

STORY HOUR

An Evangelistic Program
for Preschool and Kindergarten Children



YEAR TWO

Downloadable Edition

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STORY HOUR

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for Preschool and Kindergarten Children



YEAR TWO

Featuring 16 songs by Jacquelyn and Jon Negus
Revised Edition

Faith Alive Christian Resources
1700 28th St. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49508-1407

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Acknowledgments

Faith Alive is grateful to Diane Dykgraaf and Deb Fennema for writing this revised edition of *Story Hour*. As small group ministry representatives for Christian Reformed Home Missions, an agency of the Christian Reformed Church in North America, Dykgraaf and Fennema provide training for Story Hour and Little Lambs program directors and leaders. Dykgraaf is the director of music at Kelloggsville Christian Reformed Church, Kentwood, Michigan, and has served as leader or codirector of the church's Story Hour/Little Lambs program for twenty years. She is also the author of *Little Ones Need Jesus*, published by Faith Alive Christian Resources. Fennema earned her Master of Divinity from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and is the coordinator of worship and education at Kenosha Christian Reformed Church, Kenosha, Wisconsin. She has written three short courses in the Discover Your Bible series published by Faith Alive Christian Resources: *Discover Jonah*, *Discover 1 and 2 Peter*, and *Discover the Gift of Christmas*.

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Illustrations by Christina D. Schofield. Schofield is a freelance artist from Rolla, Missouri. She also illustrated the program guide and story cards for *Story Hour*, Year One.

Original songs by Jacquelyn and Jon Negus. Jacquelyn Negus has been a music educator for more than twenty years. Her degrees include a Bachelors of Music Performance and Education from Ball State University and a Masters in Choral Conducting from the University of Miami. She currently serves as a national professional educator for Kindermusik and operates her own Kindermusik program for approximately five hundred students. She also serves as codirector of the Red Rose Children's Choir of Lake County, Illinois. Jon Negus has been a studio singer, composer, producer, woodwind player, and synthesist in Chicago for eighteen years. His voice, instruments, and arrangements have been heard in thousands of radio and television commercials worldwide. With Jacquelyn he coproduced music for Kindermusik International, a comprehensive preschool music program, and for *Ladybug*, an early childhood magazine. Jon has recorded and arranged five children's albums for Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Illinois.

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We welcome your comments. Call us at 1-800-333-8300 or e-mail us at sales@faithaliveresources.org.

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Introduction to Story Hour



“Anyone who welcomes a little child
like this in my name welcomes me.”

Matthew 18:5, NIV



WHAT IS STORY HOUR?

Story Hour is an evangelistic program for preschool and kindergarten children four to six years old. Our goal is to make God known simply and clearly, using the stories and teachings of the Bible in a way that children can understand. Our desire is for each child to come to know God, to experience Jesus' love, and to respond to that love as the Holy Spirit works in each heart.

Story Hour (and Little Lambs, a companion program for two- and three-year-olds) was developed to complement Coffee Break, an evangelistic Bible study program for women. However, it can be used as an independent program in a variety of settings.

The Story Hour program materials are divided into six units intended to span a period of two years as outlined below:

Year One

Unit 1: God's Creation and Care (Old Testament Stories)

Unit 2: Jesus Brings Salvation (New Testament Stories)

Unit 3: Jesus' Love (New Testament Stories)

Year Two

Unit 4: God's Promise (Old Testament Stories)

Unit 5: God's Son (New Testament Stories)

Unit 6: God's Children (New Testament Stories)

Each unit is divided into three or four mini-units or themes (see table of contents, pp. 5-6). Ideas for using these themes for several sessions are presented on theme pages marked with a band of handprints along the right-hand side of the page. The sample below will help you identify these pages.

Unit 4: God's Promise
Session 1, 2

Theme
GOD CREATES THE WORLD

Bible Words
*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
Genesis 1, 1-5*

Theme Song
"That's Good"
Chorus
God said, "That's good, that's good,
Yes, it's very, very, very good.
That's good, that's good,
Yes, it's very, very, very good."
It all came about in seven simple days
when God created the world.
Day one brought the day and night,
Day two put the sky in sight.
Day three brought the earth, the flowers, and the trees,
and also the rolling seas. (Chorus)
It all came about in seven simple days
when God created the world.
Day four brought the sun, stars, and moon.
Day five brought the fish and birds that swim.
Day six animals, and man (people) he made the best.
Day seven, God took a rest and said: (Chorus)
It all came about in seven simple days
when God created the world.
That's good!
—Jacquelyn and Jon Negus, © 1993, 1995, Memorial Productions, Inc., 124 Aberdeen Road,
Haverhill, MA 01830. Used by permission.

Words and music for this song are in the Songs section of this program guide and on the
accompanying cassette. Sing-along Prayer Songs by Jacquelyn and Jon Negus.

Other Suggested Songs
"I Am Glad" (Jacquelyn and Jon Negus, Sing-along Prayer Songs)
"Thank You, Lord, for Making Me" (Tricia Barlow, Chorus, Shout, and Sing cassette/CD
—see Other Suggested Resources, p. 7)
"All Things Bright and Beautiful"
"God Made You and Me"

Unit 4, Theme: God Creates the World 63

Each year's program guide includes three Getting Acquainted sessions designed to introduce children to Story Hour, to the Bible as God's book, and to prayer. In addition, four sessions each year are planned to help children celebrate selected secular holidays from a Christian perspective.

Session materials for each year are included in a downloadable pdf. Also included (in separate pdfs) are the Leader Resources and Patterns you will need to teach each lesson.

For Story Hour Year 1 we recommend that you also purchase the following companion products and have them available as you lead your preschool children.

Music

Sing With Me Preschool Songs (CD), available from faithaliveresources.org or iTunes

Sing With Me songbook, available from faithaliveresources.org

Sing-along Praise Songs (CD), available from faithaliveresources.org or iTunes

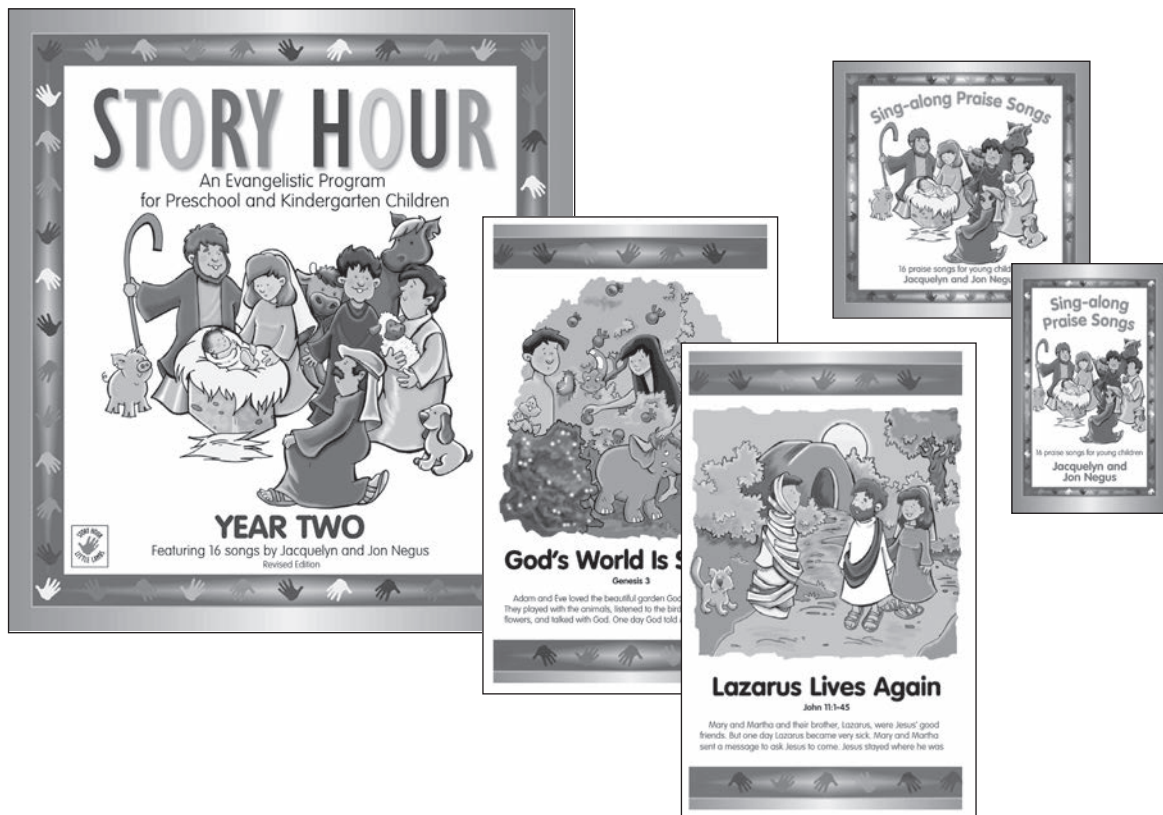
Sing-along Praise Songs songbook, available from faithaliveresources.org

Storybooks

God Loves Me storybooks, available from faithaliveresources.org

Take-home story cards have been developed specifically for each session in Story Hour. These cards present the Bible stories in simple words that preschool and kindergarten children can understand. The front of each card illustrates one scene from the story with beautiful four-color art.

Individual sets for Year One and Year Two can be ordered for each child. These cards are an excellent way to give the children their very own story Bible over a one- or two-year period





ORGANIZING STORY HOUR

Three aspects of beginning or managing a Story Hour program are particularly important: staff, space, and schedule. We encourage you to enlist the help of small group ministry representatives who can provide additional advice or conduct leadership training workshops. Contact the Coffee Break International office at 1-800-266-2175 to obtain the name and telephone number of your regional representative.



STAFF FOR STORY HOUR

The Director

Although the director's role calls for leadership and organization skills, the primary requirement is a deep love for children and for those who serve as leaders.

The director is responsible for the total Story Hour program and will

- advertise the program
- recruit and train leaders
- order supplies and materials
- organize the use of space
- schedule the year's program and weekly sessions
- facilitate contacts with families
- connect the program to the church
- develop a cooperative ministry with Coffee Break and Little Lambs
- conduct staff meetings
- model a welcoming love for the children

Smaller programs may not have a Story Hour director at all. In that case, we suggest dividing up the responsibilities among the leaders to help distribute the tasks and to prevent leader burnout.

Leaders

We use the term leaders to include both teachers and helpers. The leaders' responsibilities may include

- planning the weekly sessions in cooperation with the director
- preparing materials for the Bible story and learning activities
- telling the Bible story and carrying out the selected activities
- helping discipline the children
- maintaining contacts with families in cooperation with the director
- participating in the weekly staff-support group meetings
- performing specific tasks such as playing the piano or leading group singing

It's ideal to have at least one leader for every five to seven children. In fact, some church education policies require that each group must have two adults present with each small group of children. Leaders should remain with the same group of children throughout the year to provide a safe and predictable environment and to help leaders and children build

relationships. Ideally, you will want to retain the same large group song leader throughout the year too.

SPACE FOR STORY HOUR

Group Needs

Grouping of children is the primary factor in determining space needs. Most likely you will want space for a large group of children for at least part of each session and separate space for smaller groups for the remainder of the time.

Ideally, small groups should be no larger than about ten to fourteen children. You may wish to divide into smaller groups by age. Every week each small group should be made up of the same children. If separate rooms are not available for each small group, make sure some privacy boundaries are defined.

It's especially important to maintain a good ratio of adults to children in order to establish a healthy element of guidance and control. Remember that, for many of these little ones, Story Hour is their first experience in a group situation.

Play Centers

Depending on the amount of space you have available, you can set up play centers in your large group area or in the smaller group areas. When deciding how to organize play centers, consider the number of staff, the amount of supplies needed, and the setup and cleanup time required. If you cannot leave the centers up from week to week, you might consider using a dishpan, clothes basket, or boxes to hold supplies for each center. Here are some ideas for centers and some suggestions for supplies:

- **Art Center**

Throughout the session plans we suggest using an Art Box for several learning activities. To make your box, fill a large shoe box or a larger plastic or cardboard container with pictures and trims from old greeting cards, stickers, bits of yarn and ribbon, scraps of lace and other fabric or paper trims, pictures from old church school papers, and leftover craft supplies from previous church school or Story Hour sessions. Provide construction paper, scissors, glue sticks, paint, colors, markers, ink or marker stamps, and paint shirts or smocks.

- **Dramatic Play Center**

We've included the Drama Troupe Suitcase in the materials list for several activities. In an old suitcase or a large box, collect simple costumes to help children portray Bible characters. Older children's or adults' T-shirts can be belted to look like tunics. Large bath towels can be draped around the children and clipped at the neck with spring-type clothespins to make robes. Add scarves, soft belts or pieces of cotton rope, sandals, and small props appropriate for specific stories. You might want to hang a full-length mirror near this center.

- **Sensory Play Center**

Young children learn through their senses. They enjoy getting their hands into water, sand, rice, Play-Doh—messy, fun-to-feel things! Cover a table with plastic and the floor with plastic or newspaper. Put water in dishpans, and provide corks and small plastic boats, funnels, plastic measuring cups, a colander, and other small containers for pouring and filling. Place textured materials in gallon plastic pails or in muffin tins, and offer spoons or small plastic scoops and other small containers for mixing, pouring, and filling. You may hide in the sand or grains items that relate to an object in the story (keep safety in mind when hiding small objects like coins). Set out Play-Doh, cookie cutters, molds, plastic knives, and rolling pins for another texture experience.

- **Discovery Center**

To encourage children's natural curiosity and to foster appreciation for God's beautiful world, set out various objects from nature such as shells, rocks, leaves, flowers, insects, abandoned bird nests, feathers, and the like. Provide magnifying glasses for a closer look.

- **Book Center**

Gather a basketful of simple, colorful children's books. (Specific book suggestions are given in some of the sessions—see also Other Suggested Resources, pp. 445-46). A rocking chair, pillows, and teddy bears can create a quiet corner for the child who wants a bit of time away from the group. If possible, a leader should be available to read to children who want to hear a story.

- **Language/Listening Center**

If your resources allow, provide simple CD players and CDs with children's songs or stories. Or set up a CD player for children to record their own stories and messages. If leader supervision is available, you may occasionally want to use a compact disc, a video, or a computer program. Involve the children in these activities so that they aren't just passive viewers or listeners.

These are just a few ideas for play centers. Use your imagination to make creative use of your space and to offer children plenty of opportunity to experiment, to interact with other children, and to respond to the Bible story. Sometimes you may want to involve children in one or more center activities as they arrive. At other times you may want to set up a center for a small group activity or for a specific learning activity later in the session.



THE STORY HOUR SCHEDULE

This Story Hour program guide provides flexible session plans and includes a variety of learning activities. Use the schedule to give children needed structure and familiar repetition and at the same time accommodate the short attention span of young children. Make sure children are comfortable with any major change in your routine.

We recommend that a session should run approximately one hour and thirty minutes. Here's one way you could structure that time:

- Welcome/Play Center Activities (5-10 minutes as children arrive)
- Opening Activities (15-20 minutes)
- Bible Story (15-20 minutes)
- Response Activities (15-20 minutes)
- Snack Time (5-10 minutes)
- Closing Activities (5-10 minutes or until parents arrive)

It's important to delegate tasks within the schedule. You may wish to do some of the planning as a group using the session plan form we've included in the Leader Resources section (p. 427).

Perhaps leaders could welcome the children and encourage them to participate in play center activities. The director might organize the opening activities for the large group. You might use this time to learn the Bible Words, sing the theme song, and do the theme action rhyme as presented on the theme pages. Sometimes leaders may wish to use this opening activity time to introduce a craft or other activity to their small group to set the stage for the Bible story.

Generally leaders will tell the Bible story in their small group setting. Consider telling the story to the larger group, especially when you wish to involve other leaders in pantomime, drama, or reader's theater. The Story Hour mascot introduced in the Welcome to Story Hour session (see p. 33) can add a dialogue dimension to small and large group storytelling.

Use the response time creatively. Session plans provide a variety of activities to encourage you and the children to respond to the Bible truths through song, rhyme, dance, art, and drama. Variety will appeal to the children's various learning styles and satisfy their short attention span.

Snack time is a fun time for children and is a good time to talk together. You will want to keep the advance preparation simple and involve the children when possible. Model thankfulness and mealtime prayer habits by saying simple prayers before eating.

Closing activity time can be used for a specific planned activity or for less structured play in the centers. It's a good time to reassure children of your love and to spend a minute connecting with parents. Make sure you know who is responsible for picking up the child.



LEADING STORY HOUR

In this section we want to walk you through the theme pages and session plans in this program guide binder and provide tips to make your task easier. But before we discuss the leader's role, let's consider what it takes to get off on the right foot.



GETTING STARTED

Maybe you are an experienced leader, eager to tell the story of God's love to children. Perhaps you are just beginning this avenue of ministry and are feeling inadequate, as Moses did when God called him to lead the people of Israel. Either way, you have the assurance that God says to you, as he did to Moses, "I will help you speak and will teach you what to say" (Ex. 4:12).

Your sense of God's presence and your love for children will motivate you to make Story Hour a high priority. We'd like you to add three other essentials for your ministry:

- **Prayer**

Spend part of your private prayer time remembering each child's specific needs. Join together for staff prayer before the session begins.

- **Preparation**

Start preparing for each session early in the week. Reflect on the Bible story. Collect needed supplies; recruit others to help prepare visuals and other materials. Take care of all last-minute details before the children arrive.

- **Presence**

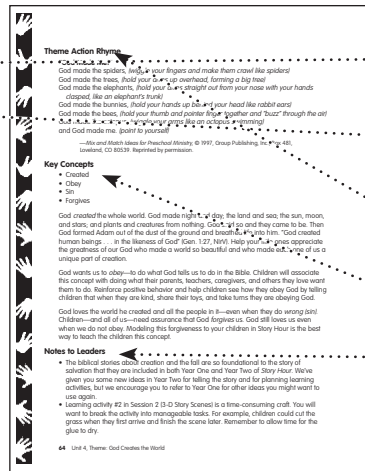
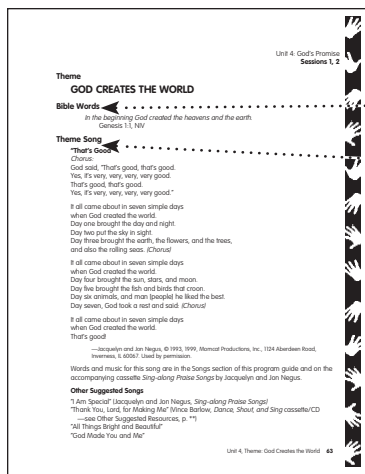
If possible, all leaders should be present to greet the children as they arrive with their parents. Smile; speak to each child. Assist with coats and nametags. Help the children find the room for opening activities. Be especially sensitive to the needs of the new child and to any parent who may be leaving a child for the first time. Take time to interact with the parents. Modeling God's love to children and parents may be the most important thing you do.

Now join us for a brief overview of the tools we've developed for Year Two of your Story Hour ministry.



STORY HOUR THEMES

Each of the three main units in this program guide binder for Year Two is identified by an indexed division page and a contents page that includes a list of themes (mini-units) and session titles. You'll notice that each unit is divided into three or four mini-units or themes—a total of nine for Year Two. We've developed a theme page to help you highlight these themes during the related sessions. Theme pages can be identified by a strip of handprints along the right-hand side of the page. Each of the nine theme pages includes these features:



- Bible Words
- Theme Song
- Theme Action Rhyme
- Key Concepts
- Notes to Leaders

• **Bible Words**

We've selected a Bible verse that will be easy for the children to learn in the two or more weeks you spend on one theme. We have suggested nine theme Bible verses for this year plus six Bible verses to correspond with the Getting Acquainted and holiday sessions. We have included many of these verses on cards, bookmarks, and other patterns in the Patterns section of your printable resources. We've also included a set of these verse cards in the Leader Resources section to enable you to make copies. Use every opportunity to reinforce these Bible words throughout the year, but don't worry if every child cannot repeat all the words. Teaching children to love God's Word is more important.

• **Theme Song**

Some of the nine theme songs will be old favorites; others are original songs written by Jacquelyn and Jon Negus and are included on the *Sing-along Praise Songs* CD for Year Two. Words and music for the theme songs are included in the *Sing-along Praise Songs* songbook available from Faith Alive Christian Resources. Young children learn through repetition and will quickly develop favorite songs they'll want to sing over and over. We encourage you to limit the number of new songs you introduce each session so that children can enjoy singing and will carry the words home in their minds and hearts.

• **Theme Action Rhyme**

We've selected nine rhymes that work well for the two or more sessions you spend on one theme. In some session plans, we have added an action rhyme that is specific to one session. All the action rhymes included in Year Two are also grouped together in the Action Rhymes section in the back of this binder. Generally we suggest using a small number of rhymes so that children can actively respond to the lesson truths without a weekly emphasis on learning new motions and words.

• **Key Concepts**

Key biblical terms are explained from a child's perspective. We have included these concepts to help you think through how you will communicate these ideas to young children; not as a vocabulary drill for the children. For example, you may choose not to

use the term parable as you talk with young children, but you will emphasize that Jesus told these stories to help us learn about God’s love.

• **Notes to Leaders**

These notes will alert you to a special focus in a particular session, give tips on scheduling special activities, or remind you to collect needed supplies in advance. We’ve tried to walk in your shoes and anticipate some of the things that take a bit of extra thought and preparation.

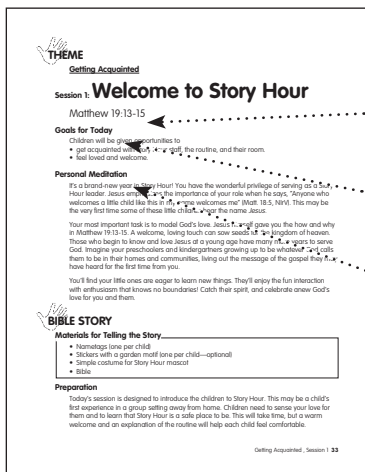


SESSION PLANS

Session plans follow a consistent format and include the introductory components, the Bible Story section, and the Learning Activities section.

Introductory Components

The introductory portion of the session plan will help you focus your preparation time. It includes these parts:



- **Scripture**
- **Goals for Today**
- **Personal Meditation**

• **Scripture**

The Bible passage for each session is identified for you. We encourage you to read the passage and the chapters before and after it so that you are familiar with the context of the story. You might find that using a study Bible or a commentary will help you understand the more difficult passages.

• **Goals for Today**

Goals are written from the child’s perspective and will help you plan the session to enable the children to accomplish them. It will be important to remember that young children are just beginning their spiritual journey and will be taking small steps, one at a time, each at his or her own pace.

• **Personal Meditation**

These brief meditations are meant to focus your thoughts on the Scripture for the session and to give you encouragement in your own spiritual walk and ministry to children.

Bible Story

The Bible story narration is written out to help you prepare to tell the story to the children. Become familiar with the story and comfortable with the way you want to tell it—let your own personality come through, and don't hesitate to modify the suggestions for how to tell the story (printed in bold in the story text). To help you prepare and carry out this key part of the Story Hour session, we've included these components:

THEME
Getting Acquainted

Session 3. God Hears Our Prayers
Daniel 6:1-23

Goals for Today
Children will be given opportunities to

- learn that prayer is talking to God
- realize that God hears our prayers.

Personal Meditation
Do you believe in prayer? Of course you do! But do you know how **very** important prayer is to your Story Hour program? Probably even more than you can imagine, prayer is your communication link with the Creator of the universe, who is also the One who loves you and your Story Hour children.

When we teach children to pray, we give them a gift of incredible value that will last a lifetime. Cameron, a preschooler who was just beginning to learn about Jesus, said, "When I'm afraid in the dark, I pray, 'Dear Jesus, please be with me.' Then I'm not afraid anymore!" What a testimony!

Pray for each child in your group during your daily quiet time. During your Story Hour sessions, include structured prayer times and spontaneous times for talking to God. The Holy Spirit will water the seeds of faith you are planting in these young hearts. The prayer of a godly person is powerful. It makes things happen! (James 5:16-18)

BIBLE STORY

Materials for Telling the Story

- Bible
- Story Hour puppet
- Simple tunic costume for puppet
- Box for lions' den
- Masking tape
- Bible Learning activity #2, p. 11
- Copy of story script

Preparation
We suggest that you use your Story Hour puppet to perform the part of Daniel in today's story. To help your puppet look the part, make a simple tunic costume from socks, handkerchiefs, or a square of cloth. Find a box in proportion to your puppet and the lions to use for the lions' den for simply mask off an area with masking tape. Make sewed lions following the directions in Learning activity #2 on page 11. Or, if you prefer, have all the children make a lion tail.

another leader to operate the puppet. Invite your helper with a copy of the script inside puppet's actions to hold and operate the puppet as you tell the story.

Big Ideas

- Daniel was a very important man who worked for the king.
- Daniel loved God very much and prayed to God three times every day.
- One day the king gave an order that everyone had to pray to the king, not to God.
- Daniel heard the king's order, but Daniel went to his room and got down on his knees, and prayed to God.
- Some men who hated Daniel told the king, "The king commanded his men to throw Daniel into the lions' den."
- God sent an angel to shut the lions' mouths. Yes, God saved Daniel!
- The king was filled with joy to add the people to honor Daniel's God, our great God.

Telling the Story
Just before your story time, place the lions in the box or in the masked area which represents the lions' den. Take out your Bible, then review the previous session about the Bible. You may wish to use the other rhyme (Fly Bible, p. 7) that you learned last time to signal your story time. Invite your Story Hour puppet to help teach the children about prayer, and show the children where the story is found in your Bible. Point out that your puppet's hands will rest on the lions' den. If you wish, invite another leader to play the king's part. Provide a robe and a paper crown. You'll want to rehearse ahead of time.

Storytelling Option
Instead of using the puppet, have another leader or your Story Hour mascot perform or act the part of Daniel. Provide a simple tunic costume and a copy of the script. If you wish, invite another leader to play the king's part. Provide a robe and a paper crown. You'll want to rehearse ahead of time.

The story begins
Daniel was a very important man who worked for the king. Daniel loved God very much and prayed to God three times every day. Daniel went to his room, got down on his knees, and talked to God. **(Show puppet kneeling with hands folded.)**

One day the king gave an order that everyone had to pray to him only and not to God. The king said no one could pray to God for a whole month! Anyone who disobeyed the king would be thrown into the lions' den.

Daniel heard the king's order. **(Show puppet with hand over one eye, shaking head.)** But Daniel did just what he always did. Daniel went to his room, got down on his knees, and prayed to God. **(Show puppet kneeling with hands folded.)** Daniel loved God very much. He needed to talk to him. Daniel knew God would hear his prayers and take care of him.

Some men who hated Daniel saw him praying and told the king. The king became very upset. He liked Daniel very much. But when the king gives an order, it can't be changed. So the king had to command his men to throw Daniel into the lions' den. **(Show puppet into lions' den.)** The king said to Daniel, "You ought to save your God. Maybe he'll save you."

The king couldn't sleep all night. But Daniel did. Daniel slept safe and sound. A night later, the king went to the lions' den. "Daniel, what did you do? Did your God save you from the lions?" the king asked.

Daniel **(show puppet raising up, excited, called out.)** "The king, I'm alright! My God sent an angel to keep me safe. The God's angel shut the lions' mouths. I'm not hurt at all!"

The king was filled with joy. Then the king gave another order. This time he told the people to honor Daniel's God, our great God.

- Explain the order that no one could pray to God?
- What did Daniel do when he prayed?
- Do you think Daniel is dead?
- How did God save Daniel?
- Have any of you been afraid? What can we say to God when we're afraid?
- Do you think that God always hears us when we talk to him?

Prayer
Dear God,
We're so glad you saved Daniel from the lions. We know that you will always hear us and take care of us. Amen.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES
Choose only as many activities as your time schedule allows. Use some activities to introduce today's Bible truth and others to give the children a variety of ways to respond to the Bible story.

1. Bible Words, Songs, and Action Rhymes
Daniel 6:10, NIV
Daniel went to his room three times a day to pray. He got down on his knees and gave thanks to his God.

Materials

- Flashboard
- Markers
- Morning, noon, and night pictures or symbols (optional)

- **Materials for Telling the Story**
- **Preparation**
- **Big Ideas**
- **Telling the Story**
- **Storytelling Option(s)**
- **Follow-up Questions**
- **Prayer Time**
- **Bible Words, Songs, and Action Rhymes**

• Materials for Telling the Story

Use this list to assemble materials for the story time.

• Preparation

Directions are given for preparing visuals and the setting for telling the story. You will want to do these things in advance.



• **Big Ideas**

These brief statements serve as an outline of the Bible story. You may find it helpful to keep these in front of you as you tell the story. We've included a set of these key truths or main ideas in notecard format in the Leader Resources section (pp. 432-42) to make them easy for you to photocopy.

• **Telling the Story**

This section suggests ways to introduce the story as you gather the children around you and set the stage for them. We'd like you to keep your Bible open as you begin to tell the story so that children know you are telling God's story.



• **Storytelling Option(s)**

Perhaps your schedule or space or your own preference doesn't fit with the primary way we've suggested for telling the story. We've given you at least one other idea in each session for telling the Bible story, and we encourage you to consider some of these alternative ways to make God's Word come alive for your children.

• **Follow-up Questions**

At the end of the story narration, you'll find a list of suggested questions designed to help children review the story and to think about what the story teaches. Be sensitive to your group's unique needs and spiritual development during this time of wondering about God's love.

• **Prayer Time**

We've included a brief prayer for you to say at the conclusion of your story time. Feel free to use your own prayer and to involve the children when you feel they are ready.

Learning Activities

The following activities are designed to introduce each session's Bible truth and to give children a variety of ways to respond to the Bible story:

2. Lions

Materials:


- Lion faces (one per child from pattern GA-3B)
- Bible words cards (one per child from pattern GA-3A)
- Ten cardstock (one sheet per child)
- Short lengths of brown yarn
- 4" (12.5 cm) wiggly eyes or buttons (two per child, optional)
- Tacky glue
- Crayons or markers
- Tongue depressors (one per child)
- Plastic grocery bags (one per child)

Directions:

Ahead of time, copy the lion faces (pattern GA-3B) and the Bible words cards (pattern GA-3A) on ten cardstock, and cut them out. Fold on the fold lines in the center of each as illustrated below. Cut the brown yarn into short lengths so that each child has a generous handful.

Lay the lion faces out flat in front of the children, and invite them to glue the brown yarn around the face to form a mane. If you've brought wiggly eyes or buttons, glue them in place. If you think these might be a safety hazard for younger siblings at home, just use the eyes or buttons. Children can add color to the face and mouth if they wish. Show children how to pinch the face together along the center fold line to make the nose protrude. Help them dab a bit of glue between the folded parts and stick the tongue depressor between (leave about half of it sticking out to form a handle). Glue the Bible words cards to the tongue depressor.

Encourage the children to retell the story using their lions and the Story Hour puppet. Show them how to hold the lion's face so the angry, hungry face shows first and then hold it the gentle face with the mouth shut by the angel shows.



• **Art, Drama, and Other Activities**

• **Snack Time**

Continue building the story by having the last person pass the ball back to you or to your assistant. **Remember to say, "God blesses those who are faithful!"**

Directions:

Ask the children to help you pass the ball back to you or to your assistant. **Remember to say, "God blesses those who are faithful!"**


5. Snack Time

Materials:

- Fresh fruit
- Snack crackers

Directions:

Cut fruit into bite-size pieces (to prevent choking). Remind your little ones that meditation (or snack time) is a wonderful time to pray. Give thanks for the good food God gives us.



Remember to send a Bible story card (from Getting Acquainted, Session 3) home with each child.

- ***Bible Words, Songs, and Action Rhymes***

Simple activities to help little ones learn the Bible words, a reminder to use the theme song and theme action rhyme, and other song suggestions are presented first in the learning activities part of every session plan.

- ***Art, Drama, and Other Activities***

Every session plan describes a number of activities that will appeal to various learning styles and will accommodate the short attention span of young children. A list of special materials needed for each activity is included. We have assumed that you will have a supply of construction paper, glue, scissors, and the like on hand (see Suggested Supplies in the Leader Resources section, p. 428).

We encourage you to try a wide variety of activities and to be especially intent on involving the child. We recommend that you carefully choose only as many activities as your schedule allows and that you feel free to vary the order of activities. Perhaps on occasion you will want to use an art activity to introduce the story rather than to respond to it. Sometimes you may choose not to do an individual art response at all but to have children respond to the story through song, dance, or drama, or by making a group mural. You need not worry about having something to send home every week—the opportunity you’ve given the children to learn about God and to express the meaning of God’s story matters most.

- ***Snack Time***

We’ve suggested simple snacks, sometimes using a symbol or idea from the story if appropriate. We’ve also included ideas for prayer and conversation with the children.

Every session plan concludes with this reminder:



We encourage you to purchase one set of story cards each year for every child in Story Hour. (Cards are available from Faith Alive Christian Resources.) We also suggest that you purchase a 6" x 9" (15 cm x 23 cm) three-ring binder for each child so that children can collect the story cards and make their own story Bible. (You can find this size binder at most office supply stores.) If the cost is prohibitive, perhaps another organization in your church would pay for the binders and cards as a service project, or you might encourage parents to purchase the binders. Or you could purchase inexpensive loose-leaf rings and give one to each child. This may be the only story Bible your child’s family has, or it may be the first Bible storybook that is the child’s very own.



TIPS TO MAKE LEADING EASIER

Experience is often the best teacher in helping to determine what works best for you, but we want to offer a few ideas to save you time and energy.

- Use Velcro strips on carpeted floors to mark off activity areas. When not in use, the strips can be rolled up and stored easily.
- Use clear Contact paper to attach pairs of footprints to the floor in the area where you want children to stand in line. Lining up is a new concept for some, and the footprints will help children find a place to stand.
- Copy patterns onto cardstock rather than construction paper. The cardstock is more durable and much less damaging to copy machines; it's available at most office supply stores. Generally, we have suggested cardstock in the materials lists rather than construction paper. If you do use construction paper for copying, make sure it's labeled "safe for photocopiers" (you can usually purchase this through school supply catalogs). You can also use 24-pound paper available at office supply stores. It's a little heavier than regular copy machine paper and comes in a variety of colors.
- Use bright-colored markers or highlighters to color patterns, and laminate them to make them more durable.
- Recruit seniors or teenagers in your church to help with cutting and other preparation of session materials. Schedule a time to do this prior to the beginning of the season. When you're finished with the patterns, store them in labeled shoe boxes or similar containers.
- Cover tables with plastic shower curtain liners when you're planning a messy project. The liners are durable, large enough to cover standard size tables, and easy to wipe off.
- To make sponge painting less messy for children, insert a large safety pin into a damp sponge. Attach a spring-type clothespin to the safety pin to make a handle. (See illustration with Suggested Supplies, p. 429 in the back of this program guide.)
- Provide glue sticks or pour glue into small shallow containers, and let the children use cotton swabs to paint the glue where needed.
- Use a blow dryer to dry art projects quickly.
- Use a squirt bottle of glass cleaner to clean tables, and fill one with soapy water to quickly clean messy hands.
- Take photos of each child early in the season and make photocopies to use for art activities throughout the year. You may also want to take some group pictures for bulletin boards.
- Use colored nametags to divide your larger group into smaller groups. Add stickers to each child's nametag to match one at the child's place in the circle or on the child's locker or coat hook.
- Develop a system for storing story visuals and other materials you'll be using again. Inexpensive cardboard file boxes are available at most office supply stores. You may want to cut large visuals into sections so that they can be stored in file folders. It might be easiest to organize your file by session titles with one or more folders for each session.



BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH STORY HOUR CHILDREN

Although the Story Hour program centers on the Bible story and related learning activities, much of what the children learn about God's love will come through their relationship with you. You can build that relationship through understanding, love, and discipline.



UNDERSTANDING the PRESCHOOL or KINDERGARTEN CHILD

Although the children in your Story Hour program may vary in age by as much as three years, and although each will develop individually, preschool and kindergarten children do share similar characteristics. Understanding typical patterns of physical, intellectual, social, and spiritual development will make your task easier. We encourage you to be especially sensitive to the child who may be developmentally delayed in one or more of these areas and to offer extra support and encouragement to both child and parent. Because early detection of delays and intervention is so important for the child's later development, you may want to help parents network with the school system and other support agencies in your community.

Physical Development

The large muscles of preschoolers and kindergartners are well developed, but their small muscles are less coordinated. Most of your children will run, jump, wave their arms, and clap their hands with ease. Younger ones will find it difficult to use scissors. Still, they delight in creating things—gluing, coloring, cutting, and putting things together. They also prefer to move rather than sit quietly. Marching, doing action rhymes and motions to music, and acting out stories are good ways to channel their enthusiasm. Some may have trouble focusing their eyes on small objects for long periods, but they love large, colorful visuals.

Intellectual Development

Preschool and kindergarten children are curious and eager to learn. The questions they ask are important—they're usually satisfied with simple answers and often like to answer their own questions. Much of their learning comes through their five senses: sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. Your children will enjoy hands-on learning experiences; these are sometimes messy and a bit hectic, but they're also vital to the children's experience.

Much has been written about the different ways that children and adults learn. By selecting a wide variety of activities you will appeal to these three main learning styles or preferences:

- ***Auditory***

Some children learn best while hearing a message; they are naturally good listeners. These children are talkative, can repeat stories, and enjoy group play. They usually like music and can remember lyrics well. They may enjoy using a CD player to retell the story.

- **Visual**

Some children learn best from visual stimulation and benefit from visual aids such as photographs, drawings, and videos. Often these children are quiet and prefer to play alone. They will benefit from watching the leader demonstrate the learning activities and model appropriate behavior.

- **Kinesthetic**

Some children learn best while doing and when they can touch things they are learning about. They enjoy large-motor activities. They are usually very people-oriented and need to be active while learning. They like to talk and move their hands and legs during the learning process; sitting still while listening to a story is very difficult for them. It's especially important for you to link the story to the response activity for these children.

Preschool and kindergarten children also think very concretely. Abstract ideas—love, justice, peace, and so on—and concepts such as salvation and sin are difficult for them to understand. You'll note that we introduce only a handful of key concepts throughout Year Two and repeat them often on the theme pages (many of these same concepts were also used in Year One).

Social Development

Preschool and kindergarten children are a delight. They express their feelings directly, spontaneously, and freely. They are anxious to please you, and younger children may be jealous of your attention. Because they are the center of their own world, your children still have much to learn about taking turns and sharing. While making allowances for these normal stages of development, you will need to gently and carefully guide their behavior, all the time leading them to see Jesus' love for them and others.

Spiritual Development

In the book *Stages of Faith* (HarperCollins—see Other Suggested Resources, p. 445), James Fowler describes how a child's faith develops as he or she matures and becomes more independent. Jessie Schut summarizes Fowler's three stages of faith development of children in these words:

- **Stage One**

Between ages one and three, children learn to trust, to feel secure, as they experience love and hope.

- **Stage Two**

Between ages three and six, children blend fact and fantasy, combining images of remembered stories with bits of experienced faith traditions. During this age span, children begin to form certain important faith concepts, such as the greatness of God and the love of Jesus. At this age, children still are not able to understand the abstract concepts so typical of much Christian doctrine and belief (such as the Trinity or original sin). Neither can they grasp the metaphors we use to explain life ("Jesus is the Lamb of God").

- **Stage Three**

Between the ages of six to twelve, children develop an appreciation for narrative and will grow in understanding the great story of salvation. Trying to make sense of the world, children will also want to figure out their own relationship to salvation and where they fit into the story. Abstractions still do not mean much to children of these ages.

For the most part, your Story Hour children will be in the second stage of their spiritual development. It's possible that some of your children may be struggling to develop a sense of trust—these children especially need to experience God's love through you.

As you lead Year Two of Story Hour, you will gradually unfold the plan of salvation just as you did in Year One. Your goal is to help the children understand that the gift of salvation is for them too. Preschool and kindergarten children are not excluded from God's family because of age.

But we must also remember that young children want to please. They are imitators, quick to pick up what you might want them to do or say. Be careful not to build a false sense of security in a child—or in yourself—because a little one has repeated the “right” words. At the same time, do not underestimate the power of the Holy Spirit. It's important that you carefully and simply explain what it means to be a child of God; then trust the Spirit to transfer that head knowledge into a knowledge of the heart. God alone can determine whether the commitment is genuine.

Sometimes a child may ask questions about God's work in our hearts, and you may feel the Spirit's prompting to talk with that child about receiving Jesus into his or her heart. When you sense that a child is ready to make this commitment, we recommend that you set aside a time to meet with the child and the parent. If the parent is unable to meet with you, a phone call or letter seeking approval to meet with the child will show that you respect the parent/child relationship and that your intention is to encourage the child's spiritual development, rather than to force a commitment. (We recommend that if you meet one-on-one with a child, you do so in a quiet corner of the room where other children and leaders are working.)

There are many ways to lead a child to Christ. “Whenever possible, use visuals . . . and clear statements such as:

round circle world—‘God made the world and the first two people, Adam and Eve.’

sad face—‘On the saddest day Adam and Eve disobeyed God. Now everyone disobeys God. God calls that sin.’

heart—‘But God still loves us. He made a way to forgive our sins.’

manger—‘He sent his son, Jesus, as a baby. We remember this at Christmas.’

cross and empty tomb—‘When Jesus grew up to be a man, he died on the cross to forgive our sins. On Easter, he came back to life.’

happy face—‘If we believe Jesus did all this for us, God will forgive us for the wrong things we do. God will send the Spirit (the Friend whom Jesus promised) to help us love and serve God. Someday, we can live in heaven with Jesus.’”

—Adapted from Jacque Bolt and Diane Dykgraaf, *Little Ones Need Jesus*, © 1996, Faith Alice Resources (see Other Suggested Resources, p. 445).

If you sense that the child is ready to make a commitment, offer to help them pray a prayer something like this:

*Dear Jesus, I know that I disobey you and do wrong things.
I am sorry for my sins.
I know that you love me and that you died on the cross for me.
I know God loves me and forgives my sins.
I want to love you more.
Thank you for loving me. Amen.*

You may find the little book *Would You Like to Know Jesus?* (Graham Jefferson and Eira Reeves, International Bible Society—see Other Suggested Resources, p. 445) a helpful tool. This children’s book explains simply and clearly how children find Jesus as their friend and features colorful illustrations of young children. This booklet is available on Amazon.com.

If a little one does make a commitment, continue to encourage that fledgling faith in the normal context of the Story Hour setting. And whether or not the children do respond in this way to the good news about Jesus, continue to scatter seeds, praying faithfully for each child by name that the Holy Spirit will cause these seeds to take root and grow. Modeling your faith in Jesus will be a powerful witness to the little ones in your care.



LOVING THE STORY HOUR CHILD

The most basic foundation for building a relationship with your Story Hour children is your love for each one as a special child of God. Your own personality and experience with children will shine through, but we want to suggest a few simple ways to communicate your love.

- Address each child by name. This says, “You are important to me. I know who you are.”
- When children are absent, let them know they are missed. Send a postcard to let them know they have a special place in your Story Hour group.
- Show affection with appropriate touch and hugs. Let each child set the pace. Those who need loving affection most may not know how to accept it comfortably.
- Praise each child generously. Look for opportunities to compliment, thank, and encourage each child. Make sure your praise is genuine and not simply an attempt to make them feel good.
- Communicate at their eye level. Make every effort to get down to the child’s level by sitting or kneeling. In conversation, be careful to respect their thoughts and feelings.
- Celebrate birthdays. Plan a special day for each child or have a monthly celebration and a time to celebrate summer birthdays, or send a birthday card to each child’s home.



DISCIPLINING THE STORY HOUR CHILD

Discipline is positive, not negative. Children will feel secure when they know your expectations—when they are simple, reasonable, and clearly stated—and when they know you will be consistent. Start with a few simple rules like these:

- When one person (leader or child) is speaking, we will be good listeners.
- We will walk (in the room, the hall, the church . . .) except during running games.
- We will be kind and polite to each other.

State your simple rules often, and expect the same behavior from each child. Notice and praise good behavior. Be careful to distinguish between a child's willful disobedience and childish behavior (spilled milk or paint is bound to happen). The best way to deal with a defiant child is to state again what positive behavior is expected and then to either isolate that child from the group or keep the child from participating in an activity. After you've disciplined a child, reassure the child of your love. Hug the child warmly; let the disobedient child know the joy of forgiveness.

Leading little ones to Jesus is a privilege and an awesome responsibility. Jacque Bolt and Diane Dykgraaf, seasoned Little Lambs and Story Hour leaders, compare the task to gardening: "A seed, a flower; a story, a child. The seed can become a flowering plant only if someone plants it. The Bible story will never change the life of a child unless someone tells it" (*Little Ones Need Jesus*, Faith Alive Christian Resources. This booklet offers wisdom and practical tips for leaders). Never doubt the importance of your ministry to these precious children. May you experience much joy and blessing!



"Let the children come to me. Don't keep them away.
God's kingdom belongs to people like them."

Mark 10:14, NIV



Getting Acquainted

Session 3: **God Hears Our Prayers**

Daniel 6:1-23

Goals for Today

Children will be given opportunities to

- learn that prayer is talking to God.
- realize that God hears our prayers.

Personal Meditation

Do you believe in prayer? Of course you do! But do you know how vitally important prayer is to your Story Hour program? Probably even more than you can imagine, prayer is your communication link with the Creator of the universe, who is also the One who loves you and your Story Hour children.

When we teach children to pray, we give them a gift of incredible value that will last a lifetime. Cameron, a preschooler who was just beginning to learn about Jesus, said, "When I'm afraid in the dark, I pray, 'Dear Jesus, please be with me.' Then I'm not afraid anymore." What a testimony!

Pray for each child in your group during your daily quiet time. During your Story Hour sessions, include structured prayer times and spontaneous times for talking to God. Trust the Holy Spirit to water the seeds of faith you are planting in these young hearts. "The prayer of a godly person is powerful. It makes things happen" (James 5:16, NIRV).



Materials for Telling the Story

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bible• Story Hour puppet• Simple tunic costume for puppet• Box for lions' den | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Masking tape (optional)• Lions (see learning activity #2, p. 56)• Copy of story script |
|--|--|

Preparation

We suggest that you use your Story Hour puppet to pantomime the part of Daniel in today's story. To help your puppet look the part, make a simple tunic costume from socks, handkerchiefs, or a square of cloth. Find a box in proportion to your puppet and the lions to use for the lions' den (or simply mark off an area with masking tape). Make several lions following the directions in learning activity #2 on page 56. Or, if you prefer, have all the children make a lion before you tell the story, and use their lions for the story props. Ask



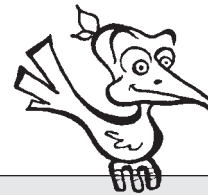
another leader to operate the puppet. Provide your helper with a copy of the script (note puppet's actions in bold), and go over the story ahead of time. If finding a helper is difficult, you can operate the puppet yourself as you tell the story.

Big Ideas

- Daniel was a very important man who worked for the king.
- Daniel loved God very much and prayed to God three times every day.
- One day the king gave an order that everyone had to pray to him only and not to God.
- Daniel heard the king's order, but Daniel went to his room, got down on his knees, and prayed to God.
- Some men who hated Daniel told the king. The king commanded his men to throw Daniel into the lions' den.
- God sent an angel to shut the lions' mouths. Yes, God saved Daniel!
- The king was filled with joy. He told the people to honor Daniel's God, our great God.

Telling the Story

Just before your story time, place the lions in the box or in the masked area which represents the lions' den. Take out your Bible, then review the previous session about the Bible. You may wish to use the action rhyme ("My Bible," p. 48) you learned last time to signal your story time. Invite your Story Hour puppet to help teach the children about prayer, and show the children where the story is found in your Bible. Point out that your puppet friend will pretend to be Daniel, an important man in the Bible story. Remember that prayer may be a brand-new part of some children's faith journey.



Storytelling Option

Instead of using the puppet, have another leader or your Story Hour mascot pantomime or act the part of Daniel. Provide a simple tunic costume and a copy of the script. If you wish, invite another leader to play the king's part. Provide a robe and a paper crown. You'll want to rehearse ahead of time.

The story follows:

Daniel was a very important man who worked for the king. Daniel loved God very much and prayed to God three times every day. Daniel went to his room, got down on his knees, and *talked* to God. **(Show puppet kneeling with hands folded.)**

One day the king gave an order that everyone had to pray to him only and not to God. The king said no one could pray to God for a whole month! Anyone who disobeyed the king would be thrown into the lions' den.

Daniel heard the king's order. **(Show puppet with hand over one ear, shaking head.)** But Daniel did just what he always did. Daniel went to his room, got down on his knees, and prayed to God. **(Show puppet kneeling with hands folded.)** Daniel loved God very much. He needed to talk to him. Daniel knew God would hear his prayers and take care of him.

Some men who hated Daniel saw him praying and told the king. The king became very upset. He liked Daniel very much. But when the king gives an order, it can't be changed. So the king had to command his men to throw Daniel into the lions' den! **(Roughly move puppet into lions' den.)** The king said to Daniel, "You always serve your God. Maybe your God will save you."

The king couldn't sleep all night. But Daniel did! Daniel slept safe and sound all night **(show puppet sleeping with lions all around)** because God sent an angel to shut the lions' mouths. Yes, God did save Daniel!

Early the next morning the king ran to the lions' den. "Daniel, Daniel! Did your God save you from the lions?" he called.

Daniel **(show puppet waking up, excited)** called back, "My king, I'm alive! My God sent an angel to keep me safe. God's angel shut the lions' mouths. I'm not hurt at all."

The king was filled with joy! Then the king gave another order. This time he told the people to honor Daniel's God, our great God.

- Who gave the order that no one could pray to God?
- What did Daniel do? What happened?
- Do you think Daniel was afraid?
- How did God save Daniel?
- Have you ever been afraid? What can we say to God when we're afraid?
- Do you know that God always hears us when we talk to him?

Prayer

Dear God,

We're so glad you saved Daniel from the lions. We know that you will always hear us and take care of us. Amen.



LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Choose only as many activities as your time schedule allows. Use some activities to introduce today's Bible truth and others to give the children a variety of ways to respond to the Bible story.

1. Bible Words, Songs, and Action Rhymes

Daniel 6:10, NIV

Daniel went to his room three times a day to pray. He got down on his knees and gave thanks to his God.

Materials

- Posterboard
- Markers
- Morning, noon, and night pictures or symbols (optional)

Directions:

On a sheet of posterboard write the numbers 1, 2, and 3 across the top. Emphasize that Daniel prayed three times a day, and invite children to think about three times that we can pray every day. (You may wish to draw symbols or find pictures in magazines to illustrate morning, noon, and night near the numbers on your poster.) Under the number 1, write things that we can pray about in the morning. Ask the children for suggestions and list them on the posterboard. (Draw symbols representing their ideas if you can.) Children might suggest the sun, breakfast, clothes, shoes, and other “morning” things. Then list things to pray about at noon and night. Encourage children to think of things they’re thankful for and people they want to pray for at certain times of the day. You might want to have your Story Hour puppet or mascot help with this activity. Close the activity by praying together. Begin by saying, “Thank you, God, for . . .” and let each child add one thing from your list.

Session Song**THE B-I-B-L-E**

The B-I-B-L-E,
it is God’s word for me.
I love to learn from God’s true Word,
the B-I-B-L-E.
(Sing four times, faster each time.)

—Traditional; altered by Jacquelyn and Jon Negus, © 1999, Momcat Productions, Inc., 1124 Aberdeen Road, Inverness, IL 60067. Used by permission.

Other Suggested Songs

“Pray” (chorus, Mary Rice Hopkins, *Good Buddies* CD—see Other Suggested Resources, p. 445)

“Hip Hop Happy Day” (Jacquelyn and Jon Negus, *Sing-along Praise Songs* CD and songbook)

“Thank you Jesus” (Jacquelyn and Jon Negus, *Sing-along Praise Songs* CD and songbook)

“True Story” (Jacquelyn and Jon Negus, *Sing-along Praise Songs* CD and songbook)

All Night, All Day

Refrain F Dm Bb Dm C7

All night, all day, an - gels watch - ing o - ver me, my Lord.

All night, all day, an - gels watch - ing o - ver me.

1 Now I lay me down to sleep. An - gels watch - ing o - ver me, my Lord.
2 Lord, stay with me through the night.

F Dm Bb Dm C7

Pray the Lord my soul to keep. An - gels watch - ing o - ver me.
Wake me with the morn - ing light.

F Dm Bb Dm C7 Repeat refrain

Words and Music: African-American spiritual

Make up motions for this song with the children.

Session Action Rhyme

My Bible

I open my Bible wide. *(hold hands open like a book)*
 "God loves me," it says inside. *(cross hands over heart)*
 God's word to me is true *(nod "yes")*
 and tells me just what I must do. *(point to self)*
 I'll listen to what God wants to say. *(hold one hand to ear)*
 It's time for a Bible story today. *(clap hands)*

2. Lions

Materials

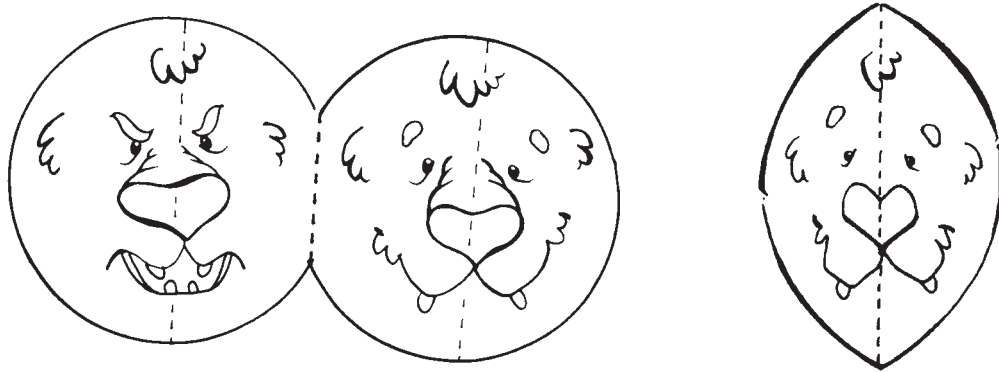
- Bible words cards (one per child from pattern GA-3A)
- Lion faces (one per child from pattern GA-3B)
- Tan cardstock (one sheet per child)
- Short lengths of brown yarn
- ½" (1.25 cm) wiggly eyes or buttons (two per child, optional)
- Tacky glue
- Crayons or markers
- Tongue depressors (one per child)
- Plastic grocery bags (one per child)

Directions:

Ahead of time, copy the Bible words cards (pattern GA-3A) and the lion faces (pattern GA-3B) on tan cardstock, and cut them out. Fold the lions faces on the fold lines in the center of each face as illustrated below. Cut the brown yarn into short lengths so that each child has a generous handful.

Lay the lion faces out flat in front of the children, and invite them to glue the brown yarn around the face to form a mane. If you've brought wiggly eyes or buttons, glue them in place. (If you think these might be a safety hazard for younger siblings at home, just omit the eyes or buttons.) Children can add color to the face and mouth if they wish. Show the children how to pinch the face together along the center fold line to make the nose protrude. Help them dab a bit of glue between the folded parts and stick the tongue depressor between (leave about half of it sticking out to form a handle). Glue the Bible words cards to the tongue depressor.

Encourage the children to retell the story using their lions and the Story Hour puppet. Show them how to hold the lion's face so the angry, hungry face shows first and then hold it so the gentle face with the mouth shut by the angel shows.



3. Prayer Bracelet

Materials

- Pipe cleaners or chenille wires (one per child)
- Gold, red, and green craft beads (two of each color per child)

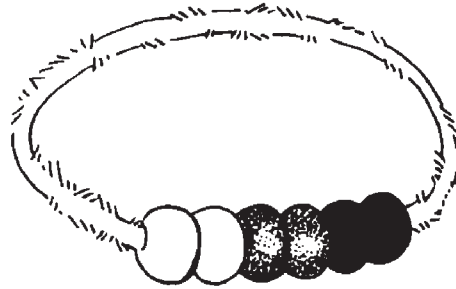
Directions:

Cut the pipe cleaners or chenille wires into 8" (20 cm) lengths. Purchase craft beads with large holes to fit on the pipe cleaners or chenille wires.

Show the children how to thread the beads onto the pipe cleaner or chenille wire. Point out the three colors, and remind the children that Daniel prayed three times a day. You can build on the idea of praying three times a day by giving your children these color prayer prompts:

- Gold reminds us of God in heaven. Thank God each morning for hearing our prayers.
- Green reminds us of grass, trees, and all the things God has made. Thank God at noon for the beautiful world.
- Red reminds us of God's love. Thank God at night for loving us.

As you place the bracelet on each child's arm and twist the ends to fit, whisper a prayer of thanks for each child.



4. Relay Game

Materials

- Bouncing ball
- Masking tape

Directions:

Place two 18" (45 cm) strips of masking tape on the floor about 6' (2 m) apart (or the distance you think it will take a child to bounce the ball three times). Divide your group into two teams, and have each team line up behind one of the lines. Give the ball to the first person in one line. (You may want your Story Hour mascot to demonstrate how to play the game.) The first person will bounce the ball three times as he or she says these three words: "God hears prayer." Then this person will pass the ball to the first person in the other line. This second person will bounce the ball back toward the first team, saying the same phrase in rhythm with the bounces, and then pass the ball to the next person in line. Continue playing until every child on each team has bounced and passed the ball (have the last person pass the ball back to you or to your mascot). If time permits, play the relay game again, this time saying, "God answers prayer."

Note: Younger children may lack the coordination to play the relay as we've described it. Simplify the rules for them, and be sure to think of ways a child with a physical disability can participate in the relay.

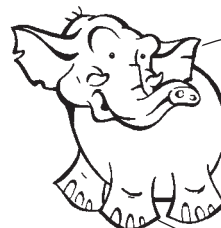
5. Snack Time

Materials

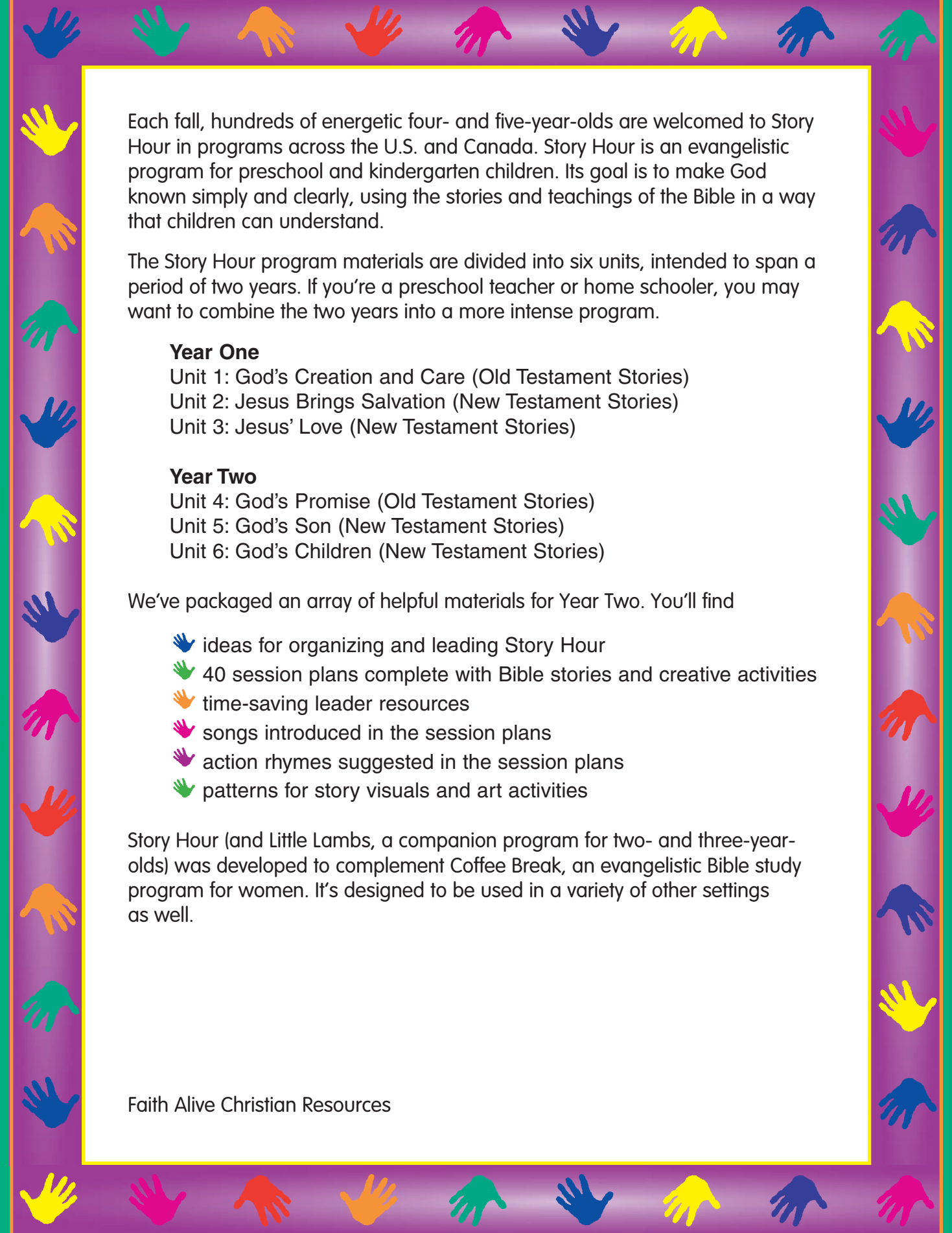
- Fresh fruit
- Snack crackers

Directions:

Cut fruit into bite-size pieces (halve grapes to prevent choking). Remind your little ones that mealtime (or snack time) is a wonderful time to pray. Give thanks for the good food God gives us.



Remember to send a Bible story card (Year 2, Getting Acquainted, Session 3) home with each child.



Each fall, hundreds of energetic four- and five-year-olds are welcomed to Story Hour in programs across the U.S. and Canada. Story Hour is an evangelistic program for preschool and kindergarten children. Its goal is to make God known simply and clearly, using the stories and teachings of the Bible in a way that children can understand.

The Story Hour program materials are divided into six units, intended to span a period of two years. If you're a preschool teacher or home schooler, you may want to combine the two years into a more intense program.

Year One

Unit 1: God's Creation and Care (Old Testament Stories)

Unit 2: Jesus Brings Salvation (New Testament Stories)

Unit 3: Jesus' Love (New Testament Stories)







Year Two

Unit 4: God's Promise (Old Testament Stories)

Unit 5: God's Son (New Testament Stories)

Unit 6: God's Children (New Testament Stories)

We've packaged an array of helpful materials for Year Two. You'll find

-  ideas for organizing and leading Story Hour
-  40 session plans complete with Bible stories and creative activities
-  time-saving leader resources
-  songs introduced in the session plans
-  action rhymes suggested in the session plans
-  patterns for story visuals and art activities

Story Hour (and Little Lambs, a companion program for two- and three-year-olds) was developed to complement Coffee Break, an evangelistic Bible study program for women. It's designed to be used in a variety of other settings as well.

Faith Alive Christian Resources