

DO THE RIGHT THING AND YOU WILL BE DIFFERENT

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

DECISION CHOICE GLORY OF GOD

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Daniel 1:1-20

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help children stand firm in making the right choices, even if those decisions make them different from others

MEMORY VERSE

“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” (1 Corinthians 10:31, NIV*)

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

The Babylonians were geniuses in administration. They ruled their huge empire with the help of the young people from the nations they had defeated, and trained them in their culture. Daniel and his friends were chosen to be a part of their leadership-training program.

As a part of their change to life in Babylon, Daniel and his friends were given new names. Both their old and new names had religious significance. However, changing their names did not change their faith.

They were served the food and drink of the royal table as a sign of their future leadership. But Daniel and his friends refused to eat what they were given because it would defile them (make them unclean). The Bible does not say exactly why the food would make the unclean, but perhaps it was because the food was offered to the Babylonian gods as an offering, and if Daniel and his friends ate it, they would have been considered unclean according to Hebrew law.

This food represented a challenge to their faith, and God honored them because of their decision. King Nebuchadnezzar recognized that these young men were “different” from the other young men, and that is why he gave them positions of authority in his kingdom.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

Decisions that honor God

Ask your children: "How did we honor God with our recent decisions?" (allow several responses) Then ask: "What were the results?" (allow several responses) Then ask: "What negative consequences did they avoid?" (allow several responses)

Ask the group: "Who knows the story of Daniel and his friends and their decision about the king's food?" (If someone knows it, let them tell the group.)

TEACH THE LESSON

We will not eat that!

Before the session, ask some of your children to participate with the dialogue of Daniel and his friends. You could be the first narrator and assign one child for each character.

Narrator 1: Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, declared war against Judah. Babylon won and took many of the Israelites as prisoners. And the king told Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring into the king's service some of the Israelites of the royal family and the nobility. They were to be young men without any physical defect, handsome, talented and fast learners.

Narrator 2: King Nebuchadnezzar arranged for the young Hebrews to be educated for three years, and then to appear before him. Among the young prisoners were Daniel and his three friends, Hananiah (Shadrach), Mishael (Meshach) and Azariah (Abednego).

Ashpenaz: (speaking to Daniel and his friends) King Nebuchadnezzar has ordered that you all be educated in the language and literature of Babylon. You have also earned the privilege to eat and drink from the king's table.

Daniel: We are Israelites. Our God has demanded that we not eat this food. Please, serve us something else.

Ashpenaz: I would love to do what you have asked me, but I fear my master, the king, who assigned your food; and when he sees that you have become paler and fainter than the other men, he will condemn me to death. Plus, everyone else loves eating what he serves.

(Ashpenaz leaves and Daniel and his friends talk.)

Shadrach: Daniel, what should we do? We cannot consume the food or drink of the king!

Meshach: No! If we do, we would be disobeying God.

Abednego: But, what will happen if we do not accept the food that we have been offered?

Daniel: I do not know, but it does not matter what happens, I will not eat or drink from the king's table!

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego: Then neither will we!

Guard: It is almost time for dinner. Are not you all excited! They are serving you food and drink from the king's table!

Daniel: Please, sir, cannot you serve us vegetables and water?

Guard: But, why do you want to eat only vegetables and drink only water when you can eat all of that?

Daniel: Because, this food will defile us.

Guard: Look, I just follow orders. Look at the others! They are enjoying the food. Just try it!

Daniel: Please test us for 10 days: give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then compare us to the other young men who eat the royal food.

Guard: (whispering) we will try this, but only for 10 days. After that, you will have to eat the royal food. I am going to go find you some vegetables and water.

Narrator 1: After 10 days, Daniel and his friends had only eaten vegetables and had water to drink.

Shadrach: How do you feel Meshach?

Meshach: Fantastic!

Abednego: I agree! I am imagining the face the guard will make when he sees us.

(The guard enters.)

Guard: The 10 days of trial have finished. Let us see how you guys look. Move closer to the window.

Daniel: What do you think?

Guard: Incredible! I would not believe it if I was not seeing it with my own eyes!

Abednego: What is that supposed to mean?

Guard: That you guys look healthier and stronger than all of the other young men who have eaten the king's food!

Daniel: So, can we continue to eat our vegetables, sir?

Guard: Well of course! I will order some more for all of you now.

Narrator 2: God blessed Daniel and his friends because they had the courage to remain steadfast in what they knew was right. God gave them knowledge and intelligence in reading and science.

Narrator 1: Three years later, the time had come for Daniel and his friends to be examined by King Nebuchadnezzar.

King Nebuchadnezzar: Ashpenaz! Have the four young men that you told me about come to me!

Ashpenaz: Yes, your majesty. At once!

Narrator 2: Ashpenaz brought Daniel and his friends before the king. The king talked to them and could not find anyone else in the group of prisoners quite like Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. So, they remained in the service of the king. In any matter of wisdom or intelligence that the king consulted them on, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that served in his kingdom.

CONNECT THE LESSON

Life application

Use Student Activity Sheet #268-A and #268-B to review the lesson.

Tell the students "The example of these young men in Babylon makes us think about the situation that many children, teens and young adults live in today. Daily they are seeking to feel accepted by their classmates and friends, and this pressures them to do or say things, which sometimes do not agree with the will of God."

Help the group to remember the church is a strong support to our children so that they remain firm in their convictions and decide to keep themselves clean from sin, regardless of pressures from their friends. Their Christian values will be more valuable than what their friends may offer. Your children must have the ability to decide to obey God, even if it makes them different from those around them.

Activity: Follow the leader

Give the group Student Activity Sheet #268-C. Have them start at the letter "E" and follow the path, writing down each letter on the lines below the maze. They will soon discover the secret phrase: "Everybody's Doing It." Have them continue until they figure out the phrase. When they have figured it out, have them put an X at that point.

Encourage them to stay firm in their convictions and beliefs and not to be carried away by what others say and/or do.

Activity: Dare to be different

Student Activity Sheet #268-D is a certificate of commitment that those children, if they choose to, can fill in with their name. They promise God to remain firm in their faith and chose to not participate with others in actions that do not please God. Ask a volunteer to read it with their name inserted: "I, (child's name) have decided to stay firm in what I believe is good, even when others do not agree with me."

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

[Download Additional Memory Verse Activities PDF](#)

[Download Suggestions for Bible Memorization PDF](#)

This is the second to last session of this unit. Remind the children to memorize the Bible verse. Say together with them: "So

whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (1Corinthians 10:31). Tell them that if they can say it during the next session, you will plan to give them a small prize. (Prepare a small gift for the children who know the memory verse.)

WRAP-UP

Pray

Invite the group to share their prayer needs. Pray for all the children, especially that God will give them the ability to remain firm in their faith.

Encourage

Encourage the children to look for ways to remain firm in their faith this week.

Invite

Thank your children for their attendance and announce something about the next lesson to spur interest in them. Remind them that friends are welcome.