

Daniel Prays to God Three Times a Day

Overview



Materials You'll Need

- no extra materials are needed for this lesson



Scriptures

Dan 6:1-23

Bible Truth Objective(s)

God wants us to draw closer to Him through daily prayer

Behavioral Objective(s)

To identify the different times and places where the students can pray to God throughout the day

Memory Verse

"Pray to the Lord." (Jer 29:7)



Bible Knowledge

Daniel's Service

Daniel was brought to Babylon during the first deportation (605 BC). He served the Babylonians during their supremacy. When they were conquered by the Medes and Persians, King Darius took the kingdom (Dan 5:31, 6:1). The Medes and Persians was the second of the series of four kingdoms that King Nebuchadnezzar had dreamed about (Dan 2).

After King Darius took over, Daniel still held a high position. He would have been around eighty years old. But he was so effective at his job and so honest that even his jealous enemies could not find any fault with him. They realized their only hope in bringing down Daniel was to catch him doing something related to his faith in God that conflicted with the law of the land.

It was common in those days to deify kings and worship them. Daniel's enemies went to the king, and urged him to make a new law that no one should pray to anyone except the king for thirty days. If a person disobeyed this law, he would be

thrown into a den of lions. The Aramaic word for den means "pit," which indicated that it was underground. It is important to note that once a royal decree was issued, it could not be revoked, not even by the king (see also Est 8). It is possible that the kings did not want the people to think they had made faulty decrees by negating them.

Daniel knew about the new decree, but he continued to pray three times a day. He prayed in his upstairs room, facing Jerusalem toward the west. Daniel's enemies went in a group and witnessed him praying, after which they immediately told the king. Darius realized that he had been tricked. He did not want to lose his most efficient and loyal official. He worked all day to save Daniel, but he could not find another way around the law he had put into place.

Darius spent a miserable night without food, sleep, or entertainment. Early in the morning, he ran out to check on his friend. Hoping against hope, Darius called out to Daniel. He was overjoyed when Daniel assured him that God had saved him. King Darius then commanded that the men who had accused Daniel, and their families, be thrown into the lion's den. Entire families were killed because the Persians (and the Hebrews, see example of Achan in Josh 7) considered guilt a collective responsibility.



Understanding Your Students

Young children have very short attention spans. They can only stay focused for several minutes at a time. Therefore, it is difficult for them to pray for more than a few minutes (though they should still be encouraged to pray with the congregation when the opportunity arises so they can learn to model what the grown-ups are doing). Since the aim of today's lesson is to allow the students to understand that they can pray to God at any time of the day, they can also be taught that small increments can add up to a lot of communication with God.

Talk about the various times throughout the day when they can pray to God. For example, they can pray to God when they get up to thank Him for a good night's sleep. They can thank God at breakfast for their food. They can pray to God in the car before their mom or dad takes them to school, to ask God to guide their

day. Then at lunch, they can say grace before their meal. After coming home from school, they can thank God for bringing them safely home. When it is time for dinner, they can be in charge of saying the thanksgiving prayer for the whole family. And at night, they can pray to God to thank Him for taking care of everyone. When we break down the day into smaller parts, they can see that there are many opportunities for them to talk to God.

Our students will learn from our actions as much as they will learn from our words. In addition to talking about when and how to pray, teach them to pray to God by praying with them in each class. Offer prayers of thanks, prayers for guidance, prayers for those in need, and prayers of repentance. That way, they can see the many ways they can talk to God. We can also share our experiences with the power of prayer. Someday, they may find themselves in similar situations and they will recall how their own teacher handled them.



Vocabulary

Jealous

being unhappy or even angry because you think someone is better than you

Evil

bad and mean

Lion's Den

a cave or a hole in the ground where lions were kept

Law

a rule



Before You Teach

We often tell others that prayer is the answer to all of our needs. And while it may sound like a cliché, there are many wonderful examples in the Bible of those who turned to God in prayer.

Hannah, in her despair, prayed to God for a child of her own. A year later, her son Samuel was born. After the defeat at Ai, Joshua fell to the ground and prayed to God in humility because he couldn't understand why the Israelites had lost the battle. God answered the prayer by revealing the deeds of Achan. When Hezekiah was sick, he prayed to God to heal him. God promised to extend his life another fifteen years. In the New Testament, Jesus prayed to God in the Garden of Gethsemane because He could not bear the bitterness of His impending death

alone.

In these examples, the people prayed to God for different reasons. Some prayed for healing. Another prayed for understanding. And Jesus prayed just because He needed to be with God. But everyone prayed to God because they realized they had no better reliance. They could not depend on others for answers. Complaining about their problems would not have helped. Only God could help them in their time of need. These people also demonstrated great trust in God's mercy and grace. Although they could not know how God would answer their pleas, they prayed with humility and sincerity. God did answer all of their requests, but only according to His will.

Today, no matter what we are facing, we can turn to God for answers, too. When we pray with the correct attitude, God will hear us and be our guide.



Bible Story

King Darius Is the New King

Last week, we learned about King Belshazzar. He held a party for his friends. During the party, the king asked that the cups from God's temple be brought out. He wanted his friends to drink wine from these cups. Was this a good idea? No, because these were special cups used in the temple to worship God. But King Belshazzar did not care about God and used them in his party. After a while, the king and all his friends saw something strange. They saw a hand appear in the air and the fingers wrote some words on the wall. When the king saw this, he stopped drinking and partying. He was scared because he didn't know what was going on. He called his wise men to tell him what the words meant, but they could not. Then the queen told the king that Daniel might be able to tell what the words meant. So the king called Daniel into the palace. Daniel told the king that the words meant he would not be king for much longer, and another kingdom would take over Babylon because he did not love God. Did Daniel say what was right? Yes, that same night, King Belshazzar was killed and a new person became the king. His name was King Darius. He was the leader of a kingdom called the Medes and Persians.

Daniel Helps King Darius

King Darius was a powerful king. He was ruler over many people. Because his kingdom was so large, he needed a lot of helpers. One of King Darius' helpers was Daniel. Remember that Daniel was very young when he was taken away from his home to live in a new country, but he did not forget God and he continued to be His good follower. He had helped King Nebuchadnezzar and King Belshazzar. Now, he helped King Darius. King Darius liked Daniel very much because he did his job better than the other men. The king wanted to put him in charge of the whole kingdom. The other people who served the king did not like this plan. They wanted to be in charge instead. So they became jealous of Daniel. These men wanted to find a way to make Daniel look bad before the king so that the king would not like Daniel anymore. Then Daniel couldn't be in charge. But no matter how hard they tried, they could not

find anything wrong with Daniel. He always did what was right.

The evil men thought to themselves and finally came up with an idea. They knew that Daniel prayed to God every day. So they decided to make a new law that said that people can only pray to King Darius for thirty days. If someone did not follow this new rule, then he would be thrown into the lion's den. That means the person would die because the lions would eat him up.

The men who thought of this plan went to the king and told him, "O, King Darius, most excellent and great ruler, our country is more and more powerful because of you! All the people in this kingdom shall come and worship you! Please make a new law that from now on, the people can only pray to you for thirty days. Anyone who prays to other gods will be punished and thrown into the lion's den."

King Darius liked this new law. He thought it made him important. So he signed the papers and this became the new rule in the land. And no one could change this law. All the people became afraid: they did not want to be the lions' food! So they did not dare to pray to anyone else but King Darius.

Daniel Still Prays to God

Daniel knew about this new law. He knew the law said that he had to pray to King Darius and no one else. If he didn't, he would be thrown into the lion's den. But Daniel knew it was not the right thing to do. He knew that it would be wrong to pray to King Darius, who was only a man. He knew he could only pray to God. So Daniel still prayed to God every day. Actually, he prayed three times a day. Like he always did, Daniel opened his window and knelt down to pray to God. He prayed to God in the morning, at noon, and at night every day. He was brave.

The evil men saw Daniel praying to God. They probably thought to themselves, "Aha! We caught him! He is praying to his God." So they hurried off to tell the king.

They said to the king, "Isn't there a new law that says everyone has to pray to you, King Darius? If not, they will be thrown into the lion's den?"

The king answered them, "Yes, this is true."

Then they said to the king, "We saw Daniel

praying to his God. He did not obey the law because the law says that everyone should only pray to you. He must be thrown into the lion's den."

Now King Darius liked Daniel. He knew that Daniel was a good person and he did not want him to be hurt. But since he had made the law and it could not be changed, he ordered the soldiers to capture Daniel.

God Protects Daniel

Even though the king was sad, he knew he had to follow his law. So Daniel was thrown into the lion's den. The lion's den was probably a big hole that was dug in the ground. The lions would already be in the big hole, hungry and waiting for food to be thrown to them. After Daniel was thrown in, a large rock was rolled over the opening. That way, Daniel could not climb out and try to escape. What do you think happened to Daniel? Will he be okay?

The king spent the whole night thinking about Daniel. He didn't want Daniel to be eaten by the lions. He was sad he had made this new law. He waited and waited the entire night. He wanted to see what had happened to Daniel.

The next day, very early in the morning, King Darius ran out of his palace and hurried to the lion's den. He cried out sadly, "Daniel, Daniel! Has your God saved you?"

The king waited, hoping to hear Daniel's voice. Then Daniel called out, "O King, live forever! My

God took care of me, and He protected me from the lions because I didn't do anything wrong. He sent angels to shut the lions' mouths and they could not hurt me."

King Darius was very happy to hear Daniel's voice.

He said to his soldiers, "Bring Daniel out of the den!"

Daniel was lifted up out of the lion's den. He was not bitten anywhere by the hungry animals because he did what was right before God. He prayed to God every day and did not stop because of the new law.

When the king found out that the evil men did this on purpose to harm Daniel, he punished them by throwing them into the lion's den. Because they did wrong things, they were probably eaten very quickly by the hungry lions. Then, the king made a new law. It said that everyone should love and pray to Daniel's God because He is the living God who saved Daniel from the lions.

We learned today that Daniel prayed to God every day. He knew it was important to thank God, ask Him for help, and talk to Him like a friend. He did not stop praying to God, even though there was a new law saying he couldn't. And in the end he was saved. We should learn from Daniel and pray to God every day when we can. God will protect us and help us just as He helped Daniel.



Check For Understanding

1. **Why did the evil men want to hurt Daniel?** (They didn't want the king to like Daniel more and give him more important jobs.)
2. **What did the new law say?** (For thirty days, the people could only pray to King Darius. If they didn't, they would be thrown into the lion's den.)
3. **What did Daniel do every day?** (He prayed to God three times a day.)
4. **Did Daniel pray to the king?** (No.)
5. **What happened to Daniel when he contin-**

ued to pray to God? (He was thrown into the lion's den.)

6. **Did the lions hurt Daniel?** (No. God sent angels to shut the lions' mouths so that Daniel would not be hurt.)
7. **What new law did the king make after Daniel came out of the lion's den?** (Everyone should love Daniel's God and pray to Him because He is the living God.)
8. **The Bible says Daniel prayed three times a day. Maybe he prayed in the morning, before he ate, or at bedtime. When do you pray to God?** (Allow students to answer. Encourage them to find time to pray to God each day.)



Life Application Story

The Paper Telephone

One sunny afternoon, Susie Lim rode her bike over to Cathy Hayes' house. Susie's mom, Mrs. Lim, was riding behind her. Mrs. Lim needed to talk to Pastor Hayes about something. While she was waiting for her mom, Susie planned on asking Cathy if she wanted to play with her.

Once they reached the house, Susie put her bike down, and ran to ring the doorbell. Ding dong!

Cathy looked out the window and saw that it was Susie. She opened the door with a big smile.

"Hi, Mrs. Lim. Hi, Susie," said Cathy. Then she called out, "Dad, Mrs. Lim is here!"

Mrs. Lim made her way into the house and found Pastor Hayes in the kitchen.

Susie turned to Cathy and asked, "Do you want to play?"

"Sure, let's go to my room," Cathy said as she shut the front door.

So Susie and Cathy went to Cathy's room. Cathy had just gotten new coloring books, and they thought that it would be fun to color together. As Cathy got her crayons out, Susie saw something taped on the wall. It was a huge paper telephone. Above it was a sign with words that said, "Don't forget to call!"

"Wow, where'd you get the big telephone?" asked Susie.

"I drew it myself and cut it out," Cathy said as she took out all her crayons from a glitter box. "Then I taped it on my wall."

"What's it for?" Susie asked her friend.

"Well, my family has family Bible study nights. Last week, my dad talked about how we should pray to God every day. But sometimes, I forget. So we came up with this idea. Now when I see this huge telephone, I won't forget to pray to God, like I am calling Him."

"That's cool. I wish I had a telephone like that."

"Well, we could make one now," suggested Cathy.

"Okay, thanks Cathy," said Susie with a big smile.

Time went by quickly as the two girls drew,

colored and cut. Finally, the telephone was finished.

"Now I have one for myself!" grinned Susie.

"You can tape it up at home to remind you to pray to God every day," said Cathy.

"Thanks. When I see the telephone, I will remember to pray to God. But sometimes I don't know what to say to Him," said Susie.

"Well, my parents tell me that I can tell God what happens at school, and thank Him for everything He gives me," explained Cathy.

"That's right," Pastor Hayes said, as he walked into the room.

"Dad, I didn't even hear you," said Cathy.

"Well, you two were so into the drawing and talking that you didn't even know I was here. I came to tell Susie that it is time for her to go home. Mrs. Lim and I are finished talking about our grown-up things," Pastor Hayes explained.

Susie got up and grabbed her paper telephone.

"That sure is a big telephone," Pastor Hayes said, "and it will definitely remind you to pray to God."

"When can I pray to God, Pastor Hayes?" asked Susie.

"Anytime we want to. We can pray when we are happy, or when we're sad. We can thank Him for our food. We can also ask God for help. He will listen to us if we pray to Him," said Pastor Hayes.

"And don't forget that we can pray to God when we want to say, 'Sorry, God,' for the bad things we have done," Cathy added.

"You are right," Pastor Hayes said.

"I won't forget to pray to God now," said Susie as she headed to the front door with her paper telephone.

Questions to Think About

1. **Why did Cathy have a huge paper phone on the wall?** (To remind her to pray to God.)
2. **What can we pray to God about?** (We can pray to give thanks, to ask for help, or because we are happy and want to share good news.)
3. **When can we pray?** (Anytime and anywhere.)
4. **Why should we always pray to Jesus?** (God is our friend. He wants to hear our voices. When we pray to Him, He will listen and be with us.)
5. **How should we begin our prayers? How can we end our prayers?** (Allow students to answer; "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ," and "Amen.")



Activity 1

Daniel Prays to God

Review the story of Daniel by reading the sentences with the help of the rebuses.

King Darius had a helper. His name was Daniel. He loved God very much and prayed three times a day. King Darius had other helpers. They did not like Daniel. They tricked King Darius and made him write a law. Daniel was trapped and he was thrown into a lion's den. But God saved Daniel and he was not eaten. King Darius was happy and praised God.



Activity 2

Where Can We Pray?

Where are some places we can pray to God? Spell the word pray in each sentence to learn about where we can pray to God.

1. We can pray at school before lunch.
2. We can pray at church.
3. We can pray at home.
4. We can pray in the car.



Activity 3

Daniel Prays

Sing the following song with the students to remind them of how Daniel prayed to God each day. (Sung to the tune of "Mary Had a Little Lamb.")

**Daniel prayed to God each day,
God each day, God each day;
Daniel prayed to God each day;
He always prayed each day.**

**I will pray to God each day,
God each day, God each day;
I will pray to God each day;
I'll always pray each day.**

Activity 9:1

Daniel Prays to God

Review the story with the help of the rebuses below.



King Darius

had a helper. His name was . He loved God very much and



Daniel



had other



Helpers

prayed three times a day. . They did



not like . They tricked



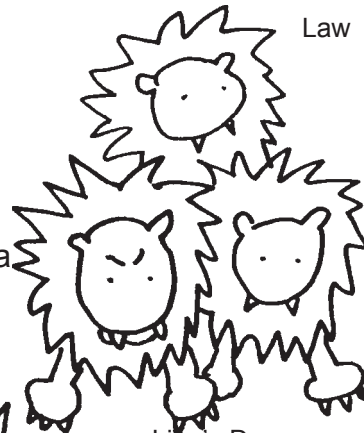
and made him write a



Law

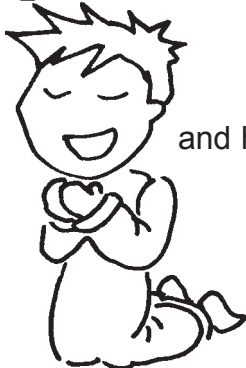


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Lion's Den

saved and he was not eaten.

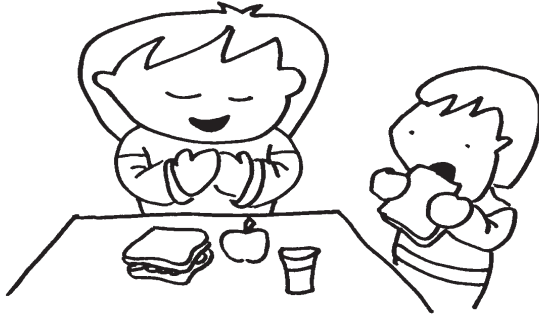


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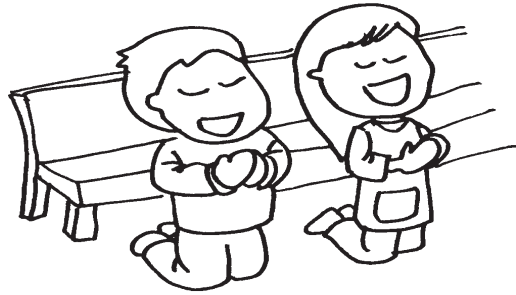
Activity 9:2

Where Can We Pray?

Where are some places we can pray to God? Spell the word **pray** in each sentence and learn about where we can pray.



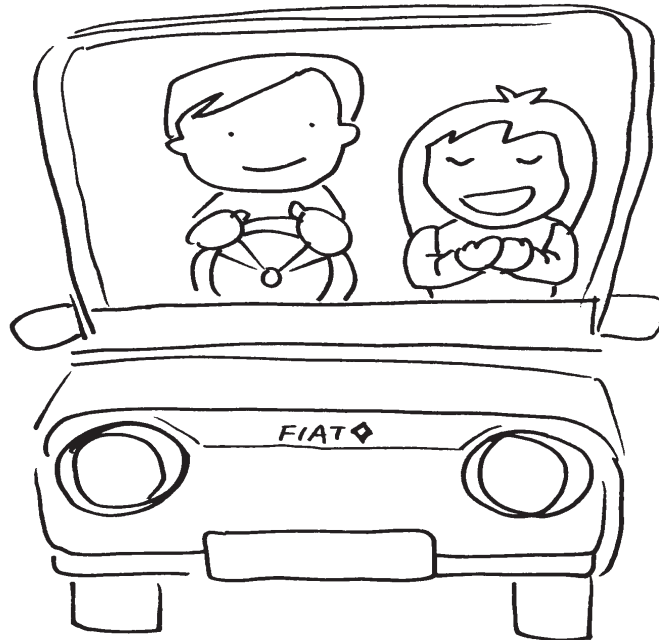
1. We can _____ at school before lunch.



2. We can _____ at church.



3. We can _____ at home.



4. We can _____ in the car.