



SESSION

3

Daniel



MEETING AIM

To see how some of God's people were faithful to him in exile.



BIBLE PASSAGE

Daniel 1



BACKGROUND

The messages God has been sending to his people through the prophets have come true. Jerusalem has been besieged and the king captured by the Babylonians. The Babylonian strategy is to take the best of God's people – the natural leaders – and to put them into positions within their own society. Daniel and his friends are part of the cohort taken to serve in the king's palace. However, they are not willing to simply assimilate and become part of Babylonian culture. Instead, they remain true to who they know themselves to be as God's children and God proves his faithfulness to them time and again.

CIRCLE TIME



As you begin the session, invite the children to sit together in a circle and pass round a simple object. When a child has the object they can share a story from their week. Sometimes it's helpful to have a sand timer so that you have time for each person to share if they want to. If a child doesn't want to say anything they can just pass on the object. Pray and thank God for all the stories shared and the stories that weren't mentioned.

COPY!



You will need: small squares (about 5cm square) of different coloured paper or card; three larger squares of paper in the same colours

Staying seated in the circle, give each child three squares of paper. Lay out your three larger squares in the middle of the circle and ask the children to copy the pattern with their squares. (Depending on where they are in the circle, they will lay out their squares differently from the people opposite them!) Change your squares around and have them copy again. Do this several times.

Explain that in today's story, God's people have been captured and taken to a different country. When you are in a different country, there are lots of new things you need to copy, such as using different words and doing things in different ways so that you fit in.

BIBLE STORY



You will need: a variety of vegetables (include unusual ones too, if you can find them)

Pass the vegetables round the circle; ask the children if they know the names of them. Which vegetables do they like? Which have they never heard of? Which would they never eat?

God's people had been captured by their enemies and taken to live in countries that weren't home to them. A guy called Daniel and his three friends were taken to a city called Babylon. The king wanted to train them up so they could serve him in the palace. The king gave the four friends new names. He had people teach them all about their new country. I wonder what new name you would have been given in Babylon? (*Take some suggestions.*)

Daniel and his friends were also given very special party food and wine to eat every day. But they didn't want to eat it! It wasn't the sort of food that God would want them to have, so they said no. The man in charge of them was worried. He didn't want these guys to look hungry – that would get him into trouble. So, Daniel made a deal. He said: "Give us vegetables and water for ten days and not this special party food. If we look hungry and unwell at the end of those days, then we will eat your special food. But if we look OK, then we'll carry on having vegetables and water instead." The man in charge thought this was a good idea. And guess what...? At the end of the ten days, Daniel and his friends looked much healthier than all the other guys who had been eating the party food.

God was really pleased with the choice that Daniel and his friends had made about the food, he gave them special abilities to learn well and even taught them to understand the hidden meanings in dreams! There are lots more exciting stories about Daniel and his friends standing up for God and doing the right things!

CHATTING TOGETHER



Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns to contribute:

- Do you think it was easy for Daniel and his friends to say no to the guy that was in charge?

- What might have happened to them?
- Do people sometimes try to get us to do things we know that God wouldn't like?
- Is it easy to do what God wants?
- Do you think God will look after you if you make choices like Daniel did?

CREATIVE RESPONSE



You will need: variety of vegetables that can be eaten raw (carrots, mushrooms, peppers, cauliflower, tomatoes etc) cut up into bite-sized pieces

Give each child a paper plate and let them choose some raw vegetables and arrange them in a pattern. Talk to the children about choices they might make this week at home or nursery to do what God would want them to do – things like sharing, not saying: "Me first!", not fighting with siblings, helping etc. Ask the children to give suggestions. As you talk about each suggestion, encourage the children to choose a piece of raw vegetable and eat it.

PRAYER



Ask the children to be quiet for a minute and think about standing up for God and doing the things he wants them to. When they are ready, they can stand up to show God they want to follow him. Challenge them to stand up without talking – it's trickier than you think! Pray out loud and ask God to help the children stand up and follow God this week.

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