

Daniel's Captivity

Teacher's Notes

Daniel is one of the great heroes in the Word. He represents our conscience. The book of Daniel tells of a time in our lives when true ideas are captive to selfish thoughts and desires. Just as king Nebuchadnezzar conceals the true identity of the captives by giving them new names, we may conceal true ideas by denying them and thinking falsely from self. The name Daniel means "God is my judge."

Daniel 1 Lesson Plan		Materials Needed
1. Welcome Activity (2-3 minutes)	Names in Daniel pp. 1-3	scissors, tape
2. Focus on the Word (5-7 minutes)	Read Daniel 1 and discuss p. 3	shortened version of text included on p. 4
3. Learn by Doing Choose 1-2 activities (15-20 minutes)	Daniel vs. Nebuchadnezzar pp. 5-6	
	Healthy Food Discussion and Service Activity pp. 7-8	vegetables, serving plates, cups, napkins, prep and serving tools, pitcher, pens <i>optional</i> : dip for vegetables
4. Closing (2-3 minutes)	Recitation and Closing p. 9	Take Home Cards p. 10

New Church Concept Daniel

The meaning of *name* is the essential nature of a person. Dan comes from the verb *to judge* and holds within it the good of life and the holiness of faith; also in the highest sense the Lord's righteousness and mercy. It is the first thing that has to be affirmed and acknowledged before a person can be regenerated. See *Arcana Coelestia* 3923

Welcome Activity: Names in Daniel

Supplies Needed: Name Cards (p. 2) printed and cut apart, tape

In 605 BC, when Daniel was young, the kingdom of Judah was conquered and its people were taken to Babylon as captives. Nebuchadnezzar changed the names of Daniel and his friends from Hebrew to Chaldean, the language of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar tried to hide Daniel's true identity by re-naming him. Daniel meant "God is my judge"; Belshazzar, his new name, meant "The treasure of Bel"—a false Babylonian god. This activity introduces names in the story of Daniel and helps the students experience what Daniel's name change must have been like for him.

As students enter, explain that they are entering the land of Babylon and being given a new name. Tape a *Name Card* (p. 6) to each student. Help students pronounce the names. Encourage them to introduce themselves to each other by their "new names" to become familiar with the characters in the story of Daniel.

continued on page 3

Name Cards

<p>Nebuchadnezzar (Neb-u-cad-nezer) King of Babylon</p>	<p>Bel (bell) Babylonian god</p>	<p>Hananiah (Han-an-iah) Daniel's friend</p>
<p>Mishael (Mish-a-ale) Daniel's friend</p>	<p>Azariah (Az-ar-iah) Daniel's friend</p>	<p>Belshazzar (Bel-te-shazer) Daniel's new name</p>
<p>Shadrach (Shad-rack) Hananiah's new name</p>	<p>Meshach (Mea-shack) Mishael's new name</p>	<p>Abednego (A-bed-ne-go) Azariah's new name</p>
<p>Arioach (Ar-i-oc) Captain of the king's guard</p>	<p>Ashpenaz (Ash-pen-az) Servant of the king</p>	<p>Belshazzar (Bel-shazer) Nebuchadnezzar's son King of Babylon</p>
<p>Darius (Dar-ius) A Mede who ruled in Babylon</p>	<p>Cyrus (Cy-rus) A Persian who ruled in Babylon</p>	<p>Jehoiakim (Je-hoi-a-kim) King of Judah</p>

Babel Names continued from page 5

1. Once everyone has a name, call each student by their new name and ask them to do something. Belteshazzar, open the window; Shadrach, shut the door; Meshach, turn off the light, etc.
2. When all have had a turn, have them take a seat and talk about what it means to have a name, and how it would feel to have your name changed. Changing a name changes someone's identity or quality.
3. In today's story, Daniel is taken captive and given a new name—Belteshazzar. Why might the king have done this? How might Daniel have felt about it? How might you have felt about it?

Focus on the Word

Read: Daniel 1:1-20 from page 4.

The story of Daniel takes place during the last years of the children of Israel, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (whose name was changed to Israel). The Lord gave the children of Israel the land of Canaan, the promised land, where they prospered and grew into a great nation. The Lord warned that if they obeyed Him they would be blessed, but if they disobeyed, they would perish. King Jehoiakim, one of the last of the kings of Israel, disobeyed the Lord. So the Lord delivered Israel into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, who took them to Babylon as captives. This story pictures our love for the Lord becoming captured by selfishness. When this happens, only Daniel, our conscience, can save us.

1. **King Nebuchadnezzar wanted to control everyone in his kingdom. He asked his servant to choose the best captives from Israel and teach them Chaldean so they could serve him. Who did he choose?** Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. Nebuchadnezzar gave them new Babylonian names (Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego), and by doing so hid their true identities.
2. **Each of us has a kind of "kingdom". It is our circle of family and friends. Have you met someone like Nebuchadnezzar, who always wants their own way? How does selfishness affect friendships? Is it easy to be a friend when someone is selfish?**
3. **The food we eat corresponds to ideas we take in. Healthy spiritual "food" is like true ideas from the Word. King Nebuchadnezzar's food was like twisted and false ideas that come from selfishness. Why was it important for Daniel to refuse the king's food? How might taking in or adopting false ideas, e.g. that you are better or more deserving than others, be dangerous?**
4. **Why was the king's steward worried?** He was afraid the men might not look good. **Actually they looked better than those who had eaten the king's food. Have you ever worried that sharing true ideas might make you look bad? Can we tell whether an idea is true or false by whether it "looks good"? Why or why not?**
5. **When Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah had finished their training they were found to be ten times better than all the other wise men. This is because living the Lord's way—taking in good ideas from His Word and using them to live well—makes a person wise. Daniel, their leader, stands for conscience—the true ideas from the Word in our minds.**

Daniel's Captivity

New Church Concept: Daniel

The name Dan is from the Hebrew verb “to judge”. In Hebrew the suffix -el means “God”. So Daniel means “God is my judge”.

New Church Concept Captivity

*Being led away captive, when said of good or truth with people, means the removal of good or truth. When truth from good reigns, the truth lies in the center of their lives and the truths they believe in less strongly are further from the center, ending with those about which they are in doubt. Bordering the truths are falsities, but they point downwards towards hell. When falsity supplants truth, this order is turned upside down. See *Arcana Coelestia* 9164*

New Church Concept Food

In the Word *food* means nothing other than spiritual and celestial food, which is faith in the Lord and love. *Arcana Coelestia* 680

¹In 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 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 Babylonia and put in the treasure house of his god.

³Then 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—⁴young 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.⁵ 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.

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

⁸But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked for permission not to defile himself this way.⁹ Now God had caused the official to show favor and compassion to Daniel,¹⁰ 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?”

¹¹Daniel then said to the guard,¹² “Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink.¹³ 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.”¹⁴ So he agreed and tested them for ten days.

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

¹⁷To 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.

¹⁸At the end of the time set by the king to bring them into his service, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar.¹⁹ The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service.²⁰ 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.

(Daniel 1:1-20 adapted from the NIV)

Daniel vs. Nebuchadnezzar

Daniel and his friends were captured by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. Daniel represents conscience, which is the noble truths from the Word that guide our actions. King Nebuchadnezzar represents selfish feelings and thoughts we have from birth that try to persuade us that we're better than others and should always get our way.



Nebuchadnezzar hid Daniel's identity by changing his name. Selfish thoughts and feelings try to cover over what we know to be true. They may suggest that a true idea is not true, that we should trust our gut-instincts and not think too much. At such times conscience becomes captive to selfishness—just as Daniel became the king's captive. Students will explore the conflict between conscience and selfish impulses.

1. Choose one student to be Daniel (conscience) and one be Nebuchadnezzar (selfishness).
2. The teacher or a student chooses one *Daniel vs. Nebuchadnezzar Scenarios* (p. 10) to read aloud, e.g. You see a cookie sitting on a counter.
3. Invite "Nebuchadnezzar" to give a selfish response to a question, e.g. "Nobody will know if I eat this cookie."
4. Invite "Daniel" to counter with a response from truth, e.g. "That cookie does not belong to me, I should leave it where it is."
5. Encourage "Daniel" and "Nebuchadnezzar" to give at least 3 different selfish and true responses to each scenario. Discuss as a group.
6. Select a different scenario and different students to be "Daniel" and "Nebuchadnezzar".
7. *Option:* Groups with active students might enjoy playing this as an arm-wrestling activity. The idea would not be to arm-wrestle based on strength, as is usually the case, but based on whichever idea is uppermost in the conversation at that time. When "Daniel" is talking, he is "winning". When "Nebuchadnezzar" is talking, he is "winning". This will help bring home the real inner struggle we experience in our minds during these situations.

Materials Needed

copies of *Daniel vs. Nebuchadnezzar Scenarios* p. 6

New Church Concept Temptation

A person who is in temptation is in doubt concerning the end in view. If the end which is loved were not put in doubt, there would be no temptation. *Heaven and Hell* 603

New Church Concept Conscience

With regenerate people there is a conscience concerning what is good and true. From conscience they do what is good and think what is true. The good they do is the good of charity, and the truth they think is the truth of faith. With one who is not regenerate there is no conscience. If there is any it is not about doing good stemming from charity or about thinking truth derived from faith. It derives from love involving self or the world, and is therefore a false conscience. See *Arcana Coelestia* 977

Daniel vs. Nebuchadnezzar Scenarios

These scenarios are the types of situations people deal with every day. A teacher or student will choose one scenario to read aloud. A student acting as “Daniel” (conscience) and a student acting as “Nebuchadnezzar” (selfishness) will give a response to the situation. Continue to give responses at least three times for each scenario. Not all situations are clear-cut. To think more deeply, ask the questions conscience helps us answer— “Is this true, kind and useful?”

1. You see a cookie sitting on a counter. Nobody is around.
2. You find a lot of money in a public place.
3. You’re out for a walk and feel too lazy to put your apple core in the trash.
4. You’ve run out of time to write a required poem for homework. You see a poem in a book you could copy and hand in.
5. You are in a rush to get to school. Your mother insists you brush your teeth before going. You put toothpaste in your mouth so if your mom checks she will smell the toothpaste.
6. Someone asks you if you like their (surprising) new hair color.
7. You accidentally let a dog outside. An adult demands to know who let the dog escape.
8. Your parent asks if you’ve done all your homework. You haven’t, but you’re doing something fun and don’t want to stop.
9. A friend has done something stupid that he’s embarrassed about. You think it’s funny and want to tell your other friends.
10. You are texting in bed—which your parent has forbidden you to do.
11. A parent asks you to clean the bathroom—a job you hate doing.
12. You have a big test at school that you’re not ready for. You are thinking of pretending to be sick so you can get out of it.
13. You are told to clean up a mess in your room. A friend invites you to do something.
14. Something exciting happened. You want to tell your friends. They are too loud and won’t let you talk.
15. You’ve been assigned a partner for a school project. You think your partner is lazy and difficult.

Healthy Food Discussion & Service Activity

Daniel chose not to eat foods offered by the king, but to eat vegetables and drink water. Foods correspond to spiritual ideas we take in or “eat”. King Nebuchadnezzar represents selfishness that twists and destroys true ideas from the Word so his food represents false ideas from selfishness, (e.g. I’m more important



than everyone else). These ideas feel good while we’re under their selfish spell, but when seen in the light of truth they appear for what they are. Daniel’s rejection of the king’s “food” shows how conscience, even when “captive” to selfishness, can alert us to false ideas that appear as “delicacies”. They look good but are actually poisonous. Discuss the sources of ideas and the need for conscience to “filter” our thoughts and consequently actions. Finish by preparing vegetable and water snacks to share with the group or with your congregation.

1. What are your favorite foods? What makes them tasty?
2. Foods correspond to ideas that we take into our minds. Just as healthy foods keep the body fit, so true ideas strengthen healthy perspectives and inspire healthy or “good” actions.
3. Explore “good” and “bad” actions and their sources through reading and *Healthy “Food”* (p. 8). Encourage students to discuss the boxes they checked and why.
4. Conclude by preparing healthy snacks. Involve the students in preparing the vegetables, serving and cleaning up.

Materials Needed

copy of *Healthy “Food”* p. 8 for each student; pens or pen-cils; easy-to-prepare seasonal vegetables, such as carrots, broccoli, peas, peppers, mushrooms, cauliflower, cherry tomatoes; serving plates; cups; napkins; preparation and serving tools, such as sharp knives, boards, spoons; pitcher for water
optional: dip for vegetables

Prepare in Advance

Purchase vegetables and dip (if desired), napkins, plates, cups. Gather serving plates, preparation and serving tools, and a pitcher for water.

New Church Concept Food

Food means things which nourish a person’s soul when bodily life is ended. Spiritual food consists in everything that has a useful purpose and everything leading to this such as knowing what goodness and truth are; and that which has such a purpose is the desire to realize these in actions. These are the things with which angels are nourished and which are therefore called spiritual and celestial foods. See *Arcana Coelestia* 5293

Healthy “Food”

The thoughts in our minds come from spirits associated with us.

At least two evil spirits and two angels are present with every person. Through the evil spirits a person is in communication with hell, and through the angels with heaven. Without the communication with heaven and hell a person could not go on living for even a moment. See *Arcana Coelestia* 697, 5849

People are linked to [the spirits with them] in such a way that they cannot think anything, or will it, unless they do so together with them, so that interiorly they are in communication with the spiritual world. *Arcana Coelestia* 5861

We are not responsible for the thoughts that enter our minds, but we are responsible for entertaining or dwelling on those thoughts and for acting on them. Conscience is the network of true ideas in our minds that filter thoughts, and help us to decide if actions are selfless or selfish, from heaven or hell.

Look at the following actions and decide whether they are selfless, selfish, or you are not sure. Some actions might appear to be selfless, but might not be really! Check as many boxes as you think are true. It is impossible to judge whether other people’s actions are selfish or selfless because we cannot know their motives. For this reason, some actions could be selfless or selfish depending on what the person doing them wants to happen.

Selfless	Selfish	Not sure	Action
			Standing up against a crowd for what’s right.
			Helping someone because it’s the right thing to do.
			Playing games by the rules.
			Giving another person something you really love or want.
			Going to church and hearing the Word.
			Seeing a person in need and deciding what you’re doing is more important than helping them.
			Telling a friend they are making a bad choice.
			Sharing something about a person that was told to you in secret, but could alert others to a problem.
			Keeping only rules that make sense to you.
			Telling a white lie to protect a friend.
			Cheating, if there’s no chance anyone will find out.
			Seeing someone in need and stopping to help immediately.
			Making sure another person does their job right.
			Interrupting while someone is speaking.
			Getting up and leaving a boring conversation.
			Holding a door open for a famous person.
			Praying you’ll win a game.
			Believing you are better than others.

Recitation and Closing

The Book of Daniel contains beautiful prayers. We will focus on one quotation during the close of each lesson. Most of the quotations were spoken by Daniel after he received the power to explain Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Daniel 2). They are arranged in an order that reflects the story for each week. The quotation for lesson three was spoken by Nebuchadnezzar after he recognized the Lord as the true God (Daniel 4).

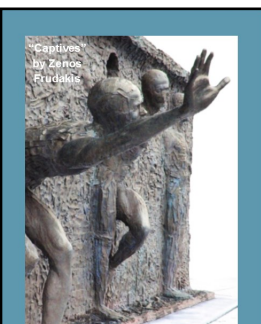
For this lesson, focus on quotation 1: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are His." Read the verse aloud and invite the students to repeat it. What did these words mean to Daniel? What do they mean to you?

Closing

Daniel is one of the true heroes in the Word. Daniel's name means "God is my judge". Even when captured and taken to Babylon—where a selfish king hid his identity by giving him a new name—Daniel resisted the pressure to do what the king wanted. He remained true to the Lord, His God.

At times we may find that our best self has been captured by selfish thoughts and feelings. When this happens we may be tricked into going along with the false ideas, or, like Daniel, we may choose to reject them and stay true to the Lord. The Lord carefully guards our freedom to make this choice.

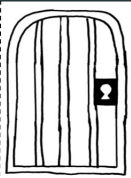
Give students Take Home Cards (p. 10) as they leave.



Held Captive

The statues in this photo show how frustrating and limiting it is to be held captive. Like Daniel in Babylon, sometimes our better selves are held captive by our own selfishness and blindness. Then we are stopped from doing the things we know to be right—things that would actually bring us joy. What can set us free is our conscience—built from truths from the Lord.

Cut off this section and fold it in half. Choose 1 or 2 good things that are held "captive" in your life. Write them on the inside. As you unfold the page, imagine opening the locked door and letting those good things free.



Prayers in Daniel

1. Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are His.
2. He reveals deep and secret things. He knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with Him.
3. How great are His signs and how mighty His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. And His dominion is from generation to generation.
4. He gives wisdom to the wise, and knowledge to those who have understanding.
5. He changes the times and the seasons. He removes kings and raises up kings.
6. I thank You and praise You, O God of my fathers. For You have given me wisdom and might.

Daniel 2:20-23; 4:3 adapted

Jake Home Cards

Cut the Take Home Cards apart and give one to each student.

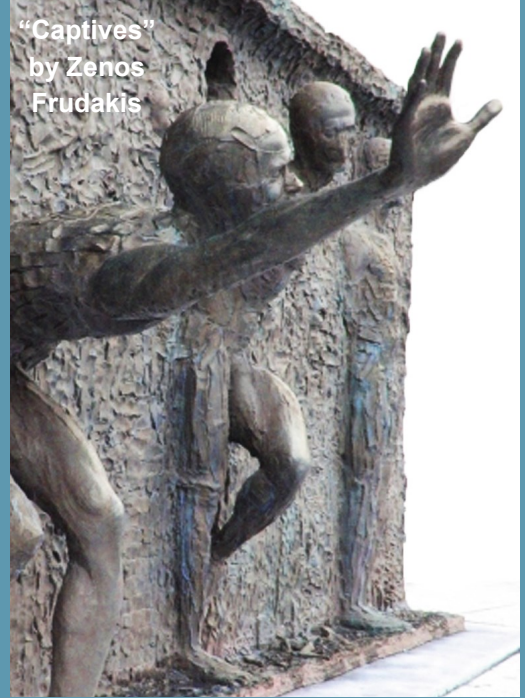
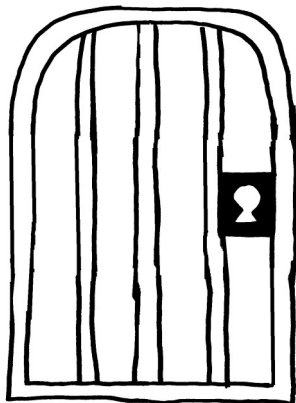


“Captives”
by Zenos
Frudakis

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