

30. Faithful



BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

**Daniel 1:1-21,
Lamentations 3:22-23,
Hebrews 13:8**

Daniel and his friends are exiled to Babylon and put to work for the king



AIMS

To help the children reflect on God's faithfulness, and to understand that no matter what else may change in their lives, God is always the same and he can help them through difficult times of change.

Daniel and his friends were taken far from home to a place where everything was different, except one thing. God is always the same, and knowing his faithfulness to them helped them to be faithful too.



PREP FOR LEADERS

Read through the Bible passages for this session and reflect:

- How did Daniel and his friends' faith in God help them through the changes they faced as they arrived in Babylon?
- How has knowing God's faithfulness helped you in times of change?

Take some time to pray for your group.



GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Choose one of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

▶ Drawing Game

You will need: paper, pens or pencils, blindfolds, cards (printed from additional document: Drawing Game Cards)

You can either let all the children play this game if you have a small group, or you can choose a few people to take part while the others watch.

Get the children to pair up. One member of the pair (Person A) stands or kneels in front of a table and puts their arms behind their back so they

cannot use them. Blindfold the other member of the pair (Person B) and then get them to stand behind their partner and put their arms under their partner's arms so that they are sticking out over the table.

Give each pair some paper and a pen or pencil, and show Person A one of the cards (from additional document: Drawing Game Cards). They have to describe the item on the card to Person B, and Person B has to draw it.

Give them a few minutes to do this, then let the children remove their blindfolds. See who has managed to draw the most accurate picture.

You could comment on the fact that, under normal circumstances, the children would have found it much easier to draw the items on the cards, but in this game the rules were different, and it

(continued overleaf)

made it much more difficult.

If you have time, you could reverse the roles and play again.

▶ Codebreaker

You will need: code sheets (printed from additional document: Code Sheets), pens or pencils

Tell the children that today they will be hearing about some of the people of Judah moving to a place where the language was different. Get the children to solve the codes to see if they can work out the messages.

The answers are:

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. (from Hebrews 13:8)

The Lord gives his people strength. The Lord blesses them with peace. (from Psalm 29:11)

▶ Fruit and Vegetable Game

You will need: printouts of fruit and vegetable pictures (from additional document: Fruit and Vegetables) printed on card and cut out individually

Divide the children into four teams with one team at each corner of the room. Place the fruit and vegetable pictures in a pile on the floor in the middle of the room.

Each team sends one child at a time to go and pick up one of the pictures and take it back to their base. At first the children take the pictures from the pile in the middle, but once there are none left, they can take them from another team's base instead.

The first team to get six fruit and vegetable pictures at their base wins.



EXPLORING THE BIBLE

▶ Recap/ Introduction

Last time we talked about how the Israelites kept on ignoring God, and, because of this, the kingdom split in two. Then later, they were sent away as slaves to a foreign land and told that they would have to stay there for 70 years. The people of Judah were taken away to Babylon which was about 900 miles away from home.

Imagine what that would be like. It's roughly the same distance as going from Scotland to Spain or Austria or Poland. Of course it's nice to go on holiday to those places, but imagine what it would be like if you didn't have a choice – if you were separated from your family and taken to one of those places with no idea when you would be back, or if you would ever get back home.

What kind of things would be different there? (e.g. the language, the food, the way people lived)

Another thing that was different for the people who were taken to Babylon was that the people there had different gods. Today we're going to hear about what happened to some of the people of Judah who were taken to Babylon.

▶ Daniel's Story

You will need: crown and robe (optional) for King Nebuchadnezzar, name cards (printed double-sided from additional document: Name Cards)

You can buy cardboard crowns to decorate from Baker Ross: <https://www.bakerross.co.uk/card-crowns> or you can make your

own.

Choose one of the children to be King Nebuchadnezzar. You could give him a robe and a crown to wear and let him sit on a chair, representing his throne.

Choose someone else to be the chief of King Nebuchadnezzar's staff, and get them to stand beside the king. Tell the rest of the children that they can be some of the people of Judah who were taken to Babylon.

The king of Babylon was called Nebuchadnezzar. He asked for some of the people of Judah to be brought to his palace. He wanted young men who were strong, healthy, good-looking and intelligent. He wanted them to be trained and taught all about how things were done in Babylon. This had to happen for three years and then, when their training was finished, they would be ready to work in the king's palace. The king also said that each day they were to get special food and wine from his own kitchen.

Four of the men from Judah were called Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah and they were chosen to be trained up to work for the king.

(You could let the child playing the king choose four people to be Daniel and his friends, or a leader could choose. Give the four children name cards, and get them to hold them with their original names on show.)

Explain that something else was about to change for these four men. King Nebuchadnezzar decided to change their names so that they had Babylonian names.

Get the children to turn their name cards round to reveal their new names.

Daniel was called Belteshazzar.

Hananiah was called Shadrach.

Mishael was called Meshach.

Azariah was called
Abednego.

These four men were determined to follow God and, even in a new country where everything was so different, they wanted to stay true to God. They went along with the training, but they didn't want to eat the king's food because some of it had been offered as a sacrifice to other gods and they didn't think it was right to eat it.

(Encourage the children to act out the rest of the story as you tell it.)

Daniel went to the chief of staff and asked if he and his three friends could have permission not to eat the king's food but to eat vegetables and drink water instead.

The chief of staff liked Daniel and was pleased with him, but he was scared to agree. He said, "The king has asked that you eat his food. If I let you eat something else instead and you don't look as strong and healthy as the other young men, I'm worried that the king will have me killed."

Daniel asked if they could try it out for ten days. He suggested that he and his friends could eat vegetables and drink water for ten days and then they could see how healthy they were compared to the other men. Then the chief of staff could decide whether they were allowed to continue to have vegetables and water.

At the end of the ten days Daniel and his friends looked much better than all the other men. They were much stronger and healthier, and so they were allowed to continue to eat vegetables and drink water every day instead of having the

king's food.

They continued to be faithful to God and God blessed them. He gave them wisdom and helped them do well at all the things they were learning. When the training was complete, all the men were brought to the king and no-one impressed him as much as Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. He found that they knew more and worked better than anyone else in his kingdom and so they were given good jobs in his palace.

▶ Testament – The Bible In Animation Video

You will need: equipment to play video

As an alternative way of telling the story, you could show the video found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j9mwQkl6hnM&t=70s>

The relevant part for today's story is from 2.14-6.53.



REFLECT & RESPOND

▶ Reflection and Prayer

You will need: large sheet of paper, pens, Bible or cards with verses (from additional document: Bible Verses)

Daniel and his friends faced lots of changes. They were in a new land with different food, a different language, different names, and a whole new way of life, and it must have been hard for them.

We may not face so many changes all at once, but all of us have things changing in our lives at times. There are times when we can feel like Daniel.

Using a large sheet of paper, get the children to make a list of changes we may

face, e.g moving house, moving school, a family member dying, a parent getting a new job...

Some changes may be good, and some may be very difficult and painful. Using a different colour, get them to add to the sheet of paper some of the feelings we might have about the changes, both good and bad.

No matter what else changes, the Bible says that one thing that always stays the same is God, that he never changes.

You could look up the verses Lamentations 3:22-23 and Hebrews 13:8 or show them cards with the verses on (from additional document: Bible verses).

Daniel and his friends knew this. They had learned to trust God in Judah and they knew they could still trust him in Babylon, and God was with them and helped them. God was faithful to them, and because they trusted in that, they were able to be faithful to him.

Christians believe that God is still the same today, that we can trust him no matter what else is changing in our lives and no matter what difficult decisions we might have to make.

Lead the children in prayer thanking God that he is always the same and asking for his help in difficult changes we might face.



ADDITIONAL IDEAS

▶ **Song: Through It All-
Lifetree Kids**

*You will need: equipment to
play video*

This song fits well with the
theme. You can find it
at: [https://
www.youtube.com/watch?
v=IPdDB2jiMic](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPdDB2jiMic)