



SUNDAY GROUPS  
STUDY GUIDE  
WEEK 1



**MAIN SCRIPTURES:**  
Daniel 1 & 2

**MAIN POINT #1:**  
As believers, we can still live and thrive in a world that hates God by trusting God is in control.

**MAIN POINT #2:**  
God can use our influence to showcase his power.

@HopeHSM

**1. READ**  
*The Bible*

Yessss! We are glad you are here because taking time on your own to study God's word is an amazing way to grow in your relationship with Him. Life with Jesus is the best life! Take a moment to pray and ask God to lead you as you study this Scripture; then read the Scripture (*from your Bible or it's on the back*).

**2. OBSERVE**  
*The Straight Facts*

Who: \_\_\_\_\_

What: \_\_\_\_\_

Where: \_\_\_\_\_

Why: \_\_\_\_\_

How: \_\_\_\_\_

**What is Repetitive?**

*Highlight it*

**What is Contrast?**

*Underline it*

**3. INTERPRET**  
*What Does the Text Mean?*

*Research answers using trusted sources like a Study Bible, BibleProject.com, BlueLetterBible.org, and/or Bible.org*

**What is the historical and/or cultural context of this Scripture?**

**What else do I know about the author, audience, or context of this passage?**

**What do key words mean in their original language?**

**What other Scripture might help me interpret this text?**

**What is this text's clearest meaning?**

**4. APPLY**  
*Getting Personal*

**How do you relate to any of the characters, events, or words in this Scripture?**

**What truth(s) from this Scripture can you apply to your life right now?**

**What is God saying to you through this Scripture?**

## MAIN SCRIPTURES

## NOTES

## Daniel 1 NIV

**1** “In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. **2** And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried off to the temple of his god in Babylon and put in the treasure house of his god.

<sup>3</sup> Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring into the king's service some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility— <sup>4</sup> young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians. <sup>5</sup> The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from the king's table. They were to be trained for three years, and after that they were to enter the king's service.

<sup>6</sup> Among those who were chosen were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. <sup>7</sup> The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego.

<sup>8</sup> But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way. <sup>9</sup> Now God had caused the official to show favor and compassion to Daniel, <sup>10</sup> but the official told Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men your age? The king would then have my head because of you."

<sup>11</sup> Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, <sup>12</sup> "Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. <sup>13</sup> Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see." <sup>14</sup> So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days.

<sup>15</sup> At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food. <sup>16</sup> So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead.

<sup>17</sup> To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds.

<sup>18</sup> At the end of the time set by the king to bring them into his service, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. <sup>19</sup> The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service. <sup>20</sup> In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom.

<sup>21</sup>And Daniel remained there until the first year of King Cyrus.”

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## DOODLES

## MAIN SCRIPTURES

## NOTES

### Daniel 2 NIV

#### Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his mind was troubled and he could not sleep. <sup>2</sup> So the king summoned the magicians, enchanter, sorcerers and astrologers to tell him what he had dreamed. When they came in and stood before the king, <sup>3</sup> he said to them, "I have had a dream that troubles me and I want to know what it means."

<sup>4</sup> Then the astrologers answered the king, "May the king live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will interpret it."

<sup>5</sup> The king replied to the astrologers, "This is what I have firmly decided: If you do not tell me what my dream was and interpret it, I will have you cut into pieces and your houses turned into piles of rubble. <sup>6</sup> But if you tell me the dream and explain it, you will receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. So tell me the dream and interpret it for me."

<sup>7</sup> Once more they replied, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will interpret it."

<sup>8</sup> Then the king answered, "I am certain that you are trying to gain time, because you realize that this is what I have firmly decided: <sup>9</sup> If you do not tell me the dream, there is only one penalty for you. You have conspired to tell me misleading and wicked things, hoping the situation will change. So then, tell me the dream, and I will know that you can interpret it for me."

<sup>10</sup> The astrologers answered the king, "There is no one on earth who can do what the king asks! No king, however great and mighty, has ever asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or astrologer. <sup>11</sup> What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among humans."

<sup>12</sup> This made the king so angry and furious that he ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon. <sup>13</sup> So the decree was issued to put the wise men to death, and men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to put them to death.

<sup>14</sup> When Arioch, the commander of the king's guard, had gone out to put to death the wise men of Babylon, Daniel spoke to him with wisdom and tact. <sup>15</sup> He asked the king's officer, "Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?" Arioch then explained the matter to Daniel. <sup>16</sup> At this, Daniel went in to the king and asked for time, so that he might interpret the dream for him.

<sup>17</sup> Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. <sup>18</sup> He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. <sup>19</sup> During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven <sup>20</sup> and said:

"Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his. <sup>21</sup> He changes times and seasons; he deposes kings and raises up others. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning.

<sup>22</sup> He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him.

<sup>23</sup> I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors: You have given me wisdom and power, you have made known to me what we asked of you, you have made known to us the dream of the king."

#### Daniel Interprets the Dream

<sup>24</sup> Then Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to execute the wise men of Babylon, and said to him, "Do not execute the wise men of Babylon. Take me to the king, and I will interpret his dream for him."

## DOODLES

## MAIN SCRIPTURES

## NOTES

### Daniel 2 NIV Continued

<sup>25</sup> Arioch took Daniel to the king at once and said, "I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can tell the king what his dream means."

<sup>26</sup> The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), "Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?"

<sup>27</sup> Daniel replied, "No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, <sup>28</sup> but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you were lying in bed are these:

<sup>29</sup> "As Your Majesty was lying there, your mind turned to things to come, and the revealer of mysteries showed you what is going to happen. <sup>30</sup> As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than anyone else alive, but so that Your Majesty may know the interpretation and that you may understand what went through your mind.

<sup>31</sup> "Your Majesty looked, and there before you stood a large statue—an enormous, dazzling statue, awesome in appearance. <sup>32</sup> The head of the statue was made of pure gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, <sup>33</sup> its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of baked clay. <sup>34</sup> While you were watching, a rock was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them. <sup>35</sup> Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were all broken to pieces and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth.

<sup>36</sup> "This was the dream, and now we will interpret it to the king. <sup>37</sup> Your Majesty, you are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory; <sup>38</sup> in your hands he has placed all mankind and the beasts of the field and the birds in the sky. Wherever they live, he has made you ruler over them all. You are that head of gold.

<sup>39</sup> "After you, another kingdom will arise, inferior to yours. Next, a third kingdom, one of bronze, will rule over the whole earth. <sup>40</sup> Finally, there will be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron—for iron breaks and smashes everything—and as iron breaks things to pieces, so it will crush and break all the others. <sup>41</sup> Just as you saw that the feet and toes were partly of baked clay and partly of iron, so this will be a divided kingdom; yet it will have some of the strength of iron in it, even as you saw iron mixed with clay. <sup>42</sup> As the toes were partly iron and partly clay, so this kingdom will be partly strong and partly brittle. <sup>43</sup> And just as you saw the iron mixed with baked clay, so the people will be a mixture and will not remain united, any more than iron mixes with clay.

<sup>44</sup> "In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever. <sup>45</sup> This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands—a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold to pieces.

"The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy."

<sup>46</sup> Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell prostrate before Daniel and paid him honor and ordered that an offering and incense be presented to him. <sup>47</sup> The king said to Daniel, "Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery."

<sup>48</sup> Then the king placed Daniel in a high position and lavished many gifts on him. He made him ruler over the entire province of Babylon and placed him in charge of all its wise men. <sup>49</sup> Moreover, at Daniel's request the king appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego administrators over the province of Babylon, while Daniel himself remained at the royal court.

## DOODLES



As believers, we can still live and thrive in a world that hates God by trusting God is in control.

God can use our influence to showcase his power.

## NOTES

- *Take a moment to introduce yourself and your topic:* Today we are going to be studying the book of Daniel and different ways it's relevant to us today.
- The first thing we are going to look at is how do we as Christians stand firm in our faith when pressure from our culture feels too heavy?

- Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Sadie's teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how she answers the following questions.
  - What caused Daniel's circumstance?
  - How did Daniel react to the king's new rules?
  - What did God do for Daniel and his three friends, and how did it benefit them?
- **Watch Session 1: God's in Control (7 minutes).**

**PAUSE HERE AND USE DISCUSSION GUIDE PART 1.**

- *Take a moment to introduce today's second topic:*
- Even if we're not a social media influencer, we all have influence, whether we realize it or not.
- For believers, our influence becomes that much more important since we are to be a light to the world, showcasing the love of Christ.

- Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Sadie's teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how she answers the following questions.
  - How does Sadie describe the theme of Daniel 2?
  - What major issue was the king dealing with? How did he plan to relieve his stress?
  - How did Daniel's actions advance God's reputation among the unbelieving king?
- **Watch Session 2: The Power of Influence (7 minutes).**

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## NOTES

- Daniel is awesome, but Daniel isn't the hero of his story. God is the hero. God rescues and saves Daniel and his friends.
- Don't miss this: the same is true for us. We aren't the heroes of our story. God is the hero of our story and of our lives.
- God sent His son Jesus to rescue and save us from sin and death. We can only live faithful lives to God after we first put our faith in Jesus, in His loving grace.
- Once we take that first step, then we are called to a life of faithfulness. A life where we walk trusting God is faithful to us, even in the fire.

- Daniel and his friends, the pressure of providing a quick answer to the king became a matter of life and death. Even with all the influence of their positions and the gifts God gave them, their actions showed that they knew only God could help them.
- So what does all this mean for us now?

*NOW that I know, HOW can I live this out? (2-4 min)*

- When is the last time you fully relied on God instead of the gifts that he gave you? As believers, we may have God-given gifts, talents, and status on our side like Daniel, but at the end of the day, God is the one who gets us through.

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- Close your time together in prayer.
- Pray and ask God to help you use the influence you have to share the love of Christ and demonstrate his power regularly.

[illegible]





## SUNDAY GROUPS DISCUSSION GUIDE — WEEK 1 —



### MAIN SCRIPTURES:

Daniel 1 & 2

### MAIN POINT #1:

As believers, we can still live and thrive in a world that hates God by trusting God is in control.

### MAIN POINT #2:

God can use our influence to showcase his power.

### LEADER CORNER

#### GOALS OF SMALL GROUP

- (1) For students to know God is in control and they can trust Him in both good and difficult times.
- (2) For students to be inspired to use their social status and influence in the community for God's glory.

#### THINK ABOUT THIS

The world puts a lot of pressure on students on who they should become and that doesn't always line up with who God created us to be. Daniel and his friends were under pressure to the threat of death. Hopefully, our students will never know that exact pressure – but standing up for God in a way that may be “social suicide” for teenagers is extremely hard. Part of what makes it hard is when we tie our identity to our status or what others think of us. Remind your students WHO THEY ARE IN JESUS: loved, cherished, forgiven, important, given purpose, etc.

#### HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

*This guide is a suggestion, not a formula. Adjust the questions and activities as needed, and don't feel like you need to do, or ask, everything you see here. Let the students and the Holy Spirit guide the conversation, too.*

### CONVERSATION GUIDE: Part 1

#### GET THEM TALKING

What are some issues that can cause division between Christians and common culture today?

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What stood out to you from the video?
2. *Daniel and his friends were forced from their families, to learn a new culture, eat new food, and even had their names changed (which stripped them of their Hebrew identity.)* In what ways have you felt the culture today try to shape your identity? In what ways, if any, do you struggle to guard your identity in Jesus from the world?
3. In what ways does the outcome of Daniel's test display God's control?

GIVE STUDENTS A FEW MINUTES TO REFLECT AND WRITE THEIR ANSWERS:

1. What areas of your life might be harder for you to surrender to God and trust He is in control?
2. Write down three ways you could choose to surrender these areas to God and fully trust Him to be with you no matter what.

### CONVERSATION GUIDE: Part 2 (to follow the second video)

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What stood out to you from the video?
2. What do you think Sadie means by her statement: “We must begin to treat our areas of influence as opportunities to advance God's reputation to the world, not our own reputation. We are not the heroes of the story.”
3. How can you use your influence to demonstrate God's power where you are right now?

#### NEXT STEP

**BIBLE STUDY CHALLENGE:** Take a STUDY GUIDE to read and study all of Daniel 1 & 2 on your own this week. Take note of anything that may seem important or you'd like to share in next week's small group.

**PRAYER CHALLENGE:** Pray every day this week and ask God to help you use the influence you have to share the love of Christ and demonstrate his power regularly.

#### PRAYER GUIDE

Ask your students to share their prayer requests and close your time together in prayer.