

Daniel interprets King Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

Theme: Who do you trust?

Opening Game:

Mad Message Relay – Organise your group into two or three teams and line them up. The first person in the line runs across the room to a chair which has a bag containing several different instructions on separate pieces of paper. They take one instruction, read it, drop it on the floor and follow it through before running back and tagging the next player. The winning team is the one who has followed all their instructions and are all sat down ready. *(There are some ideas for funny instructions in the resources section.)*

Memory Verse: *Psalm 56 v 3- But when I am afraid, I put my trust in you.* In teams again, give a copy of the memory verse to the first person in the line. Send half the team to the other end of the hall. The first person runs to the rest of the team and whispers the verse to the next person. That person then runs to the first part of the team and whispers the verse to the next person. This continues until the last person hears the verse and runs to a leader to tell them the verse. The team closest to the original verse wins; not the first team to reach the leader with the verse.

Introduction: Ask the children which leader they trust the most and which they trust the least. Then choose one volunteer and present them with two wrapped parcels. Tell them one contains a nice gift and the other contains a not-so-nice gift. (Secretly wrap a bag of sweets and an old banana skin, for example.) They have to listen to the leaders who will try to convince them which present to open and judge which one they trust the most. (If they go for the nasty gift, open the other one and give it to them for being a good sport; if they win the sweets, show them the banana skin so they know what they could have won.)

Story: Daniel Chapter 2. This is quite a long, complicated story but there is a good story script in the resources section that can be read with dramatic effect.

Application: When we are afraid or scared by something our instinct is to run or jump back from it. It takes some courage to face up to our fears; it takes real faith or trust in someone to allow them to deal with the situation while you wait patiently. This is what Daniel had to do. I don't suppose God answered him straight away when Daniel prayed for an answer and all the while Daniel waited, he and his friends were under threat of death. How patient and trusting would you be in a similar situation? We need to remember to rely on and trust in God in all situations.

Prayer: Get the children to write their prayers on pieces of paper. Then using a play parachute or an old sheet; screw up the prayers into paper balls and throw them on to the parachute. A leader can say a prayer asking God to hear our prayers, then 'mushroom' the parachute up in the air and when all the prayers have been bounced off the chute everyone can shout 'AMEN!'.

Final game: Chair Relay – Organise your teams on chairs in a line. The first in line leaves their seat and runs to the other end of the line while the others all move up one chair to fill the first seat again. Then the next person runs and play continues until all players have moved up the line and back to their original seats. The next player to run each time shouldn't move until the last one has arrived in the bottom seat.

Song: 'May the God of hope' – Doug Horley, 'Lovely Jubbly' CD

Resources: Story script; game instructions; funsheet.



King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream.

It woke him up in the middle of the night for several nights in a row so that he could hardly sleep at all. “This dream must mean something,” he thought. And so he did what kings did back in those long ago days. He sent for his magicians, sorcerers and wise men.

King Nebuchadnezzar sat high on his throne, and the magicians, sorcerers and wise men stood before him. They were probably already beginning to sweat.

King Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “I keep having this dream. Tell me what it means.” “O Mighty King, may you live forever!,” said the magicians, sorcerers and wise men. “Tell us your dream, and we will tell you what it means.”

But King Nebuchadnezzar was a clever king.

He said to the magicians, sorcerers and wise men, “Tell me my dream first, and THEN tell me what it means.” Now the magicians, sorcerers and wise men were really sweating. “How can we do that?” they said. “Tell us your dream, and then surely we can tell you what it means.”

The King said, “If I tell you my dream, how will I know you are not just making it up when you tell me what it means? Tell me my dream and what it means and I will give you all a great reward. But if you cannot, I will have you torn to pieces.” I told you didn’t want to disappoint a mighty king - especially one who hasn’t been sleeping well.

The magicians, sorcerers and wise men begged the king, “But, Your Majesty, please, tell us your dream first. No one can know another man’s dreams except God alone.”

At least they were right about that!

“You cannot do it?” said King Nebuchadnezzar, “Very well then.” And he ordered that all the magicians, sorcerers and wise men in his kingdom be torn to pieces.

Wouldn’t you know it, Daniel and his friends had been appointed to the king’s court just in time to be torn to pieces. When Arioch, the chief of the guards, came for them, Daniel asked him, “Why is the king being so harsh?” Arioch explained to Daniel what had happened.

Daniel said to him, “Don’t tear anyone to pieces just yet. Give me a little time, and I will tell the king his dream and what it means.”

Daniel got together with his friends and they prayed, “Dear God in heaven, please help us. Tell us the king’s dream and what it means.”

And God did just that.

That night Daniel had a vision, and in it God told him the king’s dream and what it meant.

The next day Daniel appeared before the mighty King Nebuchadnezzar. He said to the king, “I can’t tell you your dream or what it means....”

“WHAT!” screamed the king, “then what are you doing here?!”

“No magician, sorcerer or wise man can tell you your dream or what it means,” Daniel continued, “But there IS a God in heaven who can. And he has told me what to tell you.

“In your dream you saw a great statue. Its head was made of gold, its chest was made of silver, its waist of bronze, its legs of iron, and its feet were made of iron and clay mixed together. Then you saw a stone cut from a mountain by a hand that no one could see. The stone smashed the statue, and from the stone grew a great mountain.”

“That’s it!” cried the king.

“Now I will tell you what it means,” said Daniel. “The statue with its head of gold, chest of silver, waist of bronze, legs of iron, and feet of iron and clay - these are all the kingdoms of the people on earth. Your kingdom is the head of gold. It is a great and glorious kingdom. But it won’t last forever. Another kingdom will come. It won’t be as great as yours. That is the statue’s chest of silver. After that will come the kingdom of bronze, after that, the kingdom of iron, and finally, the kingdom of iron and clay.

“But one day, God is going to put an end to all the kingdoms on earth. God will put his Holy Mountain in their place, and from there God will rule, and his kingdom will have no end.”

King Nebuchadnezzar fell to the ground.

He knew that this was a message from God. He said to Daniel, “Now I know that your God is the one, true God, the one who knows all mysteries, and the King who rules over all the kings of the earth.”

King Nebuchadnezzar rewarded Daniel with many wonderful gifts, and he made Daniel the head of all the royal advisers. Daniel asked that his friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah be rewarded also, and so King Nebuchadnezzar put them in charge of all the affairs of Babylon.

Even though they were surrounded by people who didn’t follow God, Daniel and his friends were faithful.

And God was with them.

It was a good thing, because of what was going to happen next!

