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**All-age Online Service Outline**

This service outline takes account of the changed circumstances for many churches. This service has been adapted for those using live streaming or YouTube (where the service can be held for a limited number at the church) or Zoom, where children can be specifically invited to join with parents online. As it is particularly hard for children to concentrate and listen to a whole service, we suggest you direct parents before the service to the free downloadable resources available at [Biblestoryprintables.com](https://biblestoryprintables.com/?s=Daniel). Younger children can colour in, particularly during the ‘talks’.

If you wish to include PPT slides the references match **BSG20 Zoom Service PPT Slides**.

**Section 1 Introducing the Bible story**

**LEADER** Welcome to our **Back to School with God** service on Zoom!

All of us have been through a major time of change and challenge. A long-awaited day has arrived, when schools are open once again. Perhaps you are starting school or nursery for the first time, are moving into a new year group or starting secondary school. Maybe you are a teacher, parent or grandparent. I wonder how you are feeling about the return to school?

Maybe you can show me right now! *Choose from the following:*

1. Draw three emojis indicating happy, worried, excited and hold them up one at a time. Invite people to use the Zoom reaction button to wave when you hold up an emoji that matches how they feel.
2. Invite the children to draw and emoji to reflect their feelings *(you will need to allow time to fetch paper and pens)*
3. Invite everyone to make a facial expression close to their device to reflect how they feel.

In every circumstance of life, it is normal to feel excited and nervous at the same time. We might all wonder what lies ahead in the days and weeks to come. Here is a great Bible verse to encourage and remember. Psalm 145:18-19 tells us, ***PPT Slide 1- share on Zoom screen share***

**The Lord is close to everyone who prays, to all who truly pray to him. He gives those who fear him what they want. He listens when they cry, and he saves them. Psalm 145:18-19 (ICB)**

This Bible verse is a wonderful reminder that God not only hears us when we talk to him. He wants to come close to us, care for us and rescue us. God wants us to talk to him about everything, so let’s talk to him now. *Option: before the service invite someone else to lead in prayer.*

**PRAYER Opening prayer** *(own words or suggested prayer below)*

Lord God, thank you that you are close to us when we talk to you. Thank you that you listen to us; that your son Jesus came to die to save us; that you love us deeply. Thank you that you hear the cries of our heart.

As we come together on Zoom this morning, may we be aware of your presence. Help us to listen to your words in the Bible. Help us to know what you want to teach us. Give us hearts that long to obey you. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Let’s praise and thank God for hearing our prayer by worshipping him together.

**PRAISE** *Choose your own hymn or song of praise to insert at this point on Zoom.*

**LEADER** Boys and girls, when you hear the name Daniel, who do you imagine? Maybe you are called Daniel, or you know someone who is! Today we are thinking about Daniel in the Bible. That Daniel lived a long time ago, approximately 600 years before Jesus was born. He had many great adventures. We are going to watch a video to find out a little more about him.

**VIDEO PPT Slide 2 – BSG20 Video – Introducing Daniel**

*The video is a mock TV news interview with an actor playing the part of Daniel*. *It sets the scene and puts Chapter 6 in context.*

**LEADER** Daniel has had an exciting life so far! In chapter 6 of the book of Daniel, Daniel is about to have another adventure. A new king, King Darius, is on the throne. Let’s find out what happens next by finding Daniel chapter 6 in our Bibles.

**Daniel 6:1-10. Options for the Bible reading:**

* Before the service, invite a young person or a teacher to read the passage.
* Download **BSG20 PPT Bible Story Script** *(based on the Living Bible)* and read it as you screen share **PPT Slides 3-7.** *(The PPT images have been downloaded from*[*www.freebibleimages.com*](http://www.freebibleimages.com)*. The website offers different styles. Feel free to download alternatives.)*

**Section 2: Bible Teaching 1 – Prayer shapes**

With a new king comes lots of new rules to follow. Let’s find out how good you are at following instructions. *You may wish to pre- invite a young person to lead the following game.*

**GAME Bring me** *(optional)*

Well, children, how ready are you for school? Let’s find out! We are going to play a short game called ‘Bring Me’. When I say an item, you need to run and find it as quickly as you can, then hold it up for us all to see. Are you ready? Then bring me…

* your lunchbox
* your pencil case
* your school jumper or sweatshirt
* your schoolbag

**LEADER** Well done! You did that very well. It isn’t always easy to follow instructions or keep to rules. King Darius knew that. He couldn’t be everywhere at once, and he ruled over a very large kingdom. For that reason, he chose reliable, responsible leaders to make sure people were keeping his rules. One of them was Daniel.

It’s a bit like what happens in school: your Head Teacher is in charge, but he or she asks others to help so that the school runs smoothly. Perhaps some of you might be a monitor, a mediator, or act as a buddy to younger children. In secondary school you might be a prefect, a head of your house, or even Head Boy or Head Girl. Hopefully, like Daniel, you are given responsibility because you are someone who can be trusted, and people think well of you.

Daniel stood out from the crowd. He was trustworthy, he wasn’t lazy, and he didn’t cheat. In school, I wonder what being like Daniel might look like? It might be working hard; not being late for class; getting your homework in on time; helping others; keeping your promises; listening well; being respectful and kind. If you do these things, people will notice.

Sometimes, however, we don’t do things with the best motives. We are going to watch a wee clip from the children’s programme *Horrid Henry* that shows this well.

**VIDEO** *A short Horrid Henry clip called “Be Nice to Your Brother Day’ can be streamed from* [*YouTube*](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sjv4w7U9Kqw)*.* *Henry imagines what he might need to do to win a prize. Screen share* **PPT slide 8.**

**LEADER** Horrid Henry didn’t have good motives, did he? He was only nice to Peter because he wanted to gain something. Daniel wasn’t like this. Daniel loved and trusted God, and that shaped who he was. Daniel always worked hard. He did this so his life would bring honour to God – not so he would become rich or famous.

God gave Daniel success. He caused the king to give Daniel promotion. God loved Daniel, and Daniel loved God. Daniel allowed God to be in charge, and as a result, God was the one who was shaping Daniel’s life for him. God is pleased when we live for him, rather than living for ourselves. We might hear people around us say that you can map out your own future, but the Bible tells us that only God knows our future! Let’s be like Daniel and trust God.

Let’s see who was listening well to the Bible. Boys and girls, how many times did Daniel pray? If you know the answer, hold that many fingers up at the screen!

That’s right, *three times a day* Daniel got down on his knees and prayed. He didn’t just pray a quick prayer in the morning, or a brief thank you prayer at night. And because he prayed often, he became the kind of person God wanted him to be. His strength and trust were in God, not in himself. His focus wasn’t on what great things *he* could do – but what great things *God* could do through him.

The king had made a new law that put people who prayed to God in danger! But did Daniel stop praying? Not at all! Did he pray to King Darius instead? Certainly not! When he heard about the new rule, he did as he usually did. He went to his room, knelt and prayed.

Taking everything to God in prayer was normal for Daniel, and he wasn’t going to stop now. He thanked God as he usually did, *before* asking him for help.

We can learn a lot from Daniel**. Prayer shaped Daniel**. What about us? **PPT Slide 9.** Do we pray regularly through the day, like Daniel did? Does prayer shape our character, like it did Daniel’s?

Let’s find out what happened next. Can you find Daniel chapter 6 again? We are going to read from verse 11.

**BIBLE 2 Daniel 6:11-28. Options for the Bible reading:**

* Before the service, invite a young person or a teacher to read the passage from the Bible.
* Download **BSG20 PPT Bible Story Script** *(based on the Living Bible)* and read it alongside **PPT Slides 10-17.** *(The PPT images have been downloaded from*[*www.freebibleimages.com*](http://www.freebibleimages.com)*. The website offers different styles. Feel free to download alternatives.)*

**Section 3: Bible Teaching 2 – Prayer saves**

**LEADER** Daniel was in danger! But the men found him praying and asking God for help – not running away and hiding, and NOT praying to King Darius. That meant he would face the consequences – and the penalty was to be flung into a den of lions.

How would we feel in Daniel’s situation? I know I would… (*Share a personal response)*

We aren’t told how Daniel felt. But we can see from his actions that he was calm and collected. He knew he had done nothing wrong. Daniel showed no panic, just absolute trust. Why? This could be because he had spent time in prayer; he knew he was not alone, that God was with him. He didn’t ask the king for help. He asked God for help. Prayer helps us to know God and what he is like. Let’s read again the Bible verse we read at the start of our service. **PPT Slide 18**

**The Lord is close to everyone who prays, to all who truly pray to him. He gives those who fear him what they want. He listens when they cry, and he saves them. Psalm 145:18-19. (ICB)**

God was close to Daniel, and that made all the difference. We don’t read of Daniel protesting, or making a fuss. Unlike King Darius, who was now in a panic!

Daniel’s prayers didn’t just save Daniel. There is a twist in this story – prayer saved the king and others as well. Darius liked Daniel and the Bible tells us he tried to rescue him. The Bible says, ‘He made every effort until sunset to save him’. And yet he came to realise that even as king, he could do nothing. He had to carry out the law he had issued, as royal decrees could never be changed. Even though he was king, he was powerless. He had to throw Daniel into the lion’s den. *He* couldn’t rescue Daniel: only God could.

Suddenly, as Daniel was being flung into the den of lions, King Darius realised Daniel’s only hope was God. He shouted, ‘May the God you serve all the time save you!’ King Darius showed the first step it takes to truly trust God – recognising that God is in control and we are not. God alone can save.

So, after a sleepless, hungry night, the king hurried to the lions’ den, desperately hoping that God had heard his prayer. And God had. **PPT Slide 19** Miraculously, Daniel was completely safe and unharmed. What an amazing sight that must have been! God had saved him. God had heard both Daniel, and Darius’s, prayer.

The impossible had happened – Daniel was alive, not dead! Only God could have done this. Darius had seen first-hand the power of God, and he was overjoyed. And so, Darius came to trust God for himself. Not only that, he declared that everyone else in his kingdom should worship God too.

**PPT Slide 20** Prayer shapes. It shaped the person Daniel was. And prayer saves.Prayer saved both Daniel and King Darius. What an encouragement to us today. **Prayer shapes** who we are. And **prayer saves** – it brings about real change. Hallelujah!

**Section 4: Response**

**SONG** *(Optional)* Watch[***King of Me: Rend Co. Kids***](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ks6zl2hL2Uk)*.* The lyrics are excellent and reinforce the Bible teaching.

**PRAYER** **A prayer of response.** *The prayer can be downloaded as* ***BSG20 Zoom Responsive Prayer****.* Before the service invite the following to take part:

* *A parent who will pray for nursery schools*
* *A child who will pray for primary schools*
* *A teenager who will pray for secondary schools*
* *A church member who will pray for the community*

You will need to tell them which order they are praying in, and to start as soon as they hear the previous person finish.

**LEADER** On this Back to School with God Sunday we want to pray for our children, teachers, and local schools. It is a privilege to be able to support schools in prayer, particularly as we all know they have been through a difficult time.

(*Mention names)* have been asked to lead us in prayer.

**Parent** Father God, we pray for our nurseries and those who work in them. Please Lord, watch over our little children and keep them safe. Thank you that you love them. Help nursery staff in the amazing job they do, creating happy places where our children can be safe and cared for well. Please help the children to settle, make friends, and learn to love and help one another, despite the current challenges. Lord, hear our prayer.

**Child** Father God, thank you for our primary schools and all those who work in them. Thank you that we can get back to school again. We remember in prayer all the children in the world who have no school to go to. Help us to appreciate our teachers and our friends and what we have. Please encourage our school staff, who do such a brilliant job of running our schools. Help them to adjust to a new routine. Help all the boys and girls who are starting school for the first time, or who are nervous about returning to school. Help them to settle quickly and know that you are with them. When we are worried like Daniel, remind us that we can turn to you and ask for help. Lord, hear our prayer.

**Teenager** Father God, thank you for the Bible story of Daniel and for his good character, shaped by prayer. Lord, we pray the same might be said of those who work or study in our secondary schools. We pray that we may be people who can be trusted; who work hard; are respectful and kind. Lord, we are grateful for our education. Help us to appreciate those who teach us. As we go back to school please help those who are anxious or afraid. Keep us safe. Strengthen our school community, so that we might help and support one another. Lord, hear our prayer.

**Church member** Our heavenly Father, thank you that prayer shapes, prayer saves. Remind us to pray for our schools, those who work in them, and the children and young people who attend them. Give us faith like Daniel, to trust you for every new day, no matter what challenges it brings. We pray for guidance for those who have difficult decisions to make – in Government and at a local level. We pray for wisdom regarding our own fellowship’s relationship with schools. Help us to offer prayerful support and be ready to re-engage with SU Groups and assemblies whenever these are possible. We ask you to bless our community and our role as a church within it. Finally, we lift our children to you. We love them, and we want to see them flourish in school. Lord, thank you for sustaining them through the months spent at home. Help them now to readjust and gladly benefit from being part of a school community once more. May our prayers make a difference! Lord, hear our prayer. Amen.

**LEADER** Let’s finish this special Back to School with God Sunday service with a great hymn that speaks so powerfully about prayer: What a Friend we have in Jesus.

**PRAISE** *What a friend we have in Jesus* byJoseph M Scriven. Public domain.