God Calls Daniel

1

Before you begin, please read the introduction on the right to yourself.

The Book of Daniel is actually a combination of different types of writing. Sometimes it is narrative and sometimes it is visionary. Daniel is reported living in Babylon, first under the Babylonian kings, then under the Persians who conquered this nation. Daniel's message is that God's wisdom is different from human wisdom. Even in the face of persecutions, faithfulness to God is required by the covenant.

2

With the help of your child, prepare the meeting space. Pull out your Bible, light some candles, and add any other decoration you'd like to make the space beautiful. You will also need your handout from the last session, about Elijah.

Then begin with a prayer.

3

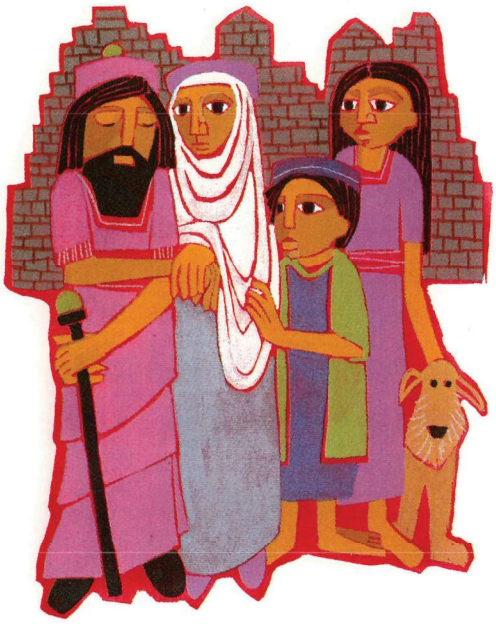
Getting started. Think of one time when you felt you were really in a mess and you weren't sure how you would get out of it. Discuss together: How did it end? What did you feel or what did you think when it was all over?

Based on the Book of Daniel

1

Read the story below out loud. If your child is old enough, he or she can read it to you. Otherwise, read it to your child. Along the way, clarify anything your child might not understand.

A long, long, long time ago, there lived a young boy named Daniel. Daniel came from a good Hebrew family. Daniel lived during the time when Israel and Judah were no longer free. They were ruled by the king of Babylon. Many Hebrew families were forced to move to Babylon. Daniel's family was one of those families.



Daniel's family missed their homeland. They missed their old friends. But they did not miss God. They knew that God was still with them. The people of Babylon and many of the Chosen People prayed to all sorts of pretend gods. But Daniel's family was faithful to God. Each day they prayed three times to God.

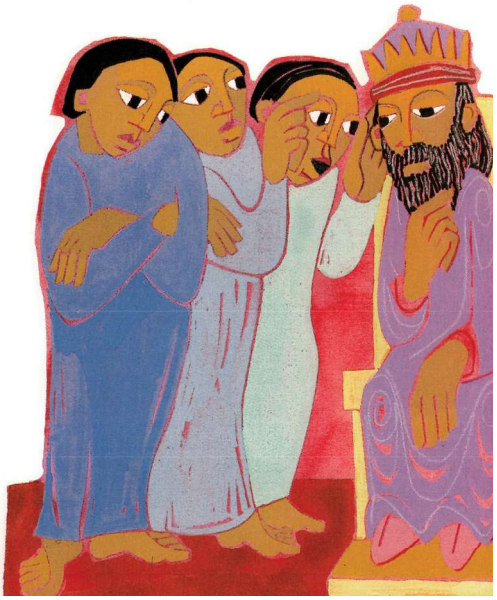
Every year the king chose the smartest and strongest young people to come work in his palace. When Daniel was old enough, he was chosen. He studied and trained for years. When Daniel grew up he became a great leader in Babylon.

The other leaders were jealous of Daniel because he was the king's favorite. They decided they would find a way to get rid of him. They thought and they thought. Finally, they had an idea. They knew that Daniel prayed every day to God. They knew that he never missed a day. They decided that this was how they would trap Daniel.

The jealous leaders went to the king and said, "We think that you should tell everyone not to pray to any gods for thirty days. For thirty days people should only pray to you. In this way everyone will know how important you are."

"What a good idea!" said the king.

"Just to make sure everyone listens," the leaders continued, "we think you should sign an order that says anyone who disobeys will be thrown into a lion's den."

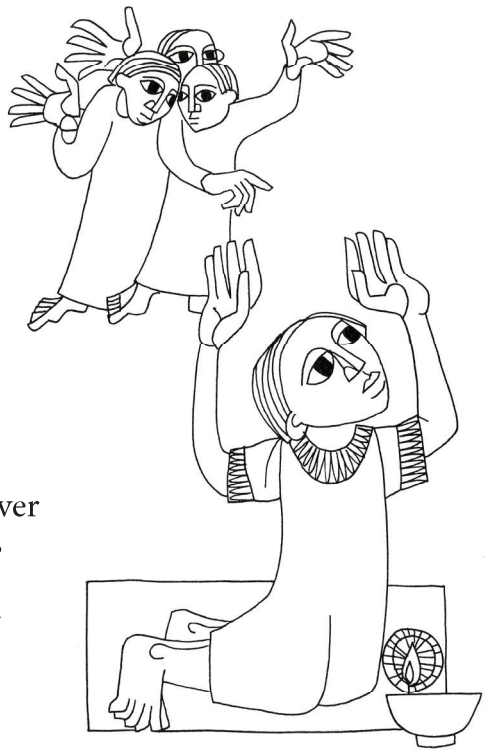


"You are right," said the king. "This will make the people pay attention. I will sign this order." The leaders were excited. They had set a trap for Daniel.

Daniel heard about the new order. He knew that he would be punished if he prayed to God. But every day, three times a day he went to his house and prayed anyway. He opened the windows and knelt down. He faced his homeland and talked to God.

One day when he was in the middle of his prayers, the other leaders came running into his room. "We have caught you!" they said. "You know you are not supposed to pray to anyone but the king. Now you will be punished."

The king was very sad that he had to punish Daniel, but an order was an order. He had Daniel brought to him. He said to Daniel, "You are faithful to your God. May your God save you." Then he told his servants to throw Daniel into the pit where the lions were kept. They rolled some big rocks over the pit so that Daniel could not escape from the lions.



The lions were very hungry. They had not been fed for several days. They were ready to gobble Daniel up. But that is not what happened.

The next morning, bright and early, the king rushed over to the lion's den. "Daniel, Daniel," he cried. "Are you alive? Has your God saved you?" The king was very happy when he heard Daniel answer. "I am alive," Daniel said. "God sent an angel to close the lions' mouths so they could not hurt me." The king ordered the rocks to be taken away

from the pit. Out walked Daniel without a mark on him.

Then the king sent out another order to all of the nations he ruled. This is what it said: "I order that the God of Daniel be honored and respected everywhere."

Daniel continued to serve the king and he also continued to serve God. Both the king and God knew who was most important to Daniel.

God speaks to us the same today. *"Come and talk to me. I like to spend time with you. When you are sad, or afraid, or lonely, come to me."*

1

Now discuss the story with your child. Use the following or other questions:

1. What is your favorite part of the story? Why?
2. How do you think Daniel felt in the lions' den? How would you have felt?
3. If you had been the king, what would you have said to Daniel the next morning?

2

Get your child started on the activity on the next page, making sure they understand the instructions. (The answer can be found on page 8.) Then continue to read below.

3

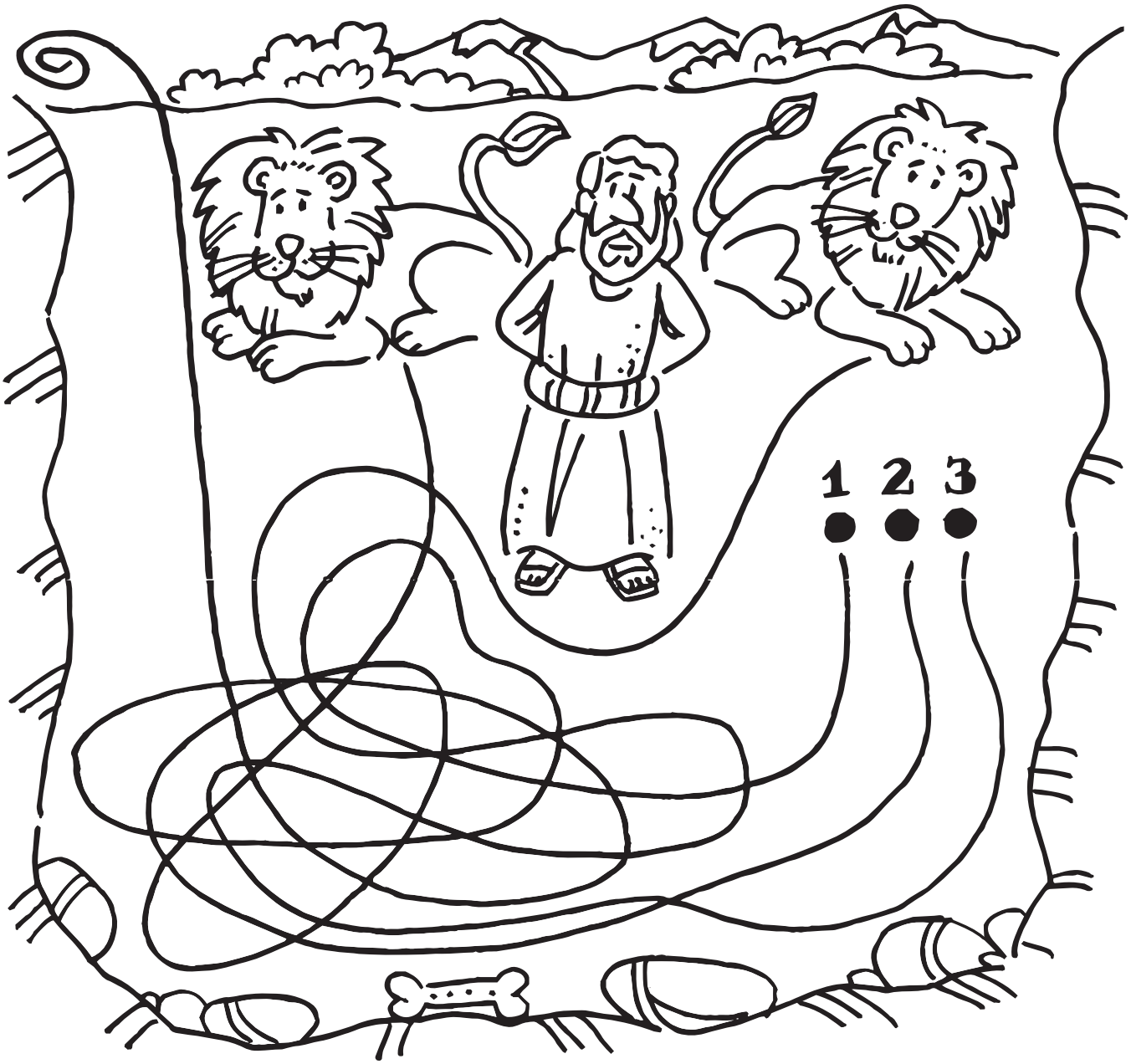
Just for you: We need to stay connected to God. Prayer is our way of staying connected.

Prayer is the crux of our relationship with God. Daniel's commitment to prayer is very costly for him. It places him in mortal danger because of his enemies' evil intentions. But this commitment is Daniel's way of being faithful, and it is what saves him from the hungry lions.

There are four common types of prayer: asking God for something (petition), saying we are sorry (contrition), giving God glory and recognition (praise), and showing God our gratitude (thanksgiving).

Help Out Daniel

Daniel wants to get out of the lions' den. Only one of the ropes will lead him out. Can you trace the correct rope for him and help him get out of the pit?



A User-Friendly World (continued)

1

Help your child get started on the their activity on the next page, and then continue to the next step.

2

Daniel was a leader and a prophet who, like Elijah, was working toward and praying for a better world. Just like Daniel, we need both to act and to pray.

3

Look back at your computer screen from the Elijah activity. Write two prayers for the "Save" issues and two for the "Delete" issues. Share with your child when you're both ready.

'Save' Prayers

I give you praise and love, God, because

I thank you, God, for

'Delete' Prayers

God of our hearts, I ask you for

God, I'm not perfect. I am sorry I

Doing and Praying

Daniel wanted good things to happen. He knew he would have to help. He also knew he would have to pray. Go back to the things you wrote for the last story. Think about what needs to be changed in the world. Think about all the good things around, too. Finish the prayers below.

God, you are great because

Thank you, God, for

God, please help

God, I am sorry for

Types of Prayer

1

At Mass next Sunday, see if you and your child can find the four types of prayer during the liturgy.

Discuss how we use these four different ways of speaking (requests, apologies, compliments and gratitude) even when we are talking to each other.

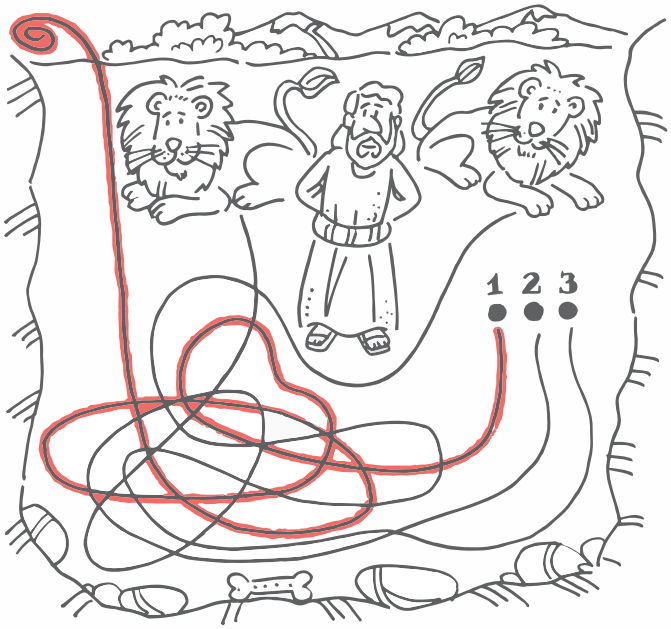
Closing Ritual

2

Make the Sign of the Cross.

Take one of your prayers from your activity pages and pray it together. Make a commitment to pray one of your prayers every day this week—together if possible.

Answer to activity on page 5



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