

# Lesson One: Decide Now to Stand Strong (Early Elementary)

## Lesson Theme

I will love God and always try to do the right thing.

## Theme Verse

“... Daniel was determined not to violate God’s law and defile himself ...”  
(Daniel 1:8 VOICE)

... Daniel resolved not to defile himself ...” (Daniel 1:8 NIV)

## Bible Story - Daniel in Babylon

### Ice Breaker Questions

Start the class time with the ‘What is your name?’ (Activity Sheet 1.1)

#### What You Need:

- Self-adhesive name tags (enough for two per student)
- Copies of Activity Sheet 1.1 and washable markers

#### What To Do:

- Have each student print his/her name on a self-adhesive name tag and apply the tag to their clothes.
- Read all the names as you greet the students, complimenting each name, such as “Jennifer is such a pretty name!” or “I like your name, Richard. Did you know that there have been kings with your name?” or “Susanna, did you know your name is in the Bible?” Show them your name and let them know how you wish to be addressed ... such as “Mrs. Ruth” or “Mr. Dan.”
- Ask them if they like their names, or would they like to have another name?

- Then explain, “Today we are going to meet Daniel, a boy in the Bible who had to leave his home and go to another country and was given a new name! And he probably didn’t like his new name very much because it was strange . . . Belteshazzar!!! Who would like a name like that? We’re gonna call him by his real name . . . Daniel.”
- Give each student a copy of Activity Sheet 1.1 and another self-adhesive name tag. They should write “Daniel” on the name tag and then adhere it to the coloring page of Daniel. The page may be colored at a later time.

### *Active Listening Activity*

What You Need:

- Lanyards can be a piece of poster board with string or ribbon attached to hang around neck . . . essentially a “sign” to designate each character.
- Crowns can be poster board/cardstock crowns covered in aluminum foil, or even Burger King crowns with name glued on the front.

Before sharing the Bible story, assign the following characters and props to students in your group:

- |   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1) King Jehoiakim – King of Judah             | Crown w/his name on it. |
| 2) King Nebuchadnezzar – King of Babylon      | Crown w/his name on it. |
| 3) Daniel – Jewish teenager                   | Lanyard w/his name      |
| 4) Hananiah – Jewish teenager                 | Lanyard w/his name      |
| 5) Mishael – Jewish teenager                  | Lanyard w/his name      |
| 6) Azariah – Jewish teenager                  | Lanyard w/his name      |
| 7) Chief Ashpenaz – Babylonian official       | Lanyard & toy sword     |
| 8) Guard – assigned to Daniel and his friends | Lanyard & toy sword     |

Divide the rest of the class into “Jews” and “Babylonians.” Have each group sit together. If you want, you can prepare self-adhesive name tags with “Jew” and “Babylonian” on them and give to the members of each group.

As you tell the following story, each character should stand when the story mentions him. The “Jews” should stand when you talk about King Jehoiakim. The “Babylonians” should stand when you mention Babylon. You may have to

coach the students when to stand and when to be seated. Some coaching suggestions are included. The constant up-and-down movement is intentional and should add to the fun. A plus sign (+) in the story indicates movement of the characters.

### *Daniel I (Paraphrase)*

When Daniel (+) was a teen-ager, he lived in a country called Judah. All of the people in that country were called Jews, so that means that Daniel was a Jew. One day, a really big country called Babylon (+) decided to send a lot of soldiers and take over the country of Judah. The leader of Babylon was King Nebuchadnezzar. (+) So King Nebuchadnezzar and all his soldiers rode into Judah and captured the people. *(all seated)*

King Nebuchadnezzar (+) had a military leader called Chief Ashpenaz. (+) The king told Chief Ashpenaz to find some teen-aged boys in Judah and bring them to Babylon (+) so they could be trained to work in the king's castle. The king told Chief Ashpenaz to only choose strong, handsome and smart boys. *(all seated)*

The Bible tells us about four of those boys . . . their names were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. (+)

When they finally reached Babylon, Chief Ashpenaz (+) put the four boys in school so that they would be like other boys in Babylon. They were to go to school for three years.

Chief Ashpenaz also changed their names to Babylonian names! Daniel was named Belteshazzar, Hananiah was named Shadrach, Mishael was named Meshach and Azariah was named Abednego. *(all seated)*

Daniel and his friends (+) were also given meat and wine and other foods from the king's (+) own dinner table. This was the best food in the land, because it was the king's food! *(King seated)*

Daniel and his friends, however, decided that they would not eat the meat nor drink the wine because it would be breaking God's law to the Jews. God had told the Jews that they could not eat certain foods, like pork, and they were not to drink wine.

Since Daniel and his friends loved God very much and had loved God for a long time, they knew that eating these foods and drinking the wine would be disobeying God's rules. So they said "we can't do that!"

They went to Chief Ashpenaz (+) and asked if they could just have vegetables to eat and water to drink. Chief Ashpenaz really liked Daniel and his friends, and really wanted to help them, but he was worried that the king (+) would be angry if he did not follow the rules! So Chief Ashpenaz said "I cannot change the king's rules." (*King seated*)

Chief Ashpenaz left the 4 boys in the care of a guard. (+) (*Ashpenaz seated*) So Daniel went to the guard and asked if they could eat meat and drink water for only ten days. Daniel told the guard that they would be stronger and healthier if they could only eat veggies and water for ten days . . . and then the guard could check them out and decide for himself.

The guard agreed on the 10-day diet of veggies and water. And then, at the end of ten days, the guard checked out Daniel and his friends, and sure enough! They looked healthier and they were stronger than all the rest of the kids! So the guard agreed to let them eat veggies and water for the rest of the 3 years. (*Guard seated*)

Daniel and his friends got smarter and smarter, because God gave them their "smarts," and God gave Daniel an extra-special ability to understand dreams! (*Daniel & friends seated*)

At the end of the three years, Chief Ashpenaz (+) brought Daniel and his friends (+) in to see the king. (+) The king spent some time talking to Daniel and his friends, and the king said that they were the smartest of all the kids, and he wanted them to be part of his crew. The king said that Daniel and his friends were ten times smarter than the king's smartest men! The end! (*All seated*)

**Optional Repeat:** If time permits, you can repeat the story, since the students will better understand their roles after an initial practice run. Also, you might wish to change the characters for the second run.

## Review Activity

### Daniel's Story

What You Need:

- One deck of UNO Cards or print out the cards in Activity Sheet 1.2
- Several copies of “Daniel’s Story” Event Cards Activity Sheet 1.3

What To Do:

- Divide the class into groups of four or five students each.
- Distribute one set of “Daniel’s Story” Event Cards to each group.
- Explain that there are nine events that occurred in our story today. The goal for each group is to put the events in order as they happened by putting the corresponding UNO card on that sheet of paper.
- While the students are working in their small groups, ask any of the following review questions necessary to help them remember the order of the events.
- If the students are struggling to get the right order of events; after about five minutes, allow the students to look in the Bible in Daniel 1 to help them.

### Review Questions

Where were Daniel and his friends from originally?

(Judah)

What happened to their homeland? What happened to them as a result?

(The Babylonians overthrew them. Many were taken captive to Babylon.)

What happened to Daniel and his friends when they arrived in Babylon?

(They were given new names and told to eat the king’s food.)

Why did Daniel and his friends not want to eat the king’s food?

(God’s Law commanded they not eat that type of food. They wanted to obey God’s Law more than the law of Babylon.)

Who was the man in charge of Daniel and his friends?  
(Ashpenaz)

What did Daniel ask the man in charge as a favor? What did he say? Why?  
(He asked to eat vegetables and drink water. He said “No!” because he didn’t want to be the one to explain to the king why they looked weak.)

When Ashpenaz finally gave in to Daniel’s request, what was the result?  
(Daniel and his friends appeared stronger than all the other young men in Babylon.)

How did the king react when he saw Daniel and his friends?  
(The king thought they were 10 times smarter than the king’s smartest men.)

## Activities & Games

### Do the Right Thing

What You Need:

- On card stock, print out a single copy of “Do the Right Thing” Scenario Cards which is Activity Sheet 1.4.
- Scissors and 14 envelopes

What to Do:

- Explain that Daniel did the right thing. He obeyed the rules that God had given him, even when it was hard, and God rewarded him for obeying the rules.
- Cut out the scenario cards and place each card inside an envelope. Distribute the envelopes to 14 volunteers.
- One by one, each volunteer should open the envelope—when instructed—and read the scenario aloud. Then they should decide what the right thing to do would be. After sharing their answers, ask other students to comment also.

Application:

- Sometimes—many times—it is very difficult to know what to do when we are under pressure. We must decide beforehand to obey God, even when the choices are hard.

## Memory Verse Game

### What You Need:

- Post-It Notes and marker
- Poster board with a picture of a scroll drawn on it. For an example, see Activity Sheet 1.6.

### What to Do:

- Write each word of the memory verse on a sticky note. (“Daniel was determined not to violate God’s law and defile himself.”)
- Place the sticky notes in a random order on the bottom of the “Scroll Poster.”
- Let students try to put the words in the right order.
- An example of this game is found online at:  
<http://www.daniellesplace.com/html/fast-easy-bible-games.html#sticky>
- For an extra challenge, include words that are not in today’s memory verse.

## Activity Sheets/Coloring Pages

- 1.1 – “What Is Your Name?” Coloring Sheet
- 1.2 – “Daniel’s Story” Number Cards
- 1.3 – “Daniel’s Story” Event Cards
- 1.4 – “Do the Right Thing” Scenario Cards
- 1.5 – “Choose to Obey God” Coloring Sheet
- 1.6 – “Memory Verse Game – Scroll”

# WHAT IS YOUR NAME?

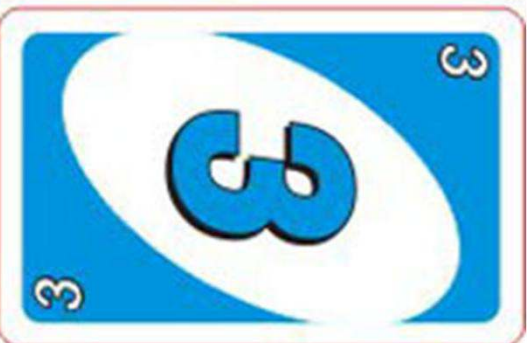
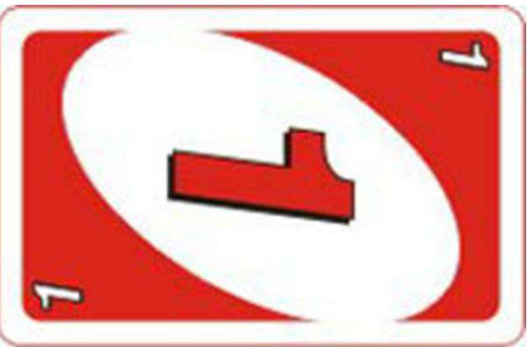
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# DANIEL'S STORY NUMBERS

Print and cut  
out one set  
of numbers  
for each  
small group  
of 4 to 5  
students.





Ashpenaz would not  
let Daniel & his friends  
eat just veggies.



After 10 days, Daniel &  
his friends were stronger  
than all the others.



The soldiers from  
Babylon  
captured Judah.

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Daniel asked Ashpenaz  
if they could eat veggies  
and drink water.



The soldiers from Babylon  
took Daniel and his  
friends into captivity.



Daniel and his friends  
were given new names.

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Daniel asked the guard if they could eat veggies and drink water for 10 days.



The king thought Daniel & his friends were 10 times smarter than his smartest men.

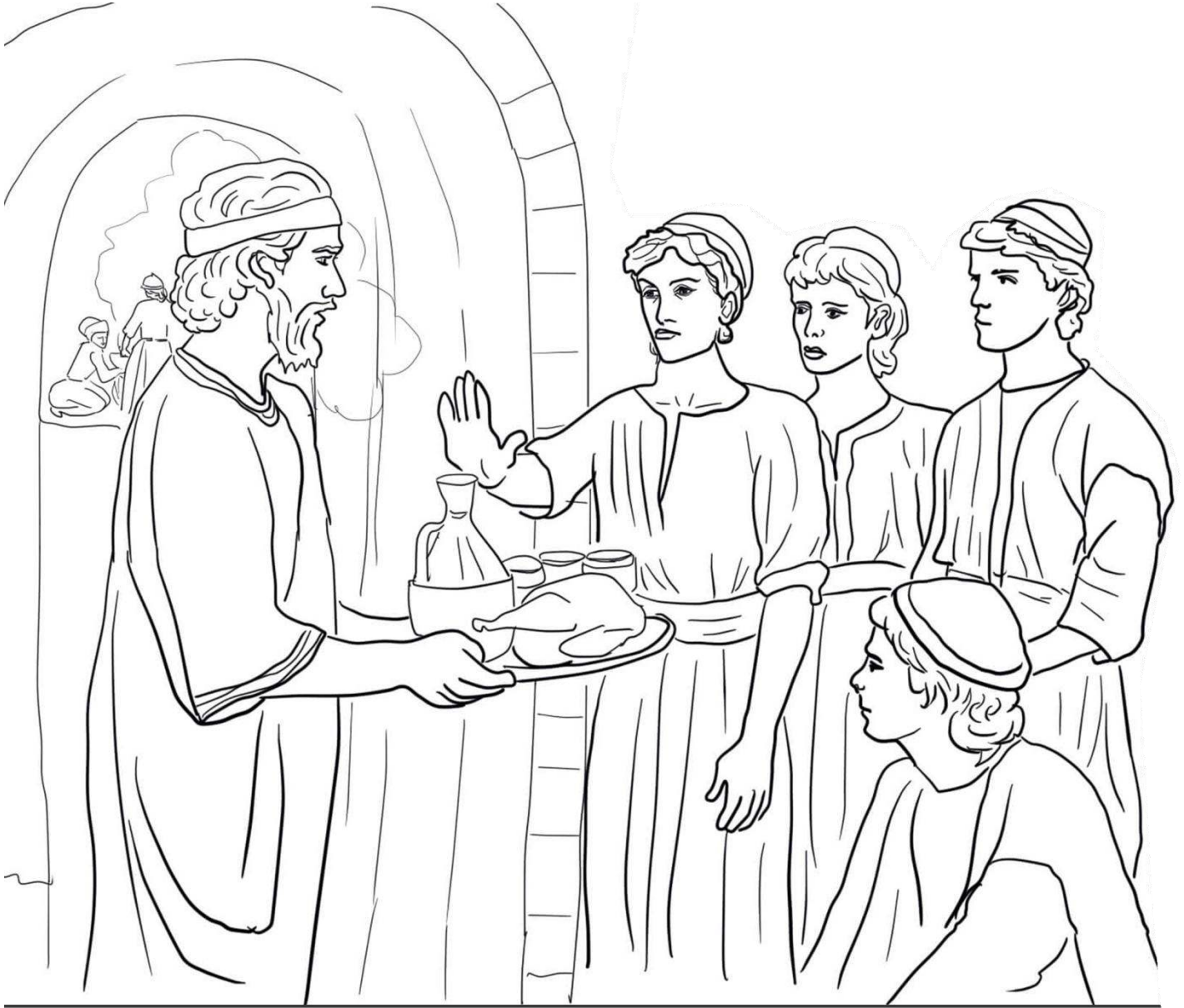


The guard said “Yes. You can eat veggies and drink water for 10 days.”

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IF YOU FOUND \$10 IN THE BACK SEAT OF YOUR FAMILY CAR, WHAT IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO?	IF YOU BROKE A LAMP AT HOME WHEN NO ONE WAS AROUND, WHAT IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO?
IF YOUR BROTHER OR SISTER LOST THEIR TOY, AND YOU KNEW WHERE IT WAS, WHAT IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO?	IF YOUR DAD TELLS YOU NOT TO PLAY VIDEO GAMES AT YOUR FRIEND'S HOUSE, BUT YOUR FRIEND WANTS YOU TO, WHAT IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO?
IF YOUR LITTLE BROTHER OR SISTER TAKES ONE OF YOUR TOYS, WHAT IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO?	IF YOU ARE IN WALMART AND YOUR FRIEND WANTS YOU TO STEAL SOME CANDY, WHAT IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO?
IF YOU ARE IN CHURCH AND YOUR FRIEND KEEPS TRYING TO GET YOU TO LAUGH, WHAT IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO?	IF YOUR FRIEND AT SCHOOL DOES NOT GO TO CHURCH, WHAT IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO?
IF YOUR FRIEND THROWS TRASH ON THE GROUND AT THE PARK, WHAT IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO?	IF YOU THINK ABOUT CHEATING ON A GAME SO YOU CAN WIN, WHAT IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO?
IF SOMEBODY SAYS A REALLY BAD WORD AT SCHOOL, WHAT IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO?	IF SOMEBODY JUST SAID SOMETHING MEAN TO YOU, WHAT IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO?
IF YOUR MOM TOLD YOU TO CLEAN YOUR ROOM, BUT YOU WANT TO WATCH TV, WHAT IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO?	IF YOU THINK THAT YOU WILL GET IN TROUBLE IF YOU TELL THE TRUTH, WHAT IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO?





Daniel  
and his friends  
choose to  
obey God!

# MEMORY VERSE GAME SCROLL

