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. Nebuchad-nezzar Scenarios* p. 2

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*

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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.