Preschool–Grade 6

Daniel's Diet

Sunday School Lesson for Kindergarten to 2nd Grade, 45 minutes

Main point: Make up your mind to obey God, like Daniel did.
Bible passage: Daniel 1:1–21. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams." *Daniel 1:17 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible, two empty bowls or plates and a cup, ten paper circles or buttons, paper, crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: put a bookmark in your Bible at Daniel 1. Put the ten circles in a row on the table.

1. Opening game: Make Up Your Mind (5 minutes)

Say: "When you decide something ahead of time, you have made up your mind." Read each choice. If it obeys God, kids stand tall and put a hand on their heart. If it does not, they sit down. 1) Telling the truth when you broke something. 2) Taking a cookie your mom said not to take. 3) Sharing your crayons. 4) Saying a mean word because a friend did. 5) Helping clean up without being asked. Ask: *Is it easier to obey when you made up your mind before?* Say: "Today we will meet a young man named Daniel who made up his mind to obey God, far from home."

2. Bible story: Daniel Made Up His Mind (10 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to Daniel 1, so the kids can see the story comes from God's Word. Tell it in your own words:

Long ago, **Nebuchadnezzar**, the king of **Babylon**, came with his army to Jerusalem (Daniel 1:1). The king told his chief officer to bring some of the **children of Israel** to his palace. They had to be young, wise and quick to learn, so they could be taught and serve the king (1:3–4). Among them were four friends: **Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah** (1:6).

The king gave them a share of his own food every day: the king's **meat**, which means the king's food, and the wine he drank (1:5). They would learn for three years and then stand before the king.

But Daniel **purposed in his heart**. That means he made up his mind. He would not **defile** himself, which means make himself unclean before God, with the king's food or wine (1:8). He asked the chief officer if he could eat something else. God made the officer like Daniel (1:9). But the officer was afraid of the king. What if the king saw them looking worse than the others (1:10)?

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The story continues: So Daniel asked **Melzar**, the man in charge of the four friends (1:11). **Read Daniel 1:12 from your Bible:** "Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink." **Prove** means test, and **pulse** means food grown from seeds. Melzar said yes, and tested them ten days (1:14). Point to the ten circles and count them together: one day, two days, all the way to ten!

At the end of ten days, Daniel and his friends looked **better** and **healthier** than all the others who ate the king's food (1:15). So Melzar let them keep eating pulse (1:16). And God gave the four friends knowledge and wisdom (1:17). When the king talked with them, he found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah (1:19)!

3. Questions to ask (5 minutes)

1. What were the names of the four friends? *(Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, Daniel 1:6)*
2. What did Daniel purpose in his heart? *(Not to defile himself with the king's food or wine, 1:8)*
3. What did Daniel ask to eat and drink? *(Pulse and water, 1:12)*
4. How many days were they tested? *(Ten days, 1:14)*
5. What did God give the four friends? *(Knowledge and wisdom, 1:17)*

4. Memory verse: Ten Days Count (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **as for these four children** means Daniel and his three friends, **knowledge and skill** means knowing things and being good at them, **understanding** means knowing what something means, and **visions and dreams** are what God showed Daniel. Say the verse together in these four parts: *As for these four children, / God gave them knowledge and skill / in all learning and wisdom: / and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. Daniel 1:17.* Each time the class says the whole verse, a child turns over one of the ten circles. Say it until all ten "days" are turned, getting faster each time. Everyone shouts "Daniel 1:17!" at the end.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Daniel made up his mind to obey God. God wants each of us to obey Him too. God loves you very much. But everyone has done wrong things. The Bible calls that sin: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God who came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus died for our sins, He was buried, and He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! The Bible tells us how to obey the gospel, the good news about Jesus: 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means we are sorry for our sin and we turn away from it. We are **baptized**, buried all the way under the water, in Jesus' name, so our sins are washed away (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). **Remission** means God takes our sins away. And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, His own Spirit, and we speak in other tongues, words God gives us, just like the believers did in the Bible (Acts 2:4)."
Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.
This week: make up your mind before you are tested: "I will tell the truth," "I will be kind," or "I will obey my parents the first time."

6. Activity (10–15 minutes)

Choose one: the **Daniel's diet word search** (vbshq.com/puzzles/daniels-diet-word-search), crossword, maze or worksheet, the Daniel's diet craft (vbshq.com/crafts/daniels-diet-craft), or **My Heart Is Made Up:** each child draws a big heart on paper. Inside it, they draw one way they will obey God this week, even when it's hard. Let a few kids show their hearts and tell about them.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for Daniel, who made up his mind to obey You far from home. Help us make up our minds to obey You too. Thank You for giving wisdom to those who obey You. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks if some foods are bad: say that this story is about Daniel obeying God, not about which foods are good or bad. Daniel 1 doesn't say exactly why the king's food would defile him, so we don't guess. Kids should eat what their parents give them.

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