

UNDER ATTACK

CHECKLIST: WHAT YOU NEED

- Pre-written pieces of paper for ice breaker
- Copies of the downloadable “622 service” and “Prayers & Thanksgivings” booklets
- Copies of the lesson handout
- Copy of the leader’s notes
- A white board, easel pad, or chalk board with markers/chalk
- OPTIONAL: Bibles (ESV or similar recommended)
- OPTIONAL: Have notebooks on hand for teens to take home and use as prayer journals if they wish

ICE BREAKER: HANGMAN (THE “ENEMY” VERSION)

Ahead of time, write out some of the following scriptural phrases on scraps of paper. The teens take turns selecting one of the scraps and drawing out lines on a board or easel pad that correspond to the letters of the words in the phrase they have selected. They should write out the word ENEMY or ENEMIES in full where they occur. *Also, where a longer verse has a portion in italics, write that part out as a clue so that the target phrase has context.* Then the other teens take turns guessing letters and try to guess what the full phrase is. Each time they guess a letter which is not there, part of the stick figure gets drawn until they have no more guesses left.

- *[He rescued me from my strong enemy and from those who hated me, for]* **they were too mighty for me.** (Psalm 18:17)
- *[My enemies say of me in malice,]* **“When will he die, and his name perish?”** (Psalm 41:5)
- *[Have I then become your enemy]* **by telling you the truth?** (Galatians 4:16)
- **They encircle me with words of hate,** [and attack me without cause]. (Psalm 109:3)
- **The ENEMY shall not outwit him.** (Psalm 89:22)
- **May he... crush the oppressor!** (Psalm 72:4)
- *[You have been my refuge]* **a strong tower against the ENEMY.** (Psalm 61:3)
- **The last ENEMY to be destroyed is death.** (1 Corinthians 15:26)

FOR LARGE GROUPS, PLAY IN TEAMS. FOR SMALL GROUPS PLAY AS INDIVIDUALS AND TAKE MULTIPLE TURNS. YOU MAY WANT TO ASSIGN BONUS POINTS IF THE TEENS CAN GUESS WHAT PART OF SCRIPTURE THE PHRASE COMES FROM.

622: BEGINNING WITH PRAYER

Begin the formal part of the lesson by saying together the first part of the order of service for young people in the booklet, up to the middle of page 4.

AT THIS POINT IN THE LESSON, ASK IF THE TEENS SUCCEEDED IN DOING LAST WEEK’S CHALLENGE, HOW IT WENT, AND WHETHER THEY HAVE ANYTHING TO SHARE.

DISCUSSION: ATTACKS + PERSECUTIONS

As an introduction to the lesson ask the teens to discuss the following questions.

DEPENDING ON THE COMFORT LEVEL FOR SHARING IN YOUR GROUP, IT MAY BE EASIER TO HAVE THEM VOLUNTEER ANSWERS WITH ALL RESPONSES WRITTEN TOGETHER ON A BOARD.

- Have you ever felt under attack? What happened?
- Share the following quote and ask your teens to respond:
 - “**The Bible clearly says that faithfulness and persecution often go hand in hand**”. – Billy Graham

A few things worth pointing out (if they don’t otherwise arise during the discussion):

- *This is a good opportunity to share a story of your own to get things going. Perhaps you’ve stood up for someone on social media only to end up on the receiving end of vicious messages as a result. Many of us encounter attacks of one kind or another in life, and they can be unsettling, overwhelming, and even at times devastating. If something of a serious and current nature arises, take a moment to stop and pray for that situation.*

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- *When we use the term “persecution” we mean a systematic hostility towards and mistreatment of a particular group of people, such as Christians. Persecution may take on different forms and levels of severity. For the most part in the western world, we “have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood” (Hebrews 12:4). We may, however, be familiar with various forms of ridicule and coercion that aim to make life difficult for Christians. Not all attacks that we experience are persecution because of our faith. Nevertheless, the more determined we are not to compromise our beliefs, the more likely it is that we will come under attack from those who are hostile towards God and towards all who seek to live in faithful obedience to him.*

THE LESSON: DANIEL 6

The first part of the lesson (below) can be read aloud. Then the teens are asked to read the Bible text (either silently to themselves or aloud together), followed by some additional questions for discussion.

(IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP RESPOND TO QUESTIONS THAT MAY BE RAISED DURING THIS UNIT, WE RECOMMEND “DISCOVERING THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER: A HANDS-ON APPROACH, VOLUME 3: SPECIAL OCCASIONS” BY SUE CARELESS.)

The “At Sea” section in the Prayer Book takes real-world struggles seriously. This is why it includes a prayer “with respect to the enemy”. Those who spend much of their lives travelling the seas and oceans know that danger comes not only from nature, but also from other people, such as pirates and hostile military forces. These concerns may not be part of daily life for many of us today, but we still know what it’s like to be under attack from those who wish to do us harm.

We know that ultimately our struggle is “not against flesh and blood”, but “against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12). Yet sometimes we find ourselves under attack from those who, whether consciously or unconsciously, are serving those forces; whose words and actions against us are hostile and malicious. In such moments it is entirely appropriate to pray for deliverance, as so many generations of believers have done before us.

So what is our proper attitude when we come under attack? It is *confident* in God’s might rather than in our own, knowing that God is in control, that Jesus has won the ultimate victory on the cross, and that God is able to work through even this situation for our good and his glory. It seeks God’s *strength* for the battle, and his *grace* to remain *faithful* whatever comes. And it earnestly desires to see God at work, so that we can *praise* him with the psalmist, saying, “you are the God who works wonders; you have made known your might among the peoples” (Psalm 77:14).

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Remember Daniel? He was just a youth when his city was conquered and pillaged, and he was taken into captivity. Daniel lived most of his life in exile serving the kings of that conquering nation. But he was committed to remaining faithful to his God in all of this, a decision that did not always make for an easy life.

Refer to Daniel 6:1-4,6-7,10-13,16,19-23,25-28.

(VERSES HAVE BEEN CLIPPED FROM THE READING FOR THE SAKE OF BREVITY, BUT IF YOU HAVE TIME TO EXPLORE THE PASSAGE FULLY, FEEL FREE TO READ IT IN ITS ENTIRETY: DANIEL 6.)

(THE TEXT IS PROVIDED ON THE BACK OF THE HANDOUTS AND IN THESE LEADERS’ NOTES SO THAT EVERYONE CAN MARK IT UP AND MAKE NOTES ON IT IF DESIRED. ALTERNATIVELY, YOU CAN READ OUT OF A BIBLE).

Read through the text. Then ask the teens to respond to what they’ve just read. Here are some questions to help guide the discussion.

- What does this narrative tell us about Daniel?
- What does it tell us about God?
- What was the result of Daniel’s trusting obedience?
- What can we learn from this today?

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A few notes and reflections for reference:

- Daniel had impressed his captors enough to be appointed to this high position. They could see that there was “an excellent spirit” in him (v3). But though Daniel’s conduct was above reproach, there was something different about him, something which was known to his enemies. Every day, three times a day, he prayed to God (v10). Daniel’s commitment to live in this way did not waver. The text tells us simply that in all of this he “trusted in his God” (v23). When God intervened to save him from the lions, Daniel was ready to tell the king exactly what had happened.
- Even though Daniel was living in exile, God had not abandoned him. God saw all that happened to his faithful prophet. Note that God allowed this hostile law to be passed. He allowed Daniel to be plotted against, accused, arrested, and sentenced. He allowed him to be thrown into a den of lions. God could have intervened at any point. But God sent an angel to prevent the lions from harming Daniel, showing his power and his gracious care for him.
- Because of Daniel’s obedience, the king saw God’s power, and changed the law. Because of Daniel’s obedience, people across that nation would have heard the story of what had happened, and learned something about God and about God’s people. Because of Daniel’s obedience, believers today can be encouraged and inspired by his story.
- Though we may not have Daniel’s advantages (a high ranking position) or disadvantages (living in exile), we know that obeying God can sometimes come at a cost. There are people who will seek to harm us because we are faithful. Like Daniel, we can trust that our mighty God is the one who is ultimately in control, not the “kings” who write laws, nor the enemies who attack us. And if we will be faithful, we may yet see what wonders he can do not just in our lives, but in the lives of our enemies as well.

DURING EACH LESSON, IF THE TEENS RAISE THEOLOGICAL OR BIBLICAL QUESTIONS THAT YOU DON’T FEEL CONFIDENT ABOUT ANSWERING, SAY SO, BUT LET THEM KNOW THAT YOU’LL FIND THE ANSWER AND RESPOND AT THE NEXT MEETING.

PREVIEW: AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Take a brief moment to look at the at-home challenge together.

THE WEEKLY “AT-HOME CHALLENGE” IS TYPICALLY A SIMPLE ASSIGNMENT TO SPEND SOME QUIET TIME IN PRIVATE PRAYER. ENCOURAGE THE TEENS TO GET NOTEBOOKS THAT CAN BE USED AS PRAYER JOURNALS. ASSURE THEM THAT THEY WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO SHOW THEIR JOURNAL OR THEIR PRIVATE PRAYERS TO ANYONE.

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON’T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE “FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES”, WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON’T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.](http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer))

Are you – or is someone you know – feeling “under attack”?

Bring the situation to God and close your time with the following prayer:

*Thou, O Lord, art just and powerful: O defend our cause against the face of the enemy.
O God, thou art a strong tower of defence to all that flee unto thee: O save us from the violence of the enemy.
O Lord of hosts, fight for us, that we may glorify thee.
O suffer us not to sink under the weight of our sins, or the violence of the enemy.
O Lord, arise, help us, and deliver us for thy Name’s sake.*

(PRAYER WITH RESPECT TO THE ENEMY, BCP P. 636)

Has God brought you – or someone you know – safely through an encounter with “the enemy”?

Spend some time in thanksgiving and close your time with the following prayer:

O gracious God and heavenly Father, we bless and glorify thy holy Name, for thy merciful deliverance from the recent peril of the enemy; and we humbly beseech thee to give us grace so to rejoice in thy saving power, that we may serve thee in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(THANKSGIVING FOR DELIVERANCE FROM A STORM OR FROM THE ENEMY, BCP P. 636)

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CLOSING PRAYERS (622 AGAIN)

Close with any prayers that might be appropriate in the context of the discussion of the day.

AT THE END OF EACH LESSON, IF YOU FIND THAT YOU STILL HAVE LOTS OF TIME REMAINING, YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO TAKE SOME TIME TO EXPLORE THE “PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS” SECTION IN THE BCP (PAGES 39-62, OR YOU CAN USE THE DOWNLOADABLE BOOKLET). AS YOUR GROUP MEMBERS COME ACROSS PRAYERS THAT THEY FIND RELEVANT, PAUSE AND PRAY THEM TOGETHER. IF YOU’RE PRESSED FOR TIME, YOU MIGHT CLOSE WITH ONE OF THE THEMED PRAYERS FROM THE AT-HOME CHALLENGE.

Then finish with the “Grace”, the final prayer in the booklet.

DANIEL 6: WHO’S THE STRONGEST?

¹It pleased King Darius to set over the kingdom 120 satraps, to be throughout the whole kingdom; ²and over them three presidents, of whom Daniel was one, to whom these satraps should give account, so that the king might suffer no loss. ³Then this Daniel became distinguished above all the other presidents and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him. And the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. ⁴Then the presidents and the satraps sought to find a ground for complaint against Daniel...

⁶Then these presidents and satraps came by agreement to the king and said to him, “O King Darius, live for ever! ⁷All the presidents of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counsellors and the governors are agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an injunction, that whoever makes petition to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions...

¹⁰When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open towards Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously. ¹¹ Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and plea before his God. ¹²Then they came near and said before the king... ¹³“Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or the injunction you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day”...

¹⁶Then the king commanded, and Daniel was brought and cast into the den of lions... ¹⁹Then, at break of day, the king arose and went in haste to the den of lions. ²⁰As he came near to the den where Daniel was, he cried out in a tone of anguish. The king declared to Daniel, “O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?” ²¹Then Daniel said to the king, “O king, live for ever! ²²My God sent his angel and shut the lions’ mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm.” ²³Then the king was exceedingly glad, and commanded that Daniel be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no kind of harm was found on him, because he had trusted in his God...

²⁵Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: “Peace be multiplied to you. ²⁶I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God, enduring for ever; his kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall be to the end. ²⁷He delivers and rescues; he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, he who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions.” ²⁸So this Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.