


 A graphic for Lesson 1 featuring the word "LESSON" in a bold, sans-serif font, with the number "1" in a larger font to its right. The text is set against a white, ribbon-like banner that curves upwards and then downwards, ending in a scroll-like tail. The banner has a subtle drop shadow.
 

# LESSON 1

## GOD BLESSES BABYLON

**Key Point:** God preserves His children in temptation

**Story:** Daniel and His Friends Are Taken to Babylon

**Biblical Basis:** Daniel 1:1-21

### INTERPRETATION

The Book of Daniel is an unmistakable testimony of both the power and mercy of the one true God. In the first six chapters, the prophet reflects on how the powers of this world arrogantly presume, based on illusion, that they will live and reign forever. The troublesome situations that Daniel presents as proof for the people of God—then and now—show that favor comes to those who remain faithful unto the end even though it may seem better to give in and conform to one’s surroundings (Revelation 2:10).

Chapter 1 offers us, by way of introduction to the entire book, a look at the setting in which all of the action takes place (Babylon and the royal court), the participants (Nebuchadnezzar, his heirs, and Darius; Daniel and his friends), the fixtures from the temple that later reveal God’s judgment, the specific gifts that the four young Jews receive (wisdom and intelligence to understand and apply their expertise in diverse circumstances), and finally the special ability to interpret visions and dreams that was given to Daniel (v. 17).

It’s clear that each of the elements presented in the first chapter is a fundamental piece in the story that we will continue to read, but they wouldn’t make any sense if they weren’t used solely to give meaning and eternal purpose to everything that happens in this world. Whether for judgment or for blessing, everything that happens around us is part of a divine purpose, which orders and arranges all things for the good of those who love God (Romans 8:28). This is what the Book of Daniel makes so clear, right from the start: that every event on a global scale is part of a divine purpose, which, although veiled and incomprehensible to our human reason and understanding, will bring about the fulfillment of the almighty God’s will. Only by paying attention to verse 2 (“The Lord let him . . .”), verse 9 (“And God made Ashpenaz sympathetic to Daniel”), and verse 17 (“God gave the four young men . . .”) will we understand that God worked in a unique way in the lives of those four Jewish youths so that even in forced exile and while enslaved under a pagan king, the testimony of the truth and the message of salvation might extend even to foreign, faraway lands like Babylon, the most powerful empire on earth at the time.

Another fundamental aspect of this first chapter is Daniel’s refusal to eat the same food that the king and his entire court receive. Verse 8 affirms that Daniel would not “let himself become ritu-



ally unclean by eating the food and drinking the wine of the royal court.” A glance at the preceding verses reminds us that the young Jews were to learn the language and ways of the Babylonians, which implies knowledge of all kinds, including astrology, myths about the existence of the world, and other pagan, idolatrous religious beliefs (v. 4). Furthermore, their names were changed to Babylonian names. Consequently, Daniel received the name Belteshazzar. The idea behind changing the slaves’ names implies a desire to invoke upon them the protection of a superior god that had demonstrated the power to conquer a people with an inferior god, in this case the God of the Jews. Beyond the exact meaning of Daniel’s new name, we also understand that the name given to him honored the Babylonian god Bel (see 4:8).

In other words, we see that there are three ways in which the young men were forced to change: with regard to their education, their names, and their diet. Evidently, Daniel’s conscience didn’t lead him to take issue with studying the language and culture of the Babylonians or with accepting a new name, but he did draw the line when it came to diet. The problem wasn’t that Daniel was picky and didn’t like Babylonian food, but rather that all of the royal court’s food was first presented as an offering to their pagan gods (false gods or idols). Eating this food meant renouncing the true God, spurning Him, and denying Him when faced with the falseness of the idols.

Daniel turns to his faith in times of confusion. He affirms his stance with a knowledge of God’s Word that compels him to confess: “Worship no god but Me” (Exodus 20:3), putting his life fully in the hands of the Creator, who knows how to preserve it according to His promises. So, faced with the danger inherent in disobeying the king’s order, along comes the trial involving a different kind of food and the resulting lack of objection when the young Jews, led by Daniel, proceed to eat only vegetables and water (vv. 15–16). In all this, the fatherly, powerful hand of God was revealed in such a way that the four distinguished themselves by their physical and mental robustness, over and above the rest of their compatriots. God greatly blessed them, and by way of the gifts that He gave them, His name was preached and glorified by people all over the world (see Isaiah 45:22).

## Application

In times of weakness and necessity, the children of God turn to their faith. That is to say, they know what they believe because they have dedicated time to learning it, but they also learn to trust in the promises that our heavenly Father has revealed in His Son, Jesus, above all things. Divine providence prevails in this chapter, which indicates that God was behind everything that happened in the lives of Daniel and his friends. Everything that God allowed them to live through as they were exiled to Babylon happened so that they might be instruments in announcing the truth and the way of salvation. Only those who recognize and confess the one true God enjoy His redemptive favor, the mercy of His forgiveness and protection.

In the midst of a context that is contrary to the faith he believes and confesses, the book of Daniel teaches the children of God not to despair or give in to the pressures and dangers they are faced with. The most important takeaway is that the life of a Christian is, from beginning to end, in God’s hands (Psalm 27:1–2). And what’s more, Christians know that they have been bought by Christ at a blessed price (1 Peter 1:18), and that consequently, their lives are no longer their own but rather belong to Christ and are sustained by Him (Galatians 2:20).



## LESSON 1 LEVEL 1

### What do I need?

- Bible poster for this lesson (Daniel with his friends and the palace steward)
- Bibles
- Story images from the Reproducibles (pp. 97-100)
- Wide paintbrushes, one per child
- Plastic trays
- Tempera paint in five colors
- Paper napkins
- Water
- Three sheets of white poster board
- The necessary alphabet letters from the Reproducibles (pp. 117-118 Spanish side) for forming the memory verse for this lesson
- Black cardstock or poster board
- Black marker
- Painter's tape
- Craft glue
- Lead pencils
- Scissors

### Opening Activity

Begin the class by having the group sit in a circle on the floor or around a table. Tell the story found in the Reproducibles, pp. 97-100. After telling the story, ask if the students have experienced a similar situation—if they've ever had to confront the temptation of wanting something and knowing it wasn't okay to take it.

Do they remember something that's happened to them, like the child in the story? Allow a few minutes for discussion.



## Bible Lesson

With Bible in hand, tell the story written in Daniel 1:1–21. Remember to use the Bible poster for this lesson. When you finish, begin a conversation with the children, emphasizing that these youngsters were tempted to abandon the life that God would have them live. Oftentimes, we will be tempted to abandon what we believe.

What do we believe? That God is our Father. He loves us. Sin separated us from His love. God sent His Son to rescue us from sin so that we might be united with Him again. Mention that Jesus, too, was tempted. The devil himself tempted Jesus to doubt the Word of God. As true God, and because He used the Word of God to defend Himself, Jesus was able to resist the temptation. With God on our side, we can overcome temptation.

**Say a prayer** with the students, giving thanks to God for His love and faithfulness. Ask that God would free us from temptations and always be by our side to guide us.

Next, move on to decorating the **memory verse** for this lesson:

*Keep watch and pray that you will not fall into temptation. **Matthew 26:4***

Ahead of time, attach the sheets of poster board together so they form a single sheet. Additionally, dilute the tempera paint with a little bit of water, one color per tray. Lay the poster board out on a table or on the floor. Place the paint trays and wide paintbrushes off to the side.

Give each child a paintbrush. Each child will select which color of paint he or she would like to use. The children should make long brushstrokes with their chosen colors, until the entire surface is covered. While the paint dries, give each child a piece of black cardstock or poster board, a pencil, and a stencil of one of the letters in the Bible passage. The children should trace the letters onto the paper and cut them out.

The letters needed to form the Bible passage are A6, C1, D1, E3, F1, H2, I3, K1, L4, M1, N4, O4, P3, R1, T8, U1, W2, and Y2.

When the poster board is dry, guide the children in gluing on the letters to spell out the memory verse. Display it someplace visible.

Continue with the lesson leaflets. Use the pictures on p. 101 (Spanish side) to complete the student leaflets.



## LESSON 1 LEVEL 2

### What do I need?

- Bible poster for this lesson (Daniel with his friends and the palace steward)
- Bibles
- Story images from the Reproducibles (pp. 107-111 Spanish side)
- Plastic cups
- Water guns or plastic squirt bottles (see the note at the end of this list)
- Tempera paint (five colors)
- Water
- Paper napkins
- Stencils of the letters for the memory verse (Reproducibles, pp. 117-118 Spanish side)
- Tablecloth
- Half sheets of letter or legal paper, one per child
- Black pencils
- Chalkboard, whiteboard, or poster board
- Masking tape
- Three sheets of white poster board
- Two additional sheets of white poster board
- Scissors
- Craft glue
- **Note:** If you are unable to use water guns, you can use squirt bottles, or dip paper napkins in a mixture of water and tempera paint and use them to decorate the poster board.

### Opening Activity

Before class, prepare the images from the Reproducibles, pp. 107-111 Spanish side.

To begin the class, place the pictures of the different foods on a table so they can be easily seen. If possible, cover the table with a tablecloth so they really stand out.



Give each student a half sheet of paper and a pencil and explain the instructions. Ask the students to study the images for several minutes. When time is up, they should choose their four favorite food items and two favorite beverages from the options and draw them on their sheets. When all of the children have finished, tally the results.

Hang up the pictures, leaving space between them. Add a tally mark for each student that chose a particular menu. Count up which menu received the most votes. It is likely that the vegetables and the water will receive less than some of the other items.

Consider the following: You are to eat nothing but vegetables and drink nothing but water. Nevertheless, the most exquisite delicacies are presented before you. Could you resist the temptation and keep joyfully eating what's on your plate? Or would you try a little bit of something that looks good?

## Bible Lesson

Give everyone a Bible and share the reading from Daniel 1:1–21. The reading can be divided up among the children. Repeat it at least twice.

Share with the students that the youngsters in the story could resist the temptation because God was with them. Many times in life we are faced with situations that are hard to tackle, but with God by our side, it is easier to resist.

With the children, make a list of situations that arise in their lives that are difficult to overcome (temptations).

Discuss with the students that in Daniel's case, it wasn't the food itself that could harm them but rather the act of disobeying God, since the king's food had first been offered to false gods. Eating it would have been committing idolatry.

We will always be tempted with the things we like the most. For some it might be food; for others, games or friendships.

Jesus was tempted also with food. But Jesus was able to respond to the temptation with the Word of God: "Human beings cannot live on bread alone, but need every word that God speaks" (Matthew 4:4). Like Jesus, Daniel could resist temptation with God by his side.

**Say a prayer** thanking God for helping us to face temptations and asking that He would remove the temptations we face every day from us (include the list of temptations you and the children came up with).

Next, move on to the poster board with the **memory verse**:

*Keep watch and pray that you will not fall into temptation. **Matthew 26:41***

Ahead of time, attach the three pieces of poster board together so they form a single piece. In the cups, dilute the paint with water so that it's fairly runny. Place the poster board on a smooth surface, if possible a tiled floor or a wall (keeping in mind that the floor or wall will get paint on it). Fill the water guns or squirt bottles with the paint mixture. Each child will take a gun, aim it at the blank



poster board, and shoot his or her color at it. Stop when the entire poster board is “painted.”

While the poster board dries, give the children the stencils of the letters in the memory verse. The children should trace them and cut them out of white poster board. When the poster board is dry, glue on the letters to form the memory verse for this lesson.

The letters needed to form the Bible passage are A6, C1, D1, E3, F1, H2, I3, K1, L4, M1, N4, O4, P3, R1, T8, U1, W2, and Y2.

When finished, display the poster board someplace visible.

**Optional:** If it is permissible and the weather cooperates, you can play a game using the water guns before filling them with paint. Start by splitting into two teams. The teacher will ask a question; we suggest using questions that refer to the Bible story. The team that responds first will earn the “right” to squirt one member of the opposing team. The team with the most dry members wins.

Continue with the lesson leaflets.

## LESSON 1 LEVEL 3

### What do I need?

- Bibles
- Chalkboard, whiteboard, or poster board
- Five pieces of white poster board
- Craft glue
- Masking tape
- Pictures for this lesson (Reproducibles, pp. 107-111 Spanish side)
- Paper plates, one per child
- At least five colors of tempera paint
- Plastic cups
- Paper napkins
- Water guns or squirt bottles (see the note at the end of this list)
- Stencils of the letters for the memory verse (Reproducibles, pp. 117-118 Spanish side)
- Scissors

**Note:** If you are unable to use water guns, you can use squirt bottles, or dip paper napkins in a mixture of water and tempera paint and use them to decorate the poster board.



## Opening Activity

Before class, prepare the pictures from the Reproducibles section, pp. 107-111 Spanish side. Make at least five copies of each picture with the exception of the vegetables and the water; you only need three of each of these.

Place the pictures someplace visible. Before giving the general instructions, choose four specific members of the class and suggest that when prompted, they should choose only vegetables and water. Tell them that it's up to them, but you suggest choosing vegetables and water.

The general instructions will be as follows: You will see images of various foods. Take a plate and choose what you would like to eat. Take the pictures and "serve" them on your plates.

Allow a few minutes for scoping out the various menu options. Don't look at anyone in particular while the students are making their choices. When time is up, gather everyone in a circle with their plates on the floor or around a table.

Once seated, randomly select some of the participants and ask them what they chose. Repeat with all participants, leaving the four preselected ones until last.

When it's their turn, ask what they chose. If they chose vegetables and water, ask them why. The response you're hoping for is because that's what their teacher suggested.

Ask the preselected participants if that would have been their choice. Ask the rest of the group why they didn't choose those food and drink options.

## Bible Lesson

Give everyone present a Bible and share the reading from Daniel 1:1-21. The reading can be divided up among the children. Repeat it at least twice.

Share with the students that the youngsters in the story could resist the temptation because God was with them. Many times in life, we are faced with situations that are hard to tackle, but with God by our side, it is easier to resist.

With the children, make a list of situations that arise in their lives that are difficult to overcome (temptations).

Share with the students that Daniel and his friends weren't the only ones to be tempted. Jesus, the very Son of God, was tempted. The devil, the world, and our sinful flesh can tempt us.

Like Jesus, we should remain close to God in order to resist temptation and know how to use His Word. He is the only one who can overcome temptation.

**Say a prayer** thanking God for helping us to face temptations and asking that He would remove the temptations we face every day from us (include the list of temptations you and the children came up with).



Next, move on to the poster board with the **memory verse**:

*Keep watch and pray that you will not fall into temptation. **Matthew 26:41***

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The letters needed to form the Bible passage are A6, C1, D1, E3, F1, H2, I3, K1, L4, M1, N4, O4, P3, R1, T8, U1, W2, and Y2.

When finished, display the poster board someplace visible.

**Optional:** If it is permissible and the weather cooperates, you can play a game using the water guns before filling them with paint. Start by splitting into two teams. The teacher will ask a question; we suggest using questions that refer to the Bible story. The team that responds first will earn the "right" to squirt one member of the opposing team. The team with the most dry members wins.

Continue with the lesson leaflets.

