

*Get Ready!*

## Courageous Christians: Learning from Daniel in the Lion's Den

By: Jennifer Wetzel



### Text

Daniel 6:1-28 (NIV)

### Key Quest Verse

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” Joshua 1:9 (NIV)

### Bible Background

In the third year of his reign, approximately 605 B.C., King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon invaded Jerusalem. During the siege of Jerusalem, the King of Judah, Jehoiakim, along with articles of the temple of God, were delivered into the hands of the oppressors. The Lord allowed the captivity of the people of Judah due to their disobedience in terms of covenant-keeping, the Sabbath years, and idolatry. Exiled in Babylon for 68 years, the people of Judah would not begin to return to their homeland until 538 B.C., one year after King Cyrus of Persia took control of Babylon, as read in Ezra and Nehemiah.

During the Babylonian invasion of Jerusalem, three deportations of captives occurred. King Nebuchadnezzar had ordered his chief of court officials to bring in young Israelite men of nobility to learn to serve in his court. Four young men from Judah, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were present during the first deportation in 605 B.C. A contemporary of Daniel's, Ezekiel, would be included in the second deportation in 597 B.C., though God's purpose for him was far different from that of Daniel's life.

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*Get Ready!***Bible Background**

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God's purpose for Daniel was to serve Him in the royal courts that would rule Babylon throughout Daniel's lifetime. According to Daniel 1:17, God gave him knowledge and understanding in all kinds of literature and understanding, in addition to understanding of visions and dreams. This wisdom set Daniel apart and allowed him to gain favor among all the kings that ruled Babylon. As Daniel became a favorite among all the kings, others became increasingly jealous of his wisdom and the preference granted to him. As they looked for a reason to bring charges against him, they quickly hit upon his religion. For even in his high administrative positions, Daniel was humble and faithful to God.

The story of Daniel in the lion's den takes place during the reign of King Darius, when Daniel is already an elderly man. Since Daniel's rivals knew that the king would not consciously take Daniel's life, they set too trap him by gaining his approval for a law in which no one can worship any God other than Darius himself. Daniel disregards this order and falls to his knees to worship the one true God, knowing that he either must deny his faith or be prepared to die for it. His rivals find him at prayer, and despite the intervention of King Darius, Daniel is thrown into the lion's den. However, God delivers Daniel from the lion's den unscathed and King Darius, deeply impressed with this miracle, orders that everyone within his realm must worship the God of Daniel.

The miracle of Daniel being delivered from the lion's den unharmed reminds us of an important lesson. Daniel remained faithful to God under trying circumstances. This faithfulness endured throughout his entire lifetime, from rejecting the king's defiled meals as a young man to worshipping his God as an elderly man. This faithfulness towards God was rewarded. God remained faithful to him, saving him from destructive powers and protecting his life. God is our rock and refuge. In Him, we can find courage to walk in His ways.

*Get Ready!*



### Lesson Quest

**What I want my students to:**

**Know:** God will protect us when we choose to remain faithful to Him, even in difficult situations

**Feel:** Courage and security in God’s faithfulness and protection

**Do:** Demonstrate courage by worshipping God in all situations

### Leader’s Devotion

In his books *Friends*, Michael W. Smith describes moments of faith in the lives of his friends. Among the memories is a story from the beginning of his career, when faith enabled his friend with courage. In this memory, he recounts the story behind the song *Thy Word* by fellow songwriter and recording artist, Amy Grant.

In his book, Michael W. Smith explains that Amy Grant, himself, and others were at a retreat in the Smoky Mountains, composing new music for her upcoming album. Working hard hours throughout the day, the group would break late at night to return to their separate cabins for respite. One night, Amy Grant stumbled through the darkness, unable to find her cabin. Alone in the darkness, she battled her fear by stopping to pray and asking the Lord to guide her. Through the darkness, the light from her cabin porch shined like a beacon, leading her safely home. The next day, the events of the previous night inspired her to write the song *Thy Word*. The lyrics? “*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet/And a light unto my path/When I feel afraid/And it seems I’ve lost my way/You’re always there right beside me/Nothing will I fear/Just as long as you are near/Please be near me to the end...*”

The lyrics to the song *Thy Word* remind us to never fear. God is ever present, ready to guide us through life’s darkest hours. When we stop to remember that He is there, we will feel his love and His word will truly guide us down life’s path. Faith in God enables us to move through life courageous and bold, for the Lord is on our side. He will deliver us from harm and ensure our safety. In Joshua 1:9, the Lord *commands* us to be strong and courageous. Under such an order, how can we offer anything else?

Get Set!



### Option A

**Crushed by Fear** (adapted from [http://kidssundayschool.com/object/object\\_16a.htm](http://kidssundayschool.com/object/object_16a.htm))

**Materials:** 2 2-liter plastic bottles, washable marker

**Procedure:** Prior to class, form a fist and have someone write the letters F – E – A – R in large print across your knuckles. Then, uncap one bottle while tightening the cap on the second bottle.

When students arrive in class, show them the two empty bottles. **“I want you to look closely at these two empty bottles. They will show us how faith responds in times of fear. The bottle with the cap is full of faith. Though you cannot see the faith right now, when I try to crush the bottle, you will be able to see it. The other bottle is completely empty and shows us what happens without faith. Let’s see what happens to these two in times of fear.”** Form a fist and show the students that your first says “FEAR.” Hold up the empty bottle and remind students that it has no faith. Lay it down and smash the bottle with your fist. Then, hold up the capped bottle and remind students that it is full of faith. Hit the capped bottle repeatedly. Demonstrate to the students that no matter what you do, it will not be smashed. Then, hold up the two bottles for the students to compare.

**“The bottle which had no faith was crushed by fear. The second bottle, which was full of faith, doesn’t even look hurt. It didn’t get crushed. It’s the same when we’re full of faith. In Joshua 1:9, God commands us to be courageous. Being full of faith can give us courage. When we have faith, God is there to protect us from harm. Though we can’t see our faith, it is there, giving us strength and courage. Having faith keeps us from being crushed by fear.”**

GO TO THE BIBLE STORY

### Option B

**Song Styles**

**Materials:** Words and music to the song “*Thy Word*” by Amy Grant (available from Christian bookstores)

**Procedures:** Sing the song “*Thy Word*” with the children. If possible, have the church pianist or worship leader visit the class to teach the song to the students. Tell the students the story behind the writing of the song. (See leader devotion.) Then, have a short discussion with the students on what the words of the song mean to the lesson on being strong and courageous in the Lord.

GO TO THE BIBLE STORY

Get Set!



### Bible Story

**Teacher Tip:** Provide markers for students to highlight portions of the story in their Bibles

Prior to class, decorate you're a small room or closet to look like a lion's den. To gain darkness in the room, use dark shades on the windows and block out any sources of light. Scatter shredded raffia or hay on the floor. Cover the walls with burlap, dark cloth, or butcher paper decorated to look like stones. Hang illustrations of lions on the walls, near the floor. Construct a paper-mache boulder to set against the inside of the door to represent how King Darius sealed the den. Decorating a small room to look like a lion's den can be inexpensive or elaborate, depending on the effect you would like to achieve with your students.

When students arrive to class, take them to the "lions' den." Turn off all the lights and use a flashlight to illuminate the den. Ask them what it feels like to be in such a dark, small space. Then, ask them to imagine what it would have been like with hungry lions prowling the floors. Would anyone be scared? Allow the students time to react to the conditions in which Daniel was thrown. Then, read the Bible story to them by flashlight. After discussing the story, read the key quest verse to them. Remind them that no matter how scared we may be, God will be there with us.

**It pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom, with three administrators over them, one of whom was Daniel. The satraps were made accountable to them so that the king might not suffer loss. Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent. Finally these men said, "We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God." So the administrators and the satraps went as a group to the king and said: "O King Darius, live forever! The royal administrators, prefects, satraps, advisers and governors have all agreed that the king should issue an edict and enforce the decree that anyone who prays to any god or man during the next thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be thrown into the lions' den. Now, O king, issue the decree and put it in writing so that it cannot be altered-in accordance with the laws of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed."**

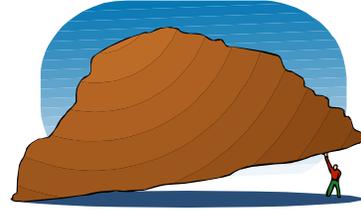
**Get Set!****Bible Story**

So King Darius put the decree in writing. Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before. Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help. So they went to the king and spoke to him about his royal decree: "Did you not publish a decree that during the next thirty days anyone who prays to any god or man except to you, O king, would be thrown into the lions' den?" The king answered, "The decree stands in accordance with the laws of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed." Then they said to the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the decree you put in writing. He still prays three times a day."

When the king heard this, he was greatly distressed; he was determined to rescue Daniel and made every effort until sundown to save him. Then the men went as a group to the king and said to him, "Remember, O king, that according to the law of the Medes and Persians no decree or edict that the king issues can be changed." So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!" A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that Daniel's situation might not be changed. Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep. At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions' den. When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?" Daniel answered, "O king, live forever! My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, O king." The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

At the king's command, the men who had falsely accused Daniel were brought in and thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children. And before they reached the floor of the den, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones. Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations and men of every language throughout the land: "May you prosper greatly! I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel. For he is the living God and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end. He 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." So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian." Daniel 6:1-28 (NIV)

*Go!*



### Like A Rock

**ARTS AND CRAFTS** (adapted from [http://www.grouppublishing.com/free/Childrens/gk3\\_god.htm](http://www.grouppublishing.com/free/Childrens/gk3_god.htm))

**Materials:** Medium-sized rocks, paint, paintbrushes, newspapers, old shirts or aprons, permanent markers

### Quest Connection

In the lesson text and key verse, students learn that when we remain faithful to God, he will protect us in all situations. We learn that we must put our faith in God and that courage will stem from our relationship with Him.

**Our story today has taught us to put in our faith in God. He will protect us in all situations as long as we remain faithful to Him. We need to learn to put our strength and courage in Him. In fact, Psalm 18:2 says that “The Lord is my rock, my protection, my Savior. My God is my rock. I can run to him for safety.” Today, we’re going to paint our rocks to remind us to remain courageous and faithful in God. We can always depend on Him.”**

**Procedure:** Cover the tables with newspaper and have each student protect their clothes with old shirts and aprons. Set out the paints and paintbrushes. Have each child select one rock and allow them to paint the rock in their favorite colors/decorations. As the rocks dry, review the lesson with the students. When the rocks dry, have each student use a permanent marker to write Psalm 18:2 on their courage rocks.

### Close

Have each student name one way in which they can place their faith and courage in God. Then, have them recite Psalm 18:2 together.

Go!



### Scaredy Cats

**ARTS AND CRAFTS** (adapted from [http://www.daniellesplace.com/html/Bible\\_themes\\_d\\_-\\_e.html](http://www.daniellesplace.com/html/Bible_themes_d_-_e.html))

**Materials:** Construction paper, white paper, markers, crayons, orange yarn, scissors, glue, stapler, pattern of lion (see resources section)

### Quest Connection

In the lesson, Daniel continually placed his faith in the Lord and was blessed with the Lord’s protection. Students are learning that they need to possess courage and faith in the Lord’s promises. This activity will teach the students Bible verses that help them remember not to be scared.

**Procedure:** Prior to class, make eleven copies of the lion pattern for each child. When the students arrive, review the story of Daniel in the lion’s den with them. **“Why wasn’t Daniel afraid to continue worshipping God? That’s right, he knew that God would protect him. How did he know that God would save him from the lions? He prayed to God and he knew what God’s word promised. We need to be like Daniel. God’s word promises that he will protect us. Today, we’re going to learn what those promises are. And, we’re going to make lion books to remind us to be courageous and not be scaredy cats.”**

Divide the students into pairs. Have each pair use their Bible concordance to find one verse in which God promises to protect us or instructs us to have courage. Ideas for students have trouble locating verses are Psalm 18:2, 1 Corinthians 16:13, Proverbs 2:8, and Psalm 27:1. As each pair finds a pertinent verse, have them write it on the chalkboard for the other students to see. When all the students have written their verses on the board, read them aloud to the class. Then, write the key quest verse on the board and have the students recite it with you.

Distribute the lion patterns to each student. Have the students cut out the shapes of the lions. On one lion, have the students copy one verse from the chalkboard. Have the students do the same for nine of the other lions. After writing down ten verses about courage and protection, allow the students to color and decorate the lions. Then, have them use the eleventh lion as a cover. Encourage them to write a title, such as “Don’t Be a Scaredy Cat!,” on the cover of their book.

When students are done, staple the books together. Then, students can cut the yarn to glue to the cover as the lion’s mane.

### Close

Tell the students that anytime they feel scared, they can open their books and read the verses to remind them that God is watching over them. Then, ask a student to close with prayer.

**Go!****Story Masks****ARTS AND CRAFTS**

**Materials:** Paper plates, popsicle sticks, construction paper, scissors, glue, markers, yarns, crayons

**Quest Connection**

As students learn about courage, they will dramatize the Bible story. By reenacting the words and actions of the characters, they will have the opportunity to see what courage feels like.

**Procedure:** Assign each student a character from the Bible story. Assign one student Daniel, one student Darius, one an angel, 2-3 students jealous satraps, and the remainder the lions. Give each student a paper plate. Have the students use the construction paper, yarn, and markers to make a mask that resembles their character. When each child is done decorating their plate, have them glue a popsicle stick to the plate as a handle.

Then, review the Bible story with the students. Using their Bibles, each student should review what their character did in the story. Using their masks as costumes, have the students reenact the Bible story.

**Close**

Summarize the meaning of courage with the students. Explain that our courage stems from our faith in the Lord. Have the student portraying “Daniel” close with prayer.

**Go!**



### Balancing Act

**GAME** (adapted from [http://www.grouppublishing.com/free/Childrens/gk3\\_god.htm](http://www.grouppublishing.com/free/Childrens/gk3_god.htm))

**Materials:** 6-foot long 2x4 beam, two footstools, grassy area or mats

### Quest Connection

In the lesson, students have examined the meaning of courage and are learning to place their courage in God. This activity will give them a chance to experience what placing faith in someone else's promise of protection feels like.

**Procedure:** If possible, conduct this lesson outside in a grassy area. If not, spread mats on the classroom floor. Lay the 2x4 directly on the ground. When the students arrive, explain to them that today they will have a chance to demonstrate faith and feel protection in someone else. Show them the beam lying on the floor. **“How many of you would be scared to walk on this beam. Does it look like a frightening experience? Not really! It’s so close to the ground and on a soft area, so we feel safe crossing the beam. We can do that on our own.”** Give each student a chance to walk across the 2x4 like a balance beam.

Now, raise the 2x4 by placing each end on a footstool. **“Now, how many of you would feel comfortable crossing the balance beam on your own? Does this height intimidate you more than the previous one? Why? That’s right, it’s higher and looks scarier. If I promised to help you across, how many of you would feel comfortable crossing the balance beam? I promise to protect you.”** Ask for volunteers to cross the balance beam. Hold their hand as they walk across the beam. **“Crossing this balance beam is a lot like the way we live our lives. At first, living our lives looks pretty easy, like our first balance beam height. We think we can do it on our own. But throughout life, we encounter moments when we might be scared or frightened, like the higher balance beam. We need someone else to help us in that moment. God is always with. In all the scary and happy moments of our life, he is there to watch over and protect us. He keeps us safe and secure. We just need to place our faith in Him and he will be faithful to us.”**

### Close

Have each child name a time when they felt scared and God protected them. Have them recite the key quest verse together.

**Go!**



## Courageous Characters

### RESEARCH

Materials: Bibles

## Quest Connection

Students have studied one moment of faith and courage in Daniel’s life. However, he lived a lifetime of dedication to the Lord. In this lesson, students will examine other events in which Daniel exhibited faith in the Lord and was protected by him.

**Procedure:** “We’ve been studying how God saved Daniel from the lions’ den because Daniel showed faith and trust in Him. But, this is not the only moment in Daniel’s life when he was courageous. He always demonstrated his faith and courage in the Lord. Many times, he had to interpret dreams and symbols. The kings did not always want to hear his messages and that could have scared Daniel. But, he told them anyway, because they were messages from God. Today, we’re going to look at other moments in Daniel’s life when he was faithful to God. It will remind us that we need to always live a faithful and courageous life.”

Have the students divide into groups of three to four. Distribute a Bible to each group. Then, assign each group a different section of Daniel in which Daniel portrays courage and faith. Passages to use include Daniel 1:8-17 (resistance of eating the king’s defiled food), Daniel 2:1-48 (Daniel interprets the king’s dream and spares men from execution), and Daniel 5:1-30 (interpreting the handwriting on the wall).

**Have each group read through their story of Daniel. Ask them to come up with a way for retelling the story to the remainder of the class. For example, they can tell the story, act out the story, sing the story in a song, or any manner that they think the class will learn the lesson. Give each group time to review their story and practice their teaching. Then, have each group present their story to the remainder of the class.**

## Close

Have each group summarize their story of Daniel in a few sentences. Close with prayer. **“Dear Lord, help us to live faithful lives like Daniel. We want to be courageous in all situations, just as he was. Help us to worship you and do your will always. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”**

**Go!**



### Musical Chair Review

#### MUSIC

**Materials:** Plenty of room to move around, cassette or CD player, cassette or CD of Christian music, chairs

### Quest Connection

As students have been learning about the life of Daniel, they learn about the importance of remaining courageous in times of fear. This activity allows them to review what they have learned throughout the lesson.

**Procedure:** Clear some space in the room so that a student may walk around without running into tables, shelves, etc. Arrange chairs in a tight circle, with their backs facing each other. There should be one less chair than the number of students. Set the cassette or CD player within easy reach and cue the music to a starting point. When the students arrive, explain that today they will be playing a review game to see what they have learned from the story Daniel in the lion's den. Explain to them this version of musical chairs. Each child should stand in a circle around the chairs. When the music starts, they should begin moving around the circle. When the music stops, every child should try to sit in a chair. Instead of having to sit out the next round (like usual musical chairs), the one child left without a chair will have to answer the review question. The game will continue in this manner until done with review questions. Use the following review questions or ones of your own:

What was the king's name in this story? **Darius**

At the beginning of the story, what was the king going to do with Daniel? **Put him in charge of the whole kingdom**

Who was jealous of Daniel? **The other administrators and satraps**

What did Daniel's enemies decide to use against him? **His religion**

Daniel's enemies tricked the king into doing what? **Signing a decree that everyone must worship only King Darius**

What would happen to those people caught worshipping another God? **They would be thrown into the lion's den**

How often did Daniel pray? **Three times a day**

**Go!**

What did Daniel's enemies catch him doing? **Praying on his knees to God**

When King Darius found out that Daniel broke the law, how did he feel? **Distressed**

Who tried to prevent Daniel from being thrown into the lion's den? **Darius**

What did the king say as Daniel was thrown to the lions? **"May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!"**

How was the opening of the lion's den closed? **Stone**

Darius sealed the lion's den with what object? **His signet ring**

What did the king do while Daniel was in the lion's den? **He fasted**

When did the king rush to check on Daniel? **At the first light of dawn**

Was Daniel hurt? **No, not even a scratch**

How did God protect Daniel? **He sent an angel to close their mouths**

Who was thrown into the lion's den after Daniel? **His enemies and their families**

What did King Darius say about Daniel's God? **That everyone in his kingdom must worship Daniel's God**

What is the main theme of this lesson? **Courage**

Daniel exhibited great what in God? **Faith**

Who protects us? **God**

Recite the key quest verse. **"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."** Joshua 1:9 (NIV)

**Close**

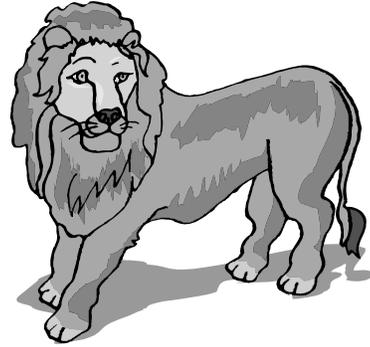
Have students recite the key quest verse. Close with prayer. **"Heavenly Father, please help us to be courageous at all times. Let us put our faith in you and be strong like Daniel. Amen."**

## Matching Mania

Directions: Draw a line from the character on the left to their actions in the story, which are listed on the right. Three of the characters match two actions on the right. Make sure to match the characters to all of their actions.

Darius	Delivered Daniel from the lions' mouths
	Were jealous of Daniel
Daniel	Decreed that everyone in his kingdom must worship Daniel's God
Satraps	Faithfully worshipped God
	Sent by God to shut the lions' mouths
Angel	Tricked the king into issuing a decree about which god to worship
Lions	Sealed the stone to the lion's den with his signet ring
	<b>Demonstrated courage in God</b>
God	The animals that Daniel was thrown to

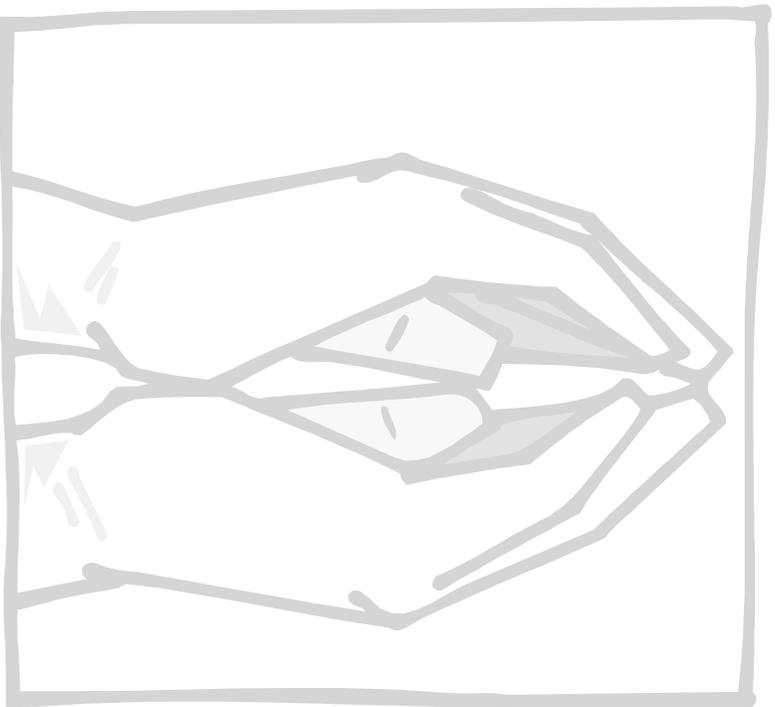
# Daniel in the Lion's Den



Download and print the “Daniel and the Lions’ Den” crossword puzzle at:  
<http://childrenschapel.org/biblestories/color/daniellioncw.html>

# Helping Hands

**Directions:** Daniel folded his hands in prayer to God three times every day. He was faithful to God. In the space below, trace your hands. Then, on every finger, write down one way you can be faithful and courageous in God.



## *My Journal Page*

**Describe an experience when you were scared. For instance, have you ever been lost in a store or some other time that was new and different? Write about the event and the way it made you feel. Last, write about how your faith in God will give you courage.**



