



LESSON PLAN

Scripture Texts:

Daniel 2:26-47

Luke 20:17-18

Session Theme:

Destruction

a. Welcome to Class

Teachers should arrive in the classroom well in advance of class. Welcome students as they enter, and inquire about their week. Pass out name tags and record attendance on a classroom chart.

b. Icebreaker: What Lasts?

Bring the following items to class: something made of paper, something made of cloth, something made of rock, and something made of wood. Ask kids which thing might last the longest of these items. Then, ask them if any of these will last forever in its present form. (*No — everything changes with time.*)

In today's story, a king dreamed about different kingdoms and wondered what would happen to them. We know that they didn't last, for he is no longer king and his kingdom has changed many times over. What does last forever? It's time to find out!

c. Opening Prayer

Lord God, you alone reveal the truth. We thank you for speaking to us your Word. Help us bring to you all our questions and doubts, that we may be guided by your own Spirit. In all things, bring us to a deeper trust in you, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

d. SEED Video or Song (Optional)

The teacher may introduce the lesson by playing the video clip from the SEED website. This time may also include an opening song or two, using a commercial Sunday School music CD.

Song suggestions for this lesson:

- "Do Lord" (children's song)
- "What a Mighty God We Serve" (children's song)

e. Brief Bible Background

Read together the introduction to the lessons for the day, and briefly summarize the context and setting:

- Today's Lesson is from the Old Testament
- Scripture Section: Promise

The prophets spoke the promise of God to the people in times of struggle and exile. In visions, dreams, and prophecy, God foreshadowed the coming of the Messiah and the salvation that would come in Jesus Christ.

f. Communicate the Bible Story

Always keep in mind that the main purpose of Sunday School is to put people in contact with Bible stories. Use a version that is appropriate to the age level:

Children: Read aloud the Bible Story and Rhyme

Youth/Adults: Read aloud Scripture from the Bible

g. Complete the Worksheet(s)

Continue with the handout sheets appropriate to the age level of the students in class:

Pre-Readers: Coloring Page and Activity

Elementary: Children's Pages (Worksheet and Drama)

Youth: Bible Study (Maps, Timelines, and Questions)

Adults: Bible Study (Large or Small Group Discussion)

h. Craft and Activity Time

If there is time after covering the Bible story, the class may move to craft and activity time, described on the following page. (Do not let the activity time supersede the actual time spent on the Scripture lesson.)

i. Summarize and Review

Before ending class, briefly summarize the day's lesson one last time. Use the Bible Rhyme as a short review, or simply ask questions to help the students recall the events of the story.

Youth/Adult: Discuss "Reflection for the Week Ahead"

j. Closing Prayer

Close the session in prayer before dismissal:

Pre-Readers: Teacher leads a simple prayer

Children: Practice a prayer from memory (e.g., the Lord's Prayer, Luther's Morning Prayer, etc.)

Youth/Adult: Use the ADTRC Prayer format

Bible Study Leader's Guide

The following is a discussion and answer guide for the Youth and Adult Bible Study sheets. For all leaders, it can serve to provide some background on the Bible lesson.

Discuss: Daniel 2:26-47

1. King Nebuchadnezzar had many scholars to advise him. Why were none of them able to tell the king what his dreams meant? What condition did the king place on them to make sure they were telling the truth?

The wise men were unable to explain what the king's dream meant because the king refused to tell them what his dream was about! He wanted to make sure they weren't just making up an answer that sounded good in order to tell the king what they thought he wanted to hear. To answer the king's request would require divine assistance!

2. The Chaldeans were the wise men of Babylon. They were the ancient days' equivalent of modern-era scientists. What other words are used here to describe their job? What's the difference between science and magic? What do they both have in common?

These scholars are called wise men, enchanters, magicians, and astrologers. They were the smartest people of the day and knew the most about physics, biology, and mathematics. They had skills and knowledge so far beyond that of the average person that their abilities seemed almost magical. As science fiction author Arthur C. Clark once said, "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic."

However, this story from Daniel shows us that spiritual truth is of a deeper character than scientific truth. Science can give us data (limited to our human knowledge), but only God can reveal meaning and purpose in our lives.

3. How did Daniel get involved in this issue? Why were he and his friends under the sentence of death? How did God save them (Daniel 2:19)?

It appears that Daniel only found out about the king's dream when the guards were sent out to kill all the wise men. Daniel and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were among the young students of the scholars in Babylon. God intervened by granting Daniel supernatural insight that the wise men did not have access to.

4. When the king asked if Daniel could tell him the meaning of his dream, how did Daniel respond? To whom did Daniel give the credit?

Daniel said quite plainly that he had no special knowledge or insight in himself. He took no credit for what was revealed to him. Instead, he gave all credit to the Lord — "the God of my fathers" — the God in heaven.

5. In the dream, the King saw a statue made of five materials, four of which were different metals. What were the metals? Taken in order, did the metals increase or decrease in value? In the same order, did they increase or decrease in strength?

The king saw a graduated statue of gold, silver, bronze, and iron. These are listed in order of greatest value as precious metals, but they are listed in reverse order in terms of strength. Gold is the most valuable of the four, but iron is the strongest of the four.

6. God revealed to Daniel that the metals represented four different kingdoms. Can you name the four great empires that ruled the Middle East in the era prior to the birth of Christ?

Most scholars agree that these metals represent the four empires of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. Babylon was the wealthiest of these empires, but Rome was the strongest. It was the empire of Rome that ruled the world at the time Jesus came into the world.

7. Read what Jesus said in Luke 20:17-18. What did Jesus mean by these words? When was this stone "rejected"? Of what did it become the cornerstone? Who is this stone?

Jesus is referring to himself as the stone that was rejected by the builders. He was not respected by the religious or political leaders of his day and was sentenced to die on the cross.

However, Jesus was vindicated in his resurrection. In his appearance to the disciples, he founded the Christian Church. Jesus is the cornerstone and foundation of our faith as Christians.

8. Daniel said that God would "set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed" (v. 44). How would this eternal kingdom be different from all the others? In what way will it bring all other kingdoms to an end?

Unlike all the other kingdoms of this world, Jesus came to establish a spiritual kingdom of faith. God had promised to David that his descendant, the Messiah, would rule forever.

God fulfilled this promise in Jesus, who is seated at the Father's right hand. As Psalm 145:13 says: "Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations."

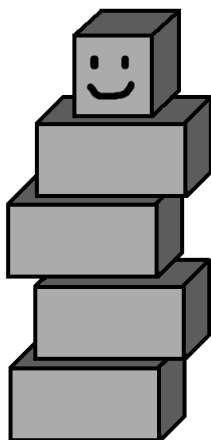
Classroom Craft and Activity Page

Listed below are in-class activities and craft projects related to the theme for the day. Choose one of the following based on the age and capabilities of the students. (Never let the activity or craft time take precedence over the biblical story.)

Activity 1: Toppling Statue Game

Materials Needed:

- Empty boxes (all sizes and types).
- Tennis ball or nerf ball
- Masking tape
- Timer
- Permanent marker



Instructions:

For this game, children will try to build (and knock down) a large statue. Before beginning, use the marker to draw a simple face on the smallest box.

- Make a starting line by taping a line of masking tape on the floor.
- At the other end of the classroom, use the masking tape again to make a square on the floor. The square should be large enough for kids to build a statue within it, but not much larger than that.
- Divide the class into two teams: Team A and Team B.
- Set a timer for 5 minutes. Within that time span, Team A will use the lightweight containers to build as sturdy and tall a structure as possible within the taped square. This will be the "statue" that King Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream. In order to qualify as a statue, the box with the face must be on top!
- When the buzzer sounds, Team B will stand behind the starting line. Set the timer for another five minutes.
- Taking turns, each member of Team B will roll the tennis ball towards the statue. The goal is to get the ball within the square and knock down every piece of the statue before the buzzer sounds again.
- After Round One, the teams change places, with Team B building the statue and Team A trying to knock it down.

In today's story, King Nebuchadnezzar dreamed he saw a giant statue. A large stone rolled toward it and knocked it down, just like we did in our game. What did it all mean?

Nothing stands forever, except for the kingdom of God.

Activity 2: Bit by Bit Dream Drama

Materials Needed:

- Large area to sit on floor

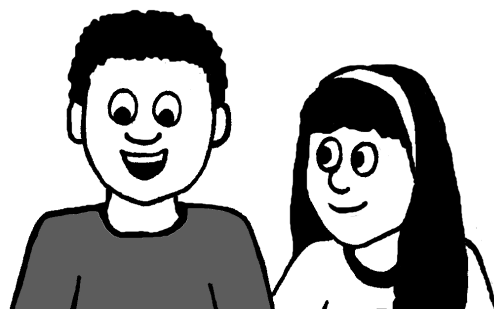
Instructions:

Invite kids to sit in a circle on the floor. For this game, the class will work together to tell a crazy story, with some kids acting it out as it goes!

- Begin the game by saying, "I once had a very odd dream. And in that dream, I *saw*..." Describe one thing you saw (for example: an angry, raging lion; a plate of mushy turnips; an old man with a cane, etc).
- The person to your right will then stand up and act out what you described.
- The next person in the circle will repeat what you said, and add one thing he or she saw in the dream. Then, the person to his or her right will act out *both* things.
- Continue this pattern, listing all the previous things and adding one more with each person, until you have a long list of sights (and actions) in the story. When it's your turn again, tie things up with a finishing sentence.

If you want to have a Round Two, begin with something slightly different, such as: "I once had a very odd dream, and in that dream I *heard*..." Continue as before, with people adding to the story and making the noises described before ending with you once again.

Dreams can seem as confusing as the crazy tales we just told. In today's Bible story, the king didn't know what his dream meant and needed help understanding it. God's servant Daniel helped interpret it, and King Nebuchadnezzar learned not only what his dream meant — but who God was, as well.



Worksheet Answer Key

Shown below are the answers and solution to the children's worksheet for this week's lesson:

Statue

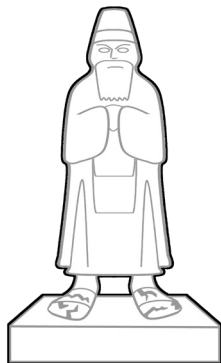
GOLD

SILVER

BRONZE

IRON

STONE



Kingdoms

BABYLON

PERSIA

GREECE

ROME

CHRIST

Discussion:

- 1) Babylon, Persia, and Greece ruled prior to Jesus' birth. Rome was in power at the time Jesus was born.
- 2) The stone in the King's dream struck the feet and broke the statue into pieces. Just as the stone became a great mountain, Jesus ushered in the eternal Kingdom of God.
- 3) Pilate wanted to know if Jesus was a king. Jesus said his kingdom was not of this world. Jesus creates his kingdom of faith by speaking the Truth of his Word.

Exploring the Metals:

If you have access to the internet in class, look up the various metals described here to see what they look like in real life. Have the students use these tones to color in the picture of the statue on the worksheet, with the breaks at the correct spots.

- Gold is a bright yellowish metal.
- Silver is a bright shiny light-gray metal.
- Bronze is a brown-yellow metal, a little darker than gold.
- Iron is a dark gray metal.
- Stone comes in many different earth-tone colors.

Map Answer Key

The major Iron Age empires that ruled the Middle East were the ones represented by the different metals in the King's dream. You can see the place these people came from located on the map on the Youth Page:

- a) The Babylonians (modern-day Iraq)
- b) The Persians (modern-day Iran)
- c) The Greeks (modern-day Greece)
- d) The Romans (modern-day Italy)

Vocabulary Word for the Week:

Teachers may want to introduce the theme word for the week to help expand students' biblical vocabulary:

Destruction

when things are broken down by force
and are completely ruined and demolished

Accidents and natural disasters can cause destruction, but things can also be destroyed by deliberate actions to harm or damage something.

Reflection for the Week Ahead

How much stock do you put in dreams? We know that in the Scriptures, God used dreams as a way of communicating to believers and unbelievers alike.

Do you ever feel like God is saying something to you in your dreams?

We need to be careful not to assume all our thoughts and dreams come from God. Our own sinful desires have a way of capturing our subconscious, and even the devil can whisper into our ears. So we must always measure our "spiritual" experiences against the truth of God's Word.

This week, as soon as you wake, try to write down as much as you can about the dream(s) you had while you slept (memory of dreams tends to fade quickly).

Consider how your dream might reflect what you are currently facing in the real world. Focus in particular on how the dream made you feel. Is there some biblical theme at work? Did the dream help you address a problem?



The Practice of Prayer

On the lines below, write a prayer giving praise to God for revealing himself in his Word. Ask that God would help you think theologically about your life (that is, about what God is doing and how God is at work). Pray that God would help you overcome fears and anxiety.

Practice using the ADTRC Prayer Form: Address, Description, Thanks, Request, Conclusion.