

Daniel and His Friends Obeyed God

1

BIBLE PASSAGE: Daniel 1

MAIN POINT: Daniel obeyed God.

KEY PASSAGE: Daniel 2:20

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How can we obey God? We trust God to help us obey Him.

SMALL GROUP OPENING (15–20 MINUTES) **LARGE GROUP BIBLE STUDY** (10–15 MINUTES) **SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES** (20–25 MINUTES)
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Leader BIBLE STUDY

God's people had been warned. The prophets had come with messages from God: "Turn from your sin, and turn back to God!" But the people did not listen. The nation of Judah was consumed by idol worship; the kings did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. So God kept His word—He allowed His people to be taken from their land.

Nebuchadnezzar was the king of Babylon, the strong and powerful nation that overtook Judah's capital of Jerusalem and brought God's people from Israel to Babylon. Daniel was a young man in Judah when this happened. He might have heard about the prophet Isaiah's warnings; now he witnessed their fulfillment. (See Isa. 39:5-7.)

King Nebuchadnezzar called for the best young men from Judah to be trained for service in the palace. Among these teens were Daniel and three of his friends. The chosen boys were given new identities—new names, new education, new culture. But Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah stayed faithful to the one true God and refused to make themselves unclean by eating the king's food.

God blessed Daniel and his friends. Daniel's obedience to God led to his favor with King Nebuchadnezzar, and Daniel's life would be a testament to God's control over all things. God remembered His people during the exile and promised to bring them back to their homeland and set up a new kingdom.

As you share this story with the preschoolers you teach, explain that obedience is not always easy, but we trust God to give us strength to obey Him. Point out that Daniel lived about 600 years before Jesus—the perfectly obedient promised One. We can trust that Jesus will return someday to set up His kingdom forever.

Check out the video "The Big Story" for a picture of this quarter's part in God's big story of redemption



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The BIBLE STORY

Daniel and His Friends Obeyed God

Daniel 1

Many years ago, God's people lived in a country called Judah. They had a king whose name was Jehoiakim (jih HOY uh kim). Jehoiakim did bad things, and God's people did bad things too. God was not happy, and He punished His people. God let another king come and take over Judah. The king's name was **Nebuchadnezzar** (NEB yoo kad NEZ uhr), and he **was the king of Babylon.**

Nebuchadnezzar and his army marched into Jerusalem and took over the city! They went into God's temple in Jerusalem and took things that did not belong to them. Nebuchadnezzar wanted boys to be brought to Babylon to serve him in his palace.

So a group of healthy, handsome, and smart boys were taken to Babylon. King Nebuchadnezzar gave them the same kind of food that he ate. He gave the boys the same kind of drinks that he drank. He chose men to be their teachers for three years. Then they would be ready to serve in the king's palace.

Four of the boys were different than the others. Even though they weren't in Judah, they still wanted to worship and obey the Lord, the one true God. These boys were named Daniel, Shadrach (SHAD rak), Meshach (MEE shak), and Abednego (uh BED-nih goh).

God's rules said that His people were not supposed to eat the kinds of food that Nebuchadnezzar gave them. Daniel and his friends wanted to obey God. Daniel asked the man in charge if he and his friends could have vegetables and water instead.

Daniel said, "Give us vegetables and water for 10

days. Then see if we are strong or weak.”

So the guard brought Daniel and his friends vegetables and water. After 10 days, Daniel and his friends looked healthier than the young men who had eaten the king’s food. So the guard let them eat vegetables and drink water instead of eating the king’s food.

God was happy that Daniel wanted to obey Him. God was kind to Daniel and his friends. He made them wise and smart. Daniel served the king for many years.

Christ Connection: Daniel and his friends wanted to obey God, and God helped them. In a greater way, Jesus always did what God wanted Him to do. Jesus never sinned, but He came to earth to rescue sinners. God forgives and helps everyone who trusts in Jesus.



**WANT TO
DISCOVER
GOD’S WORD?
GET
MORE!**

Invite preschoolers to check out this week’s devotionals to discover that before Daniel and his friends were taken to Babylon, Isaiah prophesied about the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6) bringing hope to the captives. Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out www.lifeway.com/devotionals.

Small Group OPENING

SESSION TITLE: Daniel and His Friends Obeyed God

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BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How can we obey God? We trust God to help us obey Him.

Welcome time

- “It Is Well” song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert download
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play the unit theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church’s security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

Activity page

- “Which Does Not Belong?” activity page, 1 per child
- pencils or crayons

Guide preschoolers to examine the foods in each row and draw an *X* over the ones that do not belong.

SAY • Good job deciding which foods did not belong. In today’s Bible story, Daniel and his friends had to make a choice. The king of Babylon wanted them to eat food from his table, but God’s rules said that His people were not supposed to eat that kind of food. Let’s find out what Daniel and his friends did.

Play a marching game



- construction paper
- marker
- tape

Tape several different colored sheets of construction paper on the floor in various places around the room. Lead preschoolers to follow you as you march around the room.

When you come to a sheet of construction paper, make up an activity preschoolers must complete, such as clapping

10 times, doing 4 jumping jacks, touching their toes 3 times, or making 5 arm circles. Then continue marching. Play as time allows. Consider inviting preschoolers to make suggestions for what activities to complete on their march.

SAY • We did fun things as we marched around the room!

In today's Bible story, the Babylonian army marched into Jerusalem, but they did mean things! They marched into God's temple and took things that did not belong to them. King Nebuchadnezzar even took boys to serve him in his palace in Babylon. We are going to hear about some of those boys today. Their names were Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Play out shopping for groceries

Invite preschoolers to play out shopping for groceries.

SAY • In today's Bible story, Daniel and his friends Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were taken to Babylon to serve the king. God's rules said that His people were not supposed to eat the kinds of food that King Nebuchadnezzar gave them. Daniel and his friends could not just go to the store to get different food. Let's find out what they did.

- toy shopping cart
- toy cash register
- toy food
- toy money
- clean, empty food boxes

Transition to Bible study

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, flip off the lights, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Invite preschoolers to tell you their favorite food as they move to Bible study.

- countdown video (optional)

Large Group LEADER

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Introduce the Bible story

- vegetables
- water

Display vegetables and water for preschoolers to see.

SAY • In today's Bible story, Daniel asked if he and his friends could eat vegetables and drink water instead of the food from the king of Babylon's table. Listen to our Bible story to find out why.

Watch or tell the Bible story

- bookmark
- Bible
- "Daniel and His Friends Obeyed God" video
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Place a bookmark at Daniel 1 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

SAY • The Bible is the most important book there is. The Bible is a true book, and it's the only book that has God's words in it. Today's Bible story is from Daniel.

Show the Bible story video "Daniel and His Friends Obeyed God" or tell the Bible story in your own words using the script provided. Use the bolded version for younger preschoolers.

Talk about the Bible story

- Main Point Poster
- Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle

SAY • Disobeying God by eating the king's food would have been easy for Daniel and his friends to do, but **Daniel obeyed God.** God made Daniel and his friends healthier than the young men who ate the

kings food. God was kind to Daniel and his friends. Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline or big story circle as you ask the following review questions:

1. Who marched into Jerusalem and took things from God's temple? (*Nebuchadnezzar and his army*)
2. What were the boys who were taken to Babylon like? (*healthy, handsome, and smart*)
3. What did God's rules say about the kind of food the king ate? (*not to eat it*)
4. What did Daniel ask the man in charge? (*if he and his friends could have vegetables and water instead*)
5. After 10 days, did Daniel and his friends look healthier or less healthy than the men who had eaten the king's food? (*healthier*)

Learn the big picture question

SAY • Our big picture question for the next few weeks is, ***How can we obey God? We trust God to help us obey Him.*** Daniel and his friends wanted to obey God, and God helped them obey Him. God will do the same for us. God forgives and helps everyone who trusts in Jesus.

• Big Picture Question Poster

Practice the key passage

Open your Bible to Daniel 2:20. Read the key passage aloud several times. Sing together the key passage song, "Forever and Ever."

• Key Passage Poster
• "Forever and Ever" song

SAY • Our key passage tells us that wisdom and power belong to God. He is the only One who deserves our praise.

Transition to small groups

Small Group ACTIVITIES

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Play “Would You Rather?”

Ask preschoolers questions that begin with “Would you rather...?” Make some questions silly and some serious. You may use the following questions or create your own:

- Would you rather ride in a train or fly in an airplane?
- Would you rather eat a whole pizza or a whole carton of ice cream?
- Would you rather pet a bunny or a porcupine?
- Would you rather play in the snow or go swimming?
- When you grow up, would you rather have lots of kids or only one?
- Would you rather be able to fly or turn invisible?

For the last question ask preschoolers, “Would you rather obey God or obey people?”

SAY • Most of the time, we can obey God and people at the same time, especially those people God has put in charge of us, like our parents or our teachers. But sometimes, people will want us to do things that disobey God. Choosing to obey God is always the right choice. We can ask God to help us obey Him in those times, and He will! ***How can we obey God? We trust God to help us obey Him.***

Work food puzzles

Set out an assortment of puzzles depicting food. Review the Bible story as preschoolers work.

- puzzles depicting food

SAY • Is the most important thing in today’s Bible story what foods to eat? No! Today’s Bible story is about God. We learned how God protects His people when they want to be obey Him. **Daniel obeyed God** instead of the king, and God protected Daniel and his friends by making them healthier than the other young men.

Paint with vegetables

Before the session, slice vegetables so preschoolers will be able to hold them as painting tools. Squirt different colors of paint onto paper towels laying on foam plates. Provide a sheet of paper for each preschooler. Demonstrate how to dip the sliced end of each vegetable in paint and press the paint onto paper. Encourage preschoolers to be creative with their designs. Write the key passage or main point on each preschooler’s artwork.

- Allergy Alert download
- various vegetables (carrots, celery, zucchini, potatoes, broccoli)
- knife (teacher use only)
- foam plates
- paper towels
- washable paint
- paper
- marker

SAY • You made art with vegetables similar to those Daniel and his friends may have eaten. Daniel and his friends wanted to obey God, and God helped them. **Daniel obeyed God** by not eating food from the king’s table. In a greater way, Jesus always did what God wanted Him to do. Jesus never sinned but He came to earth to rescue sinners. God forgives and helps everyone who trusts in Jesus.

Sort vegetables

Print and cut out several copies of the “Vegetables” printable. Tape one of each vegetable image on a separate

- “Vegetables” printable
- scissors
- bins, 8
- tape

bin. Set out the remaining vegetable images. Guide preschoolers to put each vegetable image in the appropriate bin.

SAY • Daniel and his friends knew God gives us rules because He loves us. They trusted God to help them obey His rule. **Daniel obeyed God**, and God was happy with his choice. God protected Daniel and his friends and made them healthier and smarter than the other boys. Jesus always obeyed God. Jesus never sinned but He came to earth to rescue sinners. God forgives and blesses everyone who trusts in Jesus.

Assemble food bags

- gallon-sized ziplock bags
- food items
- bottled water
- construction paper
- markers or crayons

Option: Contact preschool families before the session and invite them to donate items for the care package.

Lead your group in assembling food packs for families in need. Include items such as pop-top canned food that does not require heating like beef stew, pasta, or soups; tuna packets; granola or protein bars; instant oatmeal; fruit cups; and individual cereal boxes. Be sure to include bottled water and a set of plastic utensils. Form an assembly line to place all items in individual gallon-sized ziplock bags. Guide preschoolers to draw pictures to include in each bag. Identify a group in your church to distribute the bags to or donate them to a local food pantry.

SAY • **Daniel obeyed God** by not eating the king's food, and one way we can obey God is by giving to others. God gave us everything we need when He sent Jesus to earth to rescue us from sin. We can share what God has given us with others. Some people do not have places to live or food to eat. Let's pray for the people who will receive these food packs so they will hear the good news of how God forgives and helps everyone who trusts in Jesus.

Snack

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Guide preschoolers to clean their areas. Take a restroom break and wash hands. Gather preschoolers for snack time. Thank God for the snack.

Serve vegetables such as baby carrots, celery sticks, and miniature bell peppers with vegetable dip for snack. Talk about how God blessed Daniel and his friends when they obeyed Him. After 10 days of eating vegetables and drinking water, Daniel and his friends looked healthier than the young men who had eaten the king's food. **Daniel obeyed God**, and God was kind to Daniel and his friends. He made them wise and smart.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert download
- snack food
- paper cups and napkins

Transition

When a child finishes his snack, guide him to throw away any trash. He may select a book or puzzle to examine, play quietly with play dough or a favorite toy, or color the Bible story coloring page.

Offer the journal page and invite preschoolers to draw a picture of a way they can obey God. Remind preschoolers that sometimes obeying God can be hard, but God is there to help us. ***How can we obey God? We trust God to help us obey Him.*** Pray for the children.

SAY • God, thank You that when You give us a rule to obey, You will always help us obey it. Thank You that Jesus always obeyed You and that He died and came back to life to rescue sinners like us. Amen.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- books
- puzzles
- play dough
- Journal Page printable, 1 per child
- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers