



# *Christ Church*

UNLOCKING CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL: FAMILY RESOURCES

A VIRTUAL VISIT ONLINE

Medieval stone lion



## **Introduction:**

This stone lion was carved in the Middle Ages for Alexander, Prior of St Frideswide's Priory. The Prior was the head of the Augustinian community that lived there.

In the Cathedral, Alexander's tomb is located between the Lady and Latin chapels, which means that Prior Alexander is buried very near to the shrine of Saint Frideswide, patron saint of Oxford.

## **Response:**

- Look carefully at the lion. Why do you think it might be important or special?
- Which words come to mind? How does it make you feel?

## **Background:**

On tombs, where the likeness of the dead person has been carved in stone or wood, it is very common to find an animal at their feet. Usually, it is a dog or a lion. The dog may represent the owner's personal pet, or some say it means that the person died quietly and at peace.

The lion is a symbol of strength and is also associated with the Gospel writer Mark. Some people say that it can show that the person may have died in battle, even fighting for Jesus, such as in the Crusades.

The lion is also seen as a symbol of Resurrection, or life after death. In the Narnia books, Aslan the Lion represents Jesus who rose from the dead.

### **Bible story: Daniel in the Lions' den.**

In the time of King Darius the Mede, a Jewish man, Daniel had risen to a position of great responsibility and trust. But his jealous enemies who also served the king decided to try to turn the king against Daniel. They persuaded the king to make a law that no one would be allowed to pray to anyone or anything except Darius himself. Daniel loved God and prayed to Him three times every day. When his enemies caught him praying. They took him to the king and told Darius that Daniel should be eaten by lions as a punishment.

King Darius was sorry but knew he could not allow Daniel to break the law. So, Daniel was thrown into a den of lions overnight. King Darius hoped that Daniel's God might save him and, indeed, inside the lion's den, Daniel was rescued by an angel who made sure the lions did not attack poor Daniel. When the King saw that Daniel had miraculously been saved by his God, he was delighted and welcomed him back to his court.

But the King was so cross with Daniel's enemies, he had them thrown to the lions instead.

Daniel was restored to the King's favour and for many years he carried on serving him.

King Darius actually sent out a decree saying that everyone in his kingdom should revere Daniel's God, the God of the Hebrews, the God in Heaven who later sent his son, Jesus, to save the world....

### **Bible reading: Daniel 6: 16-23**

<sup>16</sup> So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!"

<sup>17</sup> A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that Daniel's situation might not be changed. <sup>18</sup> Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep.

<sup>19</sup> At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions' den. <sup>20</sup> When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?"

<sup>21</sup> Daniel answered, "May the king live forever! <sup>22</sup> My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, Your Majesty."

<sup>23</sup> The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

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### **Things to do at home- a few ideas:**

- Colour, cut out and make the Pop - up scene of Daniel in the den of lions.
- Find five pictures, from around the world, of lions.

- Find out more about the life of real lions in the wild. Where could you go on Safari and see real lions in the wild?

- Use play dough, plasticene or salt dough to make a model of your favourite lion.

Here is a recipe for salt dough:

- *Sift 100g plain flour and 50g of salt into a mixing bowl.*
- *Add one teaspoon of cooking oil.*
- *Then stir in 80 ml water, using a wooden spoon.*
- *Mix until smooth.*
- *Put the mixture, or dough, onto a floured surface and knead (squeezing, rolling and flattening again and again until the dough is easy to use).*
- *Make your lion and 'cook' for three hours on the lowest setting in the oven. (Ask an adult to help you with this).*

- Draw or paint a picture of Daniel surrounded by the lions and include the angel.

- Look online for pictures of angels.

Are they always the same? What do they all have in common?



This angel was created by Edward Burne-Jones in Queen Victoria's reign. Burne-Jones decided to give his angel blue wings and red halo. You might like to draw and colour your own angel. Which colours will you use?

