



The Bible Guides My Future

Big Idea: God equips me to serve Him when I choose His way.

#4

Bible Text: Daniel 1

Students Will:

- Know**
- Daniel and his three friends chose God's way, even when everyone else chose a different way.
 - The Bible explains God's way to live.
 - Choosing God's way sometimes means they will act differently than the people around them.
 - God's blessings wait for those who choose God's way.
 - *New Testament Structure & Authors:* The New Testament includes 5 history books, 21 doctrine books, and one prophecy book.
- Feel**
- Confident that God will guide them, even when choosing His way makes them feel alone.
 - Admiration for Daniel and his godly friends.
 - Motivated to choose God's way.
- Do**
- Ask God to help them choose God's way.
 - Tell about a time they chose God's way instead of the world's way.



Pray for Wisdom

Lord, the future of each of my students is filled with such wonderful potential as they keep in step with Your plan for them. Open my eyes to see in each of them what You have made them to be, and use me to steer them more firmly onto the path You have prepared for them!

Grant this in Jesus' name, amen.

Lesson Summary

It is never easy to go against the flow. Who wants to go one direction when everyone else seems to be having a good time on another path? Those who want a bright future serving God, however, need to understand that their choices must not be based on the actions of others, but on the Word of God.

Daniel and his three friends were God-fearing teenagers hundreds of miles from home. As they were led into captivity, the land they knew and the futures they dreamed of were left far behind. But the things they stood for and the commandments they had learned were not far away. They were in their hearts. Daniel and his friends knew that God would guide them into the future and show them how to live in a Babylonian world that had no interest in their God or His laws.

They trusted God enough to follow His ways even when it meant eating different food than everybody else. They chose God's laws even when it meant that they would be the only ones standing when everyone else was bowing. For them, there was no question as to which way was God's way. His Word made that clear. There was only one issue: whose way would they choose? By choosing God's way, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah found that God was big enough to make their future secure. God used these moments of choice to prepare them to serve Him in great ways that people would read about for centuries.

This lesson offers inspiration to students who want to do what is right but fear the consequences of going against the flow. They will see that God will lead them into wonderful areas of service if they will trust Him enough to obey His Word.

Daniel 1



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Some people choose the way of the world because it looks good. Too bad they can't see what is at the end of the road!

God's way is way better!
What is at the end of God's way?

Heaven

Why do more people choose the world's way? **more attractive and seems more fun.**

Draw yourself on the way you are going.



Why We Got the Bible 2-B-4

13

Help children understand that each one must choose which way to go. You may want to direct them to Psalm 1.



Sing with Joy

Special Songs

Two songs have been created to reinforce the learner targets for this unit. Lyrics and music are printed in this Teacher's Guide.

- *Treasure Expedition* (Mark Chase, 1998) Theme song for Level 2—

motivates students to treasure the Bible and read it regularly.

- *God's Great, Wonderful Word* (Mark Chase, 1999) Theme song for Unit B—challenges students to share the Good News about Jesus with others.

Memorize Bible Verse

Use your favorite translation to teach and rehearse:

Topic: The Bible Guides My Future

Reference: Psalm 119:1

Suggested Memory Activity:

Rhythmic Recital

Prepare a memorable rhythm for the memory verse by adding pauses, stress, and volume at appropriate places.

Alternate Passage:

Psalm 19:7-14 (learned through the entire unit).

Pray for Power

Pray that your students will see that it is God who can guide them onto the path of happiness and abundant life; ask Him to give them a hunger for Him through His Word.



Spark Interest

You will need: homemade cookies, a container of lima beans (or another vegetable that you don't think most children would choose over cookies).

Tell students that you brought a special treat for them that will help their brains pay attention to the lesson. Ask if they would like to have some of your "brain food." Reveal the cookies. Before passing them out, however, tell students that they may have what is in your container if they think they would prefer it over the cookies. Curiosity may produce a few takers. Of course, you'll allow them to change their minds when they see what they've chosen...but not before having a little fun with those who would dare to trade homemade cookies for lima beans!

Explore Scripture

You will need: a tape player with some dramatic instrumental music (optional).

Allow students to enjoy their cookies as you read this account (or describe the scenario in your own words): Pretend that school is over and summer vacation just began. Today you are going on an imaginary trip. But this trip is not going to be a vacation. In fact, you don't want to go on this trip at all, but you have no choice. Instead of riding comfortably, you have to walk the entire way. You can't play with anything along the way, because your hands are tied. You can't talk to anyone along the way because you have to walk single file and stay in a straight line. You can't stop at any rest stops along the way because soldiers on horses make you keep moving. You are so miserable that you can't wait for this trip to be over so that you can go home and enjoy your summer. But someone tells you that it will take most of the summer just to get where you're going...and when you get there, you are never coming back.



Daniel and his friends left everything behind when they were taken to Babylon.

But God's Word went with them since it was written on their hearts. They decided to obey God no matter what happened.



Circle the things that remind you that Daniel and his friends obeyed God.



Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego stood for God while everyone else bowed down. What commandment did they obey (Exodus 23:24)?

Do not bow or worship other gods

The king planned to burn them in a big furnace. What plans did God have for them (Daniel 3:30)?

They were promoted by the king

Help the children to understand that these four young men loved God—and that their love for Him was more powerful than anything else to them.

Tell students that this really happened to four boys. The name of one of the boys was Daniel. Help them find the Book of Daniel in their Bibles. Identify the other boys as Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, but suggest that they may know them better by their new Babylonian names Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Explain that they were Jewish boys who were captured and taken to Babylon to serve in the palace

of King Nebuchadnezzar. There they would be taught the language and the ways of the Babylonians.

Direct students' attention to Daniel 1:5. Ask: What kind of food do you think came from King Nebuchadnezzar's table? Encourage responses. Was it expensive? Was it delicious? Direct their attention to 1:9. Define "resolved" as meaning "made up his mind," and "defile" as "make dirty." Explain that

Sometimes it's hard to choose God's way when it seems like everybody else is doing something different. God's way isn't always the easy way, but it is always the right way.

Do you ever feel like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego?

YES NO

When have you stood up (done what was right) when others were bowing down (doing what was wrong)?



Refused to tell a lie.

Didn't pick on a person everyone else did.



Ask God to help you choose to obey Him. Do you believe that He will bless your future when you choose His way?

YES NO NOT SURE

God promises that He will! Memorize your Bible verse, and ask the Lord to help you believe it and live it!

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Psalms 119:1



Help students think about ways they can honor God by choosing God's way and standing up for Him.

the king's food contained many things that were against God's law for Jews to eat. Some of the king's food was even sacrificed to false gods! Daniel and his friends knew what the Scriptures said. They knew that God did not want them to eat the king's food. Help them feel Daniel's dilemma by discussing:

- Why it would have been easy just to go ahead and eat the king's food anyway.

- How hard it is to eat boring food while everyone around you is eating delicious food.
- How embarrassing it is to do one thing while everyone else is doing something else.
- How hard it is to explain God's laws when the other person doesn't even believe in your God.

Summarize 1:11-20, focusing on the wonderful future God had in store for Daniel and his friends because they chose God's way.

Have students turn to Daniel 3. Read (or retell in your own words):

Choosing God's way isn't just something that you do one time. We must choose to obey God over and over again. Because God blessed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, they became important men in Babylon. King Nebuchadnezzar was pleased with their wisdom and service. But it was just a matter of time until Daniel's three friends would have to choose between God's way and the king's way once more.

One day, Nebuchadnezzar had a huge golden statue made to honor himself. He called together all the important leaders of the kingdom and ordered them to fall down and worship his statue when they heard the musical instruments begin to play. He said that whoever did not bow down would be thrown into a furnace. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego raised their eyebrows. How could King Nebuchadnezzar order such a thing? God's commandment was clear: To worship anyone or anything other than God would be a very, very great sin. The young men looked at one other. Their eyes told them that they were all thinking the same thing.

Try to help students picture the scene by having them imagine a soccer field filled with people. (If you have access to a large field and the weather is cooperative, you might consider doing this portion of the lesson outdoors.) Describe a large shoulder-to-shoulder crowd all facing the same direction. Help them grasp the height of the ninety-foot statue by comparing it to a nearby tree or structure. With students standing, instruct all the students except one (or three, if your class is large) to kneel when they hear the music. Play the instrumental recording (or give some other comparable signal). Allow a moment for the student(s) to stand alone. Discuss:

- How it feels to stand alone.
- What Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were willing to give up to choose God's way.
- What thoughts about their future ran through their minds as they stood there.

Summarize or read Daniel 3:16-30. Then have students complete pages 13 and 14 of their student workbooks.

Inspire Action

You will need: a Bible, a globe or small world map, a dollar bill, a wristwatch, a cookie.

Place the Bible and the globe two or three feet apart on a table in front of you. Point out that the world often tells us things that are against what God has told us in His Word. Holding the dollar bill over the Bible, tell students that God's Word teaches us what we should and should not do with our money. Now hold the dollar bill over the globe. Explain that the world has different ideas about what we should do with our money. Place the bill on the Bible.

Follow the same progression with the wristwatch (representing our time) and the cookie (representing pleasure, physical bodies, etc.). You may add as many simple items as you like to demonstrate the fact that we face many choices every day. When we obey what the Bible says, we are choosing God's way. Disobeying God's Word is choosing the way of the world. Emphasize that God's way will lead to His blessings in the future. Help students work through *HeartBeat* on page 15 of their workbooks.

Pray for Life-Change

Standing alone isn't always easy; it can be the most difficult thing a young person faces. Yet, the ability to stand alone and say "No" when necessary is the mark of character God wants for each child. Give students the opportunity to share times when they find it difficult to say "No" when they should.

Pray that your students' hearts would be filled with strength to walk in the right and to refuse the wrong; pray that they take their stand with humility. Ask God to give genuine faith in Him as the right choice in life's decisions.

Pray for the personal requests of students. Encourage children to voice their prayer concerns. Be sure to pray for each one.

Explore More

I have read Daniel 4.

Who could not interpret the dream for King Nebuchadnezzar?

diviners Daniel astrologers magicians

TRUE **FALSE** The King knew Daniel could interpret his dream (4:18).

King Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom would be restored when (4:25-26):

he ate all the grass seven times passed by

he acknowledged that Heaven rules he got out of prison

TRUE **FALSE** Nebuchadnezzar was very proud of all he had done (4:30).

God is able to humble those who walk in pride (4:37).

N.T. Structure & Authors

The *New Testament* contains 27 books in all. (Say their names aloud.)

Each New Testament book fits into one of three groups:

- 5 History Books
- 21 Doctrine Books
- 1 Prophecy Book

(Count the number of books in each group.)

HISTORY BOOKS

DOCTRINE BOOKS

LETTERS TO CHURCHES

LETTERS TO LEADERS

LETTERS TO EVERYONE

PROPHECY BOOK

Introduce this new section on "N.T. Structure & Authors."

Encourage students to complete this page before the next lesson.

N.T. Structure & Authors

This section will help your students understand how the New Testament books fit together. They will also identify who wrote each New Testament book.

For this lesson, show students that the New Testament has been divided into three main sections:

5 history books (Matthew through Acts)

21 doctrine books (Romans through Jude)

1 prophecy book (Revelation)



1. Snack Idea

(10-15 minutes)

Serve apple slices. Dip the slices in a fruit dip.

2. Reenact Delivered!

(20-30 minutes)

Have students reenact the story of the fiery furnace. Parts to include: The King, the Guards, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Encourage a creative twist at the end by allowing Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to give a testimony about how God delivered them from the fire. (A large box or a circle of chairs covered by a sheet can serve as a furnace. Twisted-up grocery bags can be used for wood to make the fire hot!

3. Guest Speaker: A Firefighter

(30-40 minutes)

Invite a firefighter to come speak to the students and share about the dangers and power of fire. Ask him or her to bring protective gear and to speak about the intensity and heat of fire so that the children can more fully appreciate the miracle of God's deliverance of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. (Alternative: Take the students to a fire station for an even more vivid experience.)

4. Letter from Abednego

(20-30 minutes)

Provide students with a piece of writing paper and have them imagine they are Abednego. Have them answer the following letter (that you provide to them):

Dear Abednego,

The story about you and the fiery furnace is very amazing! You are so brave and filled with faith in God. How did you get so brave? What was it like to be all tied up? What did it smell like in the fire? Did you meet God in the fire? Please tell me more!

Your friend,

(each child's name)

Their response letters might follow this template:

Dear (child's name):

Thank you for writing. Let me answer your questions.

First of all...

Teacher Tip

Delivering the content does not complete the learning process. Students need to comprehend what they are learning—but even then it's not complete. They need to know how to apply it—but even then it's not complete. Students actually have to integrate it into their lives. Keep application continually in view!

Supply Checklist

General Supplies:

- Bibles, student workbooks
- pencils or pens
- "Hidden People" Profiles

Spark Interest

- homemade cookies
- container of lima beans (or another vegetable)

Explore Scripture

- tape player and instrumental music tape (optional)

Inspire Action:

- globe or world map, cookie, dollar bill, wristwatch