

Lesson 4:

Daniel

A Boy Who Lived For God

Information For Teacher

You can continue the teaching of the previous basic lesson by now telling the story of Daniel which is a good example of a child or young person who really lived for God in a difficult situation. This story will help your Christian children to understand that it is possible for them to do the same and help them to see how they also can live for God.

This story is told in the first person and I believe this will make it interesting for the children – especially if you tell it in a lively and realistic fashion – as if you really were Daniel. If you don't wish to do it this way you can teach it as a regular Bible lesson in the third person.

You should take about 5 minutes to show again the eight pictures of the previous lesson with a brief description of each picture before giving this lesson.

This lesson is outlined in eight sections each with a heading – to make it easier for you to remember and teach, and each section has a picture to illustrate it; but the heading is not included in the picture.

MAIN BIBLE PASSAGE **Daniel chapter 1**

OTHER PASSAGES *Daniel chapters 2, 4, 5 and 6*

CENTRAL TRUTH (CT) *God wants His children to live for Him – even in the most difficult situation.*

**APPLICATION TO
SAVED CHILDREN (CTS)** *God will help you to live for Him if
you ask Him.*

**APPLICATION TO
UNSAVED CHILDREN (CTU)** *You cannot start to live for Him until
you trust Jesus Christ as your Saviour.*

Powerpoint Slide 4-1 I WAS BORN IN ISRAEL

Do you know where Israel is? (*Use a map of the Middle East to show it*). There it is – right there. It is just a little country. I was born there many years ago. The people who lived in my country were called Jews. I am a Jew too – just like my parents. My name is Daniel (*Advance Slide*). Do you know that names often have a meaning? Do you know what your name means? (*Give an opportunity to respond*) Parents who lived in my country often gave their children a name because it meant something. These are my parents and this is me. My parents gave me my name because of its meaning. It means “God is my Judge”. Do you know what “judge” means? It means that God watches us and what we do – and then He decides what He will do with us. I believe my parents wanted me to remember that God was always watching me and what I did, and they wanted me to live my life for God.

We Jews were God’s special people. But I am afraid that the people of our nation were not living for God the way they should have. For many years most of our rulers and many of our people had turned their backs on God and were living sinful lives. Some of us still loved Him and tried to serve Him but a large number of our people were now worshipping idols instead of God and our nation was becoming very sinful.

Powerpoint Slide 4-2 I WAS TAKEN CAPTIVE TO BABYLON

And because our nation was so sinful God judged us. Isn’t that what my name says? God is Judge. God wanted His people to turn from their sinful ways and He knew that they would only do so if He corrected them or judged them or punished them; so He decided to do something.

Isn’t this what your parents do when you do something wrong? They correct you, and, if necessary, punish you, so that you will see how wrong you are. They try to help you decide to do the right thing, and they do this not because they want to hurt you but because they love you.

And God loved us His people but we deserved to be corrected and punished by Him. How did He do this?

Many miles from Israel there was a country called Babylonia whose capital was Babylon. The name of this country today is Iraq (*Point to it on your map of the Middle East*). It was a big and very powerful country whose king was called Nebuchadnezzar. That’s quite a difficult name isn’t it? How would you like a name like that?

It was God’s plan that this great heathen king and his army should swoop down into our little country and conquer us. You can see some of his soldiers in our picture. And then a terrible thing happened! He took many of the precious and

beautiful things which were in our special temple (or church) away back to his country. This was a terrible disaster for us – but we deserved it because of our sin.

And he also took many of our people captive as you can see at the back of our picture and moved them to Babylon, far from the land which they loved so much.

And I was one of them; I was only about fourteen years old when I was taken away from my home, my family and my country into this far-off foreign land. How would you like that to happen to you? How would you feel if an army came into your country and took you away captive to a land many miles away and you knew that you would never see your home and family again? (*Give the opportunity to respond*).

Powerpoint Slide 4-3 THE KING CHOSE ME AND MY FRIENDS

CT *Not all the people taken captive were worshippers of idols. Some of these captives really loved God, and I was one of them. I had already put my trust in God and I knew that God wanted me to live for Him. God always wants His children to live for Him. I really hoped that I could live for Him now in these difficult circumstances and in a far-off heathen land where no one seemed to want to worship and obey the One and only true God.*

CTU Are you like me? Have you put your trust in God, and especially in the Lord Jesus Christ? I started to do this when I was still young – and you should also. Do you love the Lord Jesus and want to live for Him? If not, you can trust Him today and start a new life with Him – a life like mine. If you would like to do this, but don't know what you should do, come and talk with your teacher after the meeting and he will be glad to help you.

And then I got a surprise! The king wanted a number of children and young people to be chosen from the captives. He said they should be part of the royal family of Israel, or the princes of our land, and should be healthy and intelligent. He wanted to train these young people for three years so that he could use them in important positions in the country.

And I was one of the chosen ones. I suppose I was intelligent and I did have good health. I forgot to tell you that my parents and my family were connected to the royal family of our land.

The king also chose a number of others along with me and I became very friendly with three of them who loved and worshipped God like me. You can see the four of us here in our picture. Their names are difficult to say and even more difficult to remember. They were called Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah (*Advance Slide*).

CT *We all wondered what was going to happen to us. But we made up our minds that no matter what happened we would continue to live for our God because we knew that this was what He wanted. We also believed that it was possible for young people like us to live for Him.*

CTS If you are a Christian and have trusted the Lord Jesus is this what you want to do? Do you want to live for Him? No matter what happens, or where you are, God wants you to live for Him – even if it is difficult. And He wants you to do so now when you are young.

Powerpoint Slide 4-4 THEY TRIED TO CHANGE US

The king and his officials wanted us to fit in completely with them and their way of life. First of all we were taught to speak their language and study their literature (Daniel 1 v4). We had no problem with that and indeed found it very interesting.

Then they gave us new names. They called me Belteshazzar (That's more difficult to say and remember than Daniel isn't it?) (*Advance Slide*). They called my three friends Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Actually these are the names by which they are best remembered. Let's say them together (*Point to and repeat the three names several times*). Those names are quite difficult, aren't they?

The reason they changed our names was because all four of us had part of God's name in our first, and real, names. Do you remember what I told you about our names having meaning? The letters "el" in my name and in Mishael's name mean "God"; and the letter "iah" or "jah" in the other two names are short for "Jehovah", the special name of our God (*Advande Slide*). They didn't want our names to be connected with our God. But our new names were all connected with the heathen gods of the Babylonians.

We had to accept our new names (although we ourselves still used our old ones). They could change our names, and teach us a new language and give us new literature to read. BUT – and this is the important fact – THEY COULD NOT CHANGE US. And they could not change our worship of the God whom we loved.

CTS If you are a Christian boy or girl the world wants to change you and make you completely like them. But God wants you to be different. You are a Christian and you are not the same as unsaved boys and girls. Don't let the world, the people of the world, and the temptations of the world, change you and make you like them. Ask God to help you be different and live for Him – and He will.

Powerpoint Slide 4-5 WE COULD NOT EAT THEIR MEALS

But then we faced a problem.

It was decided by the king that we should eat his meat and drink his wine (Daniel 1 v5) every day for the three years of our training and preparation. But I and my three friends felt we could not do this. This food from the king's table had been placed before idols in a temple, like this one in our picture, for them to bless it before it was served. The king and his people would not eat or drink anything unless it had been presented to and blessed by their heathen gods. So whoever ate it or drank it was really taking part in their heathen religion. And I decided in my heart that I could not do this (Daniel 1 v8) because I would not have been loyal to my God nor would I have been living for Him – which is what I always wanted to do. And my three friends agreed with me.

It would have been easy for us just to take this food and keep quiet about our God and our faith. We could then have enjoyed the food and the king would have rewarded us and given us special positions. But we felt it would have been wrong to do so. Our country was changed, our education was changed, our names were changed – but our hearts were not changed.

CTS Are you Christian boys and girls ever in this position? There are things which others want you to do. You know that it would be wrong for a Christian to do them. But to avoid trouble and criticism you are tempted to keep quiet, to say nothing – just as I was. Ask God to help you and He will give you the courage and strength to say “No”.

But what was I to do? Just to say “No, I’m not going to do it” could get me into serious trouble – and might even bring punishment or worse.

Powerpoint Slide 4-6 I MADE A SUGGESTION

The king had put a man in charge of us during our three years of preparation and training. And I had a really good friendship with him. Actually God had put into his heart a love for me and my friends and a desire to help us (Daniel 1 v9). I was glad about that and I decided to speak with him about my problem and make a suggestion. Here I am speaking to him and you can see my friends in the background.

I told him that I and my three friends could not eat this food and drink this wine because it would make us unclean and our God would not want us to do so. But I told him as nicely as I could. I did not want to be rude.

CTS *You should remember this yourself. When you tell someone that there is something which you cannot do as a Christian you should explain in a nice way why you cannot do so. Don't be rude.*

But the man over us told me I would really have to eat the king's meat and drink the king's wine. He said that he would get into trouble and could even be killed if we did not look healthy because we had not been eating the king's food.

So I suggested to him that he let us eat vegetables and fruit for ten days and drink only water – and then see if we looked any less healthy than the others who were eating and drinking everything.

He agreed to this test (Daniel 1 v14).

**Powerpoint Slide 4-7 WE WERE THE HANDSOMEST AND
FITTEST**

And so for ten days we enjoyed our special menus as you can see in our picture. The vegetables and fruit were very tasty and the water was cool and fresh. And what was the result?

The man in charge looked at us carefully as you can see and found that we looked better and fitter than those who were eating and drinking the meals from the king's table. You can see him watching us. We ourselves felt better than we had been before. And so our leader was satisfied and decided that for the rest of the three years we could eat those foods which we felt were right for us.

Of course I should point out to you two things. Firstly, the food we ate was really nice and tasty. We certainly did not miss all the meals and drinks which the others were having. But secondly, the reason we looked so well was because God was blessing us for being obedient to Him. It was He Who gave us such good health and helped us to look so well.

At the end of the three years we were brought in before the king (Daniel 1 v18) and examined closely by him. He liked what he saw and said we were the healthiest and best looking of all those there. Do you see what I mean? We did not lose anything; in fact we gained everything. He also tested our knowledge and what we had learned and found that we were even more clever and intelligent than his own advisors and helpers.

How did this happen?

It was because God had blessed us by giving us good health and also by giving us the knowledge and ability to learn. As a result I knew that, when I wanted to live for God, He would help me and give me the strength to do so.

**Powerpoint Slide 4-8 GOD WILL BLESS YOU IF YOU LIVE
FOR HIM**

My story does not end there. That is only the beginning and I don't have time to tell you more. You can read more about me in the book in the Bible which has my name on it. But God gave me the ability to understand visions, and to know

the meaning of dreams and I became one of the most important men in the country of Babylonia and lived there for many years. And God blessed me and helped me. But I always made it my goal to live for God – no matter what it cost. I hope you will also.

CTS *If you are a Christian and want to live for God, and are willing to obey Him and keep away from things which are wrong, then God will bless you, and help you with all your problems. And, like me, you will really enjoy life. There are things which you as a Christian should say “No” to – which will harm you – like alcohol, smoking, drugs, and X-rated videos. If you say “Yes” to things like these it would also make it hard for you to tell others about Jesus Christ because people who are not Christians don’t expect to see Christians involved with these things.*

But God will help you to control yourself if you ask Him and He will bless you. You will certainly be better off in many ways than those who say “yes” and do the things which are wrong.

I hope you will be like my friends and me, and live for God – no matter what it costs.

CTU *But if you are not a Christian you cannot live for God unless you first of all speak to Jesus Christ and ask Him to save you. The Bible says that, “Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Romans 10 v13). That is a promise. Call to Him, speak to Him right now and He will save you. If you do that, you can start a new life and begin to live for God. Call to Him today. It will be the best thing you have ever done.*