Preschool–Grade 6

The Handwriting on the Wall

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

Main point: Humble your heart before God, because the most high God rules over everything.
Bible passage: Daniel 5:1–31. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." *Daniel 5:27 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible, two paper lunch bags, a few toy blocks, a tissue, 4 paper strips, a marker, tape, crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: put the blocks in one bag and the tissue in the other, and fold both bags shut. Write the memory verse on the 4 paper strips (see part 4). Put bookmarks in your Bible at Daniel 5:5 and Daniel 5:27.

1. Opening game: Heavy or Light? (5 minutes)

Let each child hold one bag in each hand, with arms out wide. Ask: "Which bag is heavy? Which one is light?" Let them tip the light side up and the heavy side down. Then show what is inside. Say: "Holding something in your hands to see how heavy it is, is called **weighing** it. Today we will hear about a king who was weighed by God, and God found him too light!"

2. Bible story: The Writing on the Wall (10 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to Daniel 5, so the kids can see the story comes from God's Word. Tell it in your own words:

Long ago, a king named **Belshazzar** made a great feast, a big dinner party, for a thousand of his lords (Daniel 5:1). Then he did something very wrong. He sent for the gold and silver cups and bowls that had been taken from God's temple in Jerusalem (5:2–3). They were God's holy things, made for worshiping God. But the king and his lords drank wine from them, and they praised idols, gods made of gold, silver, brass, iron, wood and stone (5:4).

In that same hour, the fingers of a man's hand came out and wrote on the wall of the palace, near the candlestick, a lamp on a stand (5:5). The king saw the hand writing! His face changed, and he was so afraid that his knees knocked together (5:6). He called for his wise men, but none of them could read the writing (5:8).

Then **Daniel** was brought in (5:13). Daniel served God every day (Daniel 6:16). The king promised that if Daniel could read the writing, he would dress him in scarlet (bright red), put a gold chain on his neck, and make him the third ruler in the kingdom (5:16). Daniel told the king to keep his gifts, but he said he would read the writing (5:17).

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The story continues: Daniel reminded the king about the king before him, Nebuchadnezzar. God had made Nebuchadnezzar great, but when his heart was lifted up in pride, God took his kingdom away until he learned that "the most high God ruled" (5:18–21). **Read Daniel 5:22 from your Bible:** "And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this." Say: "That means the king knew all of this, but he still did not humble his heart. He did not put God first."

Then Daniel read the words on the wall: **MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN** (5:25). **MENE** meant God had numbered, or counted, the king's kingdom and finished it (5:26). **TEKEL** meant: "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting" (5:27). God had weighed the king on His scale, and he was not enough, like the light bag. The last word meant the kingdom would be divided and given to the Medes and Persians (5:28).

The king did what he promised and dressed Daniel in scarlet with a gold chain (5:29). That very night King Belshazzar died, and Darius the Median took the kingdom (5:30–31).

3. Questions to ask (5 minutes)

1. What did the king drink from at his feast? *(The gold and silver vessels from God's temple, Daniel 5:2–3)*
2. What wrote on the wall? *(The fingers of a man's hand, 5:5)*
3. Could the king's wise men read the writing? *(No, 5:8)*
4. Who read the writing for the king? *(Daniel, 5:17, 5:25)*
5. What did Daniel say the king had not done? *(He had not humbled his heart, 5:22)*

4. Memory verse: Tip the Balance (5 minutes)

Tape the 4 strips up in order: *TEKEL; / Thou art weighed / in the balances, / and art found wanting. Daniel 5:27.* Explain the old words: **TEKEL** is one of the words on the wall; **weighed** means checked to see how heavy; **balances** means a scale; **wanting** means not enough. Teach the motion: hold your arms out wide like a scale, and on "found wanting," let one arm go up high because that side is too light. Read the verse together with the motion. Then take one strip away and say it again. Keep taking strips away until the kids can say the whole verse by themselves.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "God weighed King Belshazzar and found him wanting, not enough. The Bible says all of us come short 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: be humble. When you do something good, say "Thank You, God," and treat God's things, like your Bible and God's house, with respect.

6. Activity (10–15 minutes)

Choose one: the **handwriting on the wall word search** (vbshq.com/puzzles/handwriting-on-the-wall-word-search), crossword, maze or worksheet, the craft (vbshq.com/crafts/handwriting-on-the-wall-craft), or **Human Balance:** everyone stands with arms out wide like a scale. Name something heavy (a rock, an elephant, a big book) or something light (a feather, a leaf, a tissue). Kids tip their arms: heavy side down, light side up. After every few turns, ask a question from part 3.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, You are the most high God, and You rule over everything. Help us humble our hearts and put You first. Help us treat Your holy things with respect. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child is scared of the hand on the wall: say it was a message from God to a king who would not listen. God is good, and He loves us. He gave His Word, the Bible, so we can know Him and obey Him.

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