

## BIBLE TIMELINE ASSEMBLIES

### 55. DANIEL

Bible Base: Daniel 6

Key Christian Belief: In a hostile world, God wants us to choose His way.

Aim: To help children understand that we show our faith in God by choosing His way.

You will need:

- the trailer for the 'Inside Out' movie: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=MC3XuMvsDI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MC3XuMvsDI)
- either four plain tee shirts (large enough to fit P6-7 pupils) each with one of the words JEALOUSY, PRIDE, ANGER and FEAR printed on the front - or four labels, each with one of these words printed on it, to be hung around a volunteer's neck;
- a crown;
- three lanyard-style badges with the word 'ADVISOR' printed on each and another with the words 'CHIEF ADVISOR' printed on it.

#### Introduction

Ask if anyone has seen the movie 'Inside Out' and perhaps show the trailer.

Explain that the film is about how different characters inside Riley's mind try to control her actions. Does anyone know who these five different characters are? (Joy, Sadness, Anger, Disgust and Fear.) These are all feelings that we can have inside our minds and if we allow them to, they can end up making us behave in certain ways. But as we shall see, it is not always good to allow our feelings to be in control.

Today we are going to meet four of the imaginary characters we might sometimes find in our heads - two of which we have seen in 'Inside Out' and two others who are similar - and we will see how they tried to control the actions of the people in our story. Most of them did what their feelings told them to do - but one did not. See if you can spot which one was different and why.

Ask for four volunteers who are good actors to come to the front. Either dress them in the tee shirts you have brought, or hang the labels you have prepared around their necks. Ask them each to adopt a pose that represents the word they have been given. Invite them each to try this out now and then to go and stand to the left of the stage until you call them forward. Explain that these are the four imaginary characters from inside our heads that we are going to meet in our story today.

Now ask for five volunteers to play the parts of the king, the three advisors and Daniel. Explain that these are the five real people we are going to meet in our story. Give the king a crown to wear, give the advisors each a badge with the word 'advisor' on it and give Daniel a badge with the words 'chief advisor' on it. Explain that you want them to act out what happens in the story and that you will show them what to do when the time comes. For now, ask them to stand to the right of the stage until they are needed.

#### Bible Story

Daniel was a young man of about 17 when the enemy soldiers came and attacked the city of Jerusalem in which he lived. They broke down its walls, set fire to its buildings and took lots of young men, including Daniel, away as prisoners to the land of Babylon.

God's people had turned away from Him and had refused to follow His laws. And so God had allowed their enemies, the Babylonians to invade their land and take them captive.

As a result many of them, including Daniel, spent the rest of their lives far away from home in Babylon. Daniel, however, was not like the rest of his people. He loved God and from the moment he arrived in Babylon, he was determined to stay faithful to Him. He was chosen to work for the king in the palace and soon gained a reputation for being wise and trustworthy. Eventually he became one of the king's chief advisors.

### Jealousy

*Have Jealousy standing at the front of the stage to the left. Have the king seated to the right with Daniel standing talking to him. Have the three advisors huddled together at the back of the stage in the centre. Have them follow Daniel around and then return to their places as Daniel kneels, as if in prayer, at the front of the stage in the centre.*

Daniel was now 70 years old and King Darius was the third king he had served. Like the others, this new king liked Daniel and again made him his chief advisor. The problem was that the three other advisors who were closest to the king were jealous of Daniel.

'That job should have gone to one of us' they said. 'Daniel wasn't even born in this country so how come he gets the top job?'

As the days went by they grew more and more jealous. They hated having to take orders from him. They hated it when King Darius listened to him rather than them.

'I've had enough of this' one of them finally said one day. 'We have to do something about this. We have to get rid of Daniel.'

'But how are we going to do it?' asked another.

'I know' said the third and they all huddled together to hear his idea.

'King Darius thinks very highly of Daniel. But what if we were to find out something about Daniel that the king wouldn't like? We could tell on him. Then maybe he would give Daniel the sack and make one of us his chief advisor instead.'

'Great idea!' said the others. 'Let's follow Daniel and see what he gets up to when the king isn't looking. There's bound to be something that will get him into trouble.'

And so they followed Daniel everywhere but no matter how much they spied on him, they never caught Daniel doing anything he shouldn't.

'This is useless' they said after a month of trying. 'We're never going to catch him out this way. We'll have to find another way of getting rid of him'.

As they had spied on Daniel for the past month, they had noticed that three times every day he knelt down by an open window and prayed out loud to God and that gave the three jealous advisors an idea.

## Pride

*Have Pride standing at the front of the stage to the left. Have the king seated to the right with the three advisers standing talking to him. Have Daniel kneeling, as before, at the front of the stage in the centre.*

‘Your majesty’ these three advisers said to the king next day. ‘You are the greatest king who has ever lived. You are the ruler over the greatest empire there has ever been.’

‘Yes I am’ thought the king to himself proudly as he listened to them. ‘No one has ever been as great or as powerful as I am. I am the greatest of them all.’

‘Not even the gods have as much power as you. You are greater even than the gods’ his advisers continued.

The king hadn’t thought about that before but the more he thought about it the more he liked the idea. ‘You’re right’ he said as his chest puffed up with pride. ‘Not even the gods are as great as I am!’

‘O King, live for ever!’ his advisers went on. ‘Why don’t you remind everyone how great you are by making a law that no one is to pray to any god but you for the next thirty days. And, just in case, why not say that anyone who breaks this law will be thrown into a den of lions?’

‘Well’ thought the king ‘I suppose it would do no harm to remind people that I am their king and that they don’t need anyone else but me.’ So he agreed and, without stopping to think, immediately signed the scroll his advisers had prepared.

‘We’ve got him!’ chuckled the king’s advisers as they left the room. ‘Daniel will never agree to this. He will just keep on praying to his God as he always has before and when the king finds out, he’ll be mince meat!’

## Fear

*Have Fear standing at the front of the stage to the left. Have Daniel pacing up and down and finally kneeling again, as if in prayer, at the front of the stage in the centre. Have the advisers huddled together, watching from behind.*

When Daniel heard about the new law, he knew he would be in trouble. In his head he began to imagine what the lions would do to him if he was caught and thrown into the den with them. He wondered what he should do.

It would only be thirty days...maybe he could just stop praying for thirty days? But no. Daniel loved God and had made up his mind to do what God said no matter where he was, who he was with or what happened and he knew that he needed God’s help every day to do that. He could not stop praying - not even for a single day.

Maybe he could shut his window and just pray quietly so that no one would know? But no. Daniel wanted everyone to know that his God was greater by far than any king and that he could trust Him to take care of him. He had no need to be afraid of any lions. So he decided to keep on praying out loud three times a day in front of an open window just as he had always done before.

## Anger

*Have Anger standing at the front of the stage to the left. Have the king pacing up and down on the right. Have Daniel off stage to the right of the king and then walk on again as if coming out of the lion's den. Have the advisors to the left of the king and have him act out throwing them into the lion's den (off stage to the right).*

One night soon after he had signed the new law, the king couldn't sleep. His friend Daniel had been caught praying to God and earlier that night he had been thrown into the den of lions. 'May the God you serve rescue you' the king had said but inside he didn't really believe that any god could save Daniel now.

He paced up and down in his room. What had he done? He hadn't meant to hurt Daniel. It was those other advisers. They had tricked him into signing the law. This was what they had wanted after all.

He was very angry. 'How dare they trick me like that?' he thought. 'I'll see they are punished for this. They'll get what they deserve!'

Early in the morning, the king crept nervously down to the den. 'Daniel' he called out. 'Are you alright?' (Pause here for a few seconds.)

'Of course I am' Daniel replied at last. 'My God has rescued me from the mouths of the lions. Look - not a scratch!'

The king was overjoyed and sent word throughout the empire that Daniel's God was to be honoured by everyone from now on. He had even been able to save Daniel from being torn to shreds by a den full of hungry lions.

As for the advisors who had tricked the king - the king had them thrown into the den of lions instead of Daniel and unfortunately the lions weren't quite so friendly to them...

## **Exploring Christian Belief**

Did you notice how all the people in this story, except Daniel, allowed their feelings to control how they behaved?

*Have Jealousy come forward.*

The advisors were jealous of Daniel and did what their jealous feelings told them to do. They followed Daniel around, looking for something that would get him into trouble with the king. When that didn't work, they tricked the king into signing a law they knew would get him into trouble. They hated Daniel and would not stop until they had found a way to get rid of him.

*Have Pride come forward.*

The king was proud of himself. He did what his proud feelings told him to do and allowed himself to be tricked into signing a law that would hurt his friend Daniel. If only he had stopped to think about what it would mean for Daniel, rather than how good it would make him look, he would never have signed that law. But at that moment, he was thinking only of himself.

*Have Anger come forward.*

When the king found out that he had been tricked, he was angry and did what his angry feelings told him to do. He threw the advisors who had tricked him into the den of hungry lions. It didn't matter that it had been partly his own fault - they were going to get all the blame. They were going to get what they deserved!

*Have Fear come forward.*

But Daniel was different. No doubt he was scared and his fears told him it would be safer just to stop praying for 30 days. Or maybe instead of praying out loud in front of an open window, like he usually did, he could just do it quietly so no one would find out. But Daniel didn't give in to his fears. He didn't do what they wanted him to do.

That was because Daniel was a friend of God and had long ago made up his mind to do what He knew God would want him to do - no matter what anyone else said or did and no matter how he felt. If he gave into his feelings he knew he would be letting God down and he was determined not to do that. He also knew that as long as he continued to choose God's way, he could trust God to be with him and to take care of him.

It is easy to give in to your feelings. It is much harder to choose God's way and go on doing what is right when you feel like doing something else. Maybe that was why three times every day Daniel got down on his knees to ask for God's help. He knew it wasn't always going to be easy to choose God's way. But with God's help he was able to do it.

And then when he was thrown into the den of lions, God was with him and took care of him just as Daniel believed he would.

Christians believe that through Jesus, God offers His love and friendship to us today too. If we are His friends, he wants us to trust Him, like Daniel did, and to show it by choosing His way even when our feelings may be telling us something different. And His promise to us is still the same as it was for Daniel - that if we choose His way we can trust Him to be with us and to take care of us no matter what happens.

So if the voices in your head are telling you to do something you know isn't right, or not to do something you know you should do, don't give in to them. Instead, ask God every day to help you choose His way and do what is right no matter how you may feel.

Daniel did that three times every day. How about you try it even once a day for the next week and see what happens?

### **Prayer**

Invite the children to join in this prayer with you by saying the line in italics each time you say 'Lord...'

When we are feeling jealous, Lord  
*Help us to do what is right.*

When we are feeling proud, Lord...

When we are feeling scared, Lord...

When we are feeling angry, Lord...

However we may feel, Lord...