



PYCLs: Bring some Jam & a little flour and rejoice that we're all prophets! What it can mean to be "preserved" by God and angels. Act out Daniel's story.

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PYCLs: Bring some Jam & a little flour and rejoice that we're all prophets! What it can mean to be "preserved" by God and angels. Act out Daniel's story.

Possible Younger Class Lesson ideas for the Christian Science Quarterly Bible Lesson on

"God the Preserver of Man"
for Sunday, **June 11, 2023**

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PYCL #1: GET SOME JAM.

Those of you reading these pycls for a while will be familiar with this idea. If you haven't used this analogy with your students though, it is a rich one. Jam, or "preserves", represents a way to keep food safe and long lasting for consumption.

You can talk about the heat (like being subject to a challenging situation such as we see in this week's lesson). You can bring up the way that the jar lid seals to the jar, leaving no air for bacteria to grow in (such as how we can halt and keep out all error from our thinking about ourselves and others so that there is no environment there in which sin, sickness, anger, etc. can grow.).

I have even made jam with Sunday School students at my home. In the end, you can pop open the jar (best if it's new so that it makes that satisfying and illustrative "thwap" of the seal coming undone) and share some jam on bread or crackers.

PYCL #2: BRING IN A LITTLE FLOUR/MEAL, AND REJOICE THAT WE ARE ALL PROPHETS!

In Section 2 we have the story of Elisha and the prophets making stew during a drought. (2 Kings 4:38-41 *Elisha*) Set the stage. They are hungry! There isn't anything to eat. They are making do with what they can find. Of course, tell the story/read it. As always, I encourage you to, at least sometimes, **read it also from a modern translation, just to help students see that this is not outdated information!**

Have a big pot with you, no stew necessary. Pull out your handful of flour or cornmeal. Show the students and ask them if it has any healing properties in it. Is it magical? Did Elisha imbue it with healing power? Of course not! Why did he throw it in the pot then? There are many legitimate answers to this and older children might have a few.

Perhaps the human mind needs to actually "see" something happen before it is ready to accept that there is safety and change happening. In other words, maybe if Elisha said, "Okay,

now it's fine to eat", without doing anything visual, the men wouldn't have felt safe from the poison, and would have been too afraid to eat. This is just speculation on my part.

Another idea is to look at the symbolism of meal or flour, a key ingredient in bread. Bread in the Bible symbolises the Word of God, which is like Christ, a powerful healing agent. It lifts, raises our consciousness to a higher perspective. In fact, you might say it does what we are looking at in this section about prophecy.

Here check the definition of Prophet in citation S8/593:4 "A spiritual seer; disappearance of the material sense before the conscious facts of spiritual Truth."

Ask the students to define "prophet". Most older students might respond with the common idea that a prophet is someone who can see the future. After all, isn't Isaiah's prophecy about the Messiah a prediction of a future event? But there is none of this in Mary Baker Eddy's definition of prophet. Through our disappearing material sense we may lose a sense of human "time", and be able to know the present Christ, but this might not be "future" telling, nothing to do with the human understanding of time at all!

A prophet is simply anyone whose material sense is disappearing in the face of spiritual Truth! We can all be prophets!!

PYCL #3: WHAT DOES IT MEAN THAT WE ARE "PRESERVED" BY GOD?

It's easy to think, when things are going really badly, that we certainly aren't being "preserved" from evil. Then you look at Bible stories, and testimonies in the periodicals, and Wednesday night healing services, and you realize that these are almost all examples of how man faces challenges and finds, through spiritual discernment and growth, the truth, that we never are separated from God.

With the older children you may broach the subject of "why do bad things happen"? And then speak to the challenges found in this Bible lesson, as well as others they may know. Have they ever really learned or succeeded at something without a lot of challenges coming their way? Every endeavor that yields blessing, comes with devotion and effort—maybe challenge.

We are richly rewarded when we take up the challenge and pray with joy and love for God. What happens is that we learn, like Daniel, and like Peter in citation B20/Acts 12:1. 5,7,8 (to 2nd.), 10,11 that each challenge comes with the new opportunity to discover our true freedom and preservation. The challenge is always presented by material sense, and as you may remember, as prophets, we are overcoming material sense, watching it disappear "...before the conscious facts of spiritual Truth."

PYCL #4: ANGELS HELP US FIND OUR "PRESERVATION".

Angels are fun to think about with children. Are they people? Do they have wings? Are they just one thing? Feel free to have the children look up Mary Baker Eddy's definition in her Glossary of *Science and Health*.

What was the angel that came to Peter?

Have the children ever felt like they had an angel with them?

Maybe find a good children's article to share that talks about angels. Peter's angel led him out of prison to safety and then disappeared.

My angels have come usually as inspired thoughts that are beautifully timed.

But sometimes it is people that show up for me serendipitously and beautifully. Peter's angel revealed his present spiritual freedom. This looked like chains falling away and walking out of prison.

PYCL #5: ACT OUT DANIEL'S STORY.

Daniel in the lion's den is a favorite with children. It has drama and it has lions! **See if one of the children wants to tell the story. Then talk about what lions might represent today in their lives.** One might be hungry with anger, sadness, illness, loneliness, doubt, and so on.

What error of thought put Daniel in the lion's den? Envy! Is there a Commandment that we need to remember about envy? Isn't this an example of how obedience to the Commandments can preserve us? If those men had not been envious, they wouldn't have had a sticky end (not included in our Bible lesson—ever—but maybe??? you could mention that they did end up being eaten?

Again, symbolically, **we could say that our envy "eats us"**, and cannot harm the innocent.) Why is innocence a power that preserves Daniel? Does it come from Truth?

Have fun acting out the story, including some lions. You could have a paper crown handy for Darius, and maybe a sheet for Daniel to wear and something like a headband with ears for the lions, if you want to get fancy.

Have a great week in Sunday School!