

Daniel (1 of 4)

"We must obey God rather than men." (Acts 5:29)

Choose God's way!

Introduction: Today we are starting a new topic that is all about a man in the Bible whose name was Daniel. Has anyone heard of Daniel? There is a book in the Old Testament called 'Daniel,' and it tells some stories about a young man called Daniel and his friends. Daniel and his friends faced many challenges. Some people wanted them to worship false gods. They were often in lots of danger, but Daniel and his friends always stayed loyal and very close to God no matter what! This month, we are going to be thinking about ways that we can live a life like Daniel did!

Messy Game: Slime Salad!

Tell the children that today's game is all about making a healthy snack, because in the story we'll hear later, Daniel and his friends would only eat fruit and vegetables. Chop up some fruit and vegetables, such as apples, oranges and carrots, and hide them in a bowl of slime (rice pudding with green colouring). Get three volunteers to race to find the fruit in the mixture and put it into a dessert bowl to make a 'slime salad.'

Group activity: You could bring in some blenders and make fruit (and vegetable if you are adventurous) smoothies to drink with the kids. Talk to the children about how we can choose healthy things to eat, so we can take good care of the bodies God has given us!

Snack and DVD clip: Give the children their snack, and take some time to chat with them about what is going on in their lives right now. Then show them a DVD clip of the dinner being served ('Be Our Guest' song) from 'Beauty and the Beast.' Tell the children about how today's story is all about what Daniel had for his dinner!

Teaching: Daniel 1 (my paraphrase)

Once there was a king called Nebuchadnezzar, and he was the king of Babylon. One day he sent his army to fight God's people in Jerusalem. He took power over this city and took the king captive, as well as taking treasures from the temple of God. He put these treasures in the treasure houses of his own god, who wasn't the real God we all know. Finally, King Nebuchadnezzar took some of the young men from the king's palace. He wanted men who were young and handsome, fit and healthy, and who could learn things well.

He ordered his chief leader to teach them the language of the Babylonians, and he ordered that they must eat food and drink wine from the King's table.

Four of the men who were taken captive were called Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. And do you know what the chief official did? He gave them new names. (*You could ask for volunteers to pretend to be the men. Give them name cards, that turn round to show the new names*). Daniel was now meant to be called Belteshazzar, and the others were to be called Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Imagine how they must have been feeling, in a strange place? And imagine how they must have felt with getting those strange new names? Imagine if someone told you that you were getting a new name, and that was that!

Now the king had ordered that the men eat the food and drink the wine from his table. But Daniel knew the food would not be good for them, and he knew that it was impure and God would not want him to have it. He decided not to eat the royal food and he asked the official not to make him eat it. The official liked Daniel, but he was afraid of the king. "If the king sees you looking worse than any of the other young men, he will have my head," he told Daniel.

But Daniel had a plan. "Why don't you do a test," he suggested. Test us by giving us only water and vegetables for ten days, and then compare us to the other men to see who looks the healthiest." So the official agreed and at the end of ten days they looked better than any of the men who ate the royal food. So they were allowed water and vegetables all the time.

God was pleased with Daniel and his friends for choosing to have lifestyles that honoured God. God blessed them because of this. He gave them knowledge and understanding of all kinds of books and learning, and he give Daniel a gift where he could understand pictures and dreams of all kinds.

What's this got to do with me?

Have you ever felt scared? Daniel and his friends were probably very scared. Soldiers had taken him to a new place and changed his name, but no matter what they had planned for Daniel, he knew that God had a bigger plan! Even though he was frightened, and even though he was in a strange place, Daniel was going to do things God's way.

Have you ever felt pressured to do the wrong thing? Have your friends ever wanted you to do something, but you've known in your head and in your heart that it wasn't right? That it wasn't what God wanted you to do? Daniel was under a lot of pressure to do the wrong thing. The soldiers were telling him to eat the king's food, but he knew it was the wrong thing. And even though he was probably afraid, Daniel chose to please God instead of people. He spoke to them about the food and asked if he could do things God's way!

You can choose to put God first too! Daniel could have eaten the food that the soldiers were asking him to eat, but he knew it wasn't what God wanted. God is pleased when you put him first and choose to do things His way. When you do things God's way, you are showing the rest of the world that he is your King! He is in charge of your life and he wants the best for you! God's way might feel hard at times, especially when your friends are pressuring you, but it is always the best way! So put him first, like Daniel did!

Worship and prayer ministry. Give the children a chance to respond to what God is saying to them. Explain that we have to make choices all the time. Often we know what the right thing to do is, but it can be so hard to do it. Tell the children that you want to pray for any of them who are having a hard time making good choices. Explain that you want to ask the Holy Spirit to come and strengthen them and make them strong and bold and wise, just like Daniel and his friends.

Vineyard Kids Curriculum

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