

WEEK 4 LESSON GUIDE



BIG IDEA

I'm not afraid — God is with me!

BIBLE

Daniel in the Lions' Den:
Daniel 6; 2 Timothy 4:16-18

LARGE GROUP TIME

Here we are for another week of *Hear Me Roar* fun at the Babylon Zoo. Everyone is a little wound up today because of the crazy thing that happened last night — but more about that later. It was pretty wild! And here's a little teaser: it has something to do with my favorite zoo animals. Lions!

WHAT? What are we talking about today?

MUSIC | Worship

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** You can lead kids in worship with any songs of your choice, but here are some suggestions that go along with this month's theme. Make sure you have purchased any licenses required to play or perform these songs. For more information, [read this!](#)
 - "Echo" (Elevation Worship)
 - "God Is Always With Us" (Lifetree Kids)
 - "I'm Trusting You" (Lifetree Kids)
 - "Not Afraid" (Rend Co. Kids)
 - "Journey of a Lifetime" (Kids on the Move)

ACTIVITY | Lion, Zebra, Mosquito

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** This is a twist on "Rock, Paper, Scissors." Divide the kids into pairs and have them play three times. The winner continues, while the kid who lost is out. Continue the game until there is one winner.
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Instead of having the kid who loses sit out, have them form a train behind the winner and follow them around as they face off with other players. If their train loses, then the entire train now follows the new winner. Continue playing until there's an epic showdown between the two leaders of each train!
 - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Rather than having friends turn around, allow them to face each other and close their eyes as they do their animal.

- Creatures can wreak havoc on each other in the wild! Even the smallest animal can cause problems for the King of the Jungle! Have you ever been bitten by a mosquito? It's horrible! I bet mosquitos scare big lions too!
- Today, we're going to play Lion, Zebra, Mosquito. It's like Rock, Paper, Scissors! A lion beats a zebra. A zebra beats a mosquito. A mosquito beats a lion. You're going to stand back to back with a partner, and in your mind, choose your creature. When I count to three, you'll turn around and display your choice!
 - For the lion, hold your hands up beside your face and roar!
 - For the zebra, kick one foot backward, because zebras are known for their powerful hind legs!
 - For the mosquito, hold up your pointer finger in front of your nose!
- Let's play!

ACTIVITY | Porcupine Tag

- Here at the Babylon Zoo, our porcupines are playful and fun, but they can be a bit prickly! Today, we're going to play "Porcupine Tag," and you will get a taste of what it's like to be in their shoes!
- You will each get "three quills" clipped to the upper back of your shirt. The goal is for you to protect your own quills while trying to take quills from others.
 - If you take a quill from another person, clip it to your own shirt.
 - While you're clipping on new pins, kneel on one knee. When you're on your knee, you can't be "tagged."
 - As soon as you get your clothespins on, you're back in the game.
 - If you lose your clothespins, you're out. The last one with clothespins on their back wins!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Clip three clothespins to the upper part of each kids' shirt.*
- **PRETEEN HACK:** *Have each preteen write their name on a clothespin then drop it into a bag. Mix it up and have them draw out a clothespin that doesn't have their name on it . . . that person is their target. Throughout the day, they have to discreetly get the clothespin on their target's clothes without getting detected. Once pinned, the target hands over their clothespin to the person who pinned them, giving them a new target to pursue. Designate safe zones (e.g., restrooms) and times (e.g., Bible story time) when people cannot be tagged See how many kids get pinned throughout the day!*
- It seems like you always had to watch your back, right? Someone was always out to get you! Yikes!
- Today's Bible story is about how some people were out to get Daniel but instead of watching his back, he trusted that God has his!

POLL | Would You Rather?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before your program, designate one end of the room as the "Butterfly Garden," and the other as the "Otter Pool." Point to each side to represent each of the answer choices.*
 - ✳ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** *In addition to saying the choices out loud, find corresponding images to show for each question.*
- I'm going to ask you a series of "Would You Rather" questions. If you choose the first option, flutter over to the butterfly garden. If you choose the second option, splash into the otter pool!
 - **Would you rather steal wild berries from a grizzly bear or swim in waters with barracudas?**
 - **Would you rather try to outrun a rhino or an alligator?**
 - **Would you rather run into a rattlesnake or a wolf in the wilderness?**
 - **Would you rather find a tarantula or a scorpion in your house?**
 - **Would you rather clean the teeth of a jaguar or a shark?**
 - **Would you rather tiptoe into a cave of sleeping bats or a den of sleeping lions?**
- Those were some tough choices to make! Don't worry, though, none of our exhibits at the zoo will have you do anything dangerous like that . . . that's pretty scary!
- Wait 'til you hear today's Bible story though!

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

SCRIPTURE | Daniel 6 (Daniel in the Lions' Den)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Dressed as a zookeeper, tell the Bible story from the zookeeper's perspective. Today's story spans all of Daniel 6, but feel free to only read the parts out loud that work for your specific age group. Show images of lions (like [this](#)) before you begin.
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Provide small groups with a small dry erase board and markers prior to sharing the Bible story. After reading each passage, ask "And then what?" Ask the preteens to predict what happens next by writing it on the dry erase board. Select volunteers to share their responses.
- Welcome to the lion exhibit! Have I mentioned already that I love lions? They are majestic and strong and I find it fascinating that they hunt together as a group. Sorry, as a pride.
- And lions play a big part in the story I'm about to tell you today. Maybe you already heard, but last night something wild happened in the kingdom — and I don't mean at the zoo!
- Do you remember our friend, Daniel, who stood up to King Nebuchadnezzar and shared God's wisdom with King Belshazzar? Well, last night, he had a run-in with our newest king, King Darius. Let me tell you about it! It all started a few days ago . . .
- [Read Daniel 6:1–9.]
 - These men who served the king were so jealous of Daniel, they wanted to find a way to get rid of him! But that didn't stop Daniel. He was committed to following God and chose to do what was right even when it was hard.
- [Read Daniel 6:10–16.]
 - So, Daniel was put in the lions' den and he stayed there all night long. Can you imagine what those lions must have thought? "Hey, free dinner!" I mean, I work with lions a lot at the zoo and when it's feeding time, they're unstoppable!
- **How do you think Daniel felt being trapped with the lions?**
- [Read Daniel 6:19–22.]
- We've seen all kinds of things here in Babylon, but this miracle is really exciting! Because of God rescuing Daniel, King Darius and others in the kingdom have come to realize that God is the one who rescues and saves!
- Just look at what Darius said after pulling Daniel out of the lions' den:
- [Read Daniel 6:26–27.]
- I bet Daniel was pretty afraid down there in the lions' den. He might have even felt afraid when he made the hard choice to pray to God when it was against the law. But God was with Daniel even when things seemed scary.

BIG IDEA | I'm not afraid — God is with me!

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Set up your space with the coconut tree, flamingo, and lion decorations like last week. Insert papers with the Big Ideas into the coconuts and attach them to the tree. Play the song, "[The Lion Sleeps Tonight](#)," as you gather the kids. After the Big Idea reveal, play a [sound bite of a lion's roar](#). For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)
- Did you hang out by the lion exhibit today? You must have heard all about how God saved Daniel from the lions last night! Daniel was in a pretty scary situation, but he trusted in God! As those lions approached him, he may have started to feel afraid! But then, he saw the angel show up! God saved him from the lions and took away his fear.
- Let's check out today's Big Idea.

- [Take out a piece of paper containing the Big Idea and read it out loud.] **I'm not afraid — God is with me!**
- Those lions have some pretty big roars, but so do we! Let's roar our Big Idea together: **I'm not afraid — God is with me!** [Play a [sound bite of a lion's roar](#) as a response to the roar of the kids!]

VIDEO | Hear Me Roar, Episode 4

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play this week's episode of [Grow TV](#).

VIDEO | The Elusive Pangolin

- **Have you ever seen a pangolin?** They're amazing! They're like giant anteaters who are mostly blind, and they have no teeth! They roam around at night, looking for tasty ants to slurp up with their sticky tongues, but unfortunately, they are hunted at night too. Let's see what they do when they're afraid.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Show the [video](#) "Meet the Pangolin | Night on Earth".
- When they're afraid, these small creatures roll up into a ball to defend themselves! Even massive hunters, like lions, can't penetrate their thick scales. They're covered and protected!
- Like the pangolin, we may encounter circumstances where we feel in danger or scared. We may even feel like our strength doesn't compare to what is causing us to feel threatened. Yet, just like the pangolin, we're covered! We may not have scaly skin, but God is with us.
- God provides everything we need in the moments when we feel most at risk. God covers us and protects us.
- Because God is with us, we don't have to be afraid!

ACTIVITY | Siberian Hide and Seek

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play [this camouflage version](#) of "Hide & Seek." Play music and let the kids run and dance with the music. Continue playing until only one kid remains. Show [this image](#) of a Siberian snow leopard.
 - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** For some kids, the camouflage version might be confusing. Consider swapping this activity out for a regular game of Hide & Seek or even use action figures to hide around the room to talk about blending in with the environment.
- When animals are afraid, they often blend into their environments. They camouflage themselves in order to hide from predators. In fact, one of our snow leopards got spooked by the howl of a wolf, and she hid up against the white wall of her enclosure for hours!
- In the wild, the snow leopards are amazing at blending in with the cold terrain in their homelands, like the Siberian mountains in Russia.
- We're going to play a game of "Siberian Hide and Seek." When I shout "camouflage," I will close my eyes and count to ten. All of you snow leopards will have ten seconds to find somewhere around the room to hide and camouflage yourself. I will remain where I am standing, and will not move, but I will search for you all around the room for twenty seconds. If I see you, you've been caught, and you are out!
- If I haven't found you after the twenty seconds, I will yell "nomad!" At that point, it's safe for you to come out and roam around your territory again. After I yell "nomad," I will count to five, and stand here with my eyes closed. The first person to reach me in those five seconds while I have my eyes closed, is the winner!

SCRIPTURE | 2 Timothy 4:16–18

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read 2 Timothy 4:16–18.
- In the final part of his letter to Timothy, the apostle Paul shared about how lonely he was. He felt deserted and alone. He even talked about the "lion's mouth," which is someone or something that was a major threat to him. It could have been a violent leader in Rome, or some other physical threat to his well-being. Yet through it all, even when he was afraid and none of his friends were with him, Paul trusted that God was there.

- Paul trusted God because he knew about Jesus.
 - After Jesus overcame death, he went back to visit his friends. When it was time for him to return to heaven, Jesus' disciples were afraid and overwhelmed. They didn't know how to face a world filled with pain and anger without him!
 - In this moment, Jesus told them he would always be with them, and that he would never leave them. This didn't take away the threats, conflicts, or challenges, but Jesus' words made them feel brave, instead of afraid.
- Even though Paul didn't hear these words from Jesus himself, he knew that the promise Jesus made to all his friends applied to him, too. So as Paul was in his prison cell, he displayed great courage because he trusted that Jesus was there.
- We, too, can be brave because Jesus is with us! Let's say the Big Idea again together: **I'm not afraid – God is with me!**

NOW WHAT? *What does God want us to do about it?*

VIDEO | "Don't You Worry About a Thing"

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Show this clip (or a part of it): "[Meena Sings](#)" from the movie "Sing". For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Create a playlist of popular, clean songs. Explain that one preteen will hear a popular song through headphones and will lipsync the song as it plays. Challenge the others to guess the name of the song. Continue as time permits.
- At the beginning of the clip, Meena was nervous. She wasn't sure if she could go on stage and sing because she was terrified. In that moment, Meena froze.
- Maybe some of you have experienced stage fright too. Or maybe you have been afraid of a scene in a movie, or nervous about a test at school.
- When we get nervous, our bodies react. Our palms get sweaty, our hearts beat fast, and our stomachs feel like they're in knots. This is our body's way of trying to protect us, but sometimes, our bodies have a hard time distinguishing between a charging grizzly bear and our first day on a new sports team. Our worries and anxieties rise up and we feel paralyzed, like Meena did as she hid backstage.
- **What changed for Meena? What gave her the courage to perform?**
- She knew she wasn't alone! Her friends and family members believed in her even more than she believed in herself. She stepped out of her comfort zone and into the spotlight. As she shared her beautiful voice with the crowd, her fears subsided because she knew she had people supporting her and cheering her on.
- Meena's story is kind of like our stories! God understands that we have fears. God doesn't expect us to be superheroes who are never scared! Instead, God reminds us that we're believed in, supported, and never alone! We can face our fears and conquer hard things because God is with us.

RESPONSE | Fight or Flight Bright

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Get a tri-fold black poster board and drill small holes, the size of a glow stick's width, in the board. Place the board on a table during your program. As you talk, place glow sticks in the holes on the poster board.
 - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** This is a great opportunity to anticipate those who may be uncomfortable in sudden dark places. Ask for a friend who will volunteer to assist and be "in charge" of the light.
- Think of one thing you're afraid of right now. Maybe it's an upcoming move to a new town or a different school. Maybe it's a kid at school who's unkind, or the fear of not doing well on a test, or natural things like the dark or hairy bugs. All of those situations can be scary and uncomfortable!

- Whenever we come across a scary situation, our bodies automatically try to respond by choosing fight or flight — that means, we either try to stick it out or we run away. Animals have this response, too, like when they're being hunted by predators.
- Think about a time when you were afraid in the past.
 - **Did you try to get out of the situation quickly?**
 - **Or did you fight against being afraid with words or actions?**
 - **Or maybe you just froze?**
 - **How would that situation have changed if you had realized that God was with you?**
- *[Point to the black poster board as you dim the lights in the room.]* Right now, this board seems really dark, doesn't it? *[Hold up a glow stick.]* When we put this glow stick into the board, it brings about light.
- The same goes for us. In the moments when we start to feel scared, we can trust that God is with us. His light is stronger than the darkness. *[Give each kid a glow stick.]* As you plug in your light, think of the situation that's causing you to feel fearful and anxious. Then, say the Big Idea out loud: **I'm not afraid — God is with me.**

MEMORY VERSE | Nahum 1:7 (NIV)

- **"The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him."**
- Let's pretend it's night time and we are animal prey trying to sneak away from the predator while saying our memory verse.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *This is a variation of "Red Light Green Light" where everyone starts against the wall. Have one kid or leader be the predator who faces a wall as they say "night time!" During this time, kids have to walk backwards away from the predator but with each step they take, they have to say one word of the memory verse. When the predator turns around and says "day time!" everyone has to freeze. Anyone caught moving has to go back to the wall next to the predator and start over. The goal is for everyone to finish saying the memory verse while walking away from the wall without getting caught! (Don't forget to also check out the memory verse signs — a combination of SEE and ASL — available in your Programming folder or at growcurriculum.org/Nahum1-7.)*

PRAYER

- God, you have promised to always be with me. I don't have to be afraid of lions, bullies, taking tests, or the dark. And even if we're afraid, we know you will give us the courage to handle whatever we might be facing. Just like you were with Daniel and Paul, you're with me. I can be brave because you're standing beside me. Amen.

SMALL GROUP TIME

DISCUSSION

- **Why was Daniel thrown into the lion's den?**
- **What do you think made Daniel brave when he faced the lions?**
- **What did Darius decide to do after Daniel came out of the den without a scratch?**
- **Read 2 Timothy 4:17b–18. How is Paul's suffering similar to Daniel's situation with the lions?**
- **When are some times you might need to overcome a fear?**
- **What's one way you can be brave because you know that God is with you?**
- **What kinds of words would help someone who is afraid not be afraid anymore?**