



# WHET THE APPETITE

Does the Bible have anything specific to say to your CU at Sixth Form or College?

Do you find it tough to live as a believer and make a stand for Jesus where you study?

Do you sometimes think: *'If only our CU was HUGE... then we would really reach our mates for Jesus!'*

Prepare to get some serious life-lessons from an ancient Christian Union!



The superpower of the day (the Babylonian Empire) have taken Daniel, his friends and many others captive. They are being educated in all things Babylonian – have had their Hebrew names stripped and are coming up against a worldview that is far from Christian. Will the pressure to conform to the culture around them be too much for their young faith?



This User Friendly Guide will help you get stuck into the early chapters of Daniel. You will discover together how spot on these words of God are for your CU today!

***“For He is the living God and He endures forever... He rescues and He saves.”***  
**Daniel 6:26-27**



If you'd like to do some background reading, *“The Message Of Daniel”* by Dale Ralph Davis is a good one! It is one of the Bible Speaks Today series by IVP. Ask a Church leader, search online or get a copy from a Christian bookshop.

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# TOUGH TIMES AT BABYLON COLLEGE

## Session 1: Daniel 1



### KEY VERSE

*"But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with..."*

**Daniel 1:8**



### WAY IN

Think of a time when your circumstances have dramatically changed, for example when you first started at college. What were some of the immediate trials & temptations you faced?



### PRAY



### PRAY

Pray that God would help you in these everyday decisions to live for him.



### READ

**Daniel 1**



### QUESTIONS

- 1 What were some of the new things (at least 3) Daniel and his friends had to deal with in Babylon? Can you spot the serious one?
- 2 Daniel saw the food issue as very serious indeed. Look at the key verse (verse 8) – what does *"Daniel resolved"* really mean in practice?
- 3 What was the result of Daniel's actions?



### REFLECTION & ACTION

- 1 How do you decide which aspects of college life are OK to go along with? Daniel knew his Bible well enough - do you as a CU need help with this? If there are issues you are uncertain about find someone to help you.
- 2 Agree to support one another as you try to live passionately for Jesus at school or college.



### GLOSSARY

**"Third year of the reign of Jehoiakim"** – 605BC the first of the exiles are taken from Jerusalem. Two further exiles take place in 597 and 587, the last is when the temple is demolished.

**"Babylonian Emperor's food"** – there are lots of reasons Daniel could give for not eating the food and scholars all have their ideas which one is the main one. All agree that Daniel wanted to remain faithful to God and trust in Him.

**"First year of King Cyrus"** – 539BC The Persian king defeated Babylon. Cyrus allowed the Jews to return home to Israel so from then on the exile was over and Daniel and his friends were free to leave.

Old Testament

# A CLOSE ENCOUNTER!

## Session 2: Daniel 2



### KEY VERSE

*“Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and the revealer of mysteries.”*

**Daniel 2:47**



### WAY IN

*“Policeman...a bit like Santa...the bearded man upstairs...the great zapper in the sky...”*

How would your friends describe God?



### PRAY



### READ

**Daniel 2**



### QUESTIONS

- 1 What were the gods of the Babylonians like (verses 10-11)?
- 2 How different is Daniel's God? Spend some time discovering all you can about God from Daniel's prayer in verses 20-23.
- 3 How does Daniel behave in his conversation with Nebuchadnezzar (verses 27-30)? What can we learn from this if we are put on the spot about our beliefs?



### REFLECTION & ACTION

- 1 “God of heaven” and “great God” are terms Nebuchadnezzar would understand. What can we learn from Daniel about how to talk to people who have crazy ideas about God?



### PRAY

Pray that God's Spirit would enable you to boldly proclaim the good news in His strength.



### GLOSSARY

**“Aramaic”** – Most of the Old Testament is written in Hebrew but from 2:4 – 7:28 the book of Daniel is in Aramaic, a sister language to Hebrew. From the exile onwards Aramaic became the spoken language of the Jews – the one Jesus used.

**“Kingdoms”** – over the centuries people have tried to identify each of the kingdoms and there has been much time lost doing this. The message that they will be destroyed ‘not by human hands’ is the key.

Old Testament

# WHAT MATTERS MOST?

## Session 3: Daniel 3



### KEY VERSE

*“The God we serve is able to save us... but even if he does not... we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold.”*

**Daniel 3:17-18**



### WAY IN

You know it isn't right, but your friends insist you join them. What do you do?



### PRAY



### READ

**Daniel 3**



### QUESTIONS

Remembering the second commandment:

*“You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.”*

(Exodus 20:4-6)

- 1 Why were the three friends so determined not to bow down to the image (verses 8-15)?
- 2 What is so amazing about their defence and loyalty (verses 16-18)?
- 3 God intervenes! How does He do this? What difference does the fourth person in the furnace make (verses 23-30)?



### REFLECTION & ACTION

- 1 The story ends well, but Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego didn't know that it would. Do you have their confidence (verses 17-18) to trust God even if things don't look too good?



### PRAY

Pray for each other to know the love of Jesus so deeply – that you could seriously say: *“For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain”* Philippians 1:21. Don't forget to pray for Christians in other countries who do face death because of their faith, e.g. Sudan, Pakistan.



### GLOSSARY

**“Image”** – only the Colossus of Rhodes, one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world is known to have been bigger than this statue.

**“Plain of Dura”** – we no longer know exactly where that was but it was near the royal city of Babylon for all to see and worship.

**“Satrap”** – At this time the empire was divided into provinces and each one was ruled by a satrap. Darius had 120 of these very powerful people.

Old Testament

# GOD AT WORK

## Session 4: Daniel



### KEY VERSE

*“At that time I lifted my eyes towards heaven.”*

**Daniel 4:34**



### WAY IN

*“I’ve lived a life that’s full, I’ve travelled each and every highway  
And more, much more that this - I did it my way...”*

This song (“My Way”) has been recorded by more artists than any other - why do you think it is so popular?



### PRAY



### READ

**Daniel 4**



### QUESTIONS

- 1 What warning has Nebuchadnezzar heard about his future and what does he do about it (verses 27-30)
- 2 Read verse 33 again. Compare Nebuchadnezzar as he is now to what he was a few verses ago, How has the dream been fulfilled?
- 3 How much of the old Nebuchadnezzar is evident as the story ends (verses 34-37)? What does this say to us about personal achievements and how we should view them before God?



### REFLECTION & ACTION

- 1 Honesty time – are we ready to let God “do as He pleases” (verse 35) with our lives, or do we want to run the show? How hard is that?
- 2 What do we need to do to help our not yet Christian friends bring God into their thinking? Is there anything we can do in our Christian group?



### PRAY

Pray for boldness and courage to trust God with every aspect of your life.



### GLOSSARY

**“A letter from Nebuchadnezzar”** – There are other such letters, not in our bible, from kings around this time meant to provide instruction for the reader.

**“Nebuchadnezzar’s madness”** – The King exhibits symptoms of depressive or psychotic delusion leading to self-neglect, delusion and bestial behaviour.

Old Testament

# A STEP TOO FAR

## Session 5: Daniel 5



### KEY VERSE

*“But you did not honour the God who holds in his hand your life and all your ways.”*

**Daniel 5:23**



### WAY IN

Why do people think that they can get away with things as far as God is concerned?



### PRAY



### PRAY

Pray for your family and friends, that they would come to know Jesus. Remember the heart change we saw in Nebuchadnezzar last week! Also pray for yourself, that you would be faithful like Daniel.



### READ

**Daniel 5**



### QUESTIONS

- 1 What a party it turned out to be! Can you pick out some of the key moments?
- 2 Belshazzar acted as though the God of Heaven was insignificant. What were the consequences?
- 3 “There is a man in your kingdom...” (verse 11) What evidence do we have of Daniel’s faithfulness?



### REFLECTION & ACTION

- 1 Students in your school or college face hearing the verdict of God on their life. Unless they have accepted that Christ died on the cross in their place, they will face the same verdict as Belshazzar. Do we believe this?
- 2 In light of this passage, are we really concerned for our friends and family who don’t yet know Jesus?



### GLOSSARY

**“King Belshazzar” – 549 – 539 BC** - actually Crown Prince ruling on behalf of his absent father, Emperor Nabonidus.

**“Queen / Queen Mother”** – Almost certainly Queen Mother – as she had freedom to come and go which a consort would not.

**“There is a man”** ...Daniel is now 80 years old. Worth remembering!

**“Writing on the Wall”** – is not in Aramaic but the interpretation is based on using the word sounds.

**“Darius the Mede”** - we are not sure who this is as the King who claims the throne of Babylon is Cyrus who reigned till 530. Many Median / Persian Kings were called Darius so it is possible the name is used to mean ‘King of the Medes’, especially as we know Cyrus was about 62 years old at the time!

Old Testament

# JEALOUSY AND RESCUE

## Session 6: Daniel 6

### WAY IN

Think of some of the films, book and TV dramas you know about good versus evil. Pick out some of the best ones.

### PRAY

### READ

Daniel 6

### QUESTIONS

This is a classic story of good versus evil. Daniel had worked hard and lived well, and he was hated for it.

1 What are the motives of these people throughout these events?

- A The administrators
- B Daniel
- C Darius

2 Faithfulness and prayer are key characteristics of Daniel. What evidence do we see of them here?

3 What does Darius' decree show us that he has learnt about the God of Daniel?

### REFLECTION & ACTION

1 We have seen God powerfully working in and through Daniel - how can you encourage one another to live differently in your school or college?

2 We have seen how God can change hearts in these 6 chapters! Spend some time planning how you can get the message of the Gospel out in your school or college.

### PRAY

Pray into all you have discussed – asking the “God who rescues and saves” to work in you, speak through you and help you live for Him at College!

### GLOSSARY

“**Darius**” - see previous note and verse 28 This King could be Cyrus who was the King who decreed the exiled Jews could return to Jerusalem or it may be Darius 1 who ruled 522 – 486BC when Daniel would have been over 95 years old.

Old Testament

# USER FRIENDLY GUIDES TO THE BIBLE

## WHAT ARE THEY?

UFGs are short Bible studies, designed for Christian Groups with not much time to meet. They are aimed at guiding you into a **deeper love for Jesus**. The format is simple: you **dig into the Bible** to hear what the **Holy Spirit** is saying and then you **think and pray** through the impact of His word into your lives.

## HOW LONG DO THEY TAKE?

They can take anything from **15 minutes upwards**. Most of the questions are open questions, so that more discussion can take place. You can always ask extra questions such as: *“What do other people think?”* *“What makes you say that?”* *“Why do you think that’s so important?”*.

## WHY STUDY THE BIBLE IN OUR GROUP, SHOULDN'T WE JUST FOCUS ON OUTREACH?

The whole point of the Bible is to **reveal Jesus**. The more you see of Jesus, the more you love Him and want to talk about Him and live for Him. So the best way to get **fuelled and fired up** for talking to people about Jesus, is to get to **know and love Him** through the Bible.

## WHAT ELSE DO WE NEED?

Aside from the study questions, everyone will need to be able to see the passage. Encourage everyone in the Group to bring their own Bible and have a couple spare for visitors. The Bible version used in this guide is NIV. Ideally someone in the group should read through the study beforehand and lead the time you spend together. If you want any help in preparing your study, please email: **info@festive.org.uk**