

Lesson One: Decide Now to Stand Strong (High School & College)

Lesson Theme

In a culture that discourages devotion to God, I will determine and I will discipline myself to stand strong for God.

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)

Inductive Bible Discussion Guide

Brief Explanation

- This discussion guide is designed for just that... discussion. When I lead discussion group Bible studies, I do not have answers anywhere in the material, nor do I use a leader’s guide with all the answers written in.
- This is INTENTIONAL! I believe that the discipleship process should be an encounter with God, not just listening to someone else tell you what words to write down to fill in the blanks.
- Our goal is to help you facilitate discovery learning for your students. As the questions are asked, every participant (including the leader) is required to search God’s Word to discover the appropriate morsel of truth. When facilitators are 'armed' with all the answers, they are less likely to allow the time needed for individuals to process the question and formulate an answer.
- Don't be afraid of silence! That discovery process is the key to the success or failure of this process. It is in those moments of silence that we stop teaching and the Holy Spirit takes over!

- We cannot forget what Jesus said in John 16:13: “when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.”
- For a deeper look at the issues presented herein, please look at the "Daniel – Teacher's Guide" or listen/watch the corresponding sermons at www.templerogers.org/obe/daniel_resources/)
- For a deeper discussion of how to lead an inductive style, Bible discussion group, please download the “Leading Small Group Bible Studies” resource by clicking [HERE](#).

Ice Breaker Questions

Start the class time with the ‘New Name’ Activity. [See instructions below.]

How did it make you feel to be called by a new, different name? How did you feel when someone introduced themselves using your name?

Discussion Guide

Standing Strong: When Facing the Culture

Read Daniel 1:1-7. What kind of surprises did these country boys from Judah encounter in the metropolis of Babylon?

What made them a minority? Where might you be a minority?

What did the Babylonian government do to make sure that these boys would conform to their culture and political system?

Standing Strong: When the Time Comes

Read Daniel 1:8. Most English translations of the Bible use the word ‘defile’ in verse 8. What is another word for ‘defile’? How would this situation contaminate or bring dishonor to Daniel?

[Distribute Activity Sheet 1.4 to any who want it.]

What risk was Daniel taking by making this decision?

Was this the first time that Daniel obeyed God? When do you think Daniel made his original decision to not 'defile' himself? Why is this important?

Most people have a 'price'—a point at which they will 'sell out' or compromise their principles. What is something that you would never compromise?

Standing Strong: While God Is Working

Read Daniel 1:9-10. What—or who—influenced the official, Ashpenaz, to be kind to Daniel? Does God also work in the hearts and lives of unbelievers to bring about His will and plan?

Read Proverbs 21:1. What does this verse teach you about God? How does this truth apply here in our own country?

Standing Strong: Never Give Up

Read Daniel 1:11-16. Why did Daniel keep trying to convince the authorities to let him do this? What would you call this character trait?

What about us? Do we give up on doing what we say we will do for God? What does this say about our character?

Standing Strong: God Will Reward You

Read Daniel 1:17-20. In addition to being the healthiest ones in the group, what else did God do to bless the young Hebrews?

How did Daniel's determination and discipline pay off?

Standing Strong: The Challenge Ahead

Part of discipline is learning to say 'No!' When do you say 'No' to yourself?

Another part of discipline is doing hard things. What are some of the hard things you have disciplined yourself to do?

Read Acts 5:29. How might this verse impact your life in the future? What do we need to do today to prepare ourselves for a future where Christianity is looked down upon, or even made illegal?

Activities & Games

A New Name Game [Opening Activity]

What You Need:

- Self-adhesive name-tags for students
- Markers to write their name on the name-tag.

What to Do:

- Have each student print his/her first name on a name-tag without removing the adhesive backing.
- Each student (including you) should then take his/her name tag and attach it to any other random class member (only one name tag per person).
- Once each person has placed his/her name-tag on someone else, introduce yourself by your "new" name . . . "Hello! My name is Rachael, and I don't know where I'm from!" Invite others to follow suit.
- Call out others by their "new" name... such as "Welcome to camp, Judy!" or "Where are you from, Bob?" Have fun with this!
- After a few minutes of this confusion, ask them "So, how do you like your new names?" or "Do you like your new name better than your old name?"

Application:

- Explain to the students that today’s story is about a teen-aged boy who was kidnapped, taken to a foreign country and given a new name. But before you start on that story, ask them to find their original name tag—the one with their REAL name on it—and then be seated.
- After the students have settled down, you can tell them “The guy who was kidnapped was named Daniel – the same “Daniel” that’s in the Bible. And yes, he was given a new name and it wasn’t at all who he was! Today’s Bible study will feature Daniel, his new name and his new life.”
- Refer to Activity Sheet 1.1 for more background information on the Book of Daniel.

SOAP Journals

- Make a copy of Activity Sheet 1.2 for each student. [Be sure to print these pages back-to-back so that they will function as a small booklet—or like a church bulletin.]
- At the end of the group discussion, introduce the concept of SOAP Journaling. Instructions on how to SOAP Journal are included on the cover page of this booklet.
- Challenge students to SOAP the first entry (Daniel 1) during TODAY’S quiet time after lunch and bring it back to class this afternoon. Be sure to follow up with them on this to see if they have any questions. “We cannot EXPECT something if we do not INSPECT it!” This sample journal is designed to be used each day of camp during ‘Quiet Time.’

Discipline Acrostic

- Make a copy of Activity Sheet 1.3 for each student.
- Explain the instructions at the top of the page. Each person’s acrostic will be unique and base upon their understanding of the concepts or components of Christian disciplines.

- After each individual completes their ‘DISCIPLINE’ acrostic, ask them the question at the bottom of the page: “What is the value of discipline?” Various answers will be given. If no one says it, tell them that the value of discipline is “15”—if we were playing scrabble!

Analysis of the Song “Guilty”

- Make a copy of Activity Sheet 1.5 for each student.
- Read the lyrics of “Guilty.” The writer is proclaiming his determination to “do hard things,” or to “stand strong like Daniel.”
- Follow the instructions on Activity Sheet 1.5

Discipline Prayer Cards

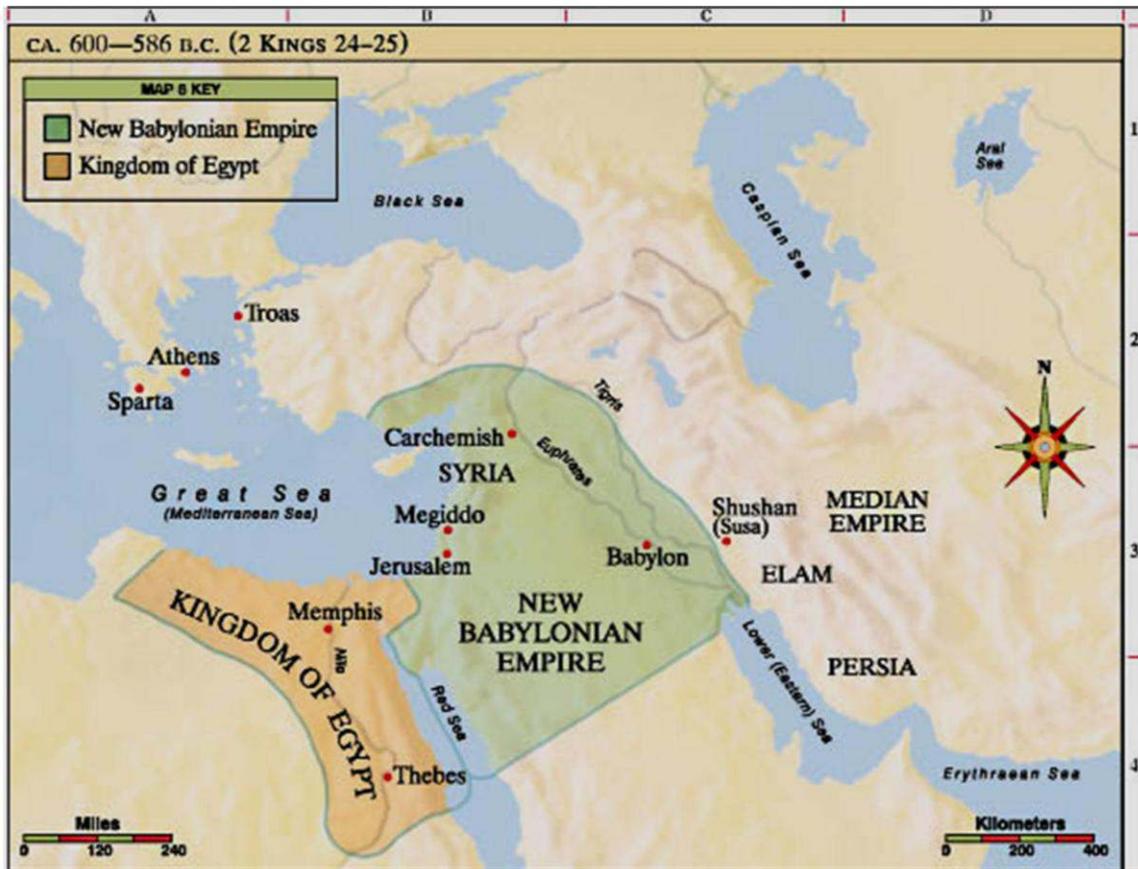
- For this activity, you will need index cards and one or two sets of “fine” or “extra-fine” markers
- In the tradition of “War Room,” choose a prayer card and write your own prayer of intent to God. Title it “Discipline” and date it.
- Then write what is in your heart after today’s lesson . . . a prayer for discipline and decision wherever it is needed.

Activity Sheets/Coloring Pages

- 1.1 – Cultural Background to the Book of Daniel
- 1.2 – “SOAP Journaling”
- 1.3 – “What is DISCIPLINE?”
- 1.4 – Daniel 1:8 Coloring Page
- 1.5 – “Guilty”

What was going on when Daniel was a kid?

- Egypt and Babylon were the two superpowers of the Middle East.
- Each country was competing for power, and it was only a matter of time until they would finally clash.
- The decisive battle that determined the fates of each empire finally came in the early summer of 605 B.C. in Carchemish, on the upper Euphrates River, in modern day Syria.



- After being defeated at Carchemish, the Egyptian armies retreated to their homeland which left Palestine undefended to ward off the Babylonian attackers.
- As a result, by August of 605 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar took control of the city of Jerusalem.
- A few weeks later, Nebuchadnezzar's father, King Nabopolassar, died in Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar rushed home to claim the throne.
- He was crowned King of Babylon on the day of his arrival the next month.
- On this trip home, Nebuchadnezzar carried captive with him some of the sacred vessels of the Temple of Jehovah in Jerusalem and the cream of the Jewish young men.
- Daniel and his companions were among those captives.
- Daniel was around 14-15 at the time of his captivity.

Title _____ Date _____
Text Daniel 6:1-28

S.O.A.P. Journaling

S

SOAP is a method of Bible reading and journaling: Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer. It can be used with any daily Bible reading plan. You'll need a Bible, a journal and a pen.

S for Scripture

Open your Bible to today's reading. Take time reading and allow God to speak to you. When you are done, look for a verse that particularly spoke to you that day, and write it in your journal.

O

O for Observation

What struck you and caught your attention in what you read?
What do you think God is saying to you in this Scripture? Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you and reveal Jesus to you.

A

A for Application

Personalize what you have read, by asking yourself how it applies to your life right now. Perhaps it is instruction, encouragement, revelation of a new promise, or corrections for a particular area of your life. Write how this Scripture can apply to you today.

P

P for Prayer

This can be as simple as asking God to help you use this Scripture, or it may be a greater insight on what He may be revealing to you. Remember, prayer is a two way conversation, so be sure to listen to what God has to say! Now, write it out.

Title _____ Date _____
Text Daniel 1:1-21

S

O

A

P

Title _____ Date _____
Text Daniel 3:1-30

S

O

A

P

Instructions: Using the word 'discipline,' create an acrostic that reinforces the concepts of Christian disciplines or words that are Christian disciplines. Example: "D—Decide to Obey"

D₂

I₁

S₁

C₃

I₁

P₃

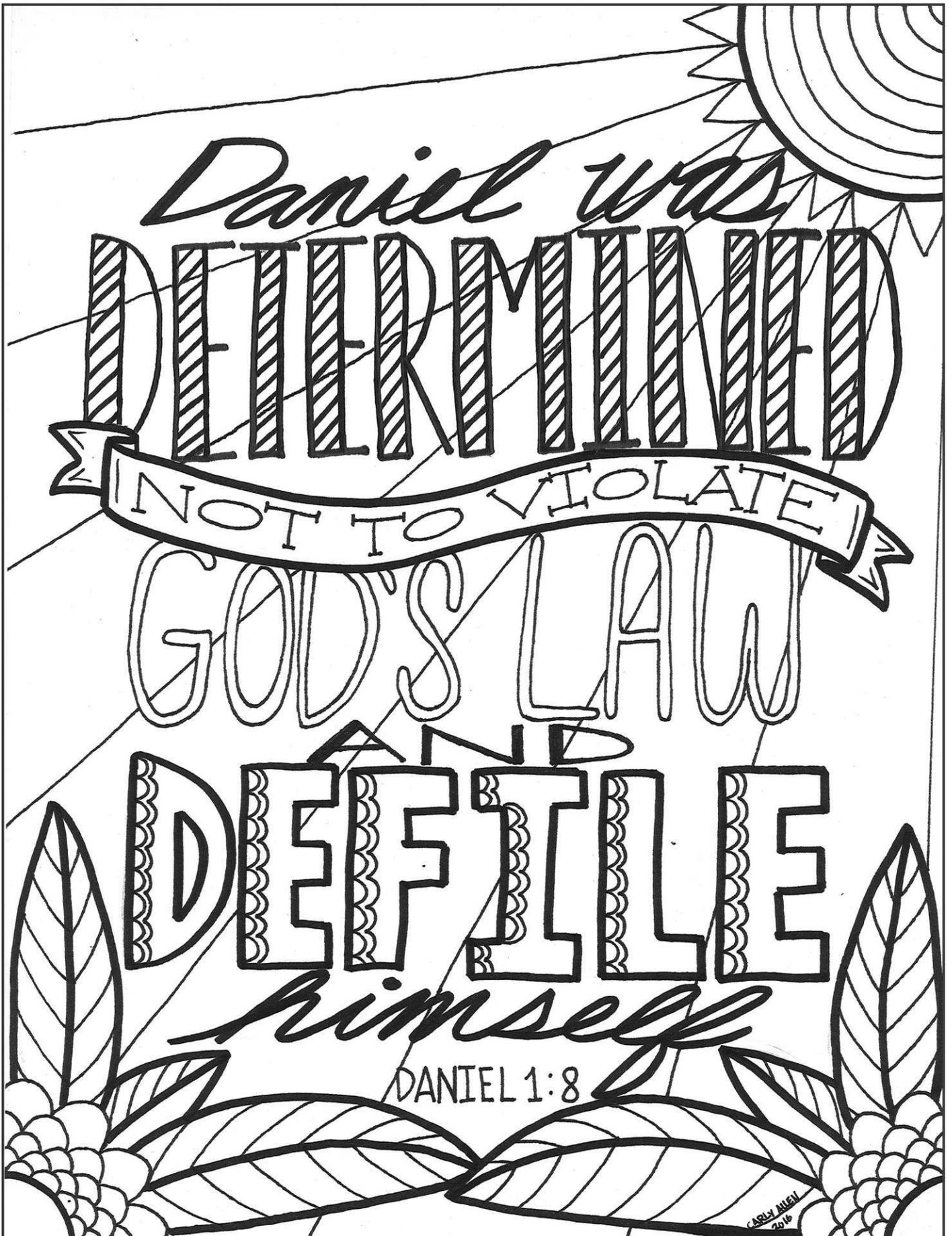
L₁

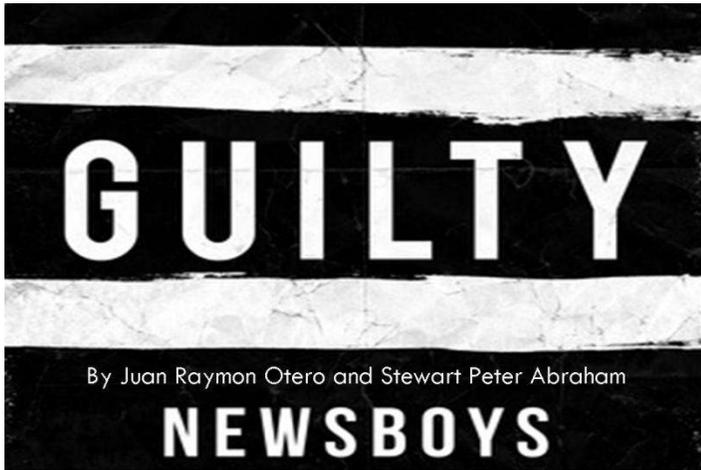
I₁

N₁

E₁

What is the value of discipline?





- Highlight all the lyrics that state intent to stay true to God
- Underline all the lyrics that describe opposition to God
- Draw a star next to lyrics that are challenging you
- Using any variety of symbols (asterisk, arrows, circles, emojis, drawings, etc.), illustrate the song
- Example, draw a broken ruler beside "breaking a rule" or a circle with a slash through it – be creative!

When did it become breaking a rule
To say Your name out loud in school
When Your name's the only one that sets us free
When did it become incorrect
To speak the truth about life and death
When Your life gave us all eternity
Even if it gets me convicted
I'll be on my knees with my hands lifted

**If serving You's against the law of man
If living out my faith in You is banned
Then I'll stand right before the jury
If saying I believe is out of line
If I'm judged cause I'm gonna give my life
To show the world the love that fills me
Then I wanna be guilty**

I'll rise up and honor You
I'll testify to the good You do
Cause Your Grace and Your Mercy have overtaken me
Even if it gets me convicted - I'll be on my knees with my hands lifted