** BIBLE 101**

Unit 5: Messengers of God - Prophets

*Daniel in the Lion’s Den*

**A Note to the Teacher:** Daniel is not a prophet in the traditional sense – he did not bring a specific message from God . Instead, Daniel prophesies by example. Even when the odds are against him and he faces punishment, Daniel refuses to stop worshiping and praying to God.

This lesson aims to teach students the importance of trusting in God, even when it seems hard. God’s love is bigger than any obstacle we face! Be sure to remind students of this throughout the lesson.

**Gathering**

As students enter the space, gather them in a seated circle. In the center of the circle, place two toys: a man and a lion. **Ask, “Imagine that these two were stuck in a room together. The lion is hungry. What do you think would happen?”** Give time for answers.

**Say, “Today’s story is exactly that. A man named Daniel ends up in a pit (a deep hole that you cannot climb out of), but instead of just one lion, he is surrounded by lions. They are all hungry, and he must stay there overnight. But before we can tell that part of the story, we should probably find out how Daniel got there in the first place!**

**Daniel was a Jewish man. He was a hard worker and very obedient to God, and had climbed the ranks as an administrator in the Babylonian government. His coworkers were jealous – how could a Jew get to be so important? They tried and tried to find ways to get Daniel in trouble, but he never did anything wrong!**

**One day, Daniel’s coworkers managed to trick the king into issuing a decree. For the next 30-days, anyone who prayed to a god or man other than the king would be thrown in a pit full of lions. Let’s see what Scripture says happens next.”**

Open the Bible to Daniel 6. (You may want to pause here to mention that this story is in the Old Testament of the Bible. Does this happen before or after Jesus?)

*Read, or invite a volunteer to read, Daniel 6:10-15.*

**Ask, “What did Daniel do that got him in trouble? Why do you think Daniel prayed if he knew that he could be punished for it?”** Take some time to talk about trusting God, even when it is hard or even dangerous. When have students trusted God through something difficult?

**Say, “So Daniel is doomed to spend the night in the pit full of lions.”**

*Read, or invite a volunteer to read, Daniel 6:16-24.*

 **Ask, “What happened? Who kept Daniel safe?”**

**Say, “Daniel was a unique kind of prophet. He did not have a message from God that he went around telling people. Instead, Daniel shared God’s love by example. Even when he knew that it could cost him his life, Daniel trusted in God enough to pray. God protected Daniel because Daniel was faithful. God did the impossible – allowed Daniel to survive his time in the lions den – because Daniel hadn’t doubted God. That is the message that Daniel brought us: trust God, no matter what, and God will take care of you.”** Repeat the lesson a few times aloud as a group before moving on to the day’s project.

**Gentle Lions**

Lions, especially hungry lions, are ferocious. But God held the mouths of the lions closed while Daniel was in the pit, and the lions were gentle.

**Say, “To help us remember the story of Daniel and the importance of trusting God even, and especially, when we are surrounded by lions, we are going to make our own lions this morning.”**

In younger classes, children will be making lion masks. In older classes, they will make felt lion loveys.

***LION MASKS: For Prek-Grade1***

Give each child a paper plate. Set out yellow/orange/brown crayons and allow them to color their plates to look like the lion’s fur.

Set out strips of yellow/orange/brown construction paper. Demonstrate how to glue the strips around the edge of the plate to make a mane.

Help students add googly eyes and a face (a Sharpie marker works best on top of crayon). Attach a tongue depressor to the back of the plate using duct tape).

**Say, “Now that you all are lions, lets see if we can act out the story of Daniel in the lions’ den. Hold up your masks and move around the room pretending to be very hungry and looking for food. We will take turns being Daniel. When Daniel sits down in the middle of the room, the lions can sniff him, but they do not eat him. In fact, they lay down and take a nap.”**

Act out the story, with children taking turns playing the part of Daniel.

***LION LOVEYS: For Grades 2-5***

Give each child a yellow and an orange circle of felt and a pair of scissors. Stack the two pieces of felt on top of one another. Demonstrate how to cut 1.5” slits through both pieces of felt around the edge of the circle. Tie the yellow and orange pieces together at each cut to seal the circle. (This process is identical to the making of a tied fleece blanket, and will be familiar to many kids.)

When everyone has finished tying their lions together, set out googly eyes and Sharpie markers for them to add faces.

**Say, “We do not typically think of lions as something we want to snuggle. Daniel was certain that he would be instantly eaten when he was thrown in to the lions’ den. But God closed the mouths of the lions and made them gentle to protect Daniel, because Daniel was faithful. When you snuggle your lions at home, remember that God protects you, too!”**

**Closing**

When everyone has finished, have them work together to clean up the classroom.

Corrie arrives to teach music at 11:20am. At that time, students gather in a seated circle near the classroom couch. If time allows, have students help cleanup before heading to choir practice.