

ENRICHMENT LESSON 14

THE STORY OF DANIEL

LESSON NOTES

FOCUS: DANIEL, HERO AND VISIONARY OF END TIMES (THE BOOK OF DANIEL)

- SACRED STORY
- ENRICHMENT PRESENTATION

THE MATERIAL

- LOCATION: OLD TESTAMENT SACRED STORY SHELVES, MIDDLE SHELF, UNDER "THE PROPHETS"
- PIECES: 10" CHAIN, PAINTING OF A GOLDEN FIGURE MOUNTED ON A WOODEN PLAQUE (SEE DANIEL 2:31FF), GOLDEN STATUE, PAINTING OF A GREAT TREE COVERED WITH FRUIT AND SURROUNDED BY ANIMALS OF ALL KINDS MOUNTED ON A WOODEN PLAQUE, WOODEN PLAQUE PAINTED TO LOOK LIKE A GREY STONE WALL WITH THE WORDS MENE, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN WRITTEN IN HEBREW ON IT, LION'S DEN, PAINTINGS OF DANIEL'S 4 VISIONS (THE 4 BEASTS IN DANIEL 7:1-8, THE RAM AND THE HE-GOAT IN DANIEL 8:1-10, GABRIEL IN DANIEL 9:20-27, THE MAN CLOTHED IN LINEN IN DANIEL 10:5-7)
- CONTROL
- UNDERLAY: THIS UNDERLAY IS UNIQUE IN THAT IT HAS TWO SECTIONS. THE FIRST SECTION IS DARK BROWN FELT (35" X 11") AND THE SECOND SECTION IS MULTI-COLORED CLOTH (29" X 11").

BACKGROUND

This lesson enriches both the lesson called Exile and Return (*Volume 2*, p. 93) and the lesson on the Prophets (*Volume 2*, p. 100). The despair that denies its own reality is impossible to cope with directly. Teaching "facts," biblical or otherwise, cannot accomplish the transformation of despair to hope, when all the facts conspire to reinforce the unacknowledged despair.

The hero stories of chapters 1-6 in Daniel and the apocalyptic visions of chapter 7-12 are ways to indirectly and symbolically present a whole new system of meaning to provide permission for the repressed despair to be named and the false goals of society to be challenged by a bright vision of the future.

"Pie in the sky" and other utopian schemes, religious or secular, will not touch such despair, but hero stories about being true to one's deepest values despite the unworthy values promoted by political leadership and visions of a hopeful future might.

If you don't think children are susceptible to such despair as that addressed by the Book of Daniel, you need to work for a few years with families who have suicidal children.

NOTES ON THE MATERIAL

Daniel's story sits on a deep wooden or wicker tray (12" x 8" x 3"). The story icon (5" x 2.5") is Daniel in the lion's den. It can be attached to the end or the side of the tray depending on the size of the shelves, the classroom or other considerations. The underlay is unique in that it is in two sections. The first section is dark brown felt (35" x 11"), and the second section is multi-colored cloth (29" x 11"). The first section is about Daniel's interactions with a king and his court; the second section is about Daniel's prophetic visions. Each object in the story is approximately the same size (no more than 4" high and 4" wide). The story calls for the following objects and images: a 10" piece of chain, a painting of a golden figure mounted on a wooden plaque (see Daniel 2:31ff), a golden statue, a painting of a great tree covered with fruit and surrounded by animals of all kinds mounted on a wooden plaque, a wooden plaque painted to look like a grey stone wall with the words *Mene, Mene, Tekel, Parsin* written in Hebrew on it, the lion's den, paintings of Daniel's four visions (the four beasts from Daniel 7:1-8, the ram and the he-goat from Daniel 8:1-10, Gabriel from Daniel 9:20-27, and the man clothed in linen from Daniel 10:5-7).

A control for the lesson is folded and placed in the tray for the children to use to check their work. The sequence of the story is important because when you change the sequence, you change the story.

SPECIAL NOTES

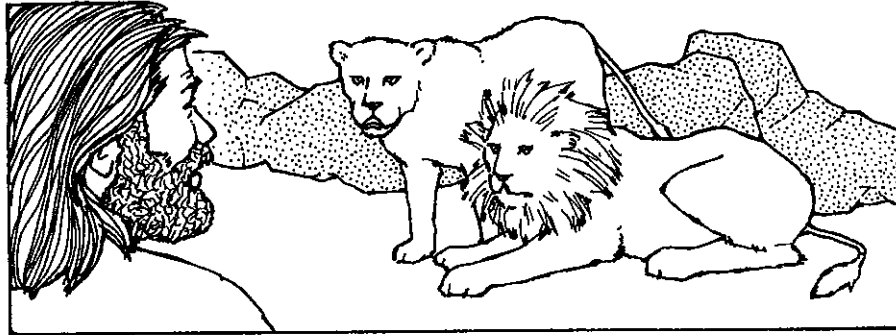
The core stories about the People of God are placed on the top of the sacred story shelves. The enrichment stories about the key people in the core stories are placed on the lower shelves of the sacred story section in the room, under the core stories

they enrich and extend (see diagram below).

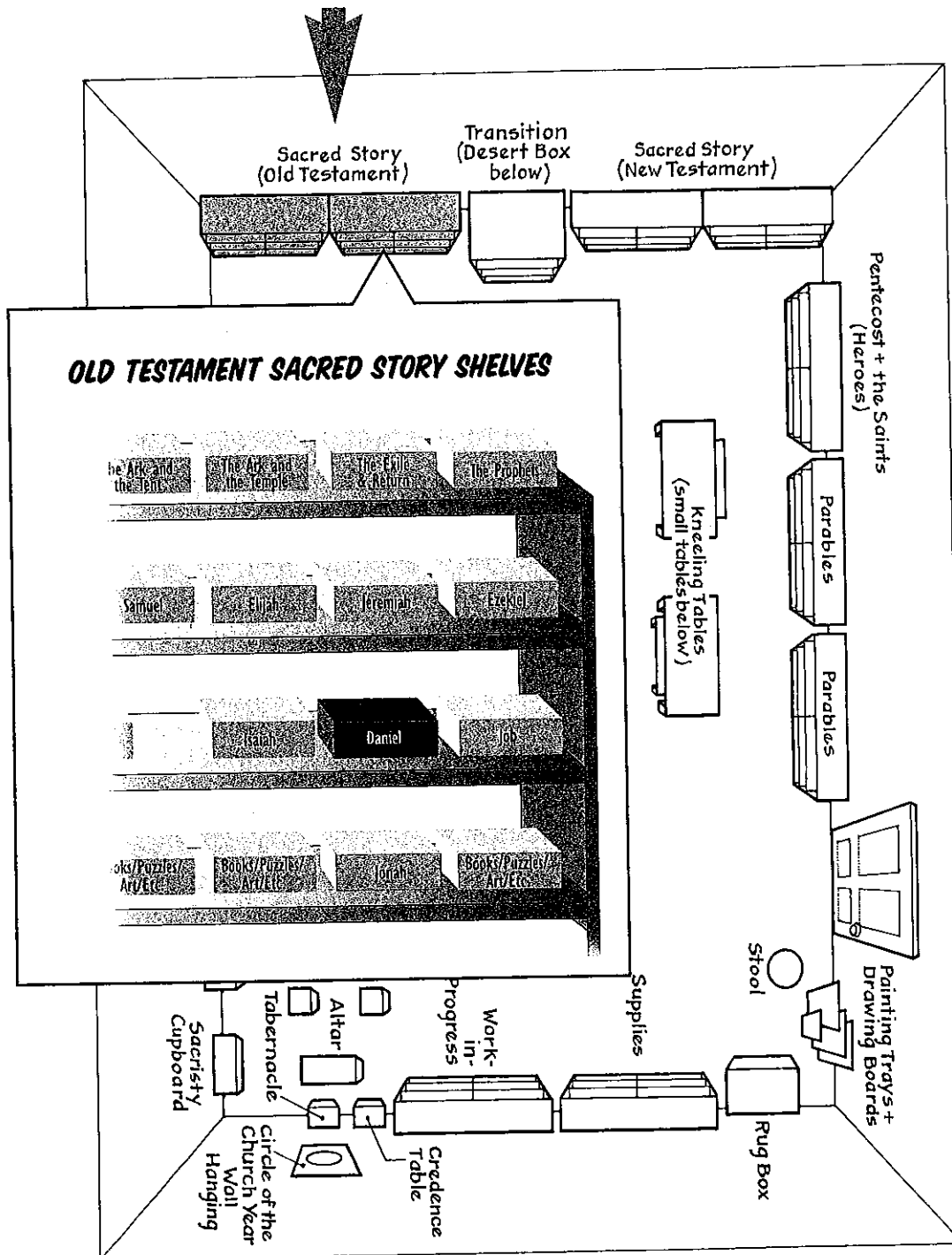
This lesson enriches both the lesson called Exile and Return (*Volume 2*, p. 93) and the lesson on the Prophets (*Volume 2*, p. 100). When you introduce the stories in this volume, take care to set them in the larger context of the sacred story of which they are a part. You can accomplish this by:

- presenting the top shelf story the week before and then following up with this,
- presenting the top shelf story briefly on the same day you present this, or
- standing by the shelf and reminding the children of the top shelf story before bringing this one to the circle.

As you tell the story of Daniel place objects on the underlay to remind you of each important event, a prophecy, or a vision. Unroll the underlay slowly, just enough for each object, as if you are unrolling a life. At the end of the wondering, carefully place each object back in the tray saying something about each event like, "Here is Daniel's vision of the four beasts," and so forth. Lastly, model how to roll the underlay back up and place it in the tray.



STORY ICON FOR THE STORY OF DANIEL



WHERE TO FIND MATERIALS (TEACHING OBJECTS)

MOVEMENTS

Move with deliberation to the shelf where the material waits.

Pick up Daniel's tray and return to the circle.

As you return to the circle you may need to say...

Take the underlay off of the tray and begin to unroll it—just enough to place the first object—right to left (storyteller's perspective).

*Place **Object #1** (chain) on the underlay when you say the word exile.*

*Place **Object #2** (painting of the great shining figure) on the underlay.*

*Place **Object #3** (golden statue) on the underlay.*

WORDS

Watch. Watch where I go.

We need to be ready.

The people were in exile. They had been living in Babylon for a long time, so many had gotten used to living there. Some even had jobs in the court of the king.

Daniel and his three friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, worked at the king's court. God blessed Daniel and his friends with learning, wisdom and skill.

One day the king of Babylon had a dream. He saw a great shining figure. As he watched it fell apart and blew away in the wind. None of the king's wise men knew what it meant, but Daniel did.

A time will come when all the kingdoms of the world will be destroyed. But God's kingdom will last forever.

Another day the king made a huge gold statue of a person. He commanded the people to bow down when they heard special music and worship the image. The people who did not obey would be thrown into a furnace full of fire.

Daniel's friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego would not worship the statue, so they were thrown into the blazing furnace. God sent an angel to keep them safe, and not a hair on their heads was burned in the fire. The king was amazed, so he gave the three friends a place of honor in his court.

MOVEMENTS

Place **Object #4** (painting of a great tree) on the underlay.

Place **Object #5** (wooden plaque with the words Mene, Mene, Tekel, Parsin written on it) on the underlay.

Place **Object #6** (lion's den) on the underlay.

WORDS

The king had another dream. The wise men of the court could not understand it, so they brought Daniel to the king again. The king dreamed about a tree that touched the sky. It had beautiful leaves and fruit. Animals found shelter under it and its branches were full of birds. The Holy One came down from heaven and said, "Cut down the tree and let the animals flee and the birds fly away."

Daniel prayed to God and God showed him what it meant. Daniel told the king, "The tree you saw was you. You are great and strong like the tree, but you will be driven away from your people and live like an animal, eating grass, for seven long years."

And the dream was true. The king was driven out and lived like an animal for seven years. When he came back to his throne he worshipped the one, true God.

After the king died, his son began to rule. He did not know the one, true God. One time he held a great feast and used the holy things from the temple in Jerusalem that the Babylonians had brought to their own city.

Suddenly the people at the party saw the fingers of a human hand writing on the wall. The king could not read the writing, so he sent for Daniel. The words were *Mene, Mene, Tekel, Parsin*, which meant, "God will bring this king's rule to an end, and the kingdom of Babylon will be divided and given to the Medes and Persians."

That very night the king was killed and King Darius took over.

King Darius divided his new kingdom into 120 parts and placed three rulers over them. One of these three was Daniel.

The other two rulers were jealous of Daniel. They knew he was the king's favorite and might one day rule over them. They decided to trick the king into making a law that Daniel could not keep. Everyone had to pray only to King Darius or be cast into a den of lions. They knew that Daniel worshipped the one, true God, so he would never pray to a king.

MOVEMENTS

WORDS

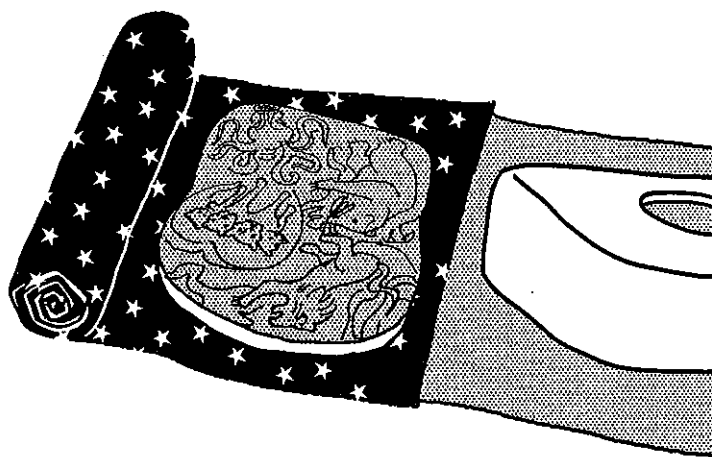
One day Daniel was caught in his room, facing Jerusalem, and praying to God. They brought him to the king. The king liked Daniel, but a law was a law. Daniel was thrown into the den of lions.

The king worried about Daniel. In the morning he ran to the lion's den and called to Daniel. Daniel answered, "I am fine! God sent an angel to protect me from the lions." The king was filled with gladness and he gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. Then the men who had accused Daniel were thrown into the lion's den instead and all were killed.

Daniel was honored throughout the kingdom, and he prospered all the rest of his life.

Change the underlay from brown felt to multi-colored cloth. Daniel also had visions and dreams himself.

Place Vision 1 (painting of fur beasts) on the underlay. One time Daniel dreamed that four great beasts came up out of the sea. The first was like a lion and had eagle's wings. The second looked like a bear standing on its hind legs with three ribs in its mouth. The third was like a leopard but had four wings on its back and four heads. The last beast was more terrifying than the rest and very strong. It had great iron teeth and ten horns.



FOUR BEASTS ON THE MULTI-COLORED CLOTH (STORYTELLER'S PERSPECTIVE)

MOVEMENTS

Place **Vision 2** (painting of ram and goat) on the underlay.

Place **Vision 3** (angel Gabriel) on the underlay.

WORDS

As he looked another horn appeared that rooted out three of the horns. As Daniel watched, this fourth beast was put to death. The others were not killed, but they lost all their powers. Then God appeared and ruled the rest forever.

Daniel woke from his dream very troubled. He told his helper about all that he had seen. His helper told Daniel what it meant. He said, "Four kings will rise out of the earth. But their power will not last. It is God alone who will rule forever."

Another time Daniel had a vision of himself standing by a river. Beside him was a ram with two horns, one longer than the other. This ram charged all around destroying everything in its path, and as it charged it became stronger. As Daniel watched, a male goat appeared from the West. It was as if it were flying. The goat had a horn between its eyes. The goat charged the ram, breaking its two horns and trampling it on the ground.

Daniel could not understand what he saw. But an angel named Gabriel came to him and told him that this was a vision of the end of all time. A king will arise, more powerful and evil than all the others. This dream frightened Daniel.

Daniel prayed for many days, asking the Lord to forgive the people for their evil ways and to restore the great city of Jerusalem. Daniel remembered that the prophet Jeremiah had said that the city would be restored after seventy years, and yet it remained in pieces.

One day as he prayed the angel Gabriel appeared to him again.

Gabriel said, "The Lord God has heard your prayers and has sent me to try and help you understand." Jeremiah meant seventy times seven—a much longer time than anyone imagined. This was because the sin of the people was so great.

The words of the angel Gabriel filled Daniel with great sadness. He fasted for three weeks and then God sent him another vision.

MOVEMENTS

Place **Vision 4** (man dressed in linen) on the underlay.

Sit for a moment and look at the lesson from beginning to end to let the story rest. Then begin the wondering.

WORDS

This time Daniel saw someone like a man dressed in linen with a belt of gold around his waist. Daniel fell to the ground before him. A hand touched him and raised him up. The figure like a man said to Daniel, "Do not be afraid. Be strong and courageous! I have come to help you understand these visions." He told Daniel that the power of all kings will come to an end. He explained that this time will be difficult, but that God will stay close to God's people and deliver them from all danger. They will live with God forever.

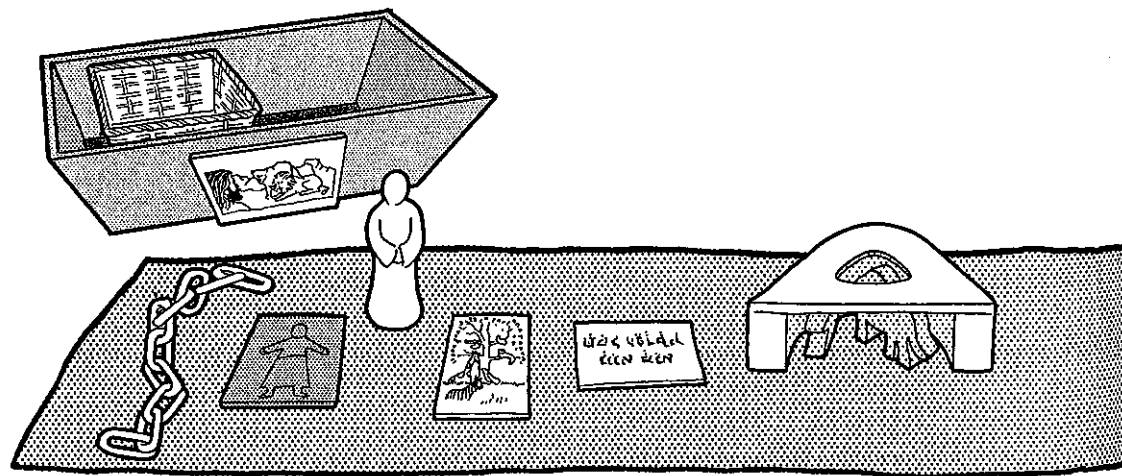
Then the figure like a man told Daniel to keep all these things secret. And he promised Daniel that all would be well for him and all of God's people.

I wonder what part of this whole story you liked the best?

I wonder what part is the most important?

I wonder what part is about you, or what part you are in?

I wonder if we could leave any of the story out and still have all that we need?



COMPLETE LAYOUT OF THE STORY OF DANIEL (CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVE)

MOVEMENTS

After the wondering is over, put the story away carefully. Pick up each object in reverse order and remind the children what the object is, saying for example, "Here are the visions Daniel had..." After all of the objects are back in the tray, carefully model how to roll the underlay back up and place it in the tray as well. Return the lesson to its place on the shelf. Then return to your spot in the circle and dismiss the children one by one to their work.

WORDS

