

Lesson 5

Young Men Obey God

Daniel 1

Memory Verse

"The Lord our God
will we serve, and His
voice will we obey"
(Joshua 24:24)

Teacher's Objective

At the end of the session,
the students should
be able to:

Define the meaning of the
four young men's names

Locate Babylon on a map

Describe how God
helped the four young
men to do what is right

Express in their own
words how they can obey
God
even when it is difficult

Materials Needed

See "Teaching Activities"
for specific activities

Teacher's Bible Study

T*raumatic* is the only word that comes to mind when describing what it must have been like for the four young men in our story this week. They were dragged into captivity at the beginning of their manhood. They were put in a position to conform to Nebuchadnezzar's pagan society. It must have been overwhelming.

Daniel and other young Jewish men were deported to Babylon as teenagers in 605 B.C. They were to be trained as civil servants in the cosmopolitan empire of King Nebuchadnezzar. The character of Daniel to do what is right is shown in a series of five events in the book of Daniel. Through these events, Daniel was advanced to the highest position in the administration of three empires.

Nebuchadnezzar's army came down from Babylon against Jerusalem. They overtook the city and the land of Judah. The city was burned and the people of Jerusalem and Judah were taken as prisoners. The pressure was certainly on these young men to conform to the pagan world.

To begin their preparation in this pagan society, their names were changed. Each of the young men's names contained the name of God, "iah" and "el": *Daniel* which means "God is my judge"; *Hananiah* means "God is gracious"; *Mishael* means "Who is as God"; *Azariah* means "God has helped." The meaning of *Belteshazzar* is doubtful, but it probably means "Protect his life." *Shadrach* is also of doubtful meaning. *Meshach* may simply mean "Who is this?" and *Abednego* may mean "Servant of Nabu." Finally, *Nebuchadnezzar* is the Aramaic form of the Akkadian word *Nabu-kudurri-usur*, which means "Nabu has protected by inheritance." Nabu was one of Babylon's deities.

The Babylonians in King Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom wanted these young men to forget God. Changing their names would not make them forget their kind and loving Creator, and it did not matter what others called them. Their actions are what mattered. They stood firm, obeyed God, and put their lives in His hands. By refusing the symbols of paganism, they were richly blessed and vindicated.

To prepare for this week's lesson, you are encouraged to read the entire chapters of Daniel 1 and Psalm 119 and also I Corinthians 10:23–33.

Presenting the Bible Story

Daniel 1:1–2

The first two chapters describe a fulfillment of prophecy. Isaiah had prophesied to Hezekiah that his descendants would be taken captive to serve the king of Babylon (II Kings 20:16–18).

Daniel 1:3–4

Upon his return to Babylon, King Nebuchadnezzar brought with him the spoils of Judah. Spoils are treasures taken from an enemy after a battle. Articles from the Temple in Jerusalem were placed in the temple of his god in Babylonia (II Chronicles 36:7). Strong, healthy, and intelligent young men from royal families were also brought back.

Daniel 1:4–5

The young men who were taken captive were physically good looking and blessed with wisdom. They were to learn the language and literature of the people among whom they were now dwelling. They were put through a rigorous three-year course of study. These gifted young men were given the king's food and wine.

Daniel 1:6–7

New names were given

New names were given to the four young men. Daniel's name was changed to *Belteshazzar*; Hananiah's name was changed to *Shadrach*; Mishael's name was changed to *Meshach*; and Azariah's name was changed to *Abed-Nego*.

Daniel 1:8

Defile means to make dirty or impure

Daniel made the decision not to defile himself with the king's food or wine. The food came directly from the King's table which was prepared by Gentiles. This alone rendered the food unclean. God had given very specific dietary laws to his people (Leviticus 11:47; Ezekiel 4:18). In addition to this, the king's food had probably been sacrificed and offered to the pagan gods. To partake of this food would be wrong (Exodus 34:15; Deuteronomy 32:37,38). If Daniel and his friends partook of this food, it would send the message that they believed in those false gods. God wants you to stay away from things that will do harm to your body. Can you name a few things that would bring you harm? (Have your students list some things like drugs, smoking, drinking, dirty magazines, and bad movies.) Daniel asked the chief of the eunuchs to be excused from eating and drinking the king's food and wine. This was indeed a courageous act as Daniel was determined to be obedient to God and please Him.

God wants you to keep your body clean

Daniel and the three other young men were determined to please God

Daniel 1:9–13

Eunuchs were men who could not have sexual relations because their sexual organs were damaged or defective

The eunuch was afraid to give in to Daniel's request. This is understandable, as it was his job to see to the well-being of these young men both physically and mentally. The eunuch could lose his life if Daniel and the others became ill. Daniel asked for just ten days. He asked that they be given vegetables and water and then compare their appearance with those that ate the king's food. Daniel trusted that God would intervene on his behalf. As we see, God *did* intervene and the four young men were given vegetables and water.

Daniel 1:14–16

At the end of the ten-day test, the four young men were in better shape than those who ate the king's food. Since the four young men looked better, Ashpenaz did not object to allowing Daniel and the others to continue the diet of vegetables and water. Now God does not prohibit eating meat (Genesis 9:3; Romans 14:4; I Corinthians 10:25–26).

Daniel 1:17–21

Remember why these young men did not eat from the king's table. God

blesses those who seek to obey and please Him.

Nebuchadnezzar believed he was preparing these young men for his royal court. In truth, God was preparing them. It was God who gave them knowledge and understanding. Knowledge has to do with having *reasoning skills* and the ability to *process thoughts*. Understanding has to do with *insight*. God gave them the ability to interpret things in their true light. These young men were repeatedly found wiser than anyone else in the king's realm.

Art and Activities

Explore with your students
the following questions:

Always close your
class with prayer

Teaching Activities

Younger Children

Provide crayons and a copy of the Activity Page. Select the activity suitable for your students.

Older Children

Provide copies of the Activity Page suitable for each of your students.

Explore the Subject

1. God honored Daniel and the other young men who did not defile their bodies. How will you turn away from things that harm you?
2. Explain I Timothy 6:11 and how it applies to today's story and your life.
3. Give the meaning of each of the young men's name. Did changing their names change their actions?

Respond and Reinforce

1. When you trust in God and please Him with your actions, does He care, protect, and watch over you? Give examples.
2. Discuss memory verse.

Activity Page

Young Men Obey God

Daniel

Find the words hidden in the puzzle below.
They are hidden up, down, across, and diagonally.



NEBUCHADNEZZAR

BABYLON

JERUSALEM

BESIEGE

JEHOIAKIM

JUDAH

CHILDREN

FAVOURED

PRINCES

SKILLFUL

CUNNING

BLEMISH

TEACH

LEARNING

DAILY

PROVISIONS

MEAT

WINE

NOURISH

DANIEL

HANANIAH

MISHAEL

AZARIAH

RENAMED

BELTESHAZZAR

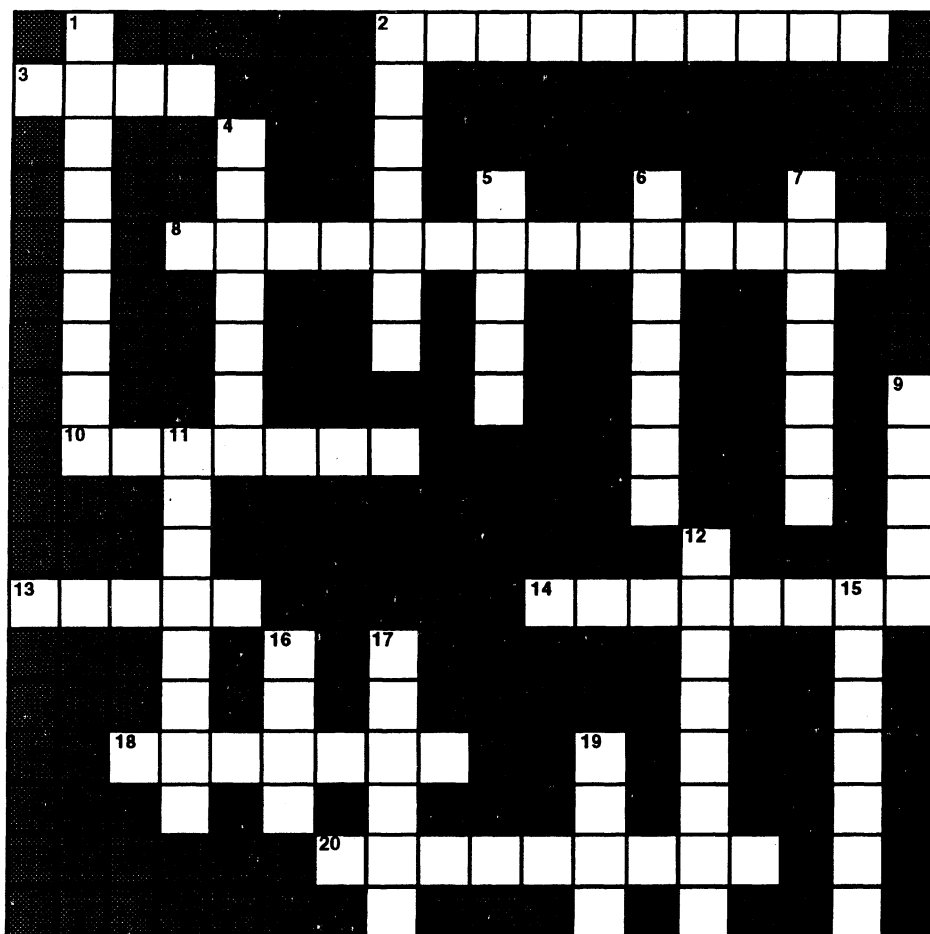
SHADRACH

MESHACH

ABEDNEGO

Activity Page

Young Men Obey God Daniel



Across

2. Something provided or supplied.
3. Solid food; flesh of animals that is eaten.
8. King of Babylon.
10. Meshach's Hebrew name (Daniel 1:7).
13. The food served at a table
14. Shadrach's Hebrew name (Daniel 1:7)
18. Crafty, devious manner.
20. Called the Holy City.

Down

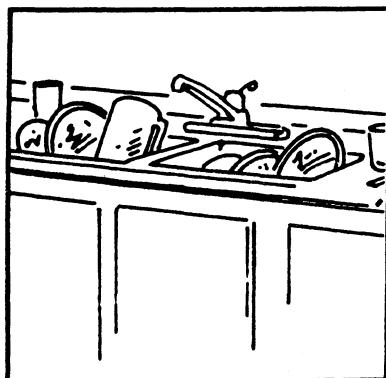
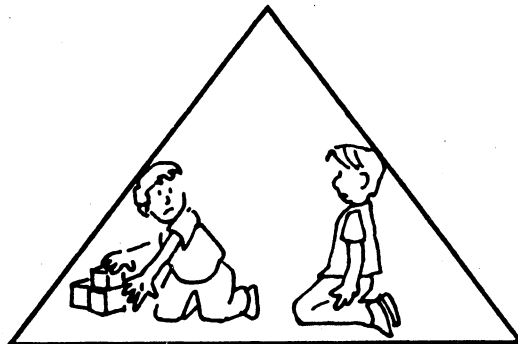
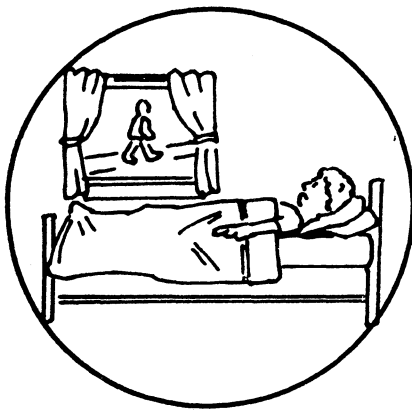
1. King of Judah (Daniel 1:1).
2. Those in preeminence.
4. A defect or flaw.
5. Day by day.
6. To decline to accept.
7. The chief city of ancient Mesopotamia.
9. Fourth son of Jacob and Leah.
11. Having skill.
12. Being preferred (Old English spelling).
15. Abednego's Hebrew name.
16. Fermented drink made of fruit.
17. Hebrew prophet during Babylonian captivity.
19. Flesh of animals used for food.

Activity Page

Showing Kindness and Love

Draw a line to connect the pictures that show how we can show kindness and love toward others. As God watches how we treat others, He is pleased to see us follow His example.

Match the opposites.



Activity Page

Young Men Obey God

Daniel

Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego knew it was more important to please God, than man. Color the sheet below

