eventually leads to Daniel's place in the Lions' den. Finding no legitimate means to get rid of Daniel, they trick Darius into signing a decree against prayer to any deity other than himself. Of course Daniel, ever faithful to God the Father, cannot acknowledge this decree.

"The remarkable faithfulness of Daniel in the face of this decree was similar to that of his three companions in chapter 3 as they faced the fiery furnace. According to the record, although he knew that the writing was signed and that discovery and execution were inevitable, he nevertheless went to his house where his windows were opened in the direction of Jerusalem, which still lay in ruins . . . Then he knelt in keeping with his schedule of coming to God three times a day in prayer and thanksgiving. Daniel in his prayer life followed the inspired instructions of Jeremiah addressed to the elders, priests, prophets, and all the people of the captivity (Jeremiah. 29:1). Jeremiah had assured them, 'Then shall you call upon me, and you shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And you shall seek me, and find me, when you search for me with all your heart' (Jeremiah. 29: 12)."^[2]

Obviously, Daniel was not defying the king to show his allegiance to God. Rather, he was merely continuing his life-long habit. The Bible records that he was doing what he had done before. The question arises, why not pray in secret and avoid punishment? "To Daniel apparently this was subterfuge, and he did not swerve whatever from his usual customs in prayer."^[3]

"Of great significance is the fact that even his enemies anticipated that this would be Daniel's response. Quite confidently, they assembled to witness his prayers and to have a basis for charging Daniel before the king . . . What a testimony Daniel had that even his enemies knew he would be faithful to God although it would cost him his life."^[4]

[1] John F. Walvoord, Daniel, The Key to Prophetic Revelation, p. 132.

[2] Ibid., pp. 137-138.

[3] John F. Walvoord, Daniel, The Key to Prophetic Revelation, p. 138.

[4] Ibid., p. 138.

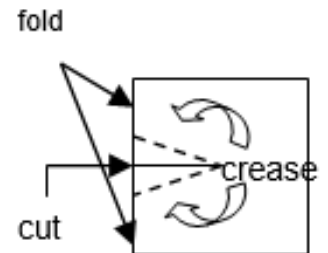
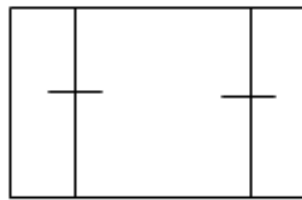
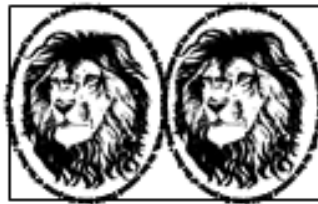
Activity Stations

• Drama Preparation

- **Instructions:** As students arrive, choose 3 students to play the parts of Daniel, Dufas and Duffer for the skit. Give each student a copy of the skit and have them practice their lines.
- Cut a window out of a large piece of white butcher paper from the storage room, roll the piece of paper like a scroll and have a pen with it.

• Craft – Pop-Up Lion Mouth

- **Instructions:** Fold the printed sheet along the vertical line on the back of the lion picture. Cut along the printed horizontal line. Fold the two triangles back and crease as shown. Fold the creased triangles back out and open the picture. Hold the paper so it looks like a tent. Push the top triangle down gently so it is pushed through to the other side of the paper. Repeat with the bottom triangle. Tape or glue a red construction paper strip across the back of the mouth part so the red shows through when the mouth is open. When the paper is opened and closed the mouth will poke in and out.



• Missions Prayer

- **Instructions:** Talk about and pray for the Oasis Giving campaign. A couple of weeks ago we talked about a young man named Daniel, who as a teenager was taken prisoner and marched in chains to Babylon (show on map) far from his home in Israel. We talked about two tests in which Daniel chose to remain faithful to God. Does anyone remember the two tests? (Get responses.) He chose to eat the kind of food God wanted him to rather than what Nebuchadnezzar gave him. He and his friends refused to bow down to the golden statue that King Nebuchadnezzar made, even though it meant his friends were to be put in the fiery furnace!

Daniel was able to remain faithful to God throughout his seventy-plus years in Babylon because he knew and trusted God. This week we are going to learn that once again even when all the odds were against him, Daniel trusted his faithful God. As a result the whole kingdom of Babylon knew that Daniel's God is the sovereign God of the universe. Our key verse is, "God rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions" (Daniel 6:27).

Open your Bibles and follow along as I read Daniel 6:3-28.

Transition

Learning Activity#1 Lg. Group

Now that we've read this incident, let's act it out.

Drama

Skit – "Daniel and the Lions' Den" acted out by class

- **Instructions:** Assign characters and act out the skit.
- **Characters:**
 - Daniel = student
 - The praising people = the class
 - King = 1 teacher
 - Lions = 4 students
 - Commissioners, Dufas & Duffer = 2 students

Scene 1: Daniel goes off alone to pray

Daniel: I am happy that God has used me to help lead the people here in Babylon. My God is great, He gives me wisdom.

(alone in his room by the window Daniel prays to God)

Thank you, God!!

Scene 2: Commissioners plot to overthrow Daniel

(Act out this part with evil facial expressions and voices, each nervously planning Daniel's demise.)

Dufas: I hate that Daniel. Why does the king think he is so great?

Duffer: We must destroy this, this, this Israelite. Let us plot to kill him....!

Dufas: Yes, Yes. But we shall not spill his blood. Let us trick the King into doing it.

Duffer: Of course!" We shall destroy this, this, this Israelite once and for all. HAHA.

Scene 3: Commissioners trick the King

Dufas: OH King, we have a great idea to praise your name more than ever.

King: What is the idea, Dufas? Come closer, let me hear your idea.

Duffer: If I may, sir.... You see, you are so great that we feel you alone should be worshipped by everyone. Why should anybody else get the praise except you?

Duffer: Therefore, we have decided that the best way to get Daniel killed is for.....oops, I mean, the best way for you to get all the praise is to make a law that punishes anyone who worships anyone other than you, dear king. For their punishment, they would be thrown into the lions den to be eaten, chewed and devoured, with blood gushing out. HA HA HA HA.

King: Not a bad idea, Dufas and Duffer.

Dufas: All you need to do is sign on the dotted line
(The king signs the law.)

Learning Activity#1 Continued

Scene 4: Commissioners observe Daniel praying and force the king to pass judgment against Daniel

(Commissioners hide, watching Daniel so they can trap him.)

Duffer: What are you doing, you Israelite?

Daniel: I'm praying to God. He's my best friend. Want to join me?

Dufas: Not on your life, mister. You are arrested because you are worshipping someone other than our King. You are a traitor.

(They arrest Daniel and bring him into the King)

Dufas: Here's your traitor, king. We found him praying to his God.

King: Oh NO, not Daniel. You can't put him in the lions' den. He is my best man and friend. You can't.

Duffer: What do you mean, we can't? It was your law! You signed it yesterday.

King: What?! You tricked me!

Dufas: Sorry, kingypoo. It's too late. You blew it and we finally get to see this Israelite boy thrown into the lions' den to be eaten, chewed and devoured, with blood gushing out. HA HA HA HA.

King: NO, No, I won't have it!!

Duffer: Sorry, kingypoo, it's too late. You have to follow through on your decree.

Scene 5: Daniel is thrown into the Lions' den

(Daniel prays. The lions act like they are completely trained. Maybe nuzzle up to Daniel)

Scene 6: The king checks on Daniel in the morning. Daniel is OK

King: Daniel, are you in there?

Daniel: I'm fine. My God closed the mouths of the lions. My God is great! Those lions were gentle as pussycats!

King: Why it's a miracle! Your God is the one and only true God. I want him to be my God!

Scene 7: The king throws the commissioners into the lions' den

King: Oh Dufas and Duffer, I have a surprise for you. You get to die today.

The King throws the evil commissioners into the lions' den. The lions begin attacking and jumping on them growling etc.

Scene 8: Darius makes decree to worship Daniel's God

King: Today I declare to the entire world that all people shall worship and bow down to the God of Daniel. For He is the only true God and His kingdom will never be destroyed. Daniel's "God rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions."

Learning Activity#1 Continued

Transition

Learning Activity# 2 Sm. Groups

Good News

Isn't it incredible that throughout his seventy-plus years in Babylon Daniel risked his life to worship God? Why would anyone want to risk his or her life for a God you can't even see? (Get responses.) Because God is real! He is the creator of the universe. He created everything and He wants to be in relationship with you! He wants you to be in heaven with Him after you die. Only those who ask Jesus to forgive their sin can be in relationship with God and go to heaven. Jesus, God's son, went to the cross as punishment for our sins! When you tell God that you want Him to forgive your sins and be a part of your life you become His child. Do you all know what the word "sin" means? It means "missing the mark." It is all the wrong choices we've made that go against God and either hurt ourselves or others— like being mean to your little brother or sister, lying about something, hating someone in your heart, jealously wanting something someone else has, etc. God teaches that sin, even just one, has caused a barrier in His relationship with you. Yet He is willing to forgive those sins, if you will ask that Jesus' death count for you. How great it is to know you have been forgiven by God and can relate to Him as a friend. Would you like that? All you have to do is say to God, "God, will you let Jesus live in my heart. I know I have made bad choices, which go against You. I want you to forgive my sins."

Let's get into small groups to talk about this amazing event in Daniel's life.

Small Group

It's not clear that Daniel knew what would happen to him when he broke King Darius' law by continuing to pray to God.

- Do you think he knew that God would protect him from the lions? (Discuss. He knew he would be thrown in the lions' den, but he had no guarantee that he wouldn't die.)
- What did Daniel know about God? (He knew that God was able to do mighty miracles and ruled the lions. He could keep them from eating him if He wanted to. Most of all he knew that God would be with him and give him whatever he needed.) Remember the key verse, "God rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions" (Daniel 6:27). Daniel remained faithful to God not only because he knew God was the ruler of all. He wanted God to be known throughout the land.
- Is it easy to trust God all the time? When do you have trouble trusting God? What do you think would help you trust God at those times?
- Daniel remembered God's power and was thankful. Can you remember a time when God showed His to you? (Teacher, share an age-appropriate personal example.)

Learning Activity# 2 Continued

Transition

Let's pray. Those of you who are forgiven can thank God that "God rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions" (Daniel 6:27). And pray that He will help us to remember when we are in difficult situations.

Let's play a game that reviews the sequence of events about Daniel and the lions' den.

Learning Activity# 3 Lg. Group

Game - Daniel Relay

Set Up: Just beyond the starting line of each team set 2 chairs together facing each other to represent the window. Beyond the window, place a chair to represent the king's throne. Hang the key verse on the white board.

Instructions: Divide class into 3 teams. The first player on each team will: (1) climb over the 2 chairs as if climbing through a window; (2) kneel down as if praying; (3) run to the "throne" and sit on the throne while forming a crown with hands on head; (4) crawl like a lion to the wall; (5) stand up, recite the key verse; (6) run back and tag the next player in line. Repeat until all players have run the race.