#### Lesson 6:

#### Daniel and 3 Friends

#### SCRIPTURE REFERENCE:

Daniel 1

#### MEMORY WORK:

Bible skills 1-6 Psalms 119:105

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

Like Daniel and his friends, I will purpose in my heart to obey God no matter what pressure others put on me. I will also choose not to smoke, drink alcohol, take harmful drugs, or do anything else that will hurt the body that God gave me. Making good choices about how I take care of myself shows my love and respect for God, His Word, and other people.

**LESSON**

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| **LESSON STARTS HERE** |

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INTRODUCTION:

Show the children sugary, sweet items (like candy or chocolate) and something healthy (like baby carrots). Ask the children to choose which ones are healthy. Talk about how every day they have to make choices that will help them grow and be strong. We can learn from four young people in the Bible who pleased God because of the good choices they made.

#### POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Just as the prophets had foretold, God allowed the Babylonian army to come into Palestine to punish the Jews for continuing to disobey Him. Daniel was one of hundreds of young people taken from their homeland, and probably from their families, when the mighty Babylonian army finally gained control of Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar’s army also gradually removed the gold from the Temple in Jerusalem, including all the vessels (containers, cups, etc.) and utensils used in Jewish worship, and took them to the temple of a Babylonian idol.
2. Nebuchadnezzar told his chief officer, Ashpenaz, to find “young men in whom there was no blemish, but good-looking, gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand, who had ability to serve in the king’s palace” (Daniel 1:4). He wanted the “best and brightest” to be prepared to serve him. He gave Ashpenaz three years to train these young men in Babylonian literature and language and in how to serve the king. Among those young men were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. The Babylonians changed Daniel’s name [which means “God is my Judge”] to Belteshazzar after the name of one of their gods (Daniel 1:7 and 4:8). Hananiah became Shadrach, Mishael became Meshach, and Azariah became Abed-Nego.
3. The four young men refused to eat of the “choice” or “rich” food (ASV—“dainties”) set before them by Ashpenaz. To eat it would have meant defiling themselves under Jewish law by eating food they were commanded not to eat (Leviticus 11). Instead, they ate vegetables and drank water for 10 days (a testing period) and were found to be healthier than all the rest—much to the amazement of those overseeing their training.

**NOTE:** God apparently intended at the beginning for humans (and many animals) to be vegetarian (Genesis 1:29-30). After the Flood, however, God authorized humans to eat animals (Genesis 9:3). Under the Law of Moses, the Israelites were not to eat certain things—creatures deemed for them “unclean” by God. Those rules did not apply to Gentiles, and what was defined as clean or unclean was not necessarily always about health. In the Christian era, rules about what foods are clean or unclean have been removed (cf. Acts 10:15; 1 Timothy 4:1-3; Romans 14; 1 Corinthians 8; 1 Corinthians

10:23-33).

1. Daniel 1:8 is the key verse to this story: “But Daniel purposed in his heart (“resolved”—ESV) that he would not defile himself.” Daniel and his friends were determined to do right, no matter what the cost. God blessed them because of their faithfulness to His Word and their willingness to do what was right. Daniel was specifically given the ability to understand “all visions and dreams” (Daniel 1:17b) because he wanted to obey God.
2. It would have been easy for these four young men to compromise or ignore what they had been taught all their lives. Who would know or care, since they were so far from home? **God** would know! Just like Joseph in Egypt, they knew any sin committed would be against God Almighty—whether their parents knew about it or not. (“How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” Joseph said in Genesis 39:9b.)
3. Like Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, we must make up our minds that we will do what God wants us to do, no matter what pressure others put on us to do things a different way. Daniel and his three friends knew that to eat the wrong things would hurt their influence and would show disrespect to God because it would have meant disobeying the God’s Law. It is important that we make up our minds (about drugs, drinking, etc.) about how we will behave **before** we are tempted to do wrong; then the temptation will seem much easier to deal with. There should **never** be a time when we “just try” something “to see what it’s like.”
4. Although Christians do not have the dietary laws that the Jews had under the Law of Moses (it is no longer sinful to eat pork, for example), we do know that there are certain things we should limit taking into our bodies because of the effect they will have on us. [Talk about the dangers of eating too much junk food, sweets, or meats.]. We also know that there are some foods that we should eat because our bodies need them in order to function properly and will strengthen us to be able to serve God better. Also, don’t forget that “bodily exercise” profits as well – 1 Timothy 4:8.
5. Our bodies are not our own, but rather, are on loan from God (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). Our job is to use the bodies God gave us to serve Him faithfully. If we destroy our bodies by eating terrible things or doing terrible things to our bodies, we will not be able to serve Him as well or as long (Romans 12:1-2). If we die sooner than God intended us to because of our habits, it could affect the lives of those whom God intended for us to influence during the extra years we could have lived. As such, we would not want to use tobacco or do drugs. Also, while God has not given us specific dietary laws as He gave the Jews in the Old Testament, He has commanded us to be “sober-minded” (1 Peter 1:13; 5:8; Titus 2:2,6; 1 Thessalonians 5:8). Some things we take into our bodies can interfere with being sober-minded (e.g., alcohol and drugs). God also prohibits gluttony (cf. Proverbs 23:2,21; Ezekiel 16:49).
6. What are some ways we can hurt our bodies? What would you think if you were in a crowd of people your own age and you were pushed to eat or drink something you knew wasn’t good for you? How would others feel about you if you did try it, i.e., how would your influence be affected?

RECOMMENDED ADDITIONAL VISUALS (**note disclaimers**):

* + - Betty Lukens’ felt pieces
    - Daniel ABeka Flash-A-Card Series (DISCLAIMERSuse the cards, not the lesson book)
    - Free Bible Images Illustrations saved on flash drive. Suggest Script in lesson file.
    - Bible Study Guide for All Ages (BSGFAA) Lesson 15. These visuals will look like a black and white comic strip on one large piece of cardstock. To use these attach it to the magnetic dry erase board. Use dry erase markers to follow the directions. Let students take turns marking on the page.

SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS :

# Prophet SUNDAY

LEARNING CENTERS AND ACTIVITIES:

* “Provide magazine pictures of food that the children can glue onto paper plates or “place

mats” (e.g., 9x12 construction paper) as you talk about making healthy food choices.

* Bring toy food items, and let the children cook a pretend meal for you.
* Bring toy food or pictures, both healthy and unhealthy, and two baskets. Put a smiley face on one basket for healthy food, and a sad face on the other basket for unhealthy food.

Let the children decide in which basket the food or pictures belong. (Example “[Food](http://www.apcurriculum.com/dcirfol/4-26-35-184Food%20Cutouts.pdf) [Cutouts](http://www.apcurriculum.com/dcirfol/4-26-35-184Food%20Cutouts.pdf)” and provided in activity sheets)

### WEDNESDAY NIGHT

#### POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Review Sunday’s lesson. (See [Review Questions](http://www.apcurriculum.com/dcirfol/4-24-32RQ.pdf) for example questions.)

LEARNING CENTERS AND ACTIVITIES:

* Provide healthy things that the children can eat and drink (such as cheese, apples, grapes, juice) while you talk about taking care of their bodies. You may want to ask the children to close their eyes and taste something, then try to guess what it is.

### Review Questions

1. What group of people took the Jews into captivity?
   1. The Babylonians
2. Why did God allow them to be taken captive?
   1. They disobeyed God
3. Who was the Babylonian King?
   1. Nebuchadnezzar
4. What type of young men did King Nebuchadnezzar tell his chief officers to find to serve in his palace?
   1. Young men who were good looking, gifted in wisdom, possessing knowledge, and quick to understand.
5. Why did Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego refuse to eat of the “choice” food that was put before them?
   1. They did not want to eat food that God had commanded them not to eat.
6. What did they eat instead?
   1. They ate vegetables and drank only water for 10 days.
7. Because Daniel obeyed God blessed him with what ability?
   1. He could understand all kinds of visions and dreams.

Additional Notes / Activities Performed & Curriculum Feed Back

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