

Age-Level Overview

	Open the Bible	Activate Faith
Lower Elementary		
WORKSHOP FOCUS: Look for the good in all living things.	SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Story Bibles	SPARK RESOURCES: None
LOVING LIONS: Kids learn about lions through hands-on activities.	SUPPLIES: None	SUPPLIES: Yellow construction paper, scissors, tape, measuring tape, chenille craft stems, yarn, tape or chalk
Upper Elementary		
WORKSHOP FOCUS: Stand up for what you believe in.	SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers	SPARK RESOURCES: None
BACKBONE: Kids learn how we stand up physically and personally.	SUPPLIES: None	SUPPLIES: Spools, thin craft foam, pencils, scissors, straws, yarn (to match straw color if possible), hole punches, water, medicine droppers, bowls, tape
All Kids		
WORKSHOP FOCUS: God's light shines on us.	SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Story Bibles, Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers	SPARK RESOURCES: None
IN THE DARK: Kids perform experiments with light.	SUPPLIES: None	SUPPLIES: Reflectors or reflective tape, masking tape, zippered sandwich bags, dry herbs or baking ingredients, flashlights, pencils, red cellophane, rubber bands, scissors, colored paper, blankets (optional)



Visit www.sparksundayschool.org for more Spark content. Watch a short Lesson Prep Video that will prepare you and give you confidence to explore this Bible story with the kids you are leading. You will also find a downloadable Family Page for this rotation's story filled with ideas for families to use to explore this story and live out their faith at home.

Workshop Focus: Look for the good in all living things.

Keep these tips in mind as you welcome kids to the workshop and explore the story together.

- Each week, remember to welcome kids to the rotation. Keep in mind that for some kids it may be the first time they are visiting your workshop!
- If kids have heard the story several times during previous weeks, read it again! Kids learn through repetition, and every workshop will explore the Bible story in a slightly different way.
- Remember that the Shepherds are there to support you as they accompany kids each week.
- Be sure to visit www.sparksundayschool.org to download the Family Page for this story. Make copies of it and ask Shepherds to distribute it during the Wrap Up.

Open the Bible (10 minutes)

Daniel and the Lions Storytelling

Welcome to Spark Science. I'm glad you're here. Are there any animals you are afraid of? (Yes) **What are they, and why are you afraid of them?** Various answers. **Many times we're afraid of animals because we think they are going to hurt us. But most animals are not interested in humans at all. They will try to protect themselves or their babies from an animal that gets too close, but they don't go looking for humans to bite, scratch, or eat.**

One of the best ways to overcome your fear of an animal is to learn more about it. We're going to learn more about one animal that many people think is very scary. Pass out Spark Story Bibles. **Let's meet this animal by turning to page 184 in our Spark Story Bibles to the story of Daniel in the Lions' Den.** Read the story out loud.

Why was Daniel thrown in the lions' den? (because he prayed to God and that was against the law) **Did the king think Daniel was a bad person?** (no) **Was Daniel mad at the king for putting him in with the lions?** (no) **Daniel looked for the good in the king. Because of what happened, he was able to lead the king to God.**

Spark Resources
Spark Story Bible

Supplies
None

Activate Faith (25 minutes)

Loving Lions

Set Up: Cut out a triangular ear shape onto yellow construction paper two times for each ear. Cut and tape the pieces together to make two yellow ears for each kid. Make a tape or chalk line on the floor. Use the tape measure to measure a distance of 12 feet (3.7 m). Make another line at this point. Twist the ends of two chenille stems together to make longer stems to use as wrist whiskers. Make two of these for each kid.

Activity Instructions

Would you be able to sleep if you were in a room with a bunch of lions? Probably not, but guess what—the lions would! In the wild, lions spend up to about 20 hours each day sleeping! Daniel had a whole night to learn more about lions. Let's see what we can learn in 25 minutes.

- Lions have eyes in front of their heads, just like we do. This helps lions be better hunters because they can see moving animals with both eyes. Let's see what it would be like if lions had eyes on the sides of their heads, like rabbits and squirrels do.**
- Put the palms of your hands together with your fingers stretched up like you are praying. Bring your hands up so your thumbs touch your nose. Keeping the thumb side together, spread your hands apart. How is your vision changing?** (*I can't see what is in front of me anymore. I can only see only side at a time.*)
- Animals that have eyes in the front of their heads do a better job of figuring out how fast an animal is moving. The funny thing is, if an animal isn't moving, a lion might not be able to see it at all! Everyone stand up. Imagine I'm a lion. When I turn my back, start moving around. I'll say "freeze" and turn to look at you. If I see you moving, you will be my dinner.** Play this game a few times.
- Lions are a type of cat. Cats have ears on the top of their heads, not on the side like we do. You have six muscles in the outer part of your ear. Cats have more than 20 different muscles in each ear. They can move each ear in a different direction at the same time.** Distribute triangle ears. **Ears are also a good way to figure out how a cat might be feeling.**
 - Put your ears facing forward and straight up on your head. A lion with ears like that is paying attention!**
 - Next, press your ears backwards so they are laying flat on your head. If I saw a lion with ears like this, I'd know that lion was getting ready to fight.**
 - Lift the ears up and move one to the right, the other to the left. Ear action like this means a cat is listening very carefully.**
- Cats have whiskers on their faces and their wrists. Whiskers are long stiff hairs that move when they touch something or when the wind blows. These**

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

Yellow construction paper

Scissors

Tape

Yarn

Tape measure

Tape or chalk

Chenille craft stems, 4 per kid

whiskers give the cats information about the world around them without them having to look. Your ankles are in about the same place as a cat's wrists. Let's wrap one end of a long chenille stem around each ankle. Walk close to the walls and to each other. Can you feel the whiskers sending signals to your body? (yes)

6. **Lions are very good runners. They have powerful legs. When you are running, how far apart are your steps? Let's find out. Start at this line on the ground. When a lion is running, its stride length is about 12 feet (3.7 m). That is the distance from this line to the other one. How many steps do you have to take to equal one lion's step?** Give each student a chance to count their steps between the two lines of tape or chalk.
7. **Tails are another way lions talk to each other. Twist together the chenille stems you used as whiskers to make a tail. We'll practice lion tail talk holding the tails in front of our bodies.**
 - a. **Hold your tail up straight and wave it slowly back and forth to say, "Hi! I'm friendly."**
 - b. **Hold your tail sideways and move it quickly from side to side. Now you're saying, "I'm excited!"**
 - c. **Lower the tip of your tail to the ground and give it a few quick twitches to say, "Watch out!"**

Send (5 minutes)

Wrap Up

Remind the Shepherds to distribute the Family Page for this story if the kids haven't already received it, and come together for Wrap Up.

Daniel had every reason to be afraid of the lions when he was put into the den with them. But maybe he watched them as they slept, and learned new things. When you are afraid, take a closer look at what you are afraid of. You might learn to find the good, just like Daniel found good in the king. To show what we learned about lions, listen for the phrases "I'm excited" and "watch out" during the final prayer. Make sure you use your tail to communicate those messages.

Prayer Time

Dear God,

We're excited (hold out tail sideways and move quickly back and forth) **that we learned more about Daniel and the lions. We know that people who try to get others in trouble should watch out,** (lower tail to ground and twitch slightly) **for you will help those who are honest and faithful.**

Amen.

Spark Resources
Family Pages



Supplies
None

Workshop Focus: Stand up for what you believe in.

Keep these tips in mind as you welcome kids to the workshop and explore the story together.

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Open the Bible (10 minutes)

Daniel and the Lions Storytelling

Welcome to Spark Science. I'm glad you're here. Before we get started, everyone stand up and stretch your arms above your heads. With your hands on your hips, turn to the right and count to five. Now turn to the left and count to five. Bend over and try to touch your toes for five seconds. Stand up straight and roll your neck so that your chin is on your chest, then your ear is on your shoulder. Keep moving your neck so your head is tilted back, then your other ear is on your shoulder. When your chin gets back to your chest, reverse directions.

What part of your body have we been stretching so far? (*backbone or spine*) Why do you have a backbone/spine? (*It holds together all the parts of your body. It lets you sit and stand. It protects your spinal cord.*) Does anyone ever remember reading about the backbone/spine in the Bible? (*no*)

Sometimes the stories in the Bible use metaphors or analogies to make the message more understandable. See if you can figure out why a backbone/spine is important to understanding today's story. Pass out Spark Bibles to kids. **Turn in your Spark Bible to the book of Daniel, chapter 6, page 964. We'll read verses 1-28.** Read the passage out loud. Invite kids to place a Spark Bible Sticker of their choice in the margin near the passage.

Spark Resources
Spark Bibles
Spark Bible Stickers

Supplies
None

Why was Daniel thrown in the lions' den? (*because he prayed to God*) **Did being in the lions' den change his actions?** (*no*) **What happened because he stood up for what he believed in?** (*he converted the king*)

Activate Faith (25 minutes)

Backbone

Set Up: Cut six pieces of yarn the same length as the straw for each kid.

Activity Instructions

When you stand up to others, people might say you showed your backbone. Why do they say that? (*you can't stand up without a backbone, it means you don't back down*)

Your backbone, or spine, is a very important part of your body. We'll learn about the different parts as we make our own models.

1. **Touch the middle of the back of your neck. What are those bumps?** (*bones, vertebrae*)
2. **From where your neck enters your skull, clear down to the bottom of your bottom, there's a line of bones called your vertebrae. When you were a baby, you had 33 separate vertebrae. As you grew older, five vertebrae in your hip area fused together to make the sacrum. The four below that fused together to make your tail bone, or coccyx. So now, you have 24 individual vertebrae, and nine fused together. Today we're going to use these** (*distribute three spools and one pencil to each kid*) **as our models. Use a pencil to write "7 neck" on the side of one spool, "12 chest" on one spool, and "5 lower back" on one spool.**
3. **What do you notice about your vertebrae?** *Accept all responses. They're hard, they come in several sizes, they're a little wider at the top and bottom, and they have a hole through the middle. We'll come back to that hole in just a minute.*
4. **Take two of your spool vertebrae and rub their ends together for a minute. This is what it would be like if you were really stretching or moving around a lot. Immediately touch the ends you were rubbing together. What do you notice?** (*they're warm, the paper is shredding*) **When two things rub together, it creates friction. We really don't want bones to rub against bones, so your body has a thin disk of cushion between each vertebra.** *Distribute foam pieces, scissors, and hole punches. Trace your spools on the craft foam. Cut out the cushions and punch a hole through the center using the hole punch or your pencil.*

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

Spools, at least 3 per kid
Thin craft foam
Pencils, 1 per kid
Scissors, 1 per kid
Straws, 1 per kid (as long as you can find and that will fit through the center of the spools)
Yarn (to match straw color if possible)
Hole punches
Water
Medicine droppers, 1 per 2 kids
Bowls, 1 per 2 kids
Tape
Bowls

5. **Why is it important to have the hole through the middle?** *(for your spinal cord)*
The middle hole is where your spinal cord goes. Your spinal cord is the information highway that connects your brain to the rest of your body. It contains the nerves that tell your body everything from “ouch that hurts” to “run like crazy, it’s a hungry lion!” Small nerve fibers run from the spinal cord, out between the vertebrae, to the muscles in your body. A straw will be your spinal cord, and yellow yarn will be the nerve fibers. Here comes the tricky part.
 - a. Distribute yarn pieces and tape. **Thread the six pieces of yarn through the neck vertebrae, taping one end of each yarn piece to the top.**
 - b. **Stretch one yarn out to the right, and one yarn out to the left. These are the nerves that work your arms. Thread the remaining four pieces through a foam cushion, then through the chest spool.**
 - c. **Stretch one yarn to the right and one to the left. These nerves work your heart, lungs and digestive muscles. Thread the remaining two pieces through a foam cushion, then through the lower back spool.**
 - d. **The remaining nerves go to your legs.**
 - e. Pass out straws. **The final step is to push your straw through the middle.**
6. **Hold your spine by the top and bottom of the straw. Try bending it. How far can it move?**
7. **Working with a partner, hold one model above a bowl. Drip water through the straw. This represents your nerve impulses. What happens if your spine is bent?** *(it goes slower)* **What happens if your spinal cord is completely bent, or pinched between two vertebrae?** *(the nerve impulses stop)* **This can happen with a pinched nerve, a slipped disc, or a broken vertebra. If you can’t straighten out the spinal cord and restore the information flow, you might be paralyzed!**

Send (5 minutes)

Wrap Up

Remind the Shepherds to distribute the Family Page for this story if the kids haven’t already received it, and come together for Wrap Up.

Speaking of paralyzed, most people would be paralyzed with fear if they were put in a den of hungry lions. Daniel might have been afraid, but it was the lions that didn’t move. Daniel had stood up to the king and his advisers, so was it really surprising that he would stand up to the lions as well? Daniel showed he had a backbone, both in the bone sense and in standing up for what he knew was right. Let’s finish up with a final prayer that will include a stretch that will help strengthen your backbone.

Spark Resources
Family Pages



Supplies
None

Prayer Time

Dear God,

As we stand before you with our arms at our sides, we give thanks for the way you teach us through amazing stories. We lift our arms over our heads and bring our palms together as we look skyward, stretching our spines in the hopes that we can show the same type of backbone that Daniel did with the king.

Amen.

Workshop Focus: God's light shines on us.

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Open the Bible (10 minutes)

Daniel and the Lions Storytelling

Welcome to Spark Science. I'm glad you're here. Where's the darkest place you've ever been? Various answers. **How did you feel when you were there?** Various answers.

Today we're going to talk about two types of darkness. One type of darkness is when there is little or no light, and it's hard to see. Another type of darkness is when you don't know something. People might say you are in the dark when you don't know something. Pass out Spark Story Bibles to the younger kids and Spark Bibles to the older kids. **Let's see what I mean by opening your Spark Story Bible to page 184, or find Daniel 6:1-28, page 964, in your Spark Bible.**

Who was in the physical dark in today's story? (*Daniel—when he was in the lions' den*) **Who was in the dark in the sense that they didn't know something?** (*the king*) **What light did Daniel give the king?** (*about God*) Invite older kids to place a Spark Bible Sticker of their choice near the passage.

Spark Resources
Spark Story Bible
Spark Bibles
Spark Bible Stickers

Supplies
None

Activate Faith (25 minutes)

In the Dark

Set Up: It's best if you can use the darkest room in the building. If necessary, cover windows with blankets. Cut the reflective tape into eye shapes, or use the masking tape to create eye shapes on the reflectors. Place these reflective eyes in pairs around the room, both high and low. Place a small amount of each of the dry ingredients in separate sandwich bags. Cut the colored paper into 4 inch (10.2 cm) squares, 1 square for every 2 kids. Cut a piece of red cellophane to cover each flashlight lens. Secure with a rubber band.

Activity Instructions

Imagine being thrown into a lions' den and a rock being rolled over the door so you couldn't leave. What do you think it would be like in there? (*dark, stinky, scary*)

To learn more about what Daniel experienced, we're going to explore how our bodies adapt when it's dark.

- 1. Find a partner of a different age to work with.**
- 2. Look at each other's eyes. What's the middle part of your eye called?** (*your pupil*) **It's your pupil. What does your pupil do?** (*it lets light in, it's the part that sees*) **Your pupil can get smaller or larger to control the amount of light that comes into your eyes. We'll see this in a little bit.**
- 3. Light that comes in goes to the back of your eye, called the retina. In the middle of the retina are a bunch of cone cells. Cone cells see color. On the sides of the retina are rod cells. Rod cells see black and white. Let's test which cells work best when the lights are on and your pupils are small.** Distribute colored paper squares and pencils. **On each square, write down your partner's name and what they say the color is.**
- 4. Could anyone name all the colors correctly? I know, unless you're color-blind, that was pretty easy. If that's the case, don't worry because we'll do this again a little bit later and everyone will be challenged! Turn the cards over and place them where they will be easy to find when it's dark.** If you are in a room that can get completely dark, do the following: **I've got one flashlight I'll keep on most of the time.** Turn on red covered flashlight.
- 5. When I turn off the lights, look around. It'll seem terribly dark at first, until your eyes adjust. We rely so much on vision that we often miss other clues about our surroundings. While the pupils in our eyes are stretching out to let in more light, we'll test your sense of smell. What do you think it smelled like in the lions' den?** Various responses. **I don't have anything that would smell like a lions' den. Instead, we're going to pass around some small bags that have dried ingredients that you use in cooking. Put your nose near the top of each bag and breathe in. Lick your finger and wet the end of your nose. Many**

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

Reflectors or reflective tape (red, orange, and white)
Masking tape
Zippered sandwich bags
Dry herbs or baking ingredients (basil, oregano, lemon zest, flour, sugar, salt, etc.)
Flashlights, 1 per 2 kids
Pencils, 1 per kid
Red cellophane
Rubber bands
Scissors
Colored paper (red, yellow, blue, green, orange, brown, white), 4 inch (10 cm) squares, 1 per 2 kids
Blankets (if needed)

animals have wet noses. This improves their sense of smell. Can you identify each ingredient?

6. **Now that your pupils are dilated, let's test your color vision again. Mix the cards so they aren't in the same order and test each other. Remember to write down each other's answers! We'll check them after we turn the lights on.**
7. **Opossums, raccoons, skunks, deer, and cats—including lions—have a special covering on their retina. This covering, called the tapetum, reflects the light that enters the pupil. This reflection gives these animals better night vision, and it makes it look like their eyes are glowing. Each pair will get a red covered flashlight. The red covering won't hurt your pupils. Use the flashlight to search the room for the pairs of reflective eyes that are looking at you!** Distribute flashlights. Give the kids several minutes to search for the eyes.
8. **Now it's time to check out our own eyes again. Turn off your flashlights. Close your right eye and put your right hand over it. Don't open it until I say to. Sit face to face with your partner and look at each other's eyes. Keep your right eye closed!** Turn on light; allow a moment for kids to respond. **Keep looking, and uncover the right eye. What do you notice?** Allow a moment for kids to respond.
9. **Let's check your color card answers. How many did you get right when the lights were off? When it's dark, our cone cells turn off, making it very hard to see colors.**

Send (5 minutes)

Wrap Up

Remind the Shepherds to distribute the Family Page for this story if the kids haven't already received it, and come together for Wrap Up.

Today's story said that the king was awake the entire night that Daniel was in the lions' den. It doesn't say what Daniel was doing. What would you be doing if you were in a lions' den? Accept all answers. **We do know that Daniel prayed to God, and God heard him. God hears our prayers as well and shines a light even when we are alone. During our final prayer, I'm going to test your hearing. Your eyes will be closed, and the Shepherd will be walking around. When the Shepherd hits the two sticks together, point to where you think the sound is coming from. I'll give the answer in the prayer. Close your eyes.**

is the cue to tap the sticks together two times. Have the Shepherd walk to the front, right, left, and behind the group, looking for a nod or other signal from you.

Prayer Time

Dear God,

Daniel was punished because he was ## up front in his faith. We know that you heard Daniel's prayer ## right away. He didn't need to worry that there would be nothing ## left of him in the morning. His faith made the king leave the false advisers ## behind.

Amen.

Spark Resources

Family Pages



Supplies

Thick dowels or broom sticks, 2