Lesson 1.1: Daniel in the Lions' Den

(Daniel 6: 1-24a)

Episode 1 - Long Journey [Episode 1 timing: 0:00 to 13:17]

Objective

- To deepen the children's understanding of Daniel's courage and faithfulness, and God's loyalty to true believers

Summary of resources required this lesson

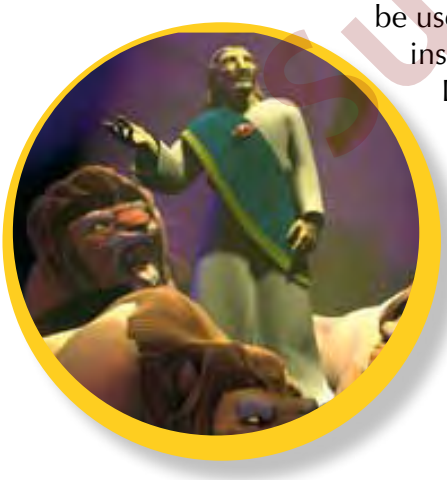
- Friends and Heroes Episode 1
- DVD player
- A lion face-mask outline for each child *(Printable Resources - page 5)*
- Scissors and coloring pens
- String, wool, or light elastic
- Prayer jigsaw pieces and take-home prayer cards *(Printable Resources - pages 6-11)*
- Temporary fixing material *(optional)*

Summary of Friends and Heroes story

Child refugees Leah and Rebecca have escaped to Alexandria. The city's Roman authorities are trying to capture them. Macky and his parents (Samuel and Diana) decide to take Leah and Rebecca into their home – despite Diana's initial reservations.

Prepare yourself - *Remember to pray first!*

Watch Episode 1 closely, looking for instances where the characters in Alexandria are confronted with a challenging, maybe even scary, situation. Make a mental (or actual) note of these. They will be useful in your discussions with the children. There are lots of them – for instance, the slaves in the boat, Leah and Rebecca alone in Alexandria, Diana feeling uncomfortable about taking the two refugees into her home; and, in the second half of this episode, Samuel and Macky's reaction to finding out that the girls have gone, and the jail-break.



In this way you will be able to relate the challenge and courage shown in the Daniel story to the 2D cartoon characters' lives – and then, by extension, into our own personal lives.

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Starting off

Craft and game activity

Materials

- DVD player and Friends and Heroes Episode 1
- A lion face-mask outline for each child
  (Printable Resources - page 5)
- Scissors and coloring pens
- String, wool, or light elastic

Watch the DVD with your group up to the end of the family scene immediately after the Daniel Bible story (playing time = 13:17).

Afterwards, let each child color and make a lion face-mask, using the attached outline. When everyone is ready, select someone to be Daniel (perhaps it could be you – so that all the children can use their masks together).

Daniel will stand or sit in the middle of a space and the masked "lions" will prowl closely around him, making lazy sweeping motions with their paws and growling softly every so often. The children can do this on two feet, or better still (if the surroundings allow it) on all-fours. If they do it on all-fours, it may be best if Daniel sits. Then clap your hands (one brisk, definite clap). You will have agreed beforehand, that this will be the signal for all the lions to suddenly rush or lunge towards Daniel with their loudest roars. Stress to the children that they must move very close to Daniel and be loud and quick, but they must not touch him.

Now repeat the game several times with a different child taking the place of Daniel each time.

If the children do it well, as instructed, the child in the center – even though they know what is going to happen – will feel slightly taken aback by the rush and noise directed straight at them. So, after the game has finished, take a little time to explore these feelings. Then get everyone to imagine how the Biblical Daniel must have felt being prowled around by real lions. It probably would have been very scary – and yet Daniel knew that if he didn't obey King Darius's command, this was the situation he was going to find himself in. He had a hard choice to make, but he stuck to what he believed was the right way. God rewarded his faith and courage by stopping the lions from attacking him!

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In deeper

DVD Extras -- Episode 1 Stills

Play the Episode 1 Stills up to the end of the 2D pictures (Samuel and Diana hugging). Before you start, tell the children that they are going to see a few pictures from the cartoon so far. Ask them to call out "STOP!" if they see a picture where some or all of the characters might be worried, or scared, or in a difficult situation. Get your pause-button finger ready!

At first the children might miss a few pictures, and they might also pick some of the obvious "calamity" ones (such as Brutacus falling over). But that doesn't matter; it is simply important at this stage that they start thinking about the feelings of the characters involved and voice views. (You might want to go through the pictures a second time, because they move on quickly and it might take a while for the children to "warm up".)

After developing some discussion about the characters' feelings in the story so far, home in on the close-up picture of Diana (number 7 in the sequence) and the family grouping immediately afterwards. These pictures are taken from immediately before the 3D story of Daniel is introduced. It's introduced here because Diana is worried about the danger of having the girl refugees (Leah and Rebecca) in her home. She actually says "We've got good reasons to be afraid." ---- But Samuel responds "We've also got good reasons not to be afraid."

Remind the children of this situation and what the characters actually said. Then explore together:

- **Why did they have good reasons not to be afraid?**
- **What does the Daniel story show about sticking to what is right?**

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Prayer time

Materials

- Prayer Picture Jigsaw pieces *(Printable Resources pages 6-10)*
- Take-home Prayer cards *(page 11)*
- Temporary fixing material *(optional)*

Preparation

Either using stiff paper or card, or mounting the pieces on stiffer matieral, print and cut out the jigsaw pieces (one set for the group) and prayer take-home cards (one card per child).

Distribute the outside jigsaw pieces of the prayer picture to your children. Let them write their name on the back of their own piece(s). If they are poor at writing let make their own mark or draw a simple doodle.

Then, with the central jigsaw piece already placed in a suitable space (either on the floor or, using some sort of temporary fixing, on a wall), collectively and collaboratively put the jigsaw together.

Once it is assembled, all get in a position where you can see it clearly. Explain that this is going to be your prayer to God now. Remind the children that it is a personal prayer for each of them -- the fact that their name or mark is on the back of each piece is important. Then pray:

Dear Heavenly Father,

Just like Daniel,
Give me the courage to stick with you
When things get tough

Amen

Then you can distribute the mini-prayer cards, for the children to take home.

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Printable Resources

Lesson 1.1 - Lion face-mask

- Color in this face mask: and then cut it out, including the eyeholes.
- Attach some string, wool or light elastic to the sides, so that you can then wear it.

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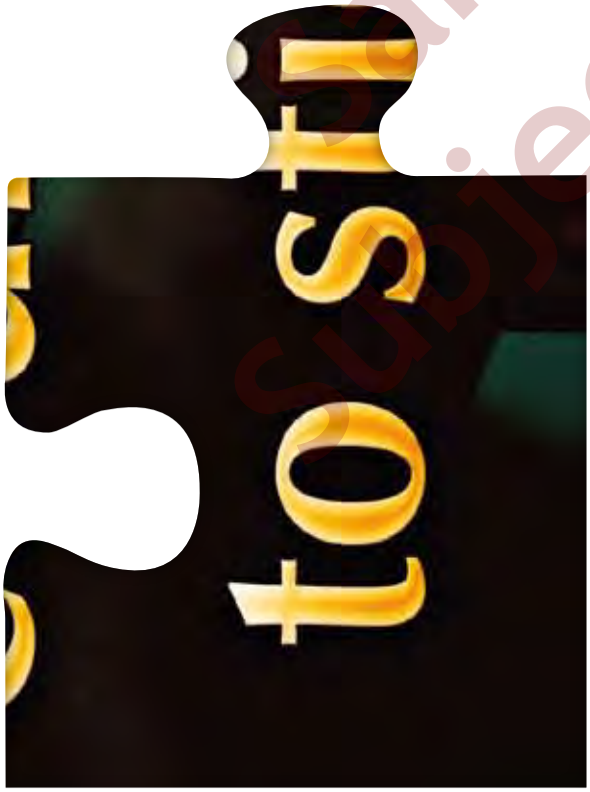
Printable Resources

Lesson 1.1 - Prayer Picture - Jigsaw (pieces 1-2)

- Print and cut out the following resources (one set for the group) for use in the Prayer Time section.



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Printable Resources

Lesson 1.1 - Prayer Picture - Jigsaw (pieces 3-6)

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Lesson 1.1 - Prayer Picture - Jigsaw (pieces 7-10)

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Extra, extra!

Lesson 1.1 - Take-home Prayer Cards

- Print and cut out these cards to provide one card per child, to take home and color in the words later.

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