

DANIEL OBEYED GOD

DANIEL 1



KEY PASSAGE: 1 Corinthians 10:31

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How can we glorify God? We can glorify God by loving Him and obeying Him.

CHRIST CONNECTION: Daniel was faithful to obey God, even in the small matters like eating the correct foods. Jesus was faithful to obey God in every way. When we trust in Jesus as Savior, God credits us with the perfect life Jesus lived.

STORY POINT: Daniel was faithful to God, and he was blessed with wisdom.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

Some see Daniel as a book filled with epic adventures and fascinating prophecies—yet the heart of Daniel’s narrative goes much deeper. At its essence, Daniel is a survival guide, a bold blueprint for thriving in a world that’s hostile to those who place their faith in the one true God.

Daniel and his friends found themselves in a situation far removed from what they may have expected for their lives. Their people had been captured by the leading power of their day, the Babylonians. God’s people were exiled from their home to a foreign land where they would face severe persecution as they boldly lived out their faith in God.

What made this nation such a hostile environment for these young men? First, Babylon had a godless king who was known for murdering his enemies and those who defied him. Secondly, Daniel and his friends were forced to receive a Babylonian education that focused heavily on religious practices directly in contrast to their own, including a strong emphasis on astrology and the occult. These young men were not just to be removed from their homeland; rather, they were to be transformed into followers of the Babylonian way of life.

Imagine for a moment the pain of being removed from the only place you have ever known, isolated from friends and family, and inundated with daily teachings that contradict your fundamental beliefs. How would you react?

Daniel and his friends reacted with humble obedience. Even in the seemingly small matters, like eating the correct foods, Daniel and his friends desired to obey God and remain faithful to Him. Daniel and his friends decided they would stick to the diets prescribed in the Law instead of indulging in the king’s food, regardless of the consequences. Like Jesus in His time of temptation, Daniel and his friends realized that “man does not live by bread alone.” These young men trusted God to honor their obedience, and that is exactly what God did by giving them wisdom beyond their years.

As you teach kids this story, help them see how obedience to God is always better than following the ways of the world and how Jesus provides Christians with the Holy Spirit to help them obey God. Remind kids that we can glorify God in the small everyday choices we make and in everything we do.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10–15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25–30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- "Follow the Veggies" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- various raw vegetables, 8
- brown paper bags, 8

Session Starter (Option 2)

- timer



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- Small Group Timeline and Map Set



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- glass jar
- tray
- pebbles or marbles

Journal and Prayer

- Journal Page
- "Why Do We Obey God?" activity page



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- countdown video
- Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- "Daniel Obeyed God" video
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Old Testament Mediterranean Map (optional)

Questions from Kids

- "Unit 16, Session 1" Questions from Kids video

Missions Moment

- "Welcome to Europe" missions video

Key Passage Activity

- Key Passage Poster
- "For the Glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31)" song
- worship song of your choice (optional)
- dry erase board
- dry erase marker and eraser



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

| **SAY** “What is your favorite food to eat? Why?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete the “Follow the Veggies” activity page.

| **SAY** “Today, we’ll see how Daniel obeyed God by choosing to eat food that honored Him.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: NAME THE VEGGIE

Before the session, gather eight raw vegetables and place each one in a brown paper bag. Examples include: broccoli, asparagus, bell pepper, carrot, artichoke, etc. Try to include a couple of vegetables that kids may not be completely familiar with. On the outside of each paper bag, write one of the letters to the word FAITHFUL.

Choose a volunteer and invite him to close his eyes, reach into the bag, and touch the vegetable. Then invite another volunteer to do the same. Ask each volunteer to write their answer on a piece of paper. Then reveal the vegetable and ask the kids to share what they wrote. Repeat, for the remaining bags.

| **SAY** “Were some of the vegetables hard to guess? How would you feel if you had to only eat vegetables for ten days? [Allow responses.] Today, we will see how a young man named Daniel chose to only eat vegetables for ten days as a way to obey God and honor Him. We’ll learn that **DANIEL WAS FAITHFUL TO GOD, AND HE WAS BLESSED WITH WISDOM.** Let’s get ready to learn more in our story.”

OPTION 2: TEST ME



Instruct kids to spread out around the room. Tell the kids that you are going to give them a series of tests. Emphasize that the tests are just for fun. Provide each kid with a piece of paper and a pencil. Direct kids to do the following tests, encouraging them to try their best.

- Complete 20 jumping jacks in 25 seconds
- Write the ABCs backward
- Stand on one foot for 30 seconds
- Write the names of 5 countries in 15 seconds
- Run in place for 60 seconds

| **SAY** “How do you think you did? [Allow responses.] It can be challenging to perform tests well. In our story today, we’ll see how a young man named Daniel asked to be tested as a way to obey God and remain faithful to God.”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “ Welcome, kids! My name is [your name], and I’m so glad you’re here! The Bible is God’s true Word, and by reading it we learn more about our great God. Did you bring your Bible today? If so, will you take it out? Today, we’ll be in the book of Daniel. [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one. Invite kids to turn to Daniel 1.]

The book of Daniel was written after the Kingdom of Judah was destroyed by Babylon. Because the people of Judah continued to sin, God allowed the nation of Babylon to destroy Jerusalem and take the people captive to Babylon. Daniel was one of the people who was taken to Babylon. Today, we’ll see how even though Daniel was in a new place and captured to be a servant, he chose to trust God and obey Him. Through our story, we’ll learn how **DANIEL WAS FAITHFUL TO GOD, AND HE WAS BLESSED WITH WISDOM.** [Display the Story Point Poster.] Let’s pray and prepare our hearts to hear God’s Word: ‘God, we trust that Your Word is true and points us to You. As we read about Daniel’s obedience, remind us that we are also called to obey You with our lives.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “ Through studying the Bible, we learn big truths about God, people, and the world. Our big picture questions and answers help us learn these truths. Our big picture question is, **How can we glorify God?** How would you answer this question? [Allow responses.] The answer we’ll learn is, **We can glorify God by loving Him and obeying Him.**

Through our story, we’ll see how Daniel and his friends glorified God by being faithful to Him, demonstrating that they loved Him and desired to obey Him. Daniel showed that he loved God more than following the idolatrous ways of Babylon and fitting in with others. As we follow God, we can show we love Him by obeying Him, even when it’s hard. In this way, we will glorify God. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “ Because God’s people continued to sin, the kingdoms of Israel and Judah were destroyed. God sent prophets to warn the people of their sin, but they did not repent. After the destruction of Judah, the people were taken into exile by the Babylonians. But God had not forgotten them. Through the prophets, God promised a new covenant. God also promised that one day, He would bring His people back to the land He had given them. However, God’s desire was not only for His people to return to the land, but also to return to Him. Today, we will learn that Daniel obeyed God rather than follow the ways of Babylon. ”



LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Daniel 1. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Daniel Obeyed God.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

DANIEL OBEYED GOD

“When Jehoiakim was king of Judah—before Judah was destroyed—God allowed King Nebuchadnezzar (neb yoo kad NEZ uhr) to attack Jerusalem and win. He brought back some of the treasures from the temple and some of the strongest and smartest young men from the royal and noble families to be servants in his palace. The king planned for these young men to be trained in the ways of Babylon and learn its language. He wanted them to become part of his nation.

The young men were to be trained for three years, and then they would serve the king. One of the young men who was captured and brought to Babylon was named Daniel.

Daniel knew that the food the king had provided him to eat went against God’s commandment. So, Daniel asked permission from the king’s chief servant to eat something else. The chief servant liked Daniel, but he was afraid of the king. “What if he sees you looking less healthy than the other young men?” the chief servant said. “The king might punish me!”

Daniel said, “Please, test us for ten days. Let me and my friends eat vegetables and drink water, so that we do not disobey the law of our God. Then examine how we look compared to the other young men and decide based on what you see.” The guard agreed to this test.

At the end of ten days, Daniel and his friends who ate vegetables and drank water were better and healthier than all the other young men. So, the guard continued to allow them to eat only what God had commanded.

God rewarded these young men for their obedience. He gave them knowledge and understanding in every kind of writing. He also gave Daniel the ability to understand visions and dreams. When the king saw all the young men, he found Daniel and his friends to be far superior to the rest and appointed them as his attendants. In every matter that the king consulted these men about, he found them ten times better than all the other advisors in his kingdom.

Christ Connection: Daniel was faithful to obey God, even in the small matters like eating the correct foods. Jesus was faithful to obey God in every way. When we trust in Jesus as Savior, God credits us with the perfect life Jesus lived.”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Map it: Point to Babylon (E1) on the Old Testament Mediterranean Map.

Listen for it: Challenge kids to listen for how Daniel showed respect to the guard. Discuss ways in which kids can glorify God by showing respect, even when they don’t always agree with someone.



2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ Daniel and his friends had been taken captive during King Nebuchadnezzar’s attack on Jerusalem. Daniel was chosen to serve the king, and he was given the king’s food to eat. But Daniel decided not to eat the food. Why did Daniel refuse to eat the king’s food? Look at Daniel 1:8. [Ask a volunteer to read Daniel 1:8 aloud.] Daniel knew that eating this food would not honor God because it went against God’s law. Daniel loved God and wanted to obey Him.

Then Daniel asked for a test: he and his friends would eat only vegetables and drink water for ten days. The chief servant was worried they would become weak, but Daniel trusted that obeying God was the right choice. What happened to Daniel and his friends after the ten days? Look at Daniel 1:15-17. [Ask a volunteer to read Daniel 1:15-17 aloud.] At the end of the test, Daniel and his friends looked healthier and stronger than all the other young men who ate the king’s food! **DANIEL WAS FAITHFUL TO GOD, AND HE WAS BLESSED WITH WISDOM.**

Daniel chose to honor and glorify God even when faced with challenges. He and his friends could have easily chosen to go along with the Babylonian ways and customs, which didn’t honor God. But they didn’t! Instead, these young men chose to continue to remain faithful to God. God also desires that we stand firm in our faith, choosing His ways over the ways of the world. **We can glorify God by loving Him and obeying Him.** ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ Daniel was faithful to obey God, even in the small matters like eating the correct foods. However, no one is perfectly faithful to God because all people sin. We need Jesus to forgive our sin and change our hearts so we can live in faithfulness to the Lord. Jesus was faithful to obey God in every way. When we trust in Jesus as Savior, God credits us with the perfect life Jesus lived. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 16, Session 1” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. Do you think living on earth is a test to see if you are good or not? Why or why not?
2. How can we listen to God and obey Him?

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

SAY “ Dan and Tara Byrd are missionaries in Manchester, England. Before they moved to England, they used to start churches in the area around Boston, Massachusetts. While living in the Boston area, the Byrds felt God calling them to become missionaries to England. ”

Play the video. Point out that it can be challenging to tell people about Jesus in Manchester, England, where the Byrds serve as missionaries. Pastors in the area say that when people



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

first hear the gospel, it may take years before they trust Jesus as their Savior. The Byrds have only seen two people become Christians in two years.

Share how the Byrds have not given up hope and continue to share the gospel with the people of Manchester. Dan wants to encourage pastors and train church members to tell people about Jesus. Share how new churches are being started. City Church, in downtown Manchester, has already started one new church in a different neighborhood and plans to start another. Pray for Dan and Tara as they help churches start more churches in Manchester, England. Pray that, like Daniel, they will be faithful to obey God in sharing the good news.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud 1 Corinthians 10:31 together.

Write the key passage on a dry erase board. Lead kids to recite the key passage aloud, repeating it after you several times. Then erase one word from the key passage. Direct kids to recite the key passage again and fill in the missing word. Repeat, until only a few words or no words remain.

SAY “ Daniel and his friends glorified God by loving and obeying God more than anything. We can follow their example, with the help of the Holy Spirit, and live in ways that glorify God. ”

Lead kids to sing “For the Glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “ Dear God, You are good and faithful. You alone deserve all honor and glory. Please forgive us when we are unfaithful and disobey You. Help us, Lord, glorify You in everything we do. In Jesus’ name, amen. ”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to Daniel 1. Explain that the book of Daniel is found in the Old Testament and was written by Daniel. Share that Daniel was a prophet and his book contains many prophecies of future events.

Consider pointing out the nation of Babylon (E11) on the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Daniel 1:3-4 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verses aloud.

SAY “ The king wanted Daniel and his friends to learn a new language, study new ideas, and even eat different food. The king wanted them to become like the Babylonians, who did not acknowledge God as the one true God. But even though Daniel and his friends lived among people who didn’t honor God, Daniel and his friends chose to stay faithful to God and His ways.

We live in a world that often goes against God, but like Daniel, we can still stand strong in our faith. Those who have trusted in Jesus have the Holy Spirit living in them, who helps them live for God and make choices that glorify Him. ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “ What are some situations where you might be faced with doing something that doesn’t honor God? How can Christians stand firm in their faith? ”

Answers will vary. Discuss how we will all face times when we will need to make a choice to obey God or disobey Him. Share how we might be tempted to lie to avoid getting into trouble or be tempted to follow friends who make bad choices. Remind kids that God is faithful, and He will help us honor and obey Him when we turn to Him for help. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 1 Cor. 10:13.)

SAY “ What are everyday examples of how we can obey God and glorify Him? ”

Discuss how Daniel honored God by obeying Him in a small matter, like eating food. Remind kids that we can glorify God in everything we do, such as how we speak to others, what clothes we wear, trying our best in school, and so on. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Col. 3:17,23.)

SAY “ How can our obedience to God point others to Him? ”

Share how God can use our obedience to make us stand out in the world, helping others see how God has changed our hearts to live in ways that are different from the world. Discuss how our good works can be used to bring glory to God. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Matt. 5:16.)

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: SMALL CHOICE, BIG IMPACT

Before the session, fill a clear glass almost full with water. Place the glass on a tray. Tell kids that the water in the glass represents our lives. Then take a small pebble or marble and add it to the water. Tell kids the pebble represents choices we make. Add a pebble and invite kids to watch as the water level increases slightly. Then add a few more pebbles. Finally, add a handful of pebbles until the water overflows out of the glass. Discuss how the small choices we make over time can have a big impact, for good or bad. Prompt kids to think about some small choices they make every day.

SAY “ Just like how the water added up in the glass, our choices shape who we become and the impact we can have on others and in God’s kingdom. Daniel made choices that honored God, and he was given a place of influence in the king’s kingdom. Through Jesus, we can make choices that show we love God and desire to bring Him glory. ”

OPTION 2: WISDOM WALK



Challenge kids to determine if a statement you say is wise or unwise. If it’s wise, kids will take a step forward. If unwise, kids will remain in place. Kids who make the wrong choice must go back to the start line. Consider calling out the following statements and create more of your own:

- Cheating on a test because others are
- Telling the truth, even if you get in trouble
- Completing a chore without grumbling
- Choosing friends who love God
- Ignoring your parents’ instructions
- Showing kindness, even if it means others will make fun of you

SAY “ Daniel made a wise choice to obey God rather than eat the king’s food. And God blessed Daniel with wisdom. God desires to help us grow in wisdom too. When we trust in Jesus, God helps us follow Him and make wise choices that glorify Him. ”

2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God’s glory and my good?
- Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray, asking God to help kids glorify Him as they seek to obey Him. As time allows, lead kids to complete “Why Do We Obey God?” on the activity page.