

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

- "Food of Choice" activity page



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- Small Group Timeline and Map Set (optional)



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
- various raw vegetables (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)



LIVE

Reflection and Prayer

- Bible story coloring page



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** “ If you could eat one food everyday for the rest of your life, what would it be? Why would you pick this particular food? ”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete the “Food of Choice” activity page.

| **SAY** “ In today’s Bible story, we’ll see how Daniel obeyed God by eating foods that honored God. ”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: BARNYARD BOOGIE



Gather kids together and instruct them to close their eyes. Explain that you are going to name an animal for kids to imitate, such as a chicken, cow, or pig. Share how you will tap one kid on the shoulder. The kid you tapped, however, must act like a different animal of his or her choosing, such as a dog. When you count to three, everyone will open their eyes and begin to act like the animal you chose, except the kid you tapped. He or she will act like a different animal. Explain that the first kid to spot which kid is acting differently wins that round. Continue playing as time allows.

| **SAY** “ Was it hard to spot who was acting differently? [Allow responses.] God calls us to obey Him and that often means acting differently than others around us. Today, we will learn how Daniel chose to be different from those around him. He obeyed God even when it was difficult. **DANIEL WAS FAITHFUL TO GOD, AND HE WAS BLESSED WITH WISDOM.** ”

OPTION 2: NOT LIKE THE REST

Before the session, gather three large brown paper bags. In each bag, place four different items, including one item that is different from the rest. For example, in one bag you may place a toothbrush, toothpaste, dental floss, and a bar of soap. In another bag, you may place markers, paints, crayons, and a hairbrush.

Hold up one of the paper bags and reveal each item one at a time. Invite kids to determine which item is not like the rest. Then ask the kids to explain why it’s not like the other items. Repeat for the remaining two bags.

| **SAY** “ Today, we will see how a man named Daniel and some of his friends were not like the other young men chosen to serve King Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel and his friends chose to obey God and ate foods that honored Him. Because Daniel and his friends chose to obey God, even in the small matters, they stood out as different from the rest of the men. Daniel and his friends were healthier, stronger, and wiser than the rest. ”

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! As we meet together, we learn true stories from the Bible about God. Did you bring your Bible today? If so, will you take it out? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one. Invite kids to turn to Daniel 1.]

The book of Daniel is in the Old Testament, and it was written after the Kingdom of Judah was destroyed by Babylon. God allowed the nation of Babylon to destroy the Kingdom of Judah and the city of Jerusalem because the people of Judah continued to sin. Some of the people were taken as captives to Babylon, including a young man named Daniel. 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.**

In the book of Daniel, we’ll learn how God’s people were far from home in the nation of Babylon because of their sinful disobedience. But God had not abandoned them. He is good, and He desired their obedience, despite their circumstances. Today, we’ll see how Daniel glorified God through his obedience to God’s commands. Daniel loved God, and this love let him to obey God even in challenging circumstances. Like Daniel, we are called to glorify God no matter what. ”

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. He also promised that 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

Display vegetables:

Place a variety of vegetables on a table and hold them up when you share how Daniel and his friends only ate vegetables.

Explain it: Tell kids that Daniel and his friends were faithful to God in even the small matters, like eating food, because they wanted to glorify God.



2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ Daniel and his friends were taken to Babylon. In Babylon, Daniel was training to serve the king. But when he was offered the king’s food, Daniel would not eat it. Why wouldn’t Daniel eat the king’s food? [Allow responses.] Daniel knew that eating the king’s food went against God’s law. Daniel loved God and wanted to obey Him, so he asked the chief servant to allow him and his friends to eat vegetables and drink water. The servant was scared of the king, but Daniel feared God. While eating or not eating certain foods may seem like a small matter, Daniel wanted to show he loved God through his obedience. God desires that we live the same way. **We can glorify God by loving Him and obeying Him.**

What happened after Daniel and his friends ate vegetables for ten days? [Allow responses.] Daniel and his friends looked better and healthier than any of the other young men. They were set apart from the others, both in their appearance and their obedience to God. God rewarded them with wisdom. God also gave Daniel the ability to understand visions and dreams. **DANIEL WAS FAITHFUL TO GOD, AND HE WAS BLESSED WITH WISDOM.**

How did the king respond when he saw Daniel and his friends? [Allow responses.] The king was so impressed, he made them his personal servants. Even when Daniel found himself in an unfamiliar place, he continued to love and obey God. God also commands us to obey Him, even in difficult situations. While we seek to be obedient, we remember that only 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. ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ Daniel was faithful to God, even in the small matters. God’s Word reminds us that no one can perfectly follow God’s law. But God sent His Son, Jesus, to live a perfect life in our place. Jesus obeyed God in every way, even through His death on a cross. God offers forgiveness to all those who trust in Jesus, and by faith in Jesus we are made right with God. ”

(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?



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

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 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.

SAY “ Our key passage reminds us that in all things we are to glorify God. We bring glory to God when we listen to and obey His Word. ”

Guide kids to form a large circle. Lead the kids in saying the first few words of the key passage in a silly voice (animal, robot, pirate, etc). Instruct the kid to your left to repeat the words using the same voice as you. Go around the circle, allowing each kid to repeat the words. Then, say the next few words of the key passage in a different silly voice. Continue this process until the kids have recited the entire key passage.

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 “ God, we are called to bring glory to You in all that we say and do. Help us love You and obey You no matter what. Give us hearts that desire to please You. 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. The book of Daniel is found in the Major Prophets division of the Old Testament.

Consider pointing out the nation of Babylon (E11) on the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Daniel 1:8-9 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verses aloud.

SAY “ Daniel obeyed God’s commands by not eating food that God said people in the Old Testament should avoid. Can you think of a time when you were faced with a decision to do what is right, even though it might have been difficult? Like Daniel, we are all faced with choosing between right and wrong, and—like Daniel—we should try to stand strong and obey God. Even when we fail, however, God provides the way for Christians to be forgiven through belief in Jesus. Jesus is the only person to have always obeyed God in all circumstances. Christians should follow Jesus’ example by trying to obey God, but they can also trust in Jesus’ perfect life and sacrifice on the cross when they sin and fall short. Daniel needed God’s forgiveness, and we do too! ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “ Like Daniel, how can we know the difference between what pleases God and what doesn’t please God? ”

Discuss how we can look to God’s Word, the Bible, when we are confused or unsure about what is right and what is wrong. Explain that God gave us His Word to help us determine His ways versus the world’s ways or the sinful ways of our hearts. Tell kids they can also seek the wisdom of godly adults who want to help them live for God’s glory.

SAY “ Does God promise to always reward us when we obey Him? Why or why not? ”

Share how God does reward us for obedience, but His rewards may not always be what we expect. Daniel was rewarded with wisdom, which is a good gift and something he could only receive through God. Discuss how God’s rewards will always include receiving more of God Himself because He is the reward. Scripture reminds us that our eternal reward is in heaven.

SAY “ What are some ways we can glorify God every day? ”

Answers will vary. Encourage the kids to think about the big picture question: **We glorify God when we love and obey Him.** Remind kids that we obey God when we live according to His Word and trust Him. Discuss how our obedience doesn’t make us right with God. Tell kids that we obey God through the power of the Holy Spirit and out of love for what God has done to save us from sin through Jesus.

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





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: DRAW A VEGGIE

Begin by helping kids think of as many vegetables as they can. Then, form kids into groups of three or four. Provide each kid with paper and markers. Lead kids to draw six squares on their paper. Explain that kids will have 30 seconds to draw a vegetable in a square. Tell kids to keep their drawings hidden from one another. At the end of 30 seconds, invite kids to share what vegetable they drew. If kids drew the same vegetable they are out. Play five more rounds, explaining that kids must draw a new vegetable each round. At the end of five rounds, congratulate the kids who remained in the game.

SAY “ Daniel obeyed God by refusing to eat the king’s food and eating only vegetables. Daniel showed that he loved God and trusted in His ways over the ways of Babylon. God wants us to trust Him and choose His ways too. We can ask God to help us follow Him in obedience and remain faithful to Him. God gives believers the Holy Spirit so they can be encouraged and empowered to obey God. ”

OPTION 2: WHO ARE YOU LOOKING AT?



Invite the kids to sit in a circle. Instruct everyone to close their eyes and put their heads down. On the count of three, shout “Look!” When the kids open their eyes, they must look at someone specific in the circle and point to him or her. Kids cannot change who they are looking at during the round. If they look at someone and he or she is looking back at them, they are out. If not, kids remain in the game. Tell kids that they must choose someone new to look at each round. Continue playing as time allows.

SAY “ Sometimes we can look to those around us and follow their example, even when it’s wrong. Daniel and his friends didn’t look at what everyone else was doing. Instead, Daniel and his friends looked to God. They wanted to obey Him and follow His ways. Hebrews 12:1-2 says that Christians look to Jesus and desire to follow Him. Believers don’t want to get tangled up in sin or disobedience. Instead, they trust Jesus and live in obedience to Him. ”

2 REFLECTION AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper and pencil to each kid. Ask kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Who can I tell about this story?

Be sure to send the sheets home with the kids along with the activity pages so parents can continue to discuss the Bible story with their kids. If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page. Pray for your group.