



## Space Ninjas vs. Pirate Squirrels

### Daniel and the Lions' Den

**BIG IDEA:** God's wants to be the leader of your life, so you should follow Him instead of the crowd.

**BIBLE BASIS:** Daniel 6

**KEY VERSE:** "Do not follow the crowd when they do what is wrong."  
Exodus 23:2a (NirV)

## SET UP INSTRUCTIONS

It's the distant future, the year 5,000, and a long lost stinky sneaker has been discovered. It's the mythical shoe of Sir Willy Wonky, and legend has it that one sniff of this foul footwear makes everything you eat taste like chocolate. During the "Space Ninjas vs. Pirate Squirrels" series, small groups will be divided into two teams and will battle for the putrid penny loafer. All the while kids will discover stories of God's faithfulness and power through the exile of His people into a foreign and hostile land.

### Do the following ahead of time:

- Divide your small groups into two teams. Each team can have multiple small groups representing it. Kids will work within their small group to earn points for their team. If you have an uneven number of groups on the teams, you may want to award the team with fewer groups more points for some of the competitions in order to make it fair.
- Lay down a strip of tape through the middle of the room. During the lesson, have the "Space Ninjas" sit on one side and have the "Pirate Squirrels" sit on the other.
- Place the bin or bag containing all of the point balls in the teaching area.
- Place the two team bins in the teaching area. Print out the team signs ahead of time and attach one sign to each bin. (See Resource Folder.) These bins will be used at the end to collect all of the points that were tossed out to each team.
- Print out a set of A, B, C, and D signs for each small group. (See Resource Folder.) Give the set of signs to the small group leaders to have with them during the GO! TELL IT large group time.
- Find an old, stinky sneaker. The older and stinkier, the better! If you want to really deck the shoe out, soak the ends of the excess laces in glue, then form them into fanciful shapes. Consider spray painting the shoe in gold or silver paint. Place the shoe in the teaching area.
- Place some sort of food item in the teaching area. It can be anything edible such as a donut or sandwich.



# 4.2 Large Group Lesson



## ★ GO! TELL IT (Large Group Lesson)

**CG:** “Space Ninjas vs. Pirate Squirrels” title graphic  
**Sound:** PLAY upbeat music as kids move to large group area

**Tech Note:** When all of the kids have moved to the Large Group area and have taken a seat, begin playing the “Space Ninjas vs. Pirate Squirrels” intro video.

**VDO:** PLAY “Space Ninjas vs. Pirate Squirrels” intro video

### SPACE NINJAS VS. PIRATE SQUIRRELS INTRO

**Large Group Leader:** Hello kids and welcome to another installment of “Space Pirates vs. Ninja Squirrels!” Wait...I think I said that wrong. Let me try again. Welcome to another installment of “Space Squirrels vs. Ninja Pirates!” Hold on...that didn’t seem right either. (*Thinking aloud.*) Is it “Ninja Spaces vs. Squirrely Pirates?” (*Tip: If you find remembering the incorrect names difficult, write them on a notecard and place them in the teaching area.*) Somebody help me out—what is it? (*Kids respond.*) Oh yeah—that’s it! (*Say with a confident, larger-than-life announcer voice.*) Welcome to another installment of “Space Ninjas vs. Pirate Squirrels!”

On this side of the room (*point to one side*) we have the Space Ninjas. Let me hear you cheer! (*Space Ninjas cheer. Toss them some point balls.*) And on this side we have the Pirate Squirrels. Let me hear you cheer! (*Pirate Squirrels cheer. Toss them some point balls.*) Once again, our two teams are going to have the biggest, best-est, most bodacious battle the galaxy has ever known. While we’re battling, though, we’ll also be diving deeper into the Big Bible Story to see how God cared for His people even after they got kicked out of the Promised Land.

Before we get started, let me explain how the battle is going to work. The goal is to be the team with the most points at the end of the hour. Each one of these (*hold up ball or other object representing points*) is worth one point. Your team will be collecting them throughout the lesson. There are three ways that you can earn points: Team Energy, Team Participation, and Team Competitions.

**CG:** Team Points graphic

At the end of the hour, we’ll count up the points. Whichever team has the most will win Sir Willy Wonky’s stinky shoe. (*Hold up the shoe for kids to see.*)

The points are a wonderful group management tool. Use them to reward positive behavior. Toss out points when kids are cheering for their team, participating in something or exhibiting other positive behaviors.

**CG:** “The Big Bible Story” graphic



## 4.2 Large Group Lesson



### THE BIG BIBLE STORY—DANIEL AND THE LIONS DEN

Last week, we heard about three of Daniel's friends who got thrown into a fiery furnace. I'll give points to whichever team can tell me their names first. *(Toss points to the team that shouts the names first.)* That's right—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego! After God saved them from the fire, a new king began ruling the city of Babylon. His name was King Darius. Fortunately, King Darius liked Daniel a lot. Daniel was one of the king's royal governors and he did a better job leading the city than anyone else, so the king made plans to put Daniel in charge of the whole kingdom. Great news for Daniel, but not for the other rulers!

When the other rulers heard about the king's plan, they became super jealous. Let's see which team can look the most jealous. *(Have the teams take turns looking jealous. Toss points to the most jealous looking team.)* Nice job! The other rulers were so jealous that they began looking for a way to bring Daniel down. At first, they tried to catch Daniel breaking the rules, but they couldn't. Daniel always followed God and did what was right. So the other rulers came up with a new plan. If they couldn't catch Daniel breaking one of the *old* rules, they would make up a *new* rule that they knew Daniel couldn't keep. Let's see what the new rule was.

I'll give a point to the team that can open their Bible and find Daniel 6:6-9 first. **CG: Daniel 6:6-9.** *(Toss points to the first team to find the verse. Have the kid who found it read it aloud or read it aloud yourself.)* "So the two leaders and the royal rulers went as a group to the king. They said, 'King Darius, may you live forever! All the royal leaders, high officials, royal rulers, advisers and governors want to make a suggestion. We've agreed that you should give an order. And you should make sure it's obeyed. Your Majesty, here is the command you should make your people obey for the next 30 days. Don't let any of your people pray to any god or human being except to you. If they do, throw them into the lions' den. Now give the order. Write it down in the law of the Medes and Persians. Then it can't be changed.' So King Darius put the order in writing."

#### **CG:** "The Big Bible Story" graphic

When Daniel heard the new rule, he knew that he couldn't follow it. Even if everyone in the kingdom prayed to the king, Daniel was still going to pray to the one true God. Just like always, Daniel went up to his bedroom window, got down on his knees *(drop to your knees, fold hands and bow head)* and prayed to God. *(Look up again.)* And guess who was watching—the other rulers! When they saw that Daniel was breaking the new rule, they ran straight to the king. I'll give points to the team that can run to the king the fastest. *(Have each team take turns running in place. Toss points to the team that appears to be fastest, then have the kids take a seat.)* When the king heard about Daniel, he was very upset. He loved Daniel and didn't want him to be hurt, but there was nothing he could do to change the law. *(Speak in a slow, somber voice.)* So the king reluctantly gave the order to have Daniel thrown into the lions' den.

That night, the king was so upset that he couldn't eat. *(Begin taking a bite of food, then stop.)* He couldn't sleep either. *(Lay down on floor. Begin tossing and turning.)* He tossed and turned and hoped that Daniel was somehow alright. Let me hear you crow like a rooster. *(Kids crow. Sit up and toss them points.)* In the morning, as soon as the sun began to rise, *(jump to feet and run in place)* the king ran straight to the lions' den and shouted, "Daniel! Are you okay?" Tick tock, tick tock. It must have seemed like forever. But then, from the depths of the dark lions' den, Daniel's voice rang out, "I'm okay, the lions haven't hurt me at all! My God sent His angel to shut their mouths."

The king was filled with joy. Show me what you look like when you're filled with joy. *(Kids respond. Toss both teams points.)* He was filled with joy and ordered his servants to have Daniel taken out of the lions' den. When they checked him out, they couldn't find a single scratch on him. That's because Daniel



# 4.2 Large Group Lesson



trusted God and followed Him instead of the crowd. And thanks to Daniel's faithfulness, he wasn't the only one that trusted God. King Darius now trusted God too and he made a new rule that said everyone in the kingdom had to respect and honor Daniel's God—the one true God!

**CG:** "Big Bible Story Questions" graphic

## BIG BIBLE STORY QUESTIONS

At the end of the Bible story have the kids turn briefly to their small groups and discuss the following questions: **What does this story teach you about God? How can you apply the story of Daniel to your life? What can you do differently?** After a few minutes, draw their attention back to the teaching area.

**CG:** show "Space Ninjas vs. Pirate Squirrels" title graphic

## REVIEW BATTLE

Now that you've heard the story, I think it's time to see how well you were listening. Are you all ready for the big review battle? Here's how the battle works. I'm going to ask you all a series of multiple choice questions. If you think you know the answer, turn to your small group leader and tell them what it is. Your leader will then hold up the sign with the most popular answer from your group. Here we go...

Give the groups about 10 seconds to choose their answer and hold up the right sign before the answer is revealed. Once the answer is revealed, toss out one point to all of the groups with the right answer. (*Correct answer is highlighted green below.*)

**Music:** (Optional) Play upbeat music during game

**CG:** Who was the king over Babylon?

- A. King David
- B. King Darium
- C. King Davis
- D. King Darius**

**CG:** The royal rulers convinced King Darius to make a new rule that said everyone could pray only to him for the next how many days?

- A. 20
- B. 30**
- C. 40
- D. 60

**CG:** Despite the rule, Daniel continued praying to God. Where did the other rulers see Daniel praying?

- A. In his bedroom window**
- B. In his closet window
- C. In his kitchen window
- D. In his prayer room window



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**CG:** How did the king react when he found out Daniel had broken the new rule?

- A. He was upset
- B. He couldn't eat
- C. He couldn't sleep
- D. All of the above**

**CG:** What did Daniel say God's angel did to the lions?

- A. He confused them
- B. He shut their eyes
- C. He shut their mouths**
- D. He removed their teeth

**CG:** "Space Ninjas vs. Pirate Squirrels" title graphic

At the end of the review battle, have the kids place all of their points inside their team's bucket or bag. When ready, count up the points for each team and award Sir Willy Wonky's stinky shoe to the winning team.

## FOLLOW THE LEADER

Isn't that incredible! Even though everyone else was praying to the king, Daniel still prayed to the one true God. Do you think that was easy for Daniel? (*Kids respond.*) Maybe, but probably not. Sometimes it's easier to keep your eyes on other people and do what they're doing. Let me show you what I'm talking about. We're going to play a simple game of "Follow the Leader." All you have to do is watch me and do exactly what I'm doing.

Invite the kids to stand up. Begin by making slow, simple motions, faces, or noises and have the kids mirror you. As the game advances, do faster and more complex motions to see if the kids can keep up. Make it fun and be silly. For the final motion, sit down.

That's kind of like what we do in our life sometimes. We keep our eyes on the people around us and do what *they* are doing. We make them the leader of our life—we talk like them, we act like them, we do what they are doing even when they are doing the wrong thing. Our Bible verse for today warns us against that. Let's take a look at what it says.

**CG:** "Do not follow the crowd when they do what is wrong." Exodus 23:2a

Have you ever been tempted to follow the crowd when they're doing the wrong thing? I have!

Tell an age-appropriate personal story about a time when you were tempted to follow the crowd and do the wrong thing. If possible, make it a story from when you were a kid so that the kids can relate to it. If the story culminates with you doing the right thing, talk about the good that came from your decision. If it culminates with you doing the wrong thing, talk about the consequences.



## 4.2 Large Group Lesson



It's so easy to just do what everyone else is doing. We're tempted to act like the people around us or the people we see in movies or on TV, even if they're doing the wrong thing. But we don't have to! We can make the same choice that Daniel did. We can make *God* the leader of our life.

### MAKING GOD THE LEADER

Daniel trusted God to lead his life, so he made the choice to follow God instead of the crowd. And because of that, Daniel came out of the lions' den without a single scratch on him. God wants to be the leader of your life too, so you can follow Him instead of the crowd. When you follow the crowd in doing what is wrong, it causes nothing but trouble! But when you follow God and do what is right, like Daniel, God blesses you—He keeps you from harm, He fills you with joy, He helps you live the best life possible.

*(Sit or kneel near kids.)* Of course, we *all* make mistakes. As hard as we try, we still mess up sometimes and follow the crowd when they do what is wrong. But the wonderful thing about God is that He forgives us. He gave us His Son, Jesus, so that our sins could be washed away and we can live forever with Him in Heaven. Let's pray right now and ask Him to do that.

Close the large group time by praying for the kids in whatever way the Holy Spirit prompts you. Before praying, be sure to let kids have an opportunity to give back to God in worshiping with their tithes and offerings.

**CG:** "Space Ninjas vs. Pirate Squirrels" title graphic

