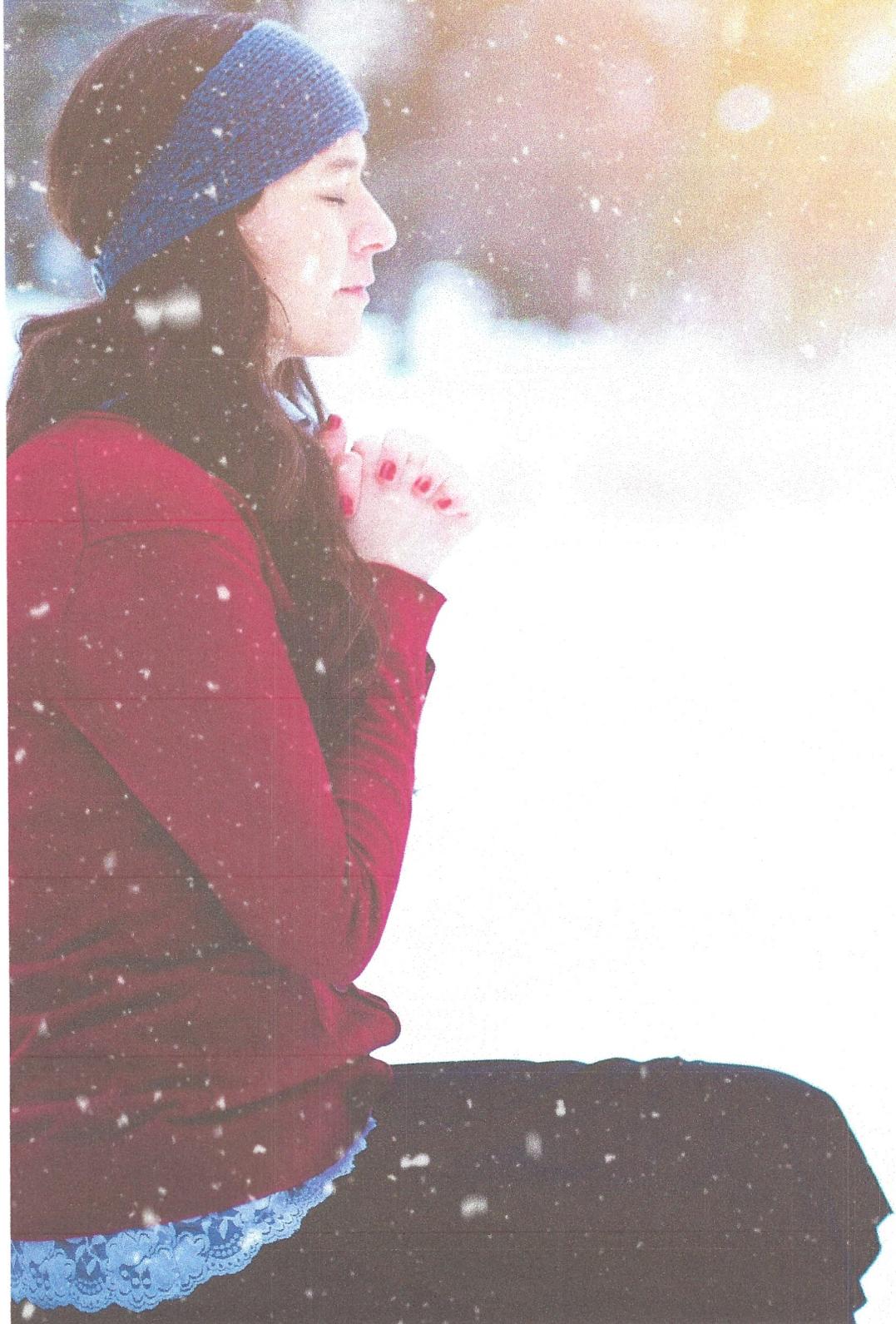


# CHRISTIAN YOGA MAGAZINE

THE RECONNECTING WITH JESUS ISSUE



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# Christian Yoga Magazine

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# Men on the Mat

## RECONNECTING WITH CHRIST THROUGH YOGA AND THE FIVE VITAL ORGANS

- by Dr. Donna Jagielski

Most often we find that men wish to follow a vigorous practice and one which is more cerebral. If we wish to engage in vigorous practice, we must maintain the health of the physical body. Also, in doing so, vigorous practice can help to maintain physical health. And if we are being obedient in taking care of our physical body we are much more prepared to serve the Lord with purity and cleanliness.

In examining our physical bodies, there are five organs we can't live without. Our vital organs are the brain, liver, kidneys, lungs, and heart. Each of these vital organs has a direct connection to the Lord and has supported poses.

**Brain.** During the solitude time of yoga, you are invited to think about their current relationship with Jesus. How are we being faithful and obedient to Christ? As you flow through your practice thank the Lord for a healthy body and brain, one that serves. Examine how you are serving the Lord especially in poses where your head is below

your heart as in any forward bends. Bow to the Lord in service.

**Poses:** Forward fold, Pyramid, Warrior I, II, and III series

### Suggested Scripture:

*Colossians 2:23-24 - Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ*

**Heart.** Once we process the life of Jesus and accept that He is the reason for all we do, how do we embrace and accept His love for us as broken individuals? How do we open our hearts to others? Forgive? Open our hearts to serve? In practice, how do we honor our bodies for what they are able to do in the moment? How do we make the necessary adjustments and modifications in our practice to meet our physical challenges and let go of our egos? How do we not 'compare and compete' in our yoga practice and just simply follow our hearts in listening to the Lord? For He alone knows what is best for us. How do we accept our physical



selves as being perfect the way God made us?

**Poses:** Heart opening poses such as Fish, Hero, Camel and allowing our heart to melt and sink in Child's pose.

### Suggested Scripture:

Proverbs 3:5 - *Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.*

**Lungs.** How do we continue to breathe new life in our relationship to Christ? How do we breathe new life in what we hear Sunday after Sunday as we attend church? How do we refrain from growing stale in our service to the Lord? How do we refrain from just turning into an automaton when stuffing boxes for the homeless? In our practice, how do we turn off our brain to the anticipation of being one pose ahead, counting how many down dogs we have done in a practice, thinking each time we are in Warrior I, it is the same as last time? What are we breathing in and what are we exhaling and letting go of? What is not serving us - what do we need to let go? How do we revisit the same pose or sequence but with renewed breath, a renewed spirit?

**Poses:** Bow, Half Moon, Wheel. All these poses are vigorous and expansive as they open the rib cage area and increase lung capacity.

### Suggested Scripture:

Job 33:4 - *The Spirit of God has made me and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.*

**Liver.** The liver is responsible for sorting out all our food and processing, turning it into nutrients. Think about the people who surround us. Are the friends we have, ones who share our journey with Christ? Are they people we are bringing into discipleship? Are they friends who are guiding you into a better discipleship and relationship with Christ? Are they friends who lift us up, do we lift them up? With our yoga practice, do you eagerly and welcome the poses that challenge you physically?

**Poses:** Some similar poses as for the kidneys such as twists in order to detoxify. Additional poses for the liver include: Boat, Cobra and Locust.

### Suggested Scripture:

Matthew 15:17 - Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and is eliminated?

**Kidneys.** Our kidneys represent water and cleansing. Since the kidneys are responsible for flushing out, cleansing and filtering, begin to ask yourself how you are cleansing? What are you flushing out of your



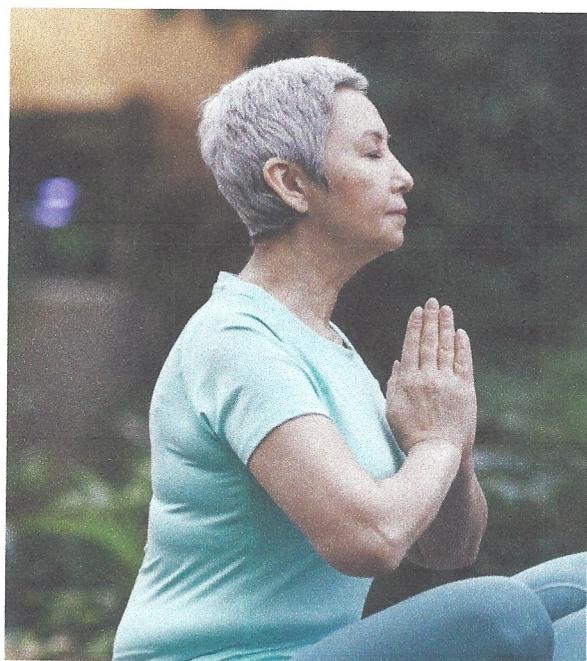
life? How are you filtering all that comes at you in work and family? How do you consistently filter out the enemy who tries to distract? How do we stay pure in thought, word, action, and in our practice and not take shortcuts?

**Poses:** Twists such as Seated Twist, Supine Twist, and Bound Angle.

**Suggested Scripture:**

1 John 1:9 - If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

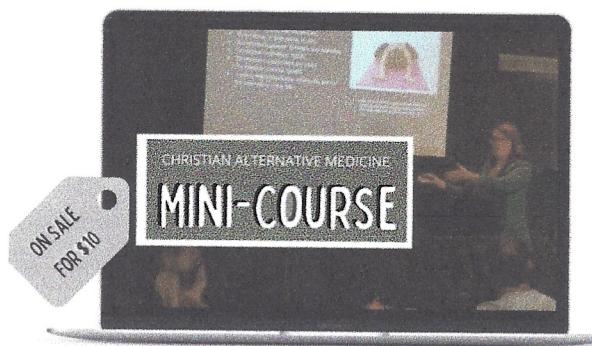
*Dr. Donna Jagielski holds a doctorate in education from ASU. She has been an educator, educational administrator and currently works in educational programming for a nonprofit organization. She is actively involved in her church in Phoenix and Flagstaff where she maintains dual residency. She is a RYT-200 and RCYT-95 and is a member of the Yoga Alliance. She currently leads Christ-centered yoga for the Women on the Move program she facilitates at her Phoenix church and also leads yoga at a juvenile detention center in Phoenix.*



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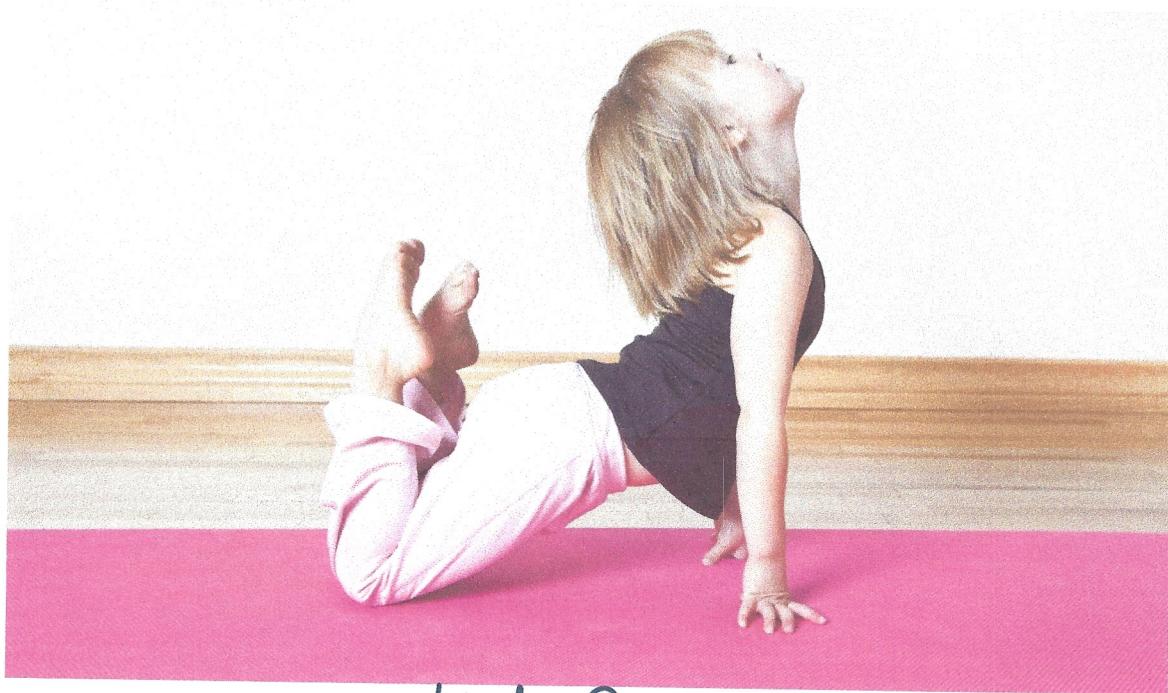
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## Kids Corner

### RECONNECTING TO CHRIST THROUGH CLASSIC BIBLE STORIES IN YOGA PRACTICE

- by Dr. Donna Jagielski

Noah's Ark and Daniel in the Lion's Den are typically the most classical Biblical stories for children. But oftentimes since these classics become overused they become uneventful for children to listen to on a regular basis.

Through playful yoga poses, especially related to animals, we can reinvent these classic Bible stories so that children once again become re-engaged with these meaningful stories. Adding the movement of yoga poses and breathwork woven into the classics gives these Bible stories new life.

You are encouraged to be playful with the poses and explore different variations. Perform poses with and without various props. Try facing one another, mirroring some poses or going back to back.

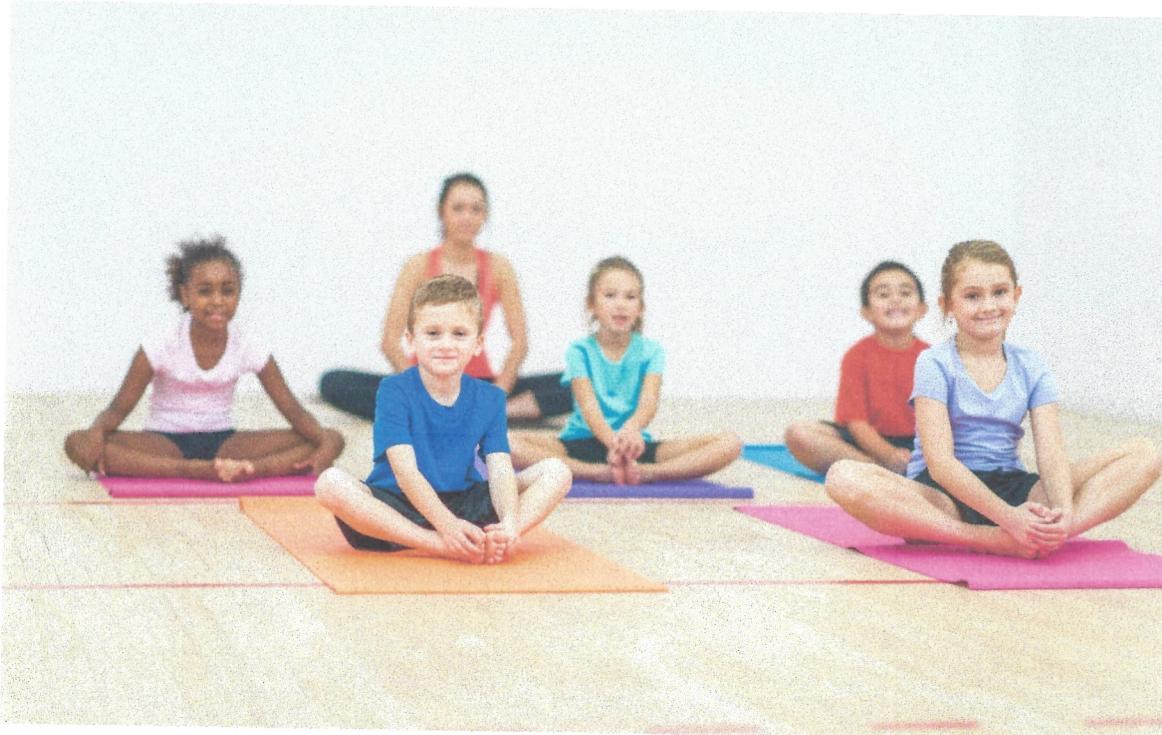
Take turns as in an "I do, you do, we do" to build further bonding relationships and/or further the development of the story. You are also invited to rename poses as related specifically to the Bible story. Renaming creates a greater sense of investment in the story thus a higher likelihood of remembering and recalling details.

This is a sample of discussion prompts, Scripture, poses, sequence, and breathwork that align well with the stories of Noah's Ark and Daniel in the Lion's Den.

### **Butterfly**

Begin in an easy seated butterfly pose, bringing the soles of the feet together. Turning your attention inward, bring your palms together in prayer at your heart. Picture Noah and his Ark with all the animals. Take this time to bless all creatures great and small. Besides the large land animals and winged creatures, turn your attention to the smallest of God's creatures, butterflies, grasshoppers, lizards, and many others. Thank God for creating all creatures great and small.

Butterflies are known for transformation. Noah's life was completely transformed when he was obedient to the Lord's request to care for the animals. Think about how Daniel was transformed during his experience in the Lion's Den.



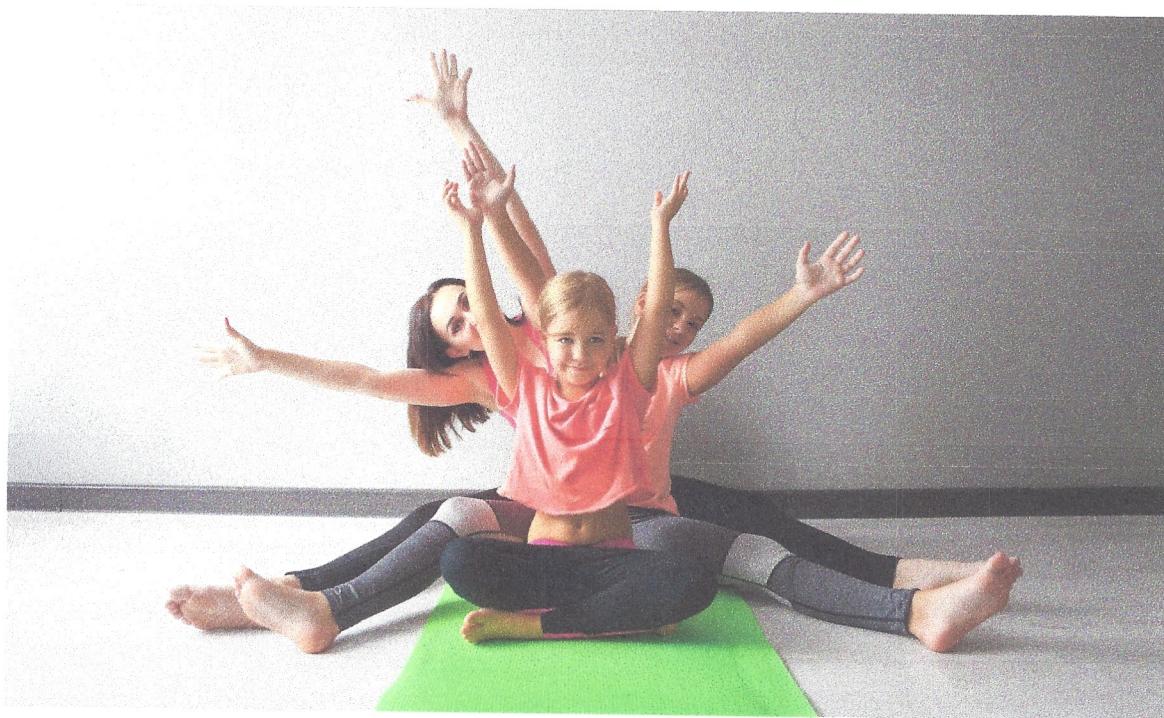
Suggested Scripture: Romans 12:2 - *Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - His good and pleasing and perfect will.*

This is a sample of discussion prompts, Scripture, poses, sequence, and breathwork that align well with the stories of Noah's Ark and Daniel in the Lion's Den, continued...

### **Peacock**

While seated, slowly open your legs to a wide straddle; open your arms out like wings to lift your gaze to heaven. Think about the beautiful feathers on a peacock, the colors, and the brightness. Imagine the size of the Ark to safely care for all the different animals. Explore this pose back to back with a loved one to feel the support of one another. Also, explore the pose facing each other to visually connect.

A peacock many times is symbolic of beauty. Recognize there is beauty in all of God's creatures. No matter how small, how many legs or stingers a creature may have, it is beautiful because it has been created with God's love.



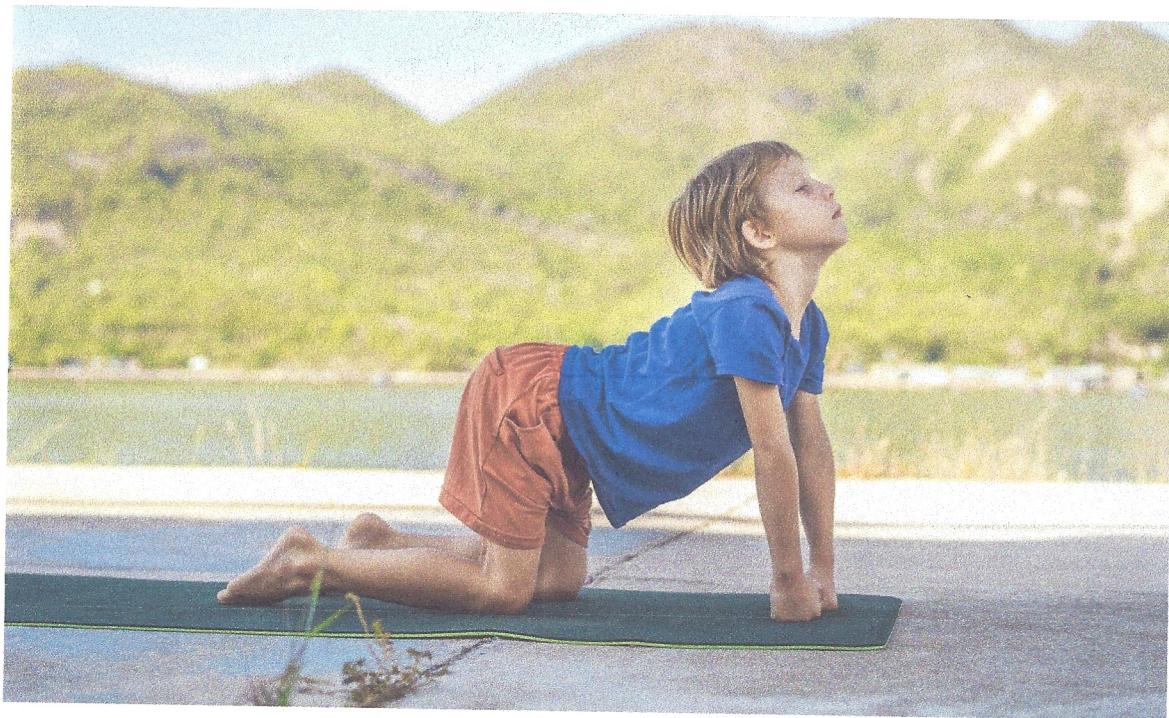
Suggested Scripture: 1 Peter 3:3-4 "Your beauty should not come from outward adornments such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. Rather, it should be your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight."

This is a sample of discussion prompts, Scripture, poses, sequence, and breathwork that align well with the stories of Noah's Ark and Daniel in the Lion's Den, continued...

### **Cat/Cow**

Crawling out onto hands and knees, slowly round your back and look towards your tummy into cat pose. Now slowly allow your tummy to release and aim towards the ground as your head and chest lifts. During one of the sets, explore with playful auditory/vocal sounds of "moo" and "meow". Think about how much God loves the animals and how he entrusted Noah to care for them and keep them safe from the flood. How do you save animals and creatures from harm?

Cows are symbolic of nourishment and the connection to motherhood. The Lord is pleased with our actions of taking care of one another and being obedient as what was asked of Noah. God continues to nourish our souls as we all are children of God. There is nothing to fear since God is always taking care of us as he did Daniel. Nothing to fear.



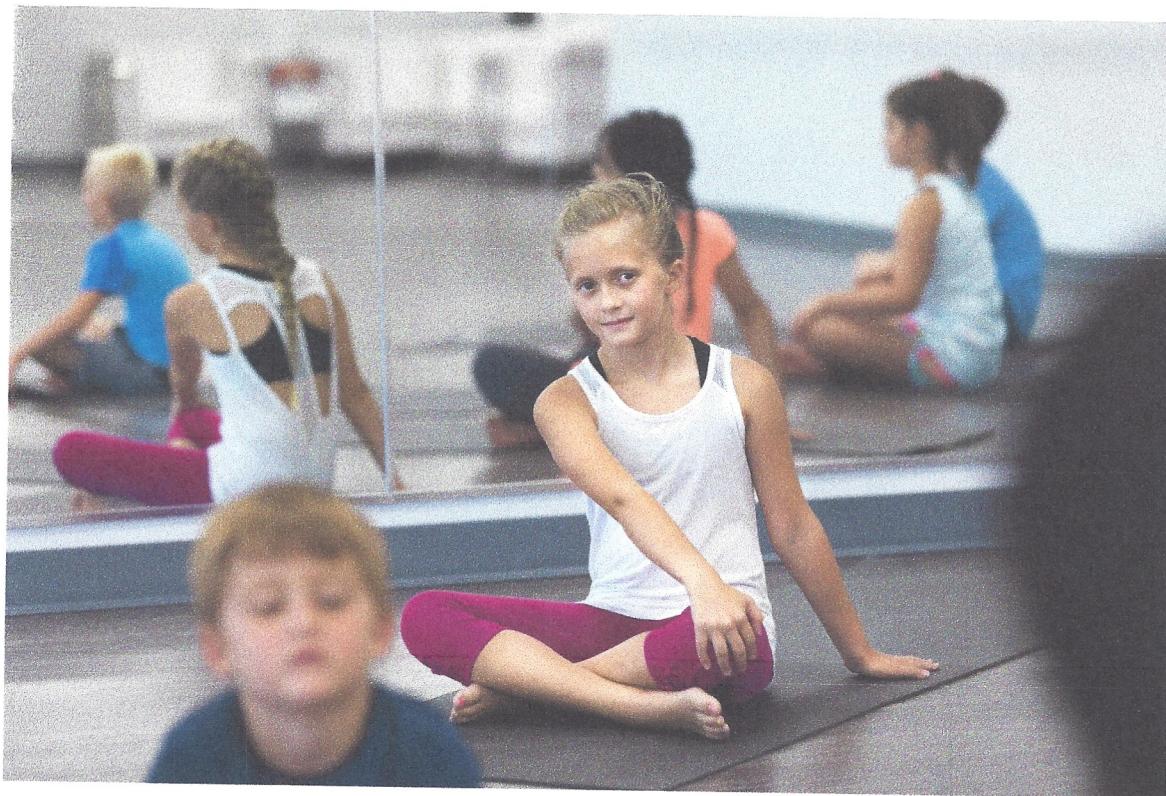
**Suggested Scripture:** Number 14:8 - *If the Lord delights in us he will bring us into this land of and give it to us, a land that flows with milk and honey.*

This is a sample of discussion prompts, Scripture, poses, sequence, and breathwork that align well with the stories of Noah's Ark and Daniel in the Lion's Den, continued...

### **Twisty Owl**

Seated in an easy cross-legged pose, wrapping arms around the waist or opposite hand to the knee. Revolve from the base of the spine first and allow the twist to extend up the spine all the way up to the head. Encourage the rotation of the head to be the last part of the twist.

Owls are symbolic of knowledge and being wise. Think about the wise decisions Noah made in making sure he had two of each kind of animal and to prepare a strong ark to withstand the floodwaters. While it is wise to proceed with caution in situations where there is a possible danger, like when Daniel was thrown into the den with the lion, God provided us with the ability to learn, grow and acquire wisdom so that combined with his love we can make sound decisions and not simply succumb to fear.



**Suggested Scripture:** Proverbs 12:15 - *The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice.*

This is a sample of discussion prompts, Scripture, poses, sequence, and breathwork that align well with the stories of Noah's Ark and Daniel in the Lion's Den, continued...

### Lion

Explore this roaring breath while on knees with your bottom resting on heels. You are invited to place your hands near the side of your face to symbolize the mane on a lion. Inhale deeply through the nose, drawing the stomach up and inward. On the exhale, open your mouth wide and create an auditory 'roaring' exhale sound. This is an excellent pranayama breathwork for young children since it is very auditory, which makes their breath quite tangible.

Besides the lions that joined all the other animals on Noah's Ark, this breathwork serves as an opportunity to discuss Daniel in the Lion's Den. Using pranayama, specifically Lion's Breath, we are able to connect our breath, body using poses, and our faith through Scripture and Bible stories, to understand God's love and how we can ultimately embrace overcoming fear because we know God loves us and is with us all the time. There is nothing to fear.



Suggested Scripture: *Daniel 6:21-22 - Daniel answered "May the King live forever! My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of lions. They did not hurt me because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, Your Majesty."*