

## MARK OF A DISCIPLE

Disciples of Christ are dependent on prayer.

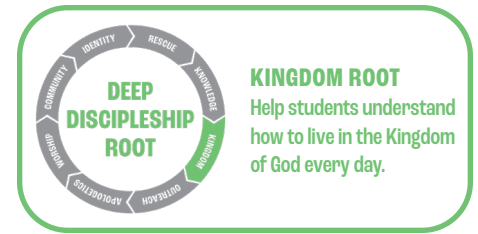
## SCRIPTURE

DANIEL 6

## BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

Prayer is a vital part of the believer's life. It is a direct connection to the God of the universe. Daniel knew this to be true and believed so much in prayer that he would rather die than go without speaking to his God. Prayer was much more than a small addition to Daniel's life, it was life-giving. He had a special place where he met with the Lord three times a day (Dan. 6:10). Maybe he did it morning, noon, and night (Ps. 55:17). Nothing, not even the threat of death, would interfere with Daniel's time with the Lord.

Check out the **Teacher Prep Video** for this lesson: <https://vimeo.com/933479825>



## OPENING

### WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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#### MEDIA AS STUDENTS ARRIVE

1. Play background music (optional)
2. Display **SERIES TITLE Slide** and announcement slides in a loop or customize the provided **PowerPoint**.
3. Play a 5-minute Countdown Timer 5:00 minutes before you start.

### GAME or ICE BREAKER

Based on your group's size, choose a **Game** from **Deep Discipleship Games** OR use the **Ice Breaker** prompt.

- **Game**—We recommend **This or That (Fall edition)** or choose another screen game from **Deep Discipleship Games**
- **Ice Breaker**— If you had the choice between staying up late or waking up early to do homework, which would you do? Why?

#### DEEP DISCIPLESHIP GAMES

Find free games in **Deep Discipleship Games**. It's already included with your Deep Discipleship subscription. View the game in advance in case you need supplies or slides.

### WORSHIP

Craft a time of worship with a live band or sing along to a playlist.

- Check out our curated Spotify list. We understand that every church has a different theological view of worship. These songs are suggestions, please pick what works best for your church.
- <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/2xmeIKGUjkEE7bJYSCbRwe?si=d254ec715a4749e5>

#### SLIDES (optional)

Use **SERIES Background & Blank Slides** or **PowerPoint** to create lyric slides.

## TRANSITION TO MESSAGE

Include a brief element that transitions students from worship to teaching time, like a prayer or video. This will keep students focused and prepared for the message while the band leaves the stage.

### VIDEO (optional)

Show **SERIES Promo Video** or **LESSON Intro Video** after the last worship song.

## MESSAGE

*Use the following teaching points and suggested illustrations as a starting point to build your message.*

### POINT 1: Commit to prayer in the face of opposition

Read or have someone in your group read Daniel 6:1–10

In these verses, we see Daniel's commitment to praying every day, three times a day! He was known for his character and the fact that he prayed regularly. Daniel was known for his faith. In fact, it was his faith that his enemies used against him. He prayed openly despite the new law forbidding it. Daniel's prayer life was consistent, and he didn't let fear or peer pressure deter him. No government or enemy would keep Daniel from praying to God. Talking to God is one way Daniel stayed connected to God. He was committed to prayer and to God.

**ILLUSTRATION:** Share a time when you were asked to do something that went against your faith or values. How did you respond, and what were the results?

Prayer should almost be like breathing in the life of a believer, something we do constantly.

### SLIDES (optional)

Use the **SERIES PowerPoint OR** the **Background & Blank Slides** to create these slides to support your message:

- Daniel 6:1–10
- Point 1

### POINT 2: Daniel's faith and trust in God was unwavering

Read or have someone in your group read Daniel 5:10–17

Daniel's faith in God was unwavering. Even when he faced certain death in the lions' den, he trusted God's faithfulness. Daniel didn't panic! Instead of allowing his circumstances to dictate his commitment to the Lord, he fully trusted in the faithfulness of God. His faith was so evident that even King Darius recognized it. Daniel wasn't afraid of the laws of man and refused to let anything disrupt his relationship with the Lord. He was more concerned with following God than following a rule that went against God.

**ILLUSTRATION:** Share a story of a time when your faith was tested and you experienced God's faithfulness in a powerful way.

God's faithfulness to his people is perfect. As our faithfulness to him grows, people will take notice and want to know what makes us so different.

### SLIDES (optional)

- Daniel 5:10–17
- Point 2



### POINT 3: God provides deliverance and judgment

Read or have someone in your group read Daniel 5:18–28

#### SLIDES (optional)

- Daniel 5:18–28
- Point 3

The end of this story is nothing short of miraculous! We see God do something that only he could—he shut the mouths of the lions! Meanwhile, the people trying to hurt Daniel got caught in their own trap.

This doesn't mean that our story will always play out the same way. Sometimes, we don't see bad people facing consequences immediately, and we might not get an instant reward for doing the right thing. But we have to trust God is always working, even when we can't see it. We trust that God's timing is perfect, and he's got a plan. So, when things get tough, instead of running away from God, we choose to stick with him. Because we know God is always faithful, we keep praying, keep trusting, and keep following God, knowing that it will all work out for our good and his glory.

*ILLUSTRATION:* Share some examples of when God intervened during some challenges and struggles in your life.

God is always present and at work in our lives, whether it be good times or bad.

## CLOSING

### MARK OF A DISCIPLE

Disciples of Christ are dependent on prayer.

#### SLIDES (optional)

- Mark of a Disciple

#### FACILITATOR NOTE: DO YOU HAVE SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION RIGHT AWAY?

- If YES, then **STOP HERE**, divide into groups, and provide Small Group Leaders with the **Small Group Breakout Questions** on the next page.
- If NO, then end your gathering with the **Reflect & Respond** questions and **Prayer** prompt below.

### REFLECT & RESPOND

Give the students time to silently think through what they have heard and contemplate these questions:

- When have you hesitated to pray or worship openly because of fear or peer pressure?
- How can you develop a more consistent and meaningful prayer life like Daniel's?

#### SLIDES (optional)

Use the **SERIES PowerPoint** OR the **Background & Blank Slides** to display the **Reflect & Respond** questions.

**FACILITATOR NOTE:** Don't rush this part. Give the students a few minutes to really consider the importance of maintaining their prayer lives, even when faced with challenges or distractions

### PRAYER

Take time to pray that God will give your students the determination to pray in every season of life, no matter what!



## SMALL GROUP BREAKOUT (OPTIONAL)

*Pick a few questions from each section to discuss. Close with prayer.*

### BREAKOUT QUESTIONS

#### Build Meaningful Relationships

- What are some challenges you face in maintaining a consistent prayer life?  
Answers will vary but may include: finding time to pray, getting rid of distractions, doubts, laziness, etc.
- What would be a meaningful prayer request the group could pray for you right now?  
Challenge students to go beyond surface-level prayer requests.

#### Share Personal Stories & Ask Intentional Questions

- When have you prayed and saw God answer in a clear way?  
Answers will vary. Maybe it was when you prayed for an exam and felt God give you peace or when you prayed for a sick relative and watched how God comforted you and them in a tough season. Come prepared to share an example from your own life. Remind students that sometimes God answers prayers with “yes,” “no,” or “wait.”
- How can Daniel’s story inspire us to be bolder in our faith and prayer life?  
Daniel’s faith in the face of death can show us it’s possible to trust God, no matter our circumstances.
- When was a time you or someone you know faced opposition for their faith?  
Answers will vary but may include: being teased for bringing your Bible to school, going to church instead of soccer practice, refusing to join your friends when they’re doing something you know is wrong, etc.
- How can prayer help us maintain our relationship with God?  
Prayer is talking to God. As it does in all relationships, talking to God keeps our connection strong and helps us grow closer to him.
- How can we support and encourage each other as a group to depend more on our prayer lives as disciples of Christ?  
Possible examples include: setting regular prayer goals, praying every day for our church, getting together to pray for each other, etc.

#### Make Life Application & Hold Students Accountable

- What are some practical steps we can take to prioritize prayer in our lives, even when faced with challenges or distractions?  
Answers will vary but may include praying during a specific activity or at a designated time every day (like 10 minutes before bed or right when we wake up). We can also have different types of prayers we pray through each time (like praise, confession, thanksgiving, and requests) and specific people to pray for each day.
- How can you strengthen your prayer life this week?  
One example may be writing in a prayer journal. It will also help you keep track of how God answers your prayers.

### PRAYER

Take time to pray that God will give your students the determination to pray in every season of life, no matter what!

*Use this space to keep track of any prayer requests.*

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