



Discussion Guide

Date: 6/14/2026

Sermon Title: Who do you bow down to?

Scripture: Daniel 6:16-23

This discussion guide is a layout to be used with a group or class. We have included opening and closing prayers to start and end your group. The guide may be used for personal or family reflection as well.

OPENING PRAYER

Gracious and loving God, you alone are worthy of our worship and devotion. In a world filled with distractions, competing loyalties, and pressures to conform, help us to remain faithful to You. As we study the witness of Daniel, give us courage to stand firm, wisdom to discern Your will, and trust to follow You wherever You lead. Open our hearts and minds to hear Your Word and transform our lives through Your grace. Amen.

OPENING QUESTIONS: (Choose one to start with)

1. Who were some of your heroes growing up? What qualities did you admire in them?
2. Have you ever experienced pressure to go along with something that conflicted with your beliefs or values?
3. What are some things in our culture that compete for our loyalty, attention, and devotion?

DIGGING INTO Daniel 6:16-23: Read Daniel 6:16-23 and use questions for conversation or reflection.

Understanding the Story

1. What stands out to you most in this passage?
2. What emotions do you imagine Daniel experienced as he was lowered into the lions' den?
3. What emotions do you imagine King Darius experienced during the night?
4. Why do you think Daniel continued praying even after the king's decree prohibited it?
5. What does Daniel's response reveal about his relationship with God?

Looking Deeper

1. Daniel's faithfulness was not developed in a single moment. What evidence throughout Daniel's life suggests that he had cultivated a long-term habit of trusting God?
2. Verse 23 says Daniel was unharmed "because he had trusted in his God." What does biblical trust look like?
3. How is trust different from certainty?
4. Have there been times when God did not remove you from a difficult situation but sustained you through it?

Examining Our Allegiances

1. What can happen when success, politics, money, reputation, comfort, or approval become our highest priorities?
2. How can Christians discern when something good has become an idol?
3. What practices help keep God at the center of our lives?

Methodist Theology Connection:

In the United Methodist Baptismal Covenant, we are asked: *"Do you accept the freedom and power God gives you to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves?"* Daniel's story reflects this commitment. He resisted pressures that would compromise his faith and remained faithful to God.

1. How does Daniel embody the baptismal vow to resist evil and injustice?
2. What forms of evil, injustice, or oppression require faithful Christian witness today?
3. Where do you see God calling you to courage in your daily life?
4. What "lions' den" are you facing right now?
5. Where is God inviting you to trust Him more deeply?
6. Is there an area of your life where God is calling you to greater faithfulness?
7. What is one concrete step you can take this week to place God more fully at the center of your life?

SERMON QUESTIONS:

1. The sermon opens with an example of humans conforming to the norm with the elevator experiment. Why do you think most people about 96% of people conform to what others are doing?
2. The sermon mentioned that his opponents could find no dirt on him except his devotion to God. What does this tell us about how Daniel lived his life?
3. Sir George Savile was an example shared as someone in England that lived a life of great virtues. If someone was to write an epitaph about your life like the one for George Savile, what would you hope it would say about your character, integrity, and faithfulness to God?
4. Daniel refused to conform to the culture and those around him He will worship God no matter what; even if he would be thrown into the lion's den. When in life and culture do you find it hard to resist conforming?
5. Daniel kept his "window open", he didn't hide his allegiances towards God and values. Are you keeping your window open towards the way of Jesus? Things like loving our neighbors, being kind to everyone, and imitating our lives after Jesus?
6. Daniel prayed three times daily with his window open, making his faith visible to others. What practices in your life help you to not conform and continue to worship and follow God?

SERMON REFLECTION:

1. The sermon emphasizes that the point of the story is Daniel's faithfulness rather than his miraculous deliverance. How does this distinction change the way we understand faith when our own prayers for deliverance go unanswered?
2. What childhood values or spiritual lessons have you returned to during difficult seasons, and how have they shaped your adult faith journey?
3. There are various modern lions' dens we face, including disease, death, and relationship challenges. How can we cultivate Daniel's trust in God's presence even when circumstances do not change?



CLOSING PRAYER:

Faithful God, we thank You for the witness of Daniel and for the countless saints who have trusted You throughout the generations. When we face our own lions' dens, give us courage. When we are tempted to bow to lesser things, remind us that You alone are worthy of our worship. Strengthen us through Your grace, shape us through Your Spirit, and help us live as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. May our lives reflect Your love, our choices honor Your will, and our hearts remain steadfast in You. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. Amen.

WAYS TO RESPOND:

Choose ONE of the following practices to focus on this week:

1. Commit to praying three times a day this week (morning, midday, evening). Keep a journal of what you pray about and what God reveals to you.
2. Identify one area where you've been "closing the window" or hiding your faith. Take one concrete step to be more open about your relationship with God.
3. Reflect on different areas of your life (work, home, finances, relationships, online presence). Ask yourself: "Am I living with the same integrity in all these areas? Where do I need to align my life more closely with my faith?"
4. Write down your current "lion's den" situation. Then write a prayer of trust, acknowledging that whether God delivers you from it or walks through it with you, you will remain faithful.