

References

Daniel 6:1-16;
Prophets and Kings,
pp. 539-543



Memory Verse

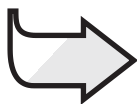
"Three times a day he
got down on his knees
and prayed, giving
thanks to his
God" (Daniel 6:10).



Objectives

The children will:
Know that true
worship means
putting God first in our lives.

Feel a desire to
give God first place
in everything, every day.
Respond by setting aside
specific times to pray.



The Message

I worship God when I
give Him first
place in my life.

First Place!

Monthly Theme

We learn why we worship God.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Daniel is faithful to God in his work and in his worship. Three times a day he kneels by an open window that faces Jerusalem and prays to God. Because of jealousy, some of Daniel's co-workers plot against him and look for a way to get rid of him. They persuade King Darius to make a decree that everyone must worship only the king. But Daniel puts God first and continues to kneel and pray three times a day as always.

This is a lesson about worship.

Daniel put God first. He continued to worship God no matter what happened. In one way or another, we all face similar decisions about our worship today. May God help us to put Him first—always.

Teacher Enrichment

"Daniel was of the royal family (Daniel 1:3), and thus of the tribe of Judah. He was obviously a young man at the time he was taken captive, for his foreign service . . . spanned a period of at least 67 years" (*The SDA Bible Dictionary*, p. 263). At the time of this incident Daniel was an old man of about 70.

"A roof chamber is a small room . . . constructed on the flat roof of an Oriental house. . . . It provided a cool and secluded place, and as such was commonly used for mourning, or for prayer and devotions. . . . In [rabbinical literature] there is an injunction that Jews living abroad must turn toward the land of Israel in prayer, those in the land of Israel toward Jerusalem, and those in Jerusalem toward the temple. . . . Such orientation in prayer was an ancient custom in the Near East" (*The Interpreter's Bible*, [New York: Abingdon Press, 1956], vol. 6, pp. 442, 443).

Room Decorations

See Lesson 5.

Program Overview

Lesson Section	Minutes	Activities	Materials Needed
Welcome	ongoing	Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled	none
1 Readiness Options	up to 10	<i>A. Shadow Game</i> <i>B. Relay Race</i> <i>C. Choices</i>	light-colored flat bedsheet, spotlight two small balls or cotton balls, two spoons, blue ribbon with words "First Place," another ribbon with words "Good Sport!" or "Thanks for Trying!" one large box of a few trinkets or small toys, some of them used, broken, or damaged; small box of still-wrapped or new, interesting, small toys (e.g., wind-up toy, scented erasers or pencils, or a beautiful handmade craft, etc.); pretty wrapping paper; plain wrapping paper; one stick-on bow
Any Time Prayer and Praise*	up to 10	Fellowship Songbook Mission Offering Prayer	<i>Sing for Joy</i> <i>Children's Mission</i> offering basket with sign "God Is First" markers, paper
2 Bible Lesson	up to 20	Experiencing the Story Memory Verse Bible Study	none marker, paper clock with movable hands Bibles, slips of paper
3 Applying the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Blue Ribbons for God</i>	blue construction paper, pencils or pens, scissors
4 Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Blue Ribbon Prayer</i>	blue construction paper, pencils, scissors

*Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.

TEACHING THE LESSON

Welcome

Welcome students at the door. Ask how their week has been—what they are pleased/troubled about. Encourage them to share any experiences from last week's lesson study. Have them begin the Readiness Activity of your choice.

1

Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

You Need:

- light-colored flat bedsheet
- spotlight

A. Shadow Game

In advance, hang a sheet or have two tall people hold the sheet up. Ask three volunteers to go behind the sheet and kneel as if they were praying. Shine the spotlight on the sheet and let the class guess who they are. After everyone has guessed, pull the sheet aside and show who it is.

Debriefing

Ask: **Did you feel you were hiding from the class when you were behind the sheet?** (yes; no—because of the light) **Do you ever try to hide when you pray? If so, why?** (People might think I'm weird. I don't want to draw attention.) **When you feel uncomfortable praying when others are around, what should you remember?** (Jesus is not ashamed of me; I should not be ashamed of Him.) **We will hear about someone in our lesson story today who didn't hide when he prayed, even though he might lose his life. He showed that God came first in his life. And that is our message for today:**



I WORSHIP GOD WHEN I GIVE HIM FIRST PLACE IN MY LIFE.

Say that with me.

You Need:

- two small balls or cotton balls,
- two spoons
- blue ribbon with words "First Place"
- another ribbon with words "Good Sport!" or "Thanks for Trying!"

B. Relay Race

Choose two teams and have a relay race. Put the small ball or a cotton ball on a spoon for each team. One child on each team will hold the item and take it to the other side of the room, then walk back and pass it to the next child in line. The team that finishes first receives a blue ribbon for first place.

Debriefing

Say: **You all did a good job playing together. The team that won first place gave their best to win the First Place ribbon. The other team also deserves a ribbon for good sportsmanship and for trying.** (Give other ribbon to that team.) Ask: **How did you feel when your team didn't get first place?** (unhappy, didn't matter, etc.) **How do you think God feels when He is not first place in our lives?** (sad; He really wants to get close to us because He loves us.) **Today's message says:**



I WORSHIP GOD WHEN I GIVE HIM FIRST PLACE IN MY LIFE.

Say that with me.

C. Choices

Wrap the large box with the prettiest wrapping paper. Add a stick-on bow. Wrap the small box with plain wrapping paper. Ask the class which box they would choose (take a hand count). Most of the children will probably choose the largest and prettiest box. After they have made a choice, open the boxes, and they will discover the nicest gift was in the smaller, less-attractive box.

Debriefing

Ask: **Were you surprised when you saw what was inside?** (yes, no)
Do you wish that you had chosen the other box? (yes, don't care, etc.)
Sometimes our choices don't turn out to be the best, do they? But we can never go wrong when we choose to worship God. Choose Him, and make Him first place in your life. Today's message says:



I WORSHIP GOD WHEN I GIVE HIM FIRST PLACE IN MY LIFE.

Say that with me.

You Need:

- one large box of a few trinkets or small toys, some of them used, broken, or damaged.
- small box of still-wrapped or new, interesting, small toys (e.g., wind-up toy, scented erasers or pencils, or a beautiful handmade craft, etc.)
- pretty wrapping paper
- plain wrapping paper
- one stick-on bow

Prayer and Praise



Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Allow time for sharing experiences from last week's lesson study. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special warm greeting to all visitors.



Suggested Songs

- "Dare to Be a Daniel" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 116)
- "A Little Talk With Jesus" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 98)
- "Whisper a Prayer" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 96)



Mission

Share a story from *Children's Mission*. Find someone in the story who put God first.



Offering

Say: **Is God first in your money too? Giving to Him is an act of worship.**

You Need:

- offering container with sign "God Is First"



Prayer

Sing "Whisper a Prayer" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 96). Give the children a sheet of paper. Ask them to draw or write a prayer request on the paper. Say: **We can pray to God anytime about anything. Setting aside special prayer times such as morning, midday, or night helps us to remember to put God first in our lives. Do you pray three times a day? Let's pray now about the requests on your papers.**

You Need:

- markers
- paper

Bible Lesson

Experiencing the Story

When you say:	Your students:
Daniel	Stand up.
Governors	Shake head “no.”
King	Salute.

Practice a few times before you tell the story so the children are comfortable with the actions.

Read or tell the story.

When we worship God, we’re really saying, “Lord, I love You.” There are lots and lots of ways to do that. **Daniel** [*stand up*] knew how to worship God. He knew that he wanted to put God first every minute of every day.

It was like clockwork. First thing in the morning, then at noon, and always right before bed, **Daniel** [*stand up*] opened his upstairs window and prayed. It didn’t matter who saw him. It didn’t matter if there were other things that needed to be done. **Daniel** [*stand up*] always prayed. Always! God was his very best friend, and **Daniel** [*stand up*] made sure that his time with God was the most important time of the day. The people who liked **Daniel** [*stand up*] knew about his special prayer time. The people who *didn’t* like him knew about his special prayer time too.

When **King** [*salute*] Darius had taken over Babylon, he needed some men to be in charge of small parts of it, so he appointed 120 **governors** [*shake head “no”*]. Then he put three presidents over those **governors** [*shake head “no”*]. **Daniel** [*stand up*] was one of the presidents. Before long, **King** [*salute*] Darius even planned to put **Daniel** [*stand up*]

in charge of the other two presidents because he did his work so well. This plan made the **governors** [*shake head “no”*] and presidents jealous. Very jealous. So jealous, in fact, that day after day they looked for something, anything, about **Daniel** [*stand up*] so they could complain to the **king** [*salute*] about him.

“I can’t believe this man!” one of the **governors** [*shake head “no”*] fumed. “He’s loyal, honest, faithful—there’s nothing we can find to complain about. I can’t stand him!”

“Look, there he is at his prayer time right now,” grumbled another.

“Ahhhhh, that may be just what we’re looking for, men! Listen to my plan.” A third **governor** [*shake head “no”*] quietly laid out his plot to the others.

The men hurried to the palace of **King** [*salute*] Darius. “Oh, great and powerful **king** [*salute*],” they said. “We have a plan to honor you! We want to make a new law that says no one may pray to anyone but you for 30 days.”

The **king** [*salute*] liked the sound of that. He was a great **king** [*salute*]. He thought he should be worshipped. He thought about it for a moment and then asked, “What if someone doesn’t keep this law?”

“Hmmm,” his advisors pretended to think, though they already knew the kind of treatment they wanted for **Daniel** [*stand up*]. “How about throwing them to the lions?”

The **king** [*salute*] was surprised at first, but finally decided to go along with the plan.

So the law was passed, and of course **Daniel** [*stand up*] knew about it. He also understood the men’s reason for asking for the law. But no law that a human being made could change **Daniel’s** [*stand up*] love for God nor his habit of worship-

ping Him. He continued to pray near his window three times a day.

How about you? Worshipping God means putting God first in your life.

Daniel [*stand up*] was determined to continue to worship God, no matter what happened. We too can worship God by giving Him first place in everything today. Let nothing keep you from worshipping Him faithfully, as **Daniel** [*stand up*] did.

Debriefing

Ask: **Why do we worship God?** (To tell Him that we love Him best of all.) **How can we do that?** (Talk to Him in prayer, study His Word, think of Him often, tell others about Him, obey His rules, show reverence and respect in His church, etc.) **What will you do if you are tempted to make a wrong choice?** (Pray to God that I will choose His way above any other.) **How do you feel when God is first in your life?** (much happier) **Let's say today's message together:**



I WORSHIP GOD WHEN I GIVE HIM FIRST PLACE IN MY LIFE.

Memory Verse

Prepare in advance a paper clock with movable hands. Write the memory verse on the clock face in big letters.

Position the clock hands to various times during the day. Each time, ask the children what they do at those times. Say: **Daniel picked three times each day to pray to God. We can pray anytime, anywhere. But it is a good idea to set certain times each day for prayer.**

You Need:

- paper clock with movable hands
- marker

When do you usually pray and worship God? Have them read the memory verse in unison.

Form three groups. Assign each group one phrase of the memory verse. Have the groups move to separate parts of the room. Allow time to memorize their phrase. Then have each group call out their phrase in sequence until all know the verse.

Phrases:

Group 1: Three times a day

Group 2: he got down on his knees and prayed,

Group 3: giving thanks to his God.

All: Daniel 6:10

Bible Study

Ahead of time, cut 16 pieces of paper. Write one of the 16 texts of Daniel 6:1-16 on each piece. Give each child a paper and have them take turns finding and reading the verses (in order). (Small groups: each child gets more than one verse.)

You Need:

- Bibles
- paper

Debriefing

Ask: **Which verse has the secret of Daniel's success and courage?** (Daniel 6:10) **How would you feel if someone told you you would die if you prayed to God?** (afraid, uncertain, etc.) **Who will be with you during scary times?** (Read aloud Isaiah 41:10.) **Think about this. How much time do you spend with God every day? Is He really first in your life?** (Ask the children to answer silently, in their own minds.) **Let's say our message together:**



I WORSHIP GOD WHEN I GIVE HIM FIRST PLACE IN MY LIFE.

3

Applying the Lesson

You Need:

- blue construction paper
- pencils or pens
- scissors

Blue Ribbons for God

Ask each child in which part of their life they feel the need for God to be first today. It will be helpful if you give an example from your own life. (I want God to be first in my speech today.) Using blue construction paper, each child is to make a “blue ribbon” and write on it the words:

“[Name] puts God first in [part of their life in which they want God to be first].”

Debriefing

Say: **Every day we all have choices to make. Some of them are hard**

choices. If the first thing you do is ask God what His will is, He will help you make good choices.

Ask: **Can anyone remember a time you put God first in a choice you had to make? What happened?** (Allow discussion time.) **How do you feel when you let God be first in your life?** (not worried, glad, peaceful, etc.) Have each child find a prayer partner and pray for what each other wrote on their blue ribbons. After prayer time, say the message together:



I WORSHIP GOD WHEN I GIVE HIM FIRST PLACE IN MY LIFE.

Sharing the Lesson

Blue Ribbon Prayer

Describe a time God powerfully answered one of your prayers for guidance or protection. Have the children make another blue ribbon from construction paper—big enough to hold a daily prayer chart for the next week. Adults assist as needed.

Say: **Make a prayer chart on your ribbon-shaped cutout, with space to include a specific time and a person you intend to pray for each day. Pray that the person on your list will make God first in their life. Try to do something nice, where possible, for the person for whom you pray. Winning others to God is another way to put God first in your life.**

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask:

Have you put a name on your daily prayer chart? When do you plan to pray for these people? If you don't seem to have time to pray, what will you do? (Find time somehow, even if something else has to wait, because God comes first.)

How do you feel when you know someone is praying for you? (It means a lot. I feel safer, grateful, etc.) **God will bless you as you pray for someone else this week. Again, praying for others is another way to put God first in your life. Let's say today's message again:**



I WORSHIP GOD WHEN I GIVE HIM FIRST PLACE IN MY LIFE.

Closing

Sing the first verse of "This Is My Prayer" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 106). Pray that everyone in the class will put God first this week.

You Need:

- blue construction paper
- pencils
- scissors

First Place!

References

Daniel 6:1-16;
Prophets and Kings,
pp. 539-543

Memory Verse

"Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God" (Daniel 6:10).

The Message

I worship
God when I
give Him first
place in my life.

What choices did you make this morning? Did you decide what to wear or what to eat? What about the choices regarding how you spoke to your parents or brothers and sisters? What other choices did you make? Each new day is filled with choices. Each day we decide in many different ways whether to put God first.

When we worship God, we're really saying, "Lord, I love You." There are many different ways to do that. Daniel knew how to worship God. He knew that he wanted to put God first every minute of every day.

It was like clockwork. Morning, noon, and night, Daniel opened his upstairs window. He turned toward Jerusalem, then knelt and prayed. It didn't matter who saw him. It didn't matter if there were other things that needed to be done. Daniel always prayed at those times, and often in between. Always! God was his very best friend.



Daniel made sure that his time with God was the most important time of the day. People who liked Daniel knew about his special prayer time. People who *didn't* like him knew about his special prayer time too.

When King Darius became ruler of Babylon, he decided to have some men be in charge of small parts of it. So he appointed 120 governors. Then he put three presidents over those governors. Daniel was one of the presidents. Before long, King Darius even planned to put Daniel in charge of the other presidents because he did his work so well. This plan made the other two presidents and the governors jealous. Very jealous. So jealous, in fact, that they searched for something, anything, to complain to the king about Daniel.

"I can't believe this man!" one of the governors complained. "He's loyal, honest, faithful—there's nothing we can find to complain about. I can't stand him!"

"Look, there he is at his prayer time right now," grumbled another.

"Ahhhh, my friends. That may be just what we're looking for! I think I have a plan." This third governor quietly described his plot to the others.

The rulers hurried to speak to King Darius. "Oh, great and powerful king," they began. "We have a plan to honor you! We want to make a new law. A law that says no one may pray to anyone but you for the next 30 days."

The king liked the sound of that. He thought that he was an important king and should be worshipped. He thought about it for a moment, then asked, "What if someone doesn't keep this law?"

"Hmmm," his advisors pretended to think, though they already knew the treatment they wanted for Daniel. "How about throwing them to the lions?" The king was surprised, but finally decided to agree to the plan.

So the law was passed. And of course Daniel knew about it. He also understood the reason those men had asked for the law. But no law made by human beings could change Daniel's love for God. No law could change his habit of worshipping Him. He continued to pray three times a day.

How about you? Worshipping God means putting God first in your life. Daniel was determined to keep worshipping God, no matter what happened. Will you choose to worship God by giving Him first place in everything today? Will you decide that nothing will keep you from worshipping God?

Daily Activities

Sabbath

- Take a nature walk with your family. Stop and read your lesson story together.
- Read Daniel 6:10 together. Unscramble the answer: Daniel was a winner because . . .
EH TPU OGD SRFTI !
- Nature has an insect that appears to pray often. Read about the **praying mantis** in nature books or an encyclopedia. Tell your family what you learned.

Sunday

- For family worship, read and discuss Daniel 6:1-10. Show your family your prayer chart from Sabbath School. (Or make a chart with the day, time, and person you want to pray for this week.) Put it on your bedroom door. Remember to pray every day.
- Write the numbers 1-12 around a paper plate to make it look like a clock. Make and attach hour and minute hands. Set the hands to one time that you will pray each day this week. (Or draw the hands to that time.) Copy your memory verse onto the clock face.

Monday

- During family worship, read and discuss Daniel 6:11-16. Ask your family to tell about a time they were in trouble and how God answered their prayers.
- Teach your memory verse to your family.
- Sing a prayer song, then pray together. Thank God for hearing and answering your prayers.

Tuesday

- For worship, use your Bible to answer these "when" questions:
 1. When did Paul say we should pray? (1 Thesalonians 5:17) What does that mean? Ask your family.
 2. When did David pray? (Psalm 55:17)

3. When did Jesus pray? (Luke 6:12, Mark 1:35)
4. When did Daniel pray? (Say your memory verse.)
5. When do YOU pray?

Wednesday

- During worship, ask each person to draw a picture of themselves doing each of the following: eating; going to school or work; praying; doing some work at home; relaxing.
- Cut out your pictures and put them in the order that you do these things each day. Do you put God first?
- Read Matthew 6:33 together. Sing "Seek Ye First" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 67).
- Say your whole memory verse together. Show your prayer chart, then pray together.

Thursday

- Ask your family to say your memory verse with you. On a sheet of paper, draw a window (about six inches [15 cm] high and three inches [eight cm] wide). Cut this window so that it opens. Fold it back. On another paper, draw a picture of Daniel kneeling in prayer. Glue this paper to the first so that the picture of Daniel praying is behind the open window. What did Daniel pray about when he knelt near his open window? Read Daniel 9:1-3.
- Sing a prayer song, then pray for the people on your prayer chart.

Friday

- With your family, act out your Bible lesson story for sundown worship.
- Read 1 Samuel 2:2 together. Then help your family write a prayer of praise to God. Tell God that He is number one in your life. Pray for the people on your prayer chart.
- Say your memory verse and sing a praise song together.