

## Daniel and His Friends Obeyed God

1

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Daniel 1

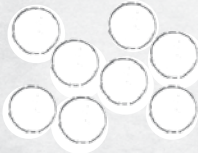
**MAIN POINT:** Daniel obeyed God by not eating the king's food.

**KEY PASSAGE:** Daniel 2:20-21

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

**SMALL GROUP OPENING**  
(10–15 MINUTES)

**PAGE 10**



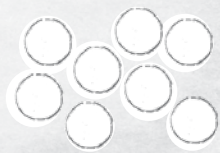
**LARGE GROUP BIBLE STUDY**  
(25–30 MINUTES)

**PAGE 12**



**SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES**  
(25–30 MINUTES)

**PAGE 18**



## 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 kids 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.



**MINISTRY GRID**  
training made simple

Additional resources for each session are available at [gospelproject.com](http://gospelproject.com). For free training and session-by-session help, visit [www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject](http://www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject).

# The BIBLE STORY

## Daniel and His Friends Obeyed God

### *Daniel 1*

When Jehoiakim (jih HOY uh kim) was the king of Judah, **Nebuchadnezzar** (NEB yoo kad NEZ uhr), the **king of Babylon, went with his army to Judah.** Because God's people had sinned against Him, **God allowed King Nebuchadnezzar to take over the city of Jerusalem.**

**King Nebuchadnezzar told one of his leaders to bring some of the people to Babylon. He wanted boys who were healthy, handsome, and good learners to serve in his palace.**

**Every day,** King Nebuchadnezzar gave **the boys** a special diet. They **ate the same food and drank the same drinks that the king ate and drank.**

**Four of the boys who came from Judah were different than the others. They worshiped the Lord, the one true God. Their names were Daniel,** Hananiah (HAN uh NIGH uh), Mishael (MISH eh uhl), and Azariah (az uh RIGH uh). The man in charge of the boys gave them new Babylonian names. Daniel's new name was Belteshazzar (bel tih SHAZ uhr). Hananiah's new name was **Shadrach** (SHAD rak). Mishael's new name was **Meshach** (MEE shak), **and** Azariah's new name was **Abednego** (uh BED-nih goh).

Even though Daniel and his friends weren't in Judah anymore, **Daniel still wanted to obey God. God's laws told Daniel what he could and could not eat. Daniel was not allowed to eat some of the food that the king gave the boys. Daniel asked the man in charge for permission to eat other foods,** but the man in charge was afraid.

“If you don't eat the king's food, you won't be strong like

the other young men. The king might get angry and kill me!” he said.

**Daniel said, “Try this for 10 days. Let us eat only vegetables and drink only water.** Then see if we are healthier than the other young men.”

**The guard agreed. At the end of 10 days, Daniel and his friends looked healthier than the young men who had eaten the king’s food.** After that, the guard allowed Daniel and his friends to keep drinking water and eating vegetables.

**God was happy that Daniel obeyed Him. God blessed Daniel and his friends.** He made them wise and smart. They learned lots of new things. God gave Daniel the ability to understand visions and dreams. When their training was over, Daniel and his friends stood before the king. The king saw that they were smarter and stronger than all the other young men. They were even smarter than the wise men who worked for the king. **Daniel served the king for many years.**

*Christ Connection: Daniel chose to obey God no matter what, and God blessed Daniel and his friends. In an even greater way, Jesus always obeyed God. He came to earth and followed God’s plan to save sinners. Jesus never sinned, but He died the death we deserve. Jesus rose from the dead, and those who trust in Him receive God’s forgiveness and blessing.*



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

Invite kids 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](http://www.lifeway.com/devotionals).

# Small Group OPENING

**SESSION TITLE:** Daniel and His Friends Obeyed God

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Daniel 1

**MAIN POINT:** Daniel obeyed God by not eating the king's food.

**KEY PASSAGE:** Daniel 2:20-21

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

---

## Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. As kids arrive, ask them about a time they felt pressured to disobey God. Be ready to provide example situations. Ask them how they reacted, or would have reacted.

**SAY** • Today we will learn about a group of God's people who were asked to break God's laws about what foods to eat. We will learn if they remained obedient to God or gave in to the pressure.

## Activity page (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete the "Menu Mix-Up" activity page. Ask them to unscramble the names of the foods pictured.

**SAY** • Daniel and his friends had to choose whether they would obey God or eat the king's food. We will learn more about what they chose and why in large group.

## Session starter (10 minutes)

**OPTION 1:** Mystery food

Place a variety of different vegetables and fruits into opaque plastic bags, one kind of food per bag. Invite a child to

- "Menu Mix-Up" activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

- opaque plastic bags, 5
- fruits and vegetables, 1 kind per bag
- knife, slicer, peeler, or other kitchen gadgets (optional)
- wet wipes for cleanup
- Allergy Alert download

reach into the bag and feel the mystery food. She will then describe what she feels, and the other kids will guess what the food is. If they are correct, select a new volunteer, allowing him to reach into a new bag and describe the next food. If they are incorrect, allow the kid feeling the food to guess what it is. If she is incorrect, open the bag and show everyone the food. For more of a challenge, consider prepping the foods in different ways before placing them into the bags. You can try slicing, peeling, or chopping different foods to make them harder to guess.

**SAY** • Today we will learn about a group of young men who chose to eat nothing but vegetables for a long time. Do you think you could do that? What if you knew it would honor God?

### **OPTION 2:** Vegetable toss

Form two teams of kids. At one end of the room, place two baskets. Instruct the kids to line up at the other end of the room. Provide toy fruits and vegetables for each team, one per kid. Kids will take turns tossing their vegetables or fruits into their team's basket. If a kid misses, he must toss again until his fruit or vegetable lands in the basket and stays in. Then that child will move to the end of the line, and the next kid will toss her fruit or vegetable.

**SAY** • Today's story features young men who ate nothing but vegetables because the other food offered to them was unclean according to God's law. Do you think you could do that?



- toy fruits and vegetables, 1 per kid
- baskets, 2

## **Transition to large group**

# Large Group LEADER

**SESSION TITLE:** Daniel and His Friends Obeyed God

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Daniel 1

**MAIN POINT:** Daniel obeyed God by not eating the king's food.

**KEY PASSAGE:** Daniel 2:20-21

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

---

- room decorations
- Theme Background Slide (optional)

**Suggested Theme Decorating Ideas:** Recreate a pizza parlor by positioning a table and two chairs at the front of the room. Cover the table with a red and white checkered tablecloth. Use a chalkboard to display a “Pizza of the Day” special. You may also project the theme background slide.

## Countdown

- countdown video
- “The Big Story” video (optional)

Show the countdown video as your kids arrive, and set it to end as large group time begins. Consider showing “The Big Story” video to help your kids understand where this quarter’s Bible stories fit chronologically with God’s plan for salvation.

## Introduce the session (3 minutes)

- leader attire

*[Large Group Leader enters wearing an apron and chef’s hat.]*

**LEADER** • Well hello there, everyone! Welcome to Papa Roni’s Pizza, home of the world’s best cheesy bread. My name is [*your name*], and I own this restaurant! I know what you are thinking, *Why is it called Papa Roni’s if your name isn’t Papa Roni?* Well, I happen to be the new owner. The restaurant had some trouble in the past, so I’ve taken over for Papa Roni, and I’m

getting things back on track.

In fact, I've been working on a new recipe for a vegetarian pizza. I call it the "License to Kale" pizza. I had a customer a few nights ago who said he couldn't eat any meat products, and I realized that all the pizzas used meat as toppings! That means a whole lot of people aren't eating here who might eat here if we served the kind of food they liked! So I decided to put out a new kind of pizza that is 100 percent meat free! Hopefully this will help me win some lost customers. I, myself, love meat toppings, but some people only eat vegetables.

You know, that reminds me of a Bible story. Would you all like to hear it? Wonderful!

## Giant timeline (1 minute)

**LEADER** • In a way, God's people were like this restaurant because they were under new leaders too. They had been living in sin, so God had exiled them—that means sent them away—from their land. The Southern Kingdom of Judah was captured by Babylon. That's where this week's story takes place. The main difference is I'm trying to fix mistakes, but the king of Babylon wasn't too concerned with helping God's people correct their course. But you'll see what I mean soon.

• Giant Timeline

## Big picture question (1 minute)

**LEADER** • Our big picture question is, *How can we obey God?* Think about that and listen to our story to see if you can find the answer!



- Bibles
- “Daniel and His Friends Obeyed God” video
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Bible Story Picture Poster

## Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Daniel 1. Tell the Bible story in your own words, or show the Bible story video “Daniel and His Friends Obeyed God.”

**LEADER** • My goodness! Can you imagine living in a place that offered all you can eat of the best foods in the land and choosing to stick with only vegetables? I don’t know if I could do that! Daniel and his friends made a difficult choice; none of the other young men made the choice Daniel and his friends made.

Even though Daniel and his friends ended up healthier than any of the other young men, they weren’t eating veggies just to be healthy. Daniel and his friends knew that the king of Babylon ate food that God told His people not to eat. It may have tasted great, but eating it would have meant disobeying God. **Daniel obeyed God by not eating the king’s food.**

Daniel and his friends relied on God to resist the king’s rich food when all of the other young men were making different choices than them. They trusted God to give them the strength to obey Him.

God was faithful to give Daniel and his friends the strength to obey Him, and He honored their obedience by making them the healthiest and strongest young men in the group. God was glorified by their obedience, and He was glorified when the king noticed that God blessed Daniel in special ways.

So, do you think you can answer the big picture question? ***How can we obey God?*** [*Allow kids to respond.*] Good job! ***We trust God to give us strength to obey Him.***

Daniel chose to obey God no matter what, and God blessed Daniel and his friends. In an even greater way, Jesus always obeyed God. He came to earth and followed God's plan to save sinners. Jesus never sinned, but He died the death we deserve. Jesus rose from the dead, and those who trust in Him receive God's forgiveness and blessing. Part of that blessing is the strength to obey Him!

## **The Gospel: God's Plan for Me (optional)**

Use Scripture and the guide provided with this session to explain to boys and girls how to become a Christian. Assign individuals to meet with kids who have more questions.

Encourage boys and girls to ask their parents, small group leaders, or other Christian adults any questions they may have about becoming a Christian.

*Tip: Provide *I'm a Christian Now* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.*

## **Key passage (5 minutes)**

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together Daniel 2:20-21.

**LEADER** • God wanted Daniel and his friends to follow

His law about food even when the other young men did not. Our key passage tells us that God has great wisdom and power. We trust God because of His wisdom. We rely on His power to give us the strength to obey Him. God is so wise, powerful, and trustworthy. He is worthy of our praise!

Lead boys and girls to sing "Name of God."

- Key Passage Poster
- "Name of God" song

## **Discussion starter video (4 minutes)**

**LEADER** • Can you think of a time you felt pressured to do something you knew you weren't supposed to? Think

- "Unit 16, Session 1" discussion starter video

about that while we watch this clip. Show the “Unit 16, Session 1” discussion starter video. Ask kids what makes it hard to do the right thing. Ask them what they can do to obey even when it’s hard.

**LEADER** • The way we live our lives can either glorify God or show that we don’t really care about what He says. When we trust in Jesus, God forgives us and gives us new life. When we choose to obey God, it shows the world that we love God and have been changed by His grace and power.

### **Sing (4 minutes)**

• “It Is Well” song

**LEADER** • God is so good! He saves us and gives us strength to obey Him. Let’s sing praises to our good God. Sing together “It Is Well.”

### **Pray (2 minutes)**

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to small groups.

**LEADER** • God, we thank You for giving Daniel and his friends strength to obey You despite pressure to disobey. Thank You for Jesus and His obedience to Your plan. Thank You that through Him we can be forgiven of all the times we disobey and receive the strength to obey too. Amen.

### **Dismiss to small groups**

## The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



**God rules.** Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



**We sinned.** Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



**God provided.** Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



**Jesus gives.** Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



**We respond.** Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus.

# Small Group LEADER

**SESSION TITLE:** Daniel and His Friends Obeyed God

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Daniel 1

**MAIN POINT:** Daniel obeyed God by not eating the king's food.

**KEY PASSAGE:** Daniel 2:20-21

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

---

## Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- heavyweight paper
- scissors
- markers, crayons, or colored pencils

Provide each child with a half-sheet of heavyweight paper. Instruct kids to write out the key passage, copying it from the poster. Then provide them with a variety of markers, crayons, or colored pencils to write the verse in three to five more colors, with each letter offset just slightly from the letter they wrote in the first color.

**SAY** • This verse teaches that God is in control of everything. He changes the seasons, which allow us to grow crops like the colorful fruits and vegetables Daniel and his friends chose to eat. ***We trust God to give us strength to obey Him.***

## Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Main Point Poster
- pencils
- crayons or paints
- large sheets of paper or poster board, 1 per group
- tape (optional)

Form groups of two to five kids. Instruct kids to find Daniel 1 in their Bibles. Give each group a large sheet of paper or poster board. Assign them a scene from the story, and ask them to draw or paint that scene as a group. Hang the pictures around the room, and allow the kids to walk along the pictures. Discuss with them the events of the story.

Use these scenes:

- Daniel and his friends were captured by the king of Babylon. (Daniel 1:1)
- Nebuchadnezzar selected young men to be trained. (Daniel 1:3-5)
- Daniel and his friends asked for permission to avoid the king's food. (Daniel 1:8)
- Daniel and his friends ate only vegetables. (Daniel 1:12-14)
- Daniel and his friends were healthier than the men who ate the king's food. (Daniel 1:15-19)

**SAY** • Daniel and his friends knew that God's laws were more important than the king of Babylon's laws or instructions. They chose to obey God even if it meant giving up the tasty food the king wanted them to eat. God gave them the strength they needed to obey Him.

Jesus also chose to obey God when He went to the cross to die for the sin of the world. Jesus relied on God to give Him strength despite the terrible pain of the cross. On the third day, God raised Jesus from the dead to show that He is in control of all things, just as He was in control over Daniel's health and diet.

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

## Activity choice (10 minutes)

### OPTION 1: Planter pots

Provide each child with a small planter pot and markers to decorate the pots. Help kids write the main point, big picture answer, or key passage around the rim. You may also choose to provide potting soil and small seeds for the kids to plant.

**SAY** • Daniel obeyed God by not eating the king's food.



- planter pots, 1 per kid
- markers
- soil (optional)
- small seeds (optional)

He only wanted to eat foods that God allowed His people to eat. Daniel's choice to obey could have gotten him in big trouble with the king, but he obeyed anyway. Daniel points us to Jesus, who also chose to obey no matter the cost. Jesus gave up His life to save us from sin. Apart from Jesus, we cannot obey God. ***How can we obey God? We trust God to give us strength to obey Him*** because of what Jesus did on the cross.

- Allergy Alert download
- variety of fruits and vegetables
- knife (adult use only)
- paint
- paper plates
- paper
- markers
- wet wipes for cleanup

### **OPTION 2:** Fruit and vegetable stamps

Before class, cut in half a variety of fruits and vegetables, such as apples, potatoes, cauliflower, carrots, bell peppers, or squash. Squirt different colors of paint onto paper plates.

Provide each kid with a piece of paper. Allow the kids to use the fruits and vegetables like stamps, dipping the cut end into paint and pressing them against paper. Help kids write the big picture question and answer on their paper.

**SAY** • Daniel knew that most of the king's food was not prepared the way God's law said food should be prepared. As a result, Daniel had to choose between obeying the king and obeying God. **Daniel obeyed God by not eating the king's food.** Daniel trusted God to take care of him.

We face choices every day in which we can obey God or obey the ways of the world. We need to trust in Jesus to obey God. Without Jesus, we cannot obey God, but with Jesus, God gives us the strength we need to follow His ways. When we make sinful choices, we can pray to God and ask Him to forgive us, knowing that He always will.

## Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute each child's journal. Ask the kids to write about or draw pictures of choices they have faced where they could obey or disobey God. Ask them to think about what kind of consequences may come from either, and remind them that they can only obey because Jesus died to make the way for them to return to God.

**SAY** • Even after we trust in Jesus, we face choices where we can obey God or disobey God. We should obey God because God loves us and wants what is best for us and because we love God. When we face choices, we can pray to God and ask Him for help. He promises to be with us. ***We trust God to give us strength to obey Him.***

When we choose to disobey, we can still return to God and confess our sin. When we ask God for forgiveness, He offers it freely because Jesus already died on the cross for our sin. We can obey because Jesus defeated sin for us.

Make sure each child secures this week's sheet in the journal, and then collect them. Keep the journals in the classroom so they will be available every week or as often as you wish to use them.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the coloring page provided with this session. Pray, asking God to give your class the strength needed to obey God no matter what choices they face. Thank Jesus for dying for our sin, and praise God for His perfect plans and control of all things.

- pencils
- Journal Page
- Bible Story Coloring Page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.