

Explore It

FOR LEADERS



TELLING THE TRUTH WHEN IT IS DIFFICULT

Daniel 5:1-16,26-30 The writing on the wall

Daniel had fallen out of favour with the kings of Babylon, and it was only when King Belshazzar was afraid that he called for Daniel's help. Daniel had to make a brave decision, telling the truth to a powerful king. It was not news that King Belshazzar wanted to hear.

Each child will need:

- Paper with a brick wall background (roughly A4 size). This can be printed out, or use brick-patterned wallpaper – see Action It section
- Felt-tips or Sharpies that will work on the brick paper
- Bible verse wristband

You will need:

- A large copy of the memory verse Philippians 4:8 (NIV) with key words in bold – see Pray It section

Start It

- **Say:** Today we are thinking about telling the truth and what it feels like to tell the truth during challenging circumstances.
- **Say:** Think of a short sentence, a statement, that is true. For example: I have a dog. Find a partner and, using your finger, write the message on their back. See if they can guess what you have written. Swap over and see if you can guess your partner's true statement.

Ask:

- What were your true statements?
- How many of you guessed correctly?
- **Say:** Writing is a very important part of today's story, as the truth is written on a wall for everyone to see. We'll find out more about that later.

Sing It

- **Say:** Today's song reminds us of the importance of telling the truth.

'To tell the truth' by Sovereign Grace Music Kids (3 mins 34 secs) The song starts 19 seconds into the clip.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=0jSm-QtZjI8

Tell It

Ask:

- What is the biggest party that you have ever been to?
- How many people do you think were there?
- What was it like to have so many people celebrating in one place?

🗨️ **Say:** In our Bible story today, King Belshazzar held a huge banquet for thousands of people. Let's read from the book of Daniel to set the scene.

Read:

'King Belshazzar gave a big banquet for 1,000 royal guests. And he drank wine with them. As Belshazzar was drinking his wine, he gave an order to his servants. He told them to bring the gold and silver cups that his ancestor Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the Temple in Jerusalem. King Belshazzar wanted his royal guests to drink from those cups. He also wanted his wives and his slave women to drink from them. So they brought the gold cups. They had been taken from the Temple of God in Jerusalem. And the king and his royal guests, his wives and his slave women drank from them. As they were drinking, they praised their gods. Those gods were made from gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood and stone.'

— (Daniel 5:1-4 *ICB*)

Ask: What was special about the gold and silver cups?

🗨️ **Say:** The gold and silver cups were precious to the people of Israel. They had been stolen from the Temple and to use them in this way was very disrespectful to God.

Ask:

- ➔ Who did King Belshazzar and his royal guests praise while they were using the sacred gold and silver cups?
- ➔ What do you think God thought about what they were doing?
- ➔ What do you think happened next in the story? It would be amazing if anyone guesses the right answer!

Read:

'Then suddenly a person's hand appeared. The fingers wrote words on the plaster on the wall. This was near the lampstand in the royal palace. The king watched the hand as it wrote.'

— (Daniel 5:5 *ICB*)

Ask:

- ➔ Is that what you expected to happen?
- ➔ How would you feel if you were at a party and suddenly a strange hand started writing things on the wall?
- ➔ How do you think King Belshazzar and his royal guests reacted?

Read:

'King Belshazzar was very frightened. His face turned white, and his knees knocked together. He could not stand up because his legs were too weak. The king called for the magicians and wise men to be brought to him. He said to the wise men of Babylon, "I will give a reward to anyone who can read this writing and explain it. I will give him purple clothes fit for a king. I will put a gold chain around his neck. And I will make him the third highest ruler in the kingdom."

'So all the king's wise men came in. But they could not read the writing. And they could not tell the king what it meant. King Belshazzar became even more afraid. His face became even whiter. His royal guests were confused.

'Then the king's mother came into the banquet room. She had heard the voices of the king and his royal guests. She said, "My king, live for ever! Don't be afraid! Don't let your face be white with fear! There is a man in your kingdom who has the spirit of the holy gods in him. In the days of your father, this man showed understanding, knowledge and wisdom. He was like the gods in these things. Your father, King Nebuchadnezzar, put this man in charge of all the wise men. He ruled over all the fortune-tellers, magicians, and wise men.'

— (Daniel 5:6-11 *ICB*)

Ask:

- Who do you think the king's mother was talking about?
- Can you remember any other Bible stories where Daniel was asked to come and help the king because his own wise men couldn't solve the problem?

Remind the children of the story of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream, where Daniel and his friends asked God to help them interpret its meaning.

Read:

'The man I am talking about is named Daniel. The king gave him the name Belshazzar. He was very wise, and he had knowledge and understanding. He could explain dreams and secrets. He could answer very hard problems. Call for Daniel. He will tell you what the writing on the wall means.'

— (Daniel 5:12 *ICB*)

- 🗨️ **Say:** During the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar Daniel had become one of the main advisers to the King. He spoke truth to power and was able to speak to King Nebuchadnezzar on God's behalf. Now that Belshazzar was king, things had changed a lot.
- 🗨️ **Say:** King Belshazzar didn't even know who Daniel was – or at least he pretended not to know!
- 🗨️ **Say:** Daniel was brought to the palace and asked to interpret the writing on the wall. It would have been easy for him to say what he thought King Belshazzar wanted to hear, but instead he listened to God and spoke the truth. Daniel reminded the king that his predecessor had turned to God and followed him. But instead of following the true God, Belshazzar followed the pagan gods.

Read:

“You are a descendant of Nebuchadnezzar. But still you have not been sorry for what you have done. Instead, you have turned against the Lord of Heaven. You ordered the drinking cups from the Temple of the Lord to be brought to you. Then you and your royal guests drank wine from them. Your wives and your slave women also drank wine from them. You praised the gods of silver, gold, bronze, iron, wood and stone. They are not really gods. They cannot see or hear or understand anything. But you did not honour God. He is the one who has power over your life and everything you do. So God sent the hand that wrote on the wall.

“These are the words that were written on the wall: 'Mene, mene, tekel, parsin.'

“This is what these words mean:

- **Mene:** God has counted the days until your kingdom will end.
- **Tekel:** You have been weighed on the scales and found not good enough.
- **Parsin:** Your kingdom is being divided. It will be given to the Medes and the Persians.”

'Then Belshazzar gave an order for Daniel to be dressed in purple clothes. A gold chain was put around his neck. And he was announced to be the third highest ruler in the kingdom. That very same night Belshazzar, king of the Babylonian people, was killed. A man named Darius the Mede became the new king. Darius was 62 years old.'

— (Daniel 5:29-31 *ICB*)

Ask:

- What did you think of this dramatic story from the Old Testament?
- Do you think that Daniel was brave to speak the truth to King Belshazzar? If so, why?
- Why is it important that we speak out and tell the truth even when people might not want to hear it?

Action It

- 🗨️ **Say:** It is very unlikely that any of us would have the same experience at a party as King Belshazzar's guests, but we can all relate to the dilemma Daniel faced in this story. It is hard to tell the truth when we know the person listening won't like the answer.

Ask: Where do you think Daniel got his courage from?

🗨️ **Say:** Daniel's total focus was on God. He spent so much time with God that he knew the correct way to respond in the situation. He knew that the truth mattered.

🗨️ **Say:** Our memory verse for this month reminds us to focus on the important things so that we can live our lives for God, just like Daniel did.

Read the memory verse together and, if possible, display it in the room where you meet for your 'Explore It' sessions.

Read:

'Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things.'

— (Philippians 4:8 *NIV*)

Mini wall mural

Ask the children to create their own version of the memory verse to put up at home. They can add pictures to help them remember the key words or write out the verse in a creative way.

Once the children have created their mini wall murals, ask them to share their drawings with each other. To bring this part of the session to a close give out the memory verse wristbands and read the verse together. The children may wish to colour in, write, or add a doodle to their wristband.

Pray It

🗨️ **Say:** Sometimes when we pray, we focus on the things that we are finding difficult or fix our minds on the bad things that are happening in the world. There is nothing wrong with that, as God wants to hear everything that is on our hearts. But sometimes it might do us good to focus on the positive. It might help us to concentrate on what is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent and praiseworthy.

Video

Watch the clip to discover more.

What is Philippians 4:8 REALLY saying? by Loop Show Clips (1 min 31 secs)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=SLmtehcgglQ

Using the memory verse displayed in the room, pray the following prayer together. Point to the words in bold below and ask the children to say them as you pray together.

Dear God,
This week help us to:
focus on what is **true**,
keep our minds on what is **noble**,
look for what is **right**,
seek out what is **pure**,
notice what is **lovely**,
admire what is truly **admirable**,
focus on what is **excellent**,
and keep in mind what is really **praiseworthy**,
because you alone, Lord, are worthy of our praise.
Amen.

Explore It

Remember to send home the *Explore It Ideas* for children and families.

Explore It

IDEAS

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.

NOVEMBER
SESSION 01

TELLING THE TRUTH WHEN IT IS DIFFICULT

 Daniel 5:1-16,26-30 The writing on the wall

FOR ME

TOGETHER



Reflect

Watch the clip about *The effects of lying* by TEDxKids www.youtube.com/watch?v=wbftIDzIALA

- ➔ Why is telling the truth so important to God?
- ➔ What do we learn from Daniel about telling the truth?
- ➔ How can we tell the truth with love so that we don't hurt someone else's feelings?



Share

In this week you created your own version of our memory verse. Put it up at home and challenge someone at home to learn it with you. See if you can spot examples of things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent and praiseworthy and share them throughout the week.



Song for the week

'To tell the truth' by Sovereign Grace Music Kids
www.youtube.com/watch?v=0jSm-QtZj18



Memory verse

'Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things.'

— (Philippians 4:8 NIV)

KIDS ALIVE! ONLINE

<https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/kidsalive>

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