

Kidnapped

Daniel 1

PPT Title

Kidnapped

Main Point: We must decide ahead of time to follow God in all that we do.

Key Verse: *Daniel made up his mind to eat and drink only what God had approved for His people to eat.* - Daniel 1:8a CEV

Props: Large clear glass of water; handful of "pollution: (dirt, candy wrappers, etc.)

Optional teaching tool: Before class, recruit four adults or teens to act out the "Donut Drama" during Background/Review section. **Props needed for Drama:** 5 copies of "Donut Drama" (at end of lesson), trash can, clean trash can liner, half-eaten donut, clean crumpled paper

BACKGROUND/REVIEW

Note to Teacher: Daniel is not called a prophet in the book of Daniel, however Jesus calls him a prophet in Matthew 24:15. In the book of Daniel we find the fulfillment of previous prophecies that told of the exile of God's people. We also find prophecies given to Daniel of things yet to come. Daniel is given visions for the fate of his people, the first and second coming of the Messiah, and God's eternal Kingdom.



Say: Let's look at our map. We call this land "the Promised Land," because God had promised Abraham that He would give this land to his HUGE family. Before they even entered the Promised Land, God spoke to Abraham's descendants through His prophet Moses. God made an **if-then** promise. He said that **if** they were faithful to Him and worshipped ONLY Him, **then** He would bless, protect, and fight for them. But **if** they disobeyed God and worshipped false gods, **then** they would be punished. Among other things, God made it very clear that they would be removed from the Promised Land.



The land became known as Israel, and God Himself was their king. In time, the people insisted that they wanted a human king. This was a very bad choice. Under King Solomon, the people began to worship false gods. So after Solomon died, Israel was divided into two kingdoms. The Northern part was still called Israel, and the Southern part was called Judah. Through the years, they had many kings. Some were good because they followed God, but most were bad, sinning against God.

Over and over, God sent prophets to remind the people about His **if-then** promise. The prophet Isaiah specifically said that **Babylon** would conquer Judah, and some of the men from Judah would **serve the King of Babylon** (Isaiah 39:5-7). **Ask:** Did the people listen to the warnings? **No.** **Optional:** Insert Donut Drama here. **Say:** Because the Israelites disobeyed God, and worshipped false gods, they would be taken out of the Promised Land. God ALWAYS keeps His promises!

In 740 BC, the Assyrians came and fought against the people in Israel. (Refer to map.) They took many Israelites as prisoners and brought them back to Assyria. Over the next 20 years, there were many wars and all the people of Israel were taken to Assyria. God protected the people of Judah at that time because their King was a great and godly man named Hezekiah (heh-zeh-KIE-uh).

But about 120 years later, during a run of very bad kings in Judah, the people from Babylon conquered the people living in the kingdom of Judah. The Babylonians, led by their King, Nebuchadnezzar (neh-byoo-kuhd-NEHZ-er), took these people back to Babylon as prisoners. You could say they had been kidnapped. Obviously this was a terrible thing that was caused by the disobedience of God's people. But today we will see that God is always in control and He can make great things come out of terrible situations.



MEET DANIEL (Daniel 1:7)

Say: *The Lord handed Jehoiakim (jee-HOY-uh-kim), the king of Judah, over to (Nebuchadnezzar). Nebuchadnezzar also took some of the articles from God's temple. He carried them off to the temple of his false god in Babylonia. He put them among the treasures of his god.*

The king gave Ashpenaz (ASH-pee-nahz) an order. Ashpenaz was the chief of Nebuchadnezzar's court officials. The king told him to bring in some of the Israelites. He wanted nobles and men from the royal family. He was looking for young men who were healthy and handsome. They had to be able to learn anything. They had to be well educated. They had to have the ability to understand new things quickly and easily. The king wanted men who could serve in his palace. Ashpenaz was supposed to teach them the Babylonian language and writings.



The king had his servants give them food and wine from his own table. They received a certain amount every day. The young men had to be trained for three years. After that, they could begin to serve the king.

Some of the men were from Judah. Their names were Daniel, Hananiah (han-uh-NIE-uh), Mishael (MISH-ay-el) and Azariah (az-uh-RIE-uh). The chief official gave them new names. He gave Daniel the name Belteshazzar (behl-SHAZ-er). He gave Hananiah the name Shadrach (SHAY-drak). He gave Mishael the name Meshach (MEE-shak). And he gave Azariah the name Abednego (uh-BED-ne-go). - Daniel 1:2-7

Say: Notice that **the Lord** handed King Jehoiakim over to Nebuchadnezzar. Nothing happens unless God allows it. King Nebuchadnezzar was not a follower of the one true God. He and his people worshipped false gods.



Nebuchadnezzar ordered his top official to pick the very best and brightest of the Israelite young men to serve him. Daniel was one of these men. **Ask:** From Nebuchadnezzar's list of requirements, what do we learn about Daniel? *Listen for answers.* **Say:** He must have had royal ancestors (Isaiah 39:7). He was young, healthy, handsome, and smart. We will learn that Daniel and his three friends were some of the few Israelites who had **NOT** turned away from God. They loved and trusted the Lord. Certainly, their relationship with God made them wise, and this is one of the things the King was looking for.



The men who were chosen by the King's official would be trained up for 3 years, probably in or near the palace. They had to learn a new language (Aramaic), the history of their new country, and maybe even some "new math." They were given the best food and drink, so they would be the healthiest and best that they could be in order to serve the King well. Some would probably become military leaders; some would be advisors to the King.

DANIEL'S CHALLENGE (Daniel 1:9-21)



Say: Daniel and his friends had a problem. God had clear rules for His people about what they were allowed to eat (Leviticus 11). Certain foods were not allowed. For example, God said that pig, rabbit, and camel meat were not allowed. I doubt that anyone here has eaten a camel-burger, but the list does include some of the foods that

we eat. God had specific rules just for the Israelites. The Babylonians did not follow these rules. Most of the food from the King's table was considered "unclean" for the Israelites.

Daniel decided not to make himself "unclean" by eating the king's food and drinking his wine. So he asked the chief official for a favor. He wanted permission not to make himself "unclean" with the king's food and wine.

God had caused the official to be kind and friendly to Daniel. But the official refused to do what Daniel asked for. He said, "I'm afraid of the king. He is my master. He has decided what you and your three friends must eat and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men who are the same age you are? When he sees how you look, he might kill me."

So Daniel spoke to one of the guards. The chief official had appointed him over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. Daniel said to him, "Please test us for ten days. Give us nothing but vegetables to eat. And give us only water to drink. Then compare us with the young men who eat the king's food. See how we look. After that, do what you want to." So the guard agreed. He tested them for ten days. - Daniel 1:8-14



Ask: When did Daniel decide not to eat the King's food? *Listen for answers.* **Say:** He decided at the VERY beginning! As soon as he was offered the food, he chose not to take it. Notice that he DID NOT sit at the table, smell the spices, taste this food and that food, and then decide if he would follow God's rules. He decided to obey God **ahead of time!** The Bible says he set in his heart and mind that he would not pollute himself by disobeying God. We all know what pollution is, and we know that it RUINS things. **Teacher:** Hold up a clear glass of water. **Say:** This water is pure. I would love to take a drink of pure water. **Take a sip.** But if it is polluted, it is good for nothing. **Drop in dirt and candy wrappers.** Now I can't drink it or wash my dishes with it. I can't even water the lawn with it. Daniel was determined to keep his heart pure towards the Lord. He wanted to be used by God, and he certainly was!

Application: Boys and girls, we live in a world much like the world that Daniel and his friends were taken to. We are surrounded by people who do not follow God. We are surrounded by those who never think about what God wants them to do. In your lives, you will be offered MANY things that go against God's rules. Just like Daniel, you must decide **ahead of time** that you will follow God in all you do. Do not sit at the table of temptation before you make up your mind! Keep a pure heart with God so that He can use you in His awesome plan.

Say: Notice that even though Daniel was SURE that he would not eat the food, he was very respectful and polite. He didn't throw his plate in the floor and refuse to eat. He didn't ask the King's chef to make anything special for him. Most of God's rules were about meat, so Daniel asked if he and his friends could go "vegetarian." They would eat only vegetables and drink only water.

Application: We should take Daniel's example to heart. If someone in authority asks us to do something that is against what God wants, we should first try to find a way to be respectful. For example, if your class is asked to read a book that talks about bad things, you could go to your teacher and explain that you do not feel comfortable reading the book. You could politely ask your teacher if you could a different book. More than likely, she will think that you are wise to think about what you are reading. It is far better to use kind, respectful words than to be harsh and demanding when you are in this situation. Your gentle attitude will be a wonderful godly example.

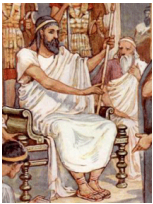


Say: In Daniel's situation, the official thought the young men would end up losing weight and looking sickly, but one of the guards agreed that they could try it. This would take discipline. If you were offered EVERYTHING from the King's table, it might be hard to turn down steak, burgers, and chocolate cake! But these men were determined

to follow God. **Ask:** At the end of ten days, what do you think happened? *Listen for answers.* **Ask a student to read Daniel 1:15-16:**

After the ten days they looked healthy and well fed. In fact, they looked better than any of the young men who ate the king's food. So the guard didn't require Daniel and his friends to eat the special food or drink the wine. He gave them vegetables instead.

Say: Doing things God's way is ALWAYS best! Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah knew the Lord. They knew His rules and they wanted to obey Him. God blessed them with great health. They looked better than any of the other students in "Babylon College"! God not only blessed their bodies, but also their minds and their spirits. God gave these four young men knowledge and understanding of everything they studied. God gave Daniel the ability to understand visions and dreams.



After their three-year education, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were brought before King Nebuchadnezzar. After talking with them, he was more pleased with them than any other of the men who had been trained. He chose them to become his advisors. He went to them for advice when he had difficult decisions to make. Listen to what the Bible says: "(The King) always found their answers to be the best. In fact, the men were ten times better than anyone in his kingdom who claimed to get knowledge by using magic." (Daniel 1:20b)

Of course their answers were the best! Their wisdom came from the all-powerful, **all-knowing** Creator of the universe! As we continue in our study of Daniel, we will see how God used Daniel's captivity for good in many ways.

Application: There is nothing like living in the blessings of God! God has an awesome plan for you, just as He did for Daniel and his friends. Decide right now that you will follow God in all you do. Don't even get near things that are against God. Satan is very clever. He has a way of getting people to try a little sin, and then he traps us into more sin. Jesus said to pray every day for God to show you where sin is, and help you stay away from it (Matthew 6:13). If you make up your mind to follow God ahead of time, every decision after that will be easy, and you will find yourself in God's blessings.

PPT Key Verse

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PPT Main Point

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Donut Drama

Just before class, put a clean trash can liner in your class trash can. Throw in some clean crumpled paper and a half-eaten donut. Keep the trash can up front so no one has access to it.

Adult (Look through trash can.)

Teacher: "Hey, what are you doing?"

Adult: "Well, I left home without eating breakfast, and I'm really hungry."

Teacher: (Look at group, very concerned.) "Uh, why are you looking through the *trash can*?"

Adult: "I thought maybe there was something to eat in here."

Teacher: "Whoa! Are you kidding? Don't eat trash! I have something you can have."

Adult (Put down trash can and walk over to Teacher.)

Teacher: "I have an extra biscuit with sausage, orange juice, and this perfectly ripe banana. You are more than welcome to have it. It tastes great and would be really good for you. If you eat something out of the trash can, you're going to get sick. You should eat this good breakfast. It's up to you." (Teacher walk away.)

Adult (Look back and forth between trash can and breakfast. Step toward the trash can. Rummage through, and pull out a half-eaten donut. Look back at breakfast.)

"Prophet" 1: (Enter) "Hey, I overheard your conversation. I just want to let you know, there is no nutrition in that old donut. It has nothing good in it for you." (Walk away.)

Adult (Look back and forth. Look longingly at the donut.)

"Prophet" 2: "Hey, I see you're about to eat that. But, you shouldn't! That fresh breakfast is so much better for you. That donut is old and crusty - and someone else has eaten off of it! Yuck!" (Walk away.)

Adult (Look back and forth. Act as if you are about to eat the donut.)

"Prophet" 3: "Wait! Don't eat that! That's gross! You'll get sick if you eat it. That fresh breakfast is good for you. Eat it instead." (Walk away.)

Adult (Look back one last time, then eat the donut. Wait a few seconds, then hold your stomach and moan.)

Teacher: Return to front. Thank your volunteers. **Say:** Was there a right and wrong choice here? Were there warnings about making the wrong choice? Still, my friend chose to do the wrong thing. He could have had what was good and beneficial, but he chose what was bad for him.

This was just like the Israelites. God offered them every blessing. He warned them that terrible consequences would come if they disobeyed. Then He sent many prophets to remind them, but they still chose to do what was wrong. In the case of the Israelites, their bad choice was disobeying God, so it was SIN. And the consequences would be MUCH worse than just a stomach ache!