

Daniel's Captivity

Teacher's Notes

Daniel is one of the great heroes in the Word. He represents our conscience. In terms of our lives, the book of Daniel tells of times when true ideas are captive to selfish thoughts and desires. Just as king Nebuchadnezzar conceals the true identity of his captives by giving them new names we sometimes conceal true ideas by denying them and thinking falsely from ourselves.

Daniel 1 Lesson Plan		Materials Needed
1. Welcome Activity (2-3 minutes)	Who's Best? pp. 1-2	
2. Focus on the Word (5-7 minutes)	Read Daniel 1 and discuss p. 2	shortened version of text included on p. 3
3. Learn by Doing Choose 1-2 activities (15-20 minutes)	Daniel Is Our Conscience Stones pp. 4-5	crayons or markers; smooth river stones, large glass aquarium stones, or bottle cap; glue or tape
	Sculpt a Captive pp. 6-7	paper plate or foam food tray, play dough or oil- based clay in two colors, toothpicks for sculpting details
	Picture to Color p. 8	crayons or markers
4. Recitation & Closing (2-3 minutes)	Recitation and Closing p. 9	Parent Note 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 re-generated. See *Arcana Coelestia* 3923

The Hebrew suffix -el means "God"; therefore, Daniel means "God is my judge".

Welcome Activity: Who's Best?

When Daniel was a boy the kingdom of Judah was conquered and its people were taken captive to Babylon. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon wanted to make a great name for himself by building the greatest kingdom on earth. This activity focuses on what it is like to want to be the "greatest" or the "least". Babylon represents selfishness that wants to be worshipped as a god (*Arcana Coelestia* 1326).

- Let's line up in order of height and see who's the tallest. Help the children identify the tallest and shortest children. When you are done, have the children sit down.

continued on next page

Who's Best continued

2. What's good about being the tallest? Does being the tallest mean you are the best?
3. What's good about being the shortest? Does being the shortest mean you are *not* the best?
4. Today we are starting to learn about Daniel. When the story begins, Daniel is a boy, so among grown-ups he was one of the smallest. Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, was big and powerful. He captured Daniel and his friends and took them far away to his country.
5. Daniel loved the Lord and wanted to do what was right but King Nebuchadnezzar loved himself and wanted everyone to do what he wanted. Who was best—Daniel or Nebuchadnezzar? Let's find out about these two men.

Focus on the Word

Read: Daniel 1. A shortened version is included on page 3. For young children you may wish to summarize some of the story and read aloud the sentences printed in **bold**.

1. **This story tells what happened to the children of Israel. Remember, the Lord gave the children of Israel the land of Canaan to live in. He gave them power to overcome enemies and they became a great nation. The Lord warned that if the children of Israel obeyed Him they would do well; but if they disobeyed, they would perish. King Jehoiakim, the last king, disobeyed and so the Lord delivered the children of Israel into the hand of King Nebuchadnezzar, who took them to Babylon as captives.**
2. **The Lord gives every person the freedom to love and obey Him, or to turn away. On a higher level the story of Daniel is about our conscience—the part of us that knows and loves the Lord—being captured by the selfishness represented by King Nebuchadnezzar.**
3. **King Nebuchadnezzar wanted everyone to do what he said. Have you met anyone like that? Is it easy to be a friend to a person like that? Why is this?**
4. **King Nebuchadnezzar asked his servant to choose the best captives to serve him. They were to look good, be wise, and be able to learn the language and customs of Babylon. Who were chosen? Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.**
5. **King Nebuchadnezzar gave them new Babylonian names—Beltshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. What effect do you think changing their names would have had on them? Why might Nebuchadnezzar have done that?**
6. **Everything in the Word has a higher meaning. Daniel and his friends refused to eat the King's food. This is a picture of them not wanting to become selfish like the King by taking his ideas into their lives. What did they want to eat and drink instead? Vegetables and water.**
7. **These foods are like healthy ideas from the Word. The good "food" or true ideas in the Lord's Word help our minds grow strong. We remember this food when we say, "Give us this day our daily bread", in the Lord's Prayer. The Lord wants us to have food that is good for our bodies, but even more importantly, He wants us to have good spiritual food so we can grow spiritually strong, like Daniel, and his friends.**

Daniel's Captivity

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 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.

³ 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—⁴ 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.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.

⁶ Among 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.

⁸ But 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?"

¹¹ Daniel 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.

¹⁵ At 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.

¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸ At 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 Is Our Conscience Stones

Materials Needed for Each Student

copy of the *Daniel Stone* from p. 5; crayons or markers; a smooth river stone, large glass aquarium stone (sold in a dollar or pet store), or large bottle cap; glue or tape

Prepare in Advance

Collect or purchase stones or find caps to mount the project. Print *Daniel Stone Templates* p. 5. Make a sample to show.

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 from conscience 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 a conscience about doing good stemming from charity or about thinking truth deriving from faith. It derives from love involving self or the world, and is therefore a false conscience. See *Arcana Coelestia* 977

At birth, human beings know nothing. As we learn true ideas from the Word, conscience starts to develop. The more true ideas a person learns, the stronger conscience becomes. Conscience is the Lord's voice within us. It warns us when we are thinking of disobeying the commandments and when we are making selfish choices. It has the power to raise us towards heaven. Daniel represents our conscience. At first he is tentative—he asks the king's servant if he can eat vegetables and drink water (true ideas) instead of eating the king's food (selfish ideas). But by the end of his story he rules the kingdom. Children will make a Daniel stone to remind them of their conscience. This can help them choose words and actions that are true, kind and useful.



1. Daniel was captured and taken to a country far from home. Daniel pictures our conscience. Conscience is the part of our mind where the Lord speaks to us. In what ways does conscience help us do what's true, kind and useful?
2. Our conscience is always with us. When we learn new ideas from the Word it grows stronger. When we stop thinking about the Lord and think and do only what we want, conscience is "captured". Even though we may ignore our conscience, it never goes away.
3. We're going to make a mini "Daniel" to help us remember that the Lord is always with us, helping us do what is true, kind and useful.
4. Hand each child a copy of the *Daniel Stone* (p. 5), crayons or markers and a stone or lid. Color and cut out the picture and the words, "Daniel Our Conscience". Have students choose which size will work best with their stone or lid.
5. Use glue or tape to mount the picture on a lid, bottle cap, smooth stone or large glass aquarium "stone". Mount the words "Daniel Our Conscience" on the back of the project.
6. Encourage children to keep the *Daniel Stone* somewhere where it reminds them to think about whether what they are thinking or doing is true, kind and useful—perhaps in a pocket, on a dresser, or near a mirror.

Daniel Stone Templates



Daniel
Our Conscience



Daniel
Our
Conscience



Daniel
Our Conscience



Daniel
Our Conscience



Daniel
Our
Conscience



Daniel
Our Conscience

Sculpt a Captive

Materials Needed for Each Student

paper plate or foam food tray, play dough or oil-based clay in two colors, toothpicks for sculpting details, disposable plate or tray to use as a sculpture base

Prepare in Advance

Gather or purchase materials.

New Church Concept Captivity

A person is constantly among evils and falsities, held in captivity by them. *Arcana Coelestia* 5897

“Being led away captive”, when said of good or truth with people, means the removal of good or truth. When truth from good reigns in people, the truth lies in the center of their life 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

Daniel and his friends were captured by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. Daniel represents conscience, which is based on the noble truths from the Word, and has the power to guide our actions.

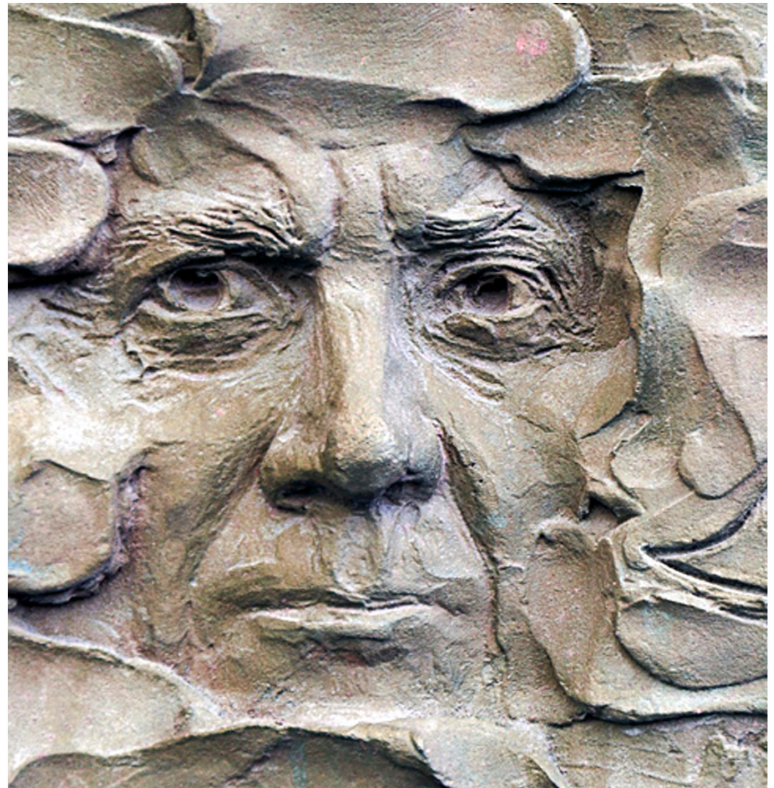
King Nebuchadnezzar represents selfish feelings and thoughts we have from birth that try to persuade us that we’re better than others and should always get our way. Not only did Nebuchadnezzar capture Daniel, he also tried to hide his identity by changing his name. Sometimes selfish feelings and thoughts try to cover over what we know to be true. They may tell us that the Word is not important or true, that we know best, that we can trust our own feelings. At such times conscience is captive to selfishness—just as Daniel was the king’s captive.



Students will create a sculpture that illustrates what it is to be “captive”.

1. Show the children pictures of Zenos Frudakis’s “captive” sculptures (p. 7). What do these works tell us about captivity? Which statue do you like best? Why?
2. Now think of Daniel in captivity. What could Daniel do? (He had his own room and was given an education. He had friends. He probably could have walked around freely.) What couldn’t Daniel do? (Go back to his home and possibly his family, wear clothes he liked, speak his own language, etc.)
3. How might you make a sculpture of Daniel as a captive in Babylon?
4. Give each child a lump of play dough or oil-based clay. Invite them to sculpt Daniel.
5. Offer a second color of play dough or clay to “capture” Daniel, e.g. by making him stay in one place, surrounding him in with ropes, etc.
6. When we picture Daniel as a captive, we can remember ways in which our conscience can be “captured” by selfishness.

“Captives” by Zenos Frudakis





Recitation and Closing

Each lesson in the Daniel series includes a recitation. The recitations are taken from prayers in the book of Daniel. Most of the sentences 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 sentence for lesson three was spoken by Nebuchadnezzar after he recognized the Lord as the true God (Daniel 4). We will be learning one sentence with each lesson, and building on each until all six sentences can be recited together.

Introduce the 1st sentence of *Prayers in Daniel*, the recitation for this lesson: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever." Daniel loved the Lord and continued to bless His name and obey Him, even when he was taken as a captive to a foreign land.

Try saying the sentence aloud and inviting the children to repeat it after you.

Prayers in Daniel

1. Blessed be the name of God forever and ever.
2. He reveals deep and secret things.
3. How great are His signs!
4. He gives wisdom to the wise.
5. He removes kings and raises up kings.
6. I thank You and praise You, O God.

Daniel 2:20-23; 4:3 adapted

Closing

Daniel is one of the great heroes in the Word. He stands for our conscience, which is the good and true ideas from the Word in our minds. This week, try to pay attention to times when your conscience speaks to you, and listen to what the Lord is asking you to do.

Give *Parent Notes* (p. 10) to students to take home.

Cut the Parent Notes apart and give one to each student.

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Dear Parents,

Today we started learning about Daniel, one of the great heroes in the Word. Did you know that Daniel is like our conscience? Conscience is the good and true ideas in our minds that remind us to do what's right and good.

We will be learning one sentence from *Prayers in Daniel* each week. Please help your child remember the first sentence this week. You could say it at meal time, bed time, or when you are brushing your teeth!

Thank you.

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