

Lesson Three: God Gives Me the Choice to Obey (Early Elementary)

Lesson Theme

I have the choice to obey or not obey God, but there will be consequences if I choose to disobey Him. I will choose to do what is right!

Theme Verse

“Make a *clean* break with your sins and invest in what is right.” (4:27 VOICE)

Bible Story - Nebuchadnezzar's Pride & Punishment

Active Listening Activity

Before sharing the Bible story, give each student a piece of paper (use Activity Sheet 3.1 if you want it to look like a story board) and ask them to draw a picture of what is happening in the story.

Daniel 4 (Paraphrase)

A long time ago in a land far, far away called Babylon, there lived a king. This king's name was Nebuchadnezzar. King Nebuchadnezzar was the greatest king of one of the greatest kingdom that ever existed. All this 'greatness' kind of went to the king's head. He became very proud of all he had accomplished.

One day, while Nebuchadnezzar was sleeping, God sent him a vision. He had a vision of a giant tree that was tall and green, and it provided shade and fruit for everyone—birds, animals and even people. But in his vision, a holy messenger commanded that the tree be chopped down, leaving only the stump to remind the people of the greatness of the tree.

One of the king's wise men, Daniel, explained the dream to the king. He said, “Here is what the dream means: the kingdom of Babylon will fall and you, O King, will live outside and eat grass like an animal for seven years. God is

doing this to you so you will learn that He is the one who rules over the kingdoms of the world.” Then Daniel begged the king, “Please take my advice. Stop sinning and do what is right. Break from your wicked past and be merciful to the poor. Show God that you’ve really changed and then maybe he will change His mind and let you remain as king.”

The king did not change. In fact, a whole year went by and nothing ever happened. Then one day, as King Nebuchadnezzar was looking out from the roof of his palace, he said, “Look at what an awesome city I have built. Babylon is my creation. I built this by my own power. I built this as my royal home so everyone can see how awesome I am.”

As the king was saying those words, a holy messenger came down and proclaimed, “O King Nebuchadnezzar, you are no longer the king of this kingdom. You will no longer live like a real person; you will live in the fields with the wild animals and eat grass to keep you alive. For seven years, you will live like that. Then we will see if you have changed your attitude and recognize that God is the One who is really in control.”

And so it happened, just as the holy messenger said...

You see, King Nebuchadnezzar was also given a choice to honor and recognize God as the ruler over everything. Do you remember what Daniel said would happen to him? Just after declaring how great he was and how awesome the city of Babylon was, God declared that he would lose his kingship and live like an animal for seven whole years. So Nebuchadnezzar lived out in the fields like an animal for seven years.

At the end of that seven years of living like an animal, the Bible tells us that Nebuchadnezzar looked up to heaven—his sanity restored—and he ‘praised and worshipped the Most High and honored the one who lives forever’ (Daniel 4:34a). In fact, Nebuchadnezzar went on to say this about God:

His rule is everlasting,
and his kingdom is eternal.
All the people of the earth
are nothing compared to him.
He does as he pleases
among the angels of heaven

and among the people of the earth.
No one can stop him or say to him,
'What do you mean by doing these things?'

"When my sanity returned to me, so did my honor and glory and kingdom. My advisers and nobles sought me out, and I was restored as head of my kingdom, with even greater honor than before.

"Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and glorify and honor the King of heaven. All his acts are just and true, and he is able to humble the proud." (Daniel 4:34b-37)

When Nebuchadnezzar recognized God as the supreme ruler of all things, God restored him as the King over the Babylonian Empire. But there was even more to it than that! You see, Nebuchadnezzar recognized that before his seven years living like a wild animal, he was a very prideful person. The king realized that God was the one who humbled him and brought him to a point of repentance.

The Bible says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (Proverbs 3:34, James 4:6 and 1 Peter 5:5). The Bible also tells us that God hates a prideful attitude (Proverbs 6:16-17), and He will do whatever it takes to humble us and bring us to repentance!

What is it going to take in your life for God to get your attention?

When faced with this decision, will you choose your way or God's way?

Review Questions

How did King Nebuchadnezzar feel when he looked out at Babylon?
(He was filled with pride. He saw it as his greatest accomplishment.)

What was Nebuchadnezzar's dream? Who told the king what it meant? What did he say? (He dreamed of a great tree that would be chopped down, leaving only the stump of the tree. This meant that he no longer be the king of Babylon. He also dreamed of a man whose mind changed from a man to an animal. Daniel told him that he was that man.)

Why did God make Nebuchadnezzar live like an animal?

(It was God's plan to humble him so he would recognize that God is the ruler over everything.)

What happened when the seven years were over?

(God allowed him to think like a human again and he once again became the king of Babylon. He praised God for being in control of everything, including the King of Babylon.)

When faced with the decision to obey God or do what you want, what will you do?

Why is it important to obey God?

Activities & Games

Building Block Challenge (Introductory Activity)

What You Need:

- Multiple, matching sets of building blocks (wooden blocks, legos, etc.)
- Flat surface that is sturdy for the students to work on. This can be the floor if solid table tops are not available.

How to Play:

- Divide the group into multiple teams (however many sets of blocks that you have available).
- Explain to the students that the goal of this activity is to build the most unique structure out of the sets of blocks within 3 minutes. After the students complete their structures, take pictures of each one with a digital camera.
- Next, explain that they will have another 3 minutes to build the tallest and strongest tower possible out of their sets of building blocks. Again, take pictures of each tower when completed.

Application:

- Ask the students how they felt about their structures. "Was yours the best out of all of them?"
- Explain that the man in our story today was a great builder just like them, but his problem was that he was too proud of what he built.

Loud & Proud Role Play

What You Need:

- Imagination and a little extra time.

How to Do It:

- Role play with students by asking them what they feel they are gifted at. If they don't know, ask them what others have said they do really well.
- Using their answer, ask the class to role play what a person who is filled with pride says when a compliment is given.
- Then allow them to share ways they can respond that point others to God because He is the one who gave them that ability.

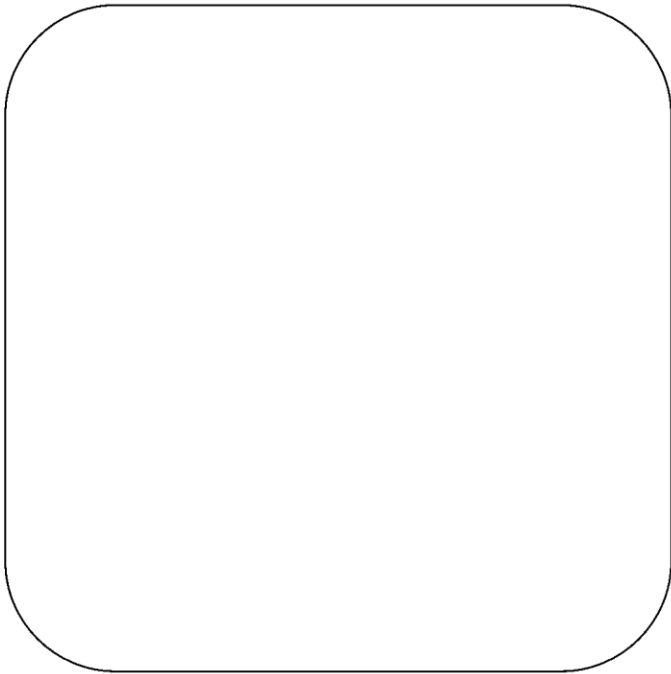
Application:

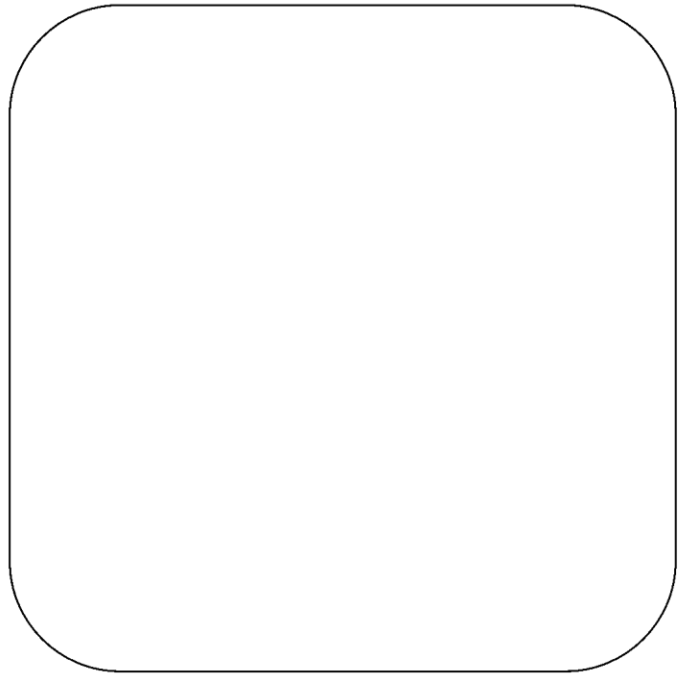
- The goal of this exercise is to help the students understand that what they say when complemented can come across as boastful and proud—and help them to know what to say instead.
- Be sure to point out that we need to give God the glory when we are able to do something well.

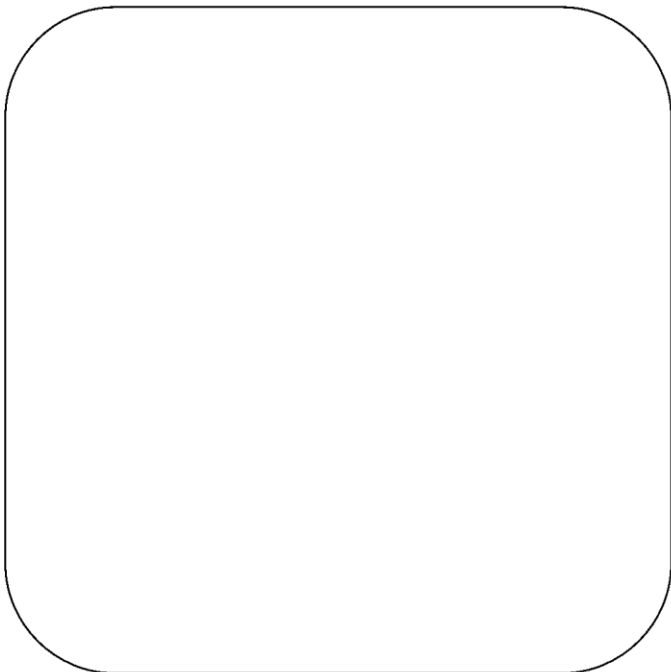
Activity Sheets/Coloring Pages

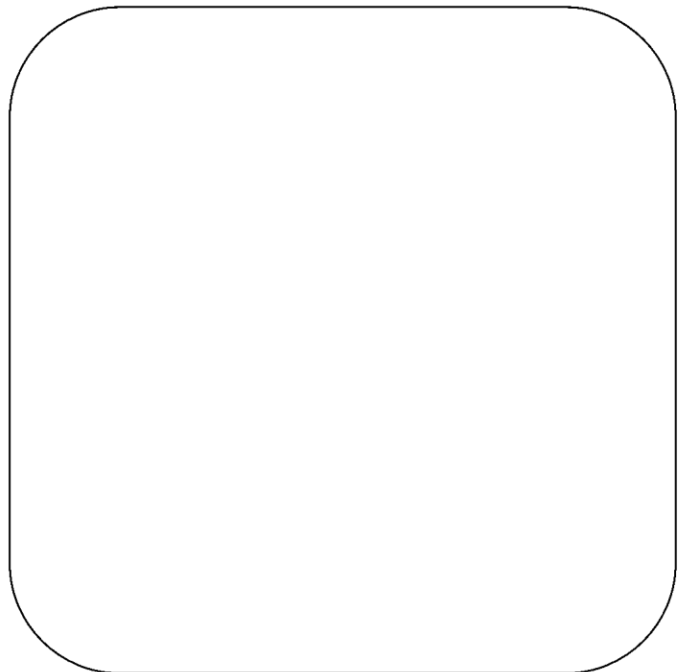
- 3.1 – Nebuchadnezzar's Story Board
- 3.2 – "Nebuchadnezzar's Dream" Coloring Page
- 3.3 – "Nebuchadnezzar" Coloring Page
- 3.4 – "Obedience" Coloring Page
- 3.5 – "Nebuchadnezzar" Word Search

NEBUCHADNEZZAR STORY BOARD







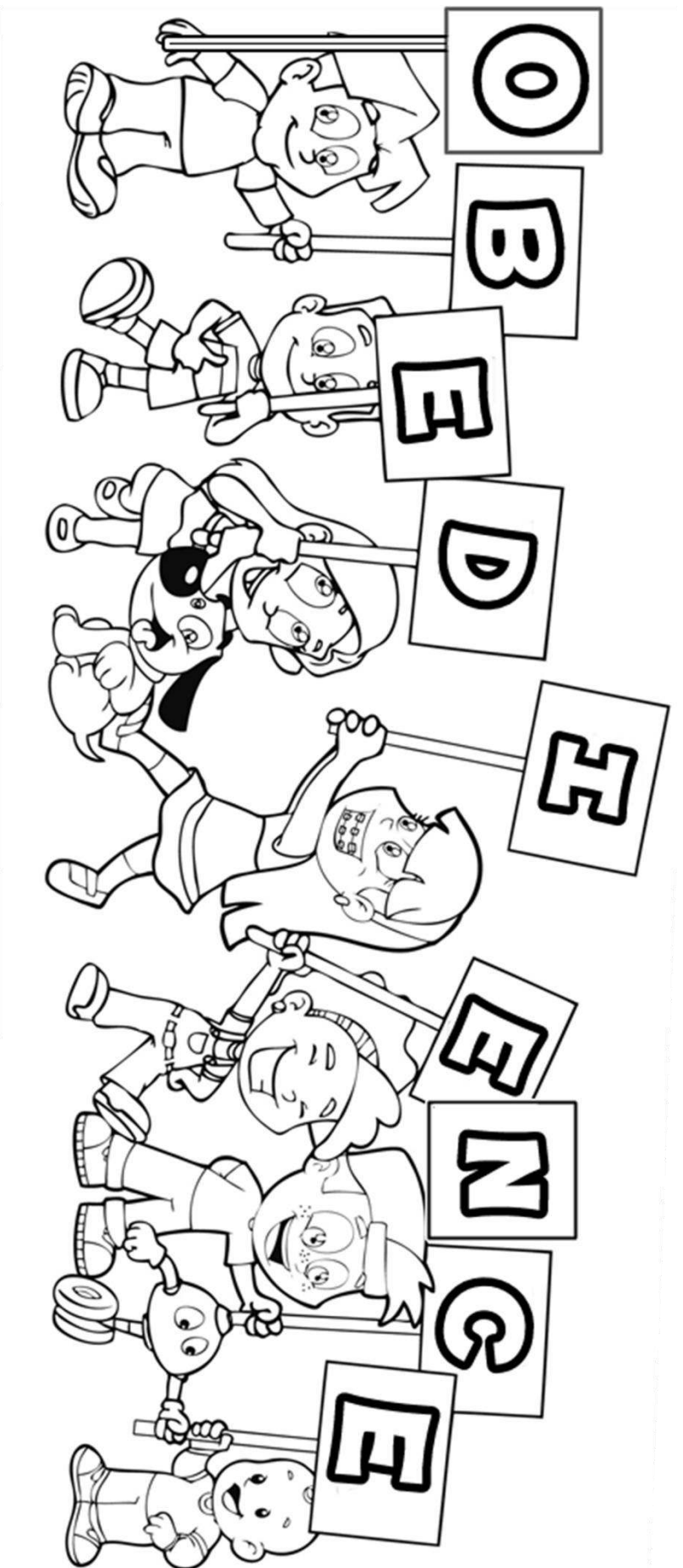




God used Daniel to interpret King Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Because of Nebuchadnezzar's pride, God was going to punish him for seven years by driving him away from his kingdom and making his mind like an animal's (Daniel 4:23).



“That same hour the judgment was fulfilled, and Nebuchadnezzar was driven from human society. He ate grass like a cow, and he was drenched with the dew of heaven. He lived this way until his hair was as long as eagles’ feathers and his nails were like birds’ claws.” (Daniel 4:33)



Make a clean break
with your sins and
invest in what is right.

Daniel 4:27

NEBUCHADNEZZAR WORD SEARCH

B H E L B P N T V P W B J R I
L U O D Z H V B Q P Z K T P L
E Q O R F Z Q I Z E K E E N S
S S C E H I H T U R T C J O T
S S N O L Y B A B S K L Z S F
E I F U N V T A U G Q A Z A A
D L K W G V A M A D J W K E Y
J S B J L B Q D N E B S C R Y
Q R A Z Z E N D A H C U B E N
I J Y N G Q F T M P B S T I O
K F E D I R P Y G Z R S I Q O
T F N S R Y H L F C R A O D T
D E P A R T E D H C I R T J E
D O M Z Q E P I A Q A G A Q N
Y P H K I L J O W I H F N R F

BABYLON

GRASS

PRIDE

BLESSED

HAIR

REASON

CLAWS

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

TRUTH

DEPARTED

OXEN