

ONE

STORY

SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

WEEK 37
Daniel

BEFORE THE SESSION:

- Pray for each of your group members by name
- Look over the questions on the right and choose the ones that are most appropriate for your small group. If you're really feeling motivated, you might even think of a few on your own.
- Think through how you might prompt your group a little if they have difficulty getting started in discussion.
- Take a look at the accountability question below. Lead members to gather one on one or in same sex clusters to discuss it over coffee this week.

THIS WEEK'S BIG IDEA

Obedience to God demonstrates our faith.

ACCOUNTABILITY QUESTION

What can you do on a daily basis to strengthen your faith in God?

TO PREPARE FOR NEXT WEEK:

Read Daniel 10-12; Ezra 1-6; Psalms 137; Haggai; Zechariah 1-14;

AS YOU READ...

...Think about what God's plan is for your life.

CONNECT

(10 min.)

Choose one or both of the following questions to begin your time together as a group.

1. **Have you ever had a near-death experience?**
2. **Is there someone you admire for standing up for what they believe?**

EXPLORE

(40 min.)

Say something like, "Today we will be talking about standing up for our faith in the face of persecution." Then guide your group through these questions.

3. **If you were in worship this week, what statement or experience stood out to you? What stood out during last week's reading?**
(Leader: Take some time to discuss any questions that may have arisen as your members read through this week's assigned reading.)
4. **Read Daniel 3:1-7. What was the purpose of King Nebuchadnezzar's decree? Why do you think he decided on such a severe punishment for those who failed his test?**
5. **Read Daniel 3:16-25. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to worship the image of gold. Did they know for sure that God would save them from the fire? When it comes to "avoiding the fire", what are some reasons or excuses people give for justifying their decision not to make a stand for Christ?**
6. **Who do you think the fourth person in the fire was? An optical illusion? An angel? Jesus? A mystery?**
7. **Read Isaiah 43:1-5. What promises does God make in these verses? How do these promises affect your confidence in God when facing difficult situations?**
8. **Read Daniel 3:28-30. What was the King's reaction to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego surviving the fire? How do you think people who are not Christ followers react when they see us have unwavering faith in God?**

TRANSFORM

(10 min.)

Wrap up your time by recalling a few things from your meeting that stood out to you. Then, ask the following question and pray together.

9. **Is there a situation in your life in which you need to take a bigger stand? How much are you willing to risk in order to obey a clear commandment from God? Take some time to pray for our Christian brothers and sisters around the world who face this type of danger and persecution every day.**

This Week's Study Notes:

Scripture Notes

Daniel 3:1

After hearing that he would play a significant role in Gentile history, Nebuchadnezzar built a 90-foot gold statue to symbolize the greatness of Babylon under his rule. He hoped that this impressive structure would unify the nation.

Daniel 3:2

Nebuchadnezzar called together officials of every rank in the kingdom. He wanted the officials to swear allegiance to him and publicly recognize his absolute authority in the kingdom.

Daniel 3:18

As they faced the fiery furnace, Nebuchadnezzar gave the three Jews another chance to bow down to the golden image. But the Jews were obedient to God—even in the face of death. They were confident that God could rescue them, but were willing to obey even if rescue did not come. This was a test of their faith.

Daniel 3:25

Many assume that the fourth man in the fire was Jesus preincarnate. But, because of the way the phrase reads in Hebrew, the fourth person could easily be interpreted as an angel.

Leader Tips

AS YOU READ THIS WEEK...

- Think about and pray for each member of your small group.
- Think through the following questions:
 1. Whom does God bring to mind as I read these verses? Why?
 2. What needs to change in my own life as a result of what I'm reading?
 3. Whom do I need to tell about these verses?

FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY WE RECOMMEND...

- Bible Commentary: Bible.org
- Bible Commentary: DesiringGod.org
- Pronouncing Biblical Words: Netministries.org/Bbasics/bwords.htm

* Scripture Notes adapted from and used by permission of Serendipity House Publishing, 1 LifeWay Plaza, Nashville, Tennessee

