

Four men in exile



Text: Daniel 1

Focus statement: Dare to be different.

Visuals: Fresh fruit and vegetables

GATHERING

Welcome

Call to worship:

Leader: Blessed are those who are steadfast in faith and show the mercy of God.

People: **God can do all things and the ways of God are greater than we can imagine.**

Leader: Therefore, sisters and brothers, be steadfast, immovable, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

People: **We wait for God and the strength and courage God offers.**

All: ***We will stand firm and without fear, for God is worthy of our praise.***
—based on 1 Corinthians 15:58

Prayer:

Lord, we come before you this morning as humble servants, desiring to be faithful to what you have called us. Take our gifts and inadequacies and use them to bring glory to your name. Touch us with your love and power and give us courage to be true to you.

PRAISING

Song suggestions:

SJ 45 *In the morning when I rise*

SJ 75 *Be still*

SJ 22 *By the waters of Babylon*

SJ 50 *Keep me safe. O God*

HWB 76 *Je louerai l'Eternel*
(Praise, I will praise you, Lord)

OFFERING

LISTENING TO GOD

Affirmation of faith: *Words for Worship 2, 128 (Adapt last line)*

Children's time:

Bring in a plate with a variety of snack finger foods: cut up vegetables and fruit, crackers, pita bread, cheese cubes, dried fruit, etc. (Include ethnic snacks and non-traditional food items.) Have each child take one snack item. Encourage them to explain why they chose the snack they did. Which one would they not eat? Why not? If there are children with food allergies, have them tell about the decisions they have to make about food. How can children be supportive of those who eat differently for whatever reason? Briefly tell the story of Daniel's decision not to eat the food that was given him for religious reasons. Talk about the difficult

decisions people hate to make sometimes because of their beliefs.

(*Option:* Find a book or internet site that tells of the Jewish Passover meal. Bring some of the foods for the children to taste. Tell of the importance Jewish families still place on eating kosher foods. Connect with Daniel's story about eating foods that were healthy and not connected with the religion of the Babylonians.)

Song: "Dare to be a Daniel" by Philip Bliss (public domain)

Scripture reading: Daniel 1 (Read in sections)

Sermon seeds: (See *Connect* and *Youth* for additional inspiration.)

How do you think persons who are forced to assimilate into another culture, like Native Americans, might feel? Going against cultural expectations is not easy. For a current story, view and/or show the Bonus clip in the VIA curriculum about a young soldier from a military family who was convicted to leave the military. Sometimes choices about how and what we eat are based on ethics.

At one time Mennonites were known as the different ones. Since it is no longer dress that sets us apart, what are our "marks" of non-conformity? Do others know they are based on our faith? This story calls for us to be sensitive to those who are different than us and to take the time to find out why they believe and do what they do. It also offers a challenge to contemporary Anabaptists to be willing once again to be set apart for Christ.

RESPONDING TO GOD

Song of response: HWB 545 *Be thou my vision* or HWB 374 *O young and fearless prophet*

Prayers of the people

SENDING

Song: HWB 435 *May the Lord, mighty God*

Benediction: "Go with us, God" (*Together*, p. 7)

Session Eleven

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abenego



Text: Daniel 3

Focus statement: Stand firm in the faith.

Visuals: Modern day "idols" placed on the table

GATHERING

Welcome