

HAVE THE COURAGE TO STAND FIRM

KEY WORDS

WITNESS COURAGE SIN FAITH IN GOD RACE HINDER

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Daniel 3; 6; Hebrews 11:32-12:3.

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To learn that having faith in God gives us courage.

MEMORY VERSE

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us” (Hebrews 12:1, NIV*).

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

It is difficult for preadolescents to express and defend their faith when Christian friends are not around to support them. It is often easier for them to give in to peer pressure than to defend their beliefs.

Perhaps they have a sincere desire to please God, but they do not know what to do when others insist on keeping them away from their convictions. Only a solid faith in God will give them the courage to resist the pressure.

The lives of Daniel, Azariah, Mishael and Ananias will be models of faith and courage for them. These young people did not abandon their relationship with God, even when their life was in danger.

Through this lesson, preadolescents will learn that the courage to defend our relationship with God is born of faith in him. Just as Daniel’s faith served as a testimony for others, the lives of your students will be a living testimony to their friends. Their reaction to pressures and problems will impact them, and it will make a difference in their personal testimony.

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

Read Daniel chapter 3. In this chapter, we read how the faith of Ananias, Mishael and Azariah was tested. King Nebuchadnezzar had built a huge golden statue and those who refused to worship it would be condemned to die in the furnace of fire.

The three young men refused to betray God by worshiping the image, since by doing so they would not only have broken the commandments, but would have destroyed their relationship with God.

When the king questioned them, they did not deny the charges; rather they affirmed their faith that God could save them from the fire. However, their faith was not based on the fact that God could deliver them. They told the king that, even if God did not save them, they would not worship the statue.

When God saved them from the fire, Nebuchadnezzar recognized the greatness of the Lord of Israel. After asking them to come out of the furnace, he ordered that no one speak against their God because he is truly powerful.

Read Daniel chapter 6. Daniel's faith faced a similar test under the command of the Median king Darius. The other officers of the kingdom were jealous because Daniel, despite being a Hebrew, was the second most important man in the kingdom.

Some officers proposed that for 30 days, no one should be worshiped except the king, and whoever did otherwise would be thrown into the lions' den. Thinking that Daniel had approved that law, the king signed it.

Since Daniel did not stop praying to God, the officers denounced him. The king, who could not revoke the law, with much regret watched while the guards threw Daniel into the pit of lions. The next day the king went to the pit, and found Daniel alive.

He gave honor to God for having delivered Daniel. Then the king recognized the God of Daniel as the only living, eternal and powerful God, and declared that all should fear and revere him. As further proof that God had intervened, the lions devoured those who had conspired against Daniel.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

I would do anything for...!

Ask the students to complete this sentence: "I would do anything for _____." Then, guide your students in a game to guess the answers of their classmates.

Ask some volunteers to ask questions of others, trying to find out what they wrote. Ask for example: Is it an object? Is it an animal? Is it something you can buy? Can you get it in a store? Is it colored? Can you carry it in your arms? If the answer to each question is "yes", the volunteer will continue to ask until they receive a "no" answer. Then, another person will have a chance, and so on until someone guesses what the person wrote.

TEACH THE LESSON

During the week, read the Bible story of Daniel chapter 3, and think about how you would relate it in your own words. Remember that you need to become very familiar with the lesson in order to tell a good story.

The statue that King Nebuchadnezzar made was about thirty meters high and three meters wide. It was a gigantic monument, because the king wanted it to be seen from everywhere in the kingdom.

After telling the rest of the biblical story, ask your students, "What do you think about what the Hebrew youth told the king, even knowing they could be thrown into the fiery furnace?" They trusted God with all their being, not only because they believed that God could deliver them, but also because they wanted to please him, even if it meant dying for their beliefs.

Daniel faced another dangerous situation when he was locked in a den with lions.

CONNECT THE LESSON

What did you learn in this unit of lessons ?

You will need small papers or cards to write each of the following questions separately. Each student should take a paper/ card, read the question and answer it.

The young Hebrews learned that they could stand firm in their religious beliefs. What did you learn?

Daniel helped the king understand the meaning of his dream. What did you learn?

Daniel helped Belshazzar understand the meaning of the writing on the wall. What did you learn?

Daniel learned to trust in God when he was in the lions' den. What did you learn?

What did you learn about God in this series of lessons?

What did you learn about yourself in these lessons?

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

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Put several papers in a container that have the following instructions: "Say the verse on your way out", "cry the verse", "scream the verse", etc.

Put the container in the center of the room. Ask the children to come by one by one and take a piece of paper. It will probably be necessary for you to read it so they can say the memory verse.

WRAP-UP

Pray

Finally, form a circle and ask everyone to pray silently for the person on their right. Finish by praying for each of your students.

Encourage

Encourage the group to ask God to help them all during the coming week and to not forget to intercede for the brothers and sisters who suffer persecution around the world.

Invite

Remind the group that in the next session they will begin a new unit of lessons. Invite them to attend and to invite friends.