

Lesson 9: Living in Exile

AIM:

General: 1) To give the children a picture of life in exile through the story of Daniel and his friends- Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah: i) How they entered the court of Nebuchadnezzar. ii) The story of the fiery furnace.
2) To think about the challenges we face as Christians among people of other beliefs: Do we stand up for Christ's values?

Personal: 1) To encourage the children to be true to Christ at all times, even in the face of unbelief and opposition.
2) To assure them that God will be with them in a real way when they stand up for him.

Texts: Daniel Ch 1; Ch 3 Luke 12: 8, 9

STARTER: [10 mins] Story of 'Corrie Ten Boom in the Nazi Prisons.

Today I'd like to tell you a true story about a Dutch family- the Ten Booms. It was the time of the Second World War. As the Nazi madness swept across Europe, this gentle family of watchmakers remained true to Christ... and to love. In those days while Hitler's forces hunted and tortured Jesus in Holland, this Christian family did all they could to provide food and shelter to the hunted people, even though this was a dangerous thing to do. They built a secret room to hide their guests during raids.

But one day a trap was set...a false plea for help which they answered, knowing the risk they were taking. The entire family- Corrie and her sisters, brother and their old father were taken away to months of cruel imprisonment. ***Their father was given a chance- 'Ten Boom, give me your word you will behave yourself, and you can die in your bed, old man, where you belong!'***

But Corrie's father remained true. 'If I stay behind, I will open my door to anyone who knocks for help' The Ten Booms paid the price for caring... in the darkness of prison. Alone... and yet, not alone

Once, after months of solitary confinement, Corrie was summoned by the prison warden 'Tell me, Miss Ten Boom. How can you believe in a God who lets an old man die in prison... his body forgotten somewhere in a beggar's grave?' 'My father?'

'Yes...I hear he became ill 10 days after his arrest. He died somewhere... no-one knows where his body is...' 'Lieutenant, I know where my father is' answered Corrie.

⇒ What did Corrie mean by these words? What do you think the prison warden felt as he heard them? [*Corrie knew, without doubt, that her father was safe and happy in Heaven. To her, his body was not as important as his soul.*]

This warden realised that there was truth and something special about Corrie. He realised that though she was a prisoner, she was walking in the light, while he was in terrible darkness. Later, he managed to help Corrie, by arranging for her to meet her family for the reading of their father's will.

INPUT: [15 mins]

Today we will see how some of the Jewish exiles, also prisoners, like Corrie, faced their captors. Did their faith In God remain strong?... or did they give in to the ways of their captors?

We will read the story from the book of Daniel, which was written, not during the time of the exile, but at a much later date.

6CCP.

Read: Daniel Chapter 1 (Let different students read as it is a long passage)

⇒ What was the first test or temptation these young men faced?

(They were asked to eat food which was against their belief)

⇒ How did they react to this test? [They did not eat the food, but they trusted God to keep them as strong as others, who were eating everything... and God was faithful to them]

Lets look at an even more difficult challenge they had to face:

Read: Chapter 3

⇒ What test did the men have to face this time? [To worship a statue of the king]

⇒ How do you think they had the courage to stand up before the all- powerful king? [They had faith in God. They knew that His power was greater than that of the king.] By a great miracle, God rewarded their faith and courage.

⇒ What do you think about the fourth figure in the furnace? [Perhaps it was God Himself or an angel...but it shows that God is present with his people when they are ready to stand up for Him- like Corrie and her family]

⇒ What effect did this miracle have on the emperor? [He realised that their God was a living and true God.]

ACTIVITY: [30mins]

(Divide the class into 3 groups for enacting o f role- plays)

Just like the two examples we have just heard, we too, are in a way, exiles. We are living in a society where Jesus and his values are put down. God challenges us to stand up for Him.

If we do, we may have to suffer in some way, but God will be at our side. At the same time, by our response we have a chance to win over others to Jesus. Before we go into groups to act out such situations, lets think of what these challenges could be-

(Have a brain-storming session and write down on the black-board the ideas suggested. Let each group lead then select one which his/her group will plan and act. Example could be-)

✚ We are asked to join in worshipping other God's.

✚ You with your friends decide to go all together for a movie which has dirty scenes.

✚ The monitor unjustly punishes someone in your class and tells lies to back his actions.

✚ An examination supervisor allows alt the students in your class to take their books and copy.

✚ You are caught driving a bike without a licence and the policeman shows that he is ready to take a bribe to set you free.

(Go around as the discussions are going on and encourage the students to present a good response to the challenge. Their response should be true, but not hurtful to others. The skit should show that God was present even when the person had to face difficulties. It could also show a change of heart in the person they are opposing.)

N.B. For the worship of other God, the Christian could gently explain-

“I believe in one God- Jesus Christ, who has done everything for me. How can I go after other gods? It is like wife leaving her loving husband and running after other men. If we had a party or some other function not connected to a God. I would willingly come. Please do not take it as a personal insult.”

PRAYER: [10mins]

(Form a prayer-circle. Encourage the children to quieten their minds and hearts and come into the Presence of God... Let them thank God in their hearts for His love for them... Then read-) Listen to the words of Jesus- ‘I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man will acknowledge before the angels of God; but he who denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God

(Read it once again and then encourage the students to pray aloud in response)

Teacher: Lord Jesus, we thank-you for today’s class and for all we have learnt. Give us the grace to stand for you; and give us also the faith of Corrie and the Jewish boys to see your powerful presence with us. Help us be your witnesses always Amen.