

## The Young Men at Nebuchadnezzar's Court

**Theme:** Don't follow the crowd!

### **Opening Game:**

**Chicken and chips:** Divide children into two teams, in two long lines, facing each other. Side A is called "chicken" and side B is "chips"! When you call "chicken", side A turns and runs to the wall behind as quickly as possible, without being caught by the chasing "chips"! If any children are caught, they become members of the opposing team. All return to the centre of the room, facing each other. When you call "chips", side B has to turn and run to the wall behind, without being caught by team A. Have fun by yelling out "cheers", "chops" or "chilly" instead of "chicken" and "chips" and see which children move before they should!

**Up and over:** In teams, play a relay game such as up and over.

**Memory Verse:** Exodus 23 verse 2 "*You must not do wrong just because everyone else is doing it.*" Have a game of hangman.

**Introduction:** Play "I went to market and I bought..." Each child has to add an item of food or drink each go until the list is too long to remember. Explain that the story today is about Daniel who refused to eat and drink food that was not good in God's eyes.

**Story:** *Daniel chapter 1.* See story in the resources section. Every time you say the word "King", the children mime putting a crown on their heads; when you say "Daniel", the children flex their muscles and for "God", they point up to Heaven.

**Application:** Ask the children if they've ever been tempted to join their friends and do something wrong. Did they go ahead or did something stop them? It would have been a lot easier for Daniel if he'd simply kept quiet and eaten the food of the royal court, just like everyone else, but Daniel was determined to do what God wanted him to do. We need to ask God to make us brave enough not just to follow the crowd but to stand up for what we believe in.

**Prayer:** Make a giant tick (correct sign!) and ask the children to write their prayers on it, asking God to help them do what is right and not just follow the crowd.

**Song:** "I'm gonna run" track 2 - Great Big God CD

### **Final game:**

**Minefield:** Divide room into three parallel sections. "Home" is where children start. They have to cross the "minefield" to get to the "safe place". One player is "IT" and they patrol the minefield. When the leader yells "go!" everyone must run across the minefield without getting caught by "IT". If captured, they too become "IT" and the game continues until one child is left who then becomes "IT" whilst the others go back to "home" to start again.

**Resources:** The story and a fun sheet can be found in the resources section.

## The Young Men at Nebuchadnezzar's Court

**Daniel** and his Israelite friends had been captured by **King** Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia. The **King** asked his chief official, Ashpenaz, to choose some men who were handsome, intelligent, well-trained, quick to learn and without any physical weaknesses to serve in the royal court. The **King** ordered that every day, these men should be given the same food and drink as the members of the royal court. After three years of training, they were to appear before the **King**. **Daniel** and his friends were chosen to be trained.

**Daniel** knew that he and his friends should not eat the food and drink the wine of the royal court as it would not please **God**, so he asked Ashpenaz to help him. **God** made Ashpenaz sympathetic to **Daniel** but Ashpenaz was frightened of the **King** and said, "If you don't eat the food and look as healthy as the other men, the **King** will kill me!" So **Daniel** said, "Test us for ten days. Give us just vegetables and water to eat and drink and then compare us with the other men who eat the royal food."

Ashpenaz agreed and after ten days, **Daniel** and his friends were stronger than the men eating the royal food so they were allowed to continue just having vegetables and water. After three years, **Daniel** and his friends impressed the **King** more than any other men in the royal court. **God** had poured His blessings on them for not following the crowd and for doing what they knew was right in **God's** eyes.

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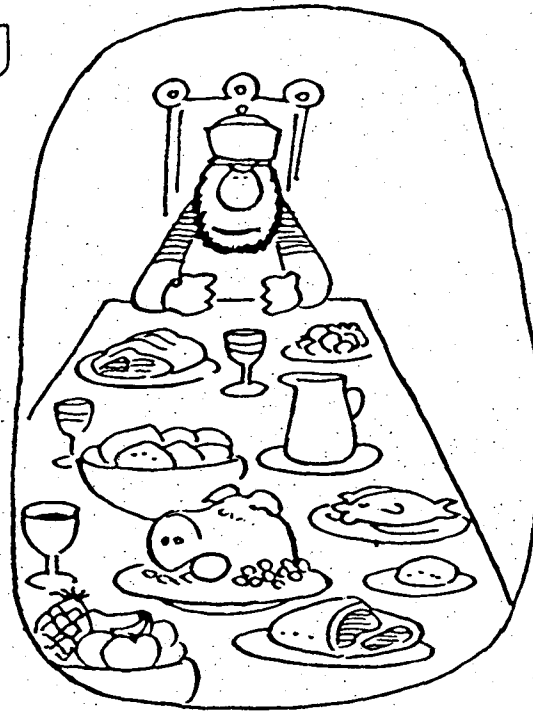
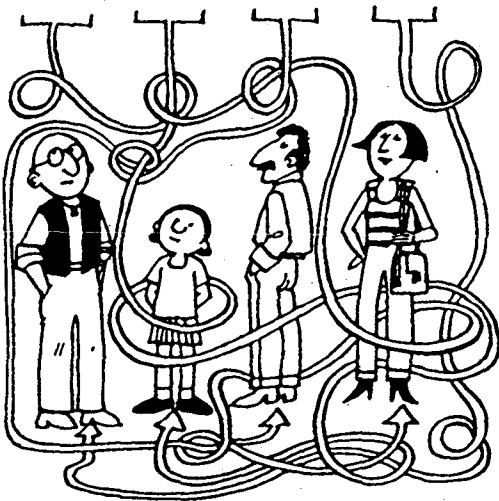
Week 1

"You must not do wrong  
just because everyone  
else is doing it."  
Exodus 23 verse 2

God wants these people not to  
follow the crowd but to follow Him.

Who says 'YES'? Who says 'NO'?

'NO' 'YES' 'NO' 'YES'



**Daniel refused to eat  
the food of the royal court.  
Would you be strong enough  
to say "NO"????**

Can you find the words hidden in  
this wordsearch puzzle?

- |                |            |          |
|----------------|------------|----------|
| DANIEL         | COURT      | ASHPENAZ |
| FRIENDS        | FOOD       | DRINK    |
| NEBUCHADNEZZAR | KING       | GOD      |
| WATER          | VEGETABLES | ROYAL    |

N S L A D O G M C K V J I B Q  
 H E Y E K E C P A I J S L S V  
 J T B I I N R S W N F J S C W  
 B J H U V N H S X G L O G N H  
 L C L P C P A T I K Q W X N Q  
 A Y X M E H R D P A C X M Z V  
 Y K K N F U A S D N E I R F E  
 O R A O O Q B D R I N K V R G  
 R Z O C G W X G N F B F U F E  
 G D H X J Q X D V E I X B L T  
 G Y U Y Y R J Z U W Z G P X A  
 O S F H Z C F A V N A Z H S B  
 Z O X A A W B N U C Y T A Q L  
 N Z G Z W W D Y L F H F E R E  
 M M G C X L Z M J J Q Q V R S