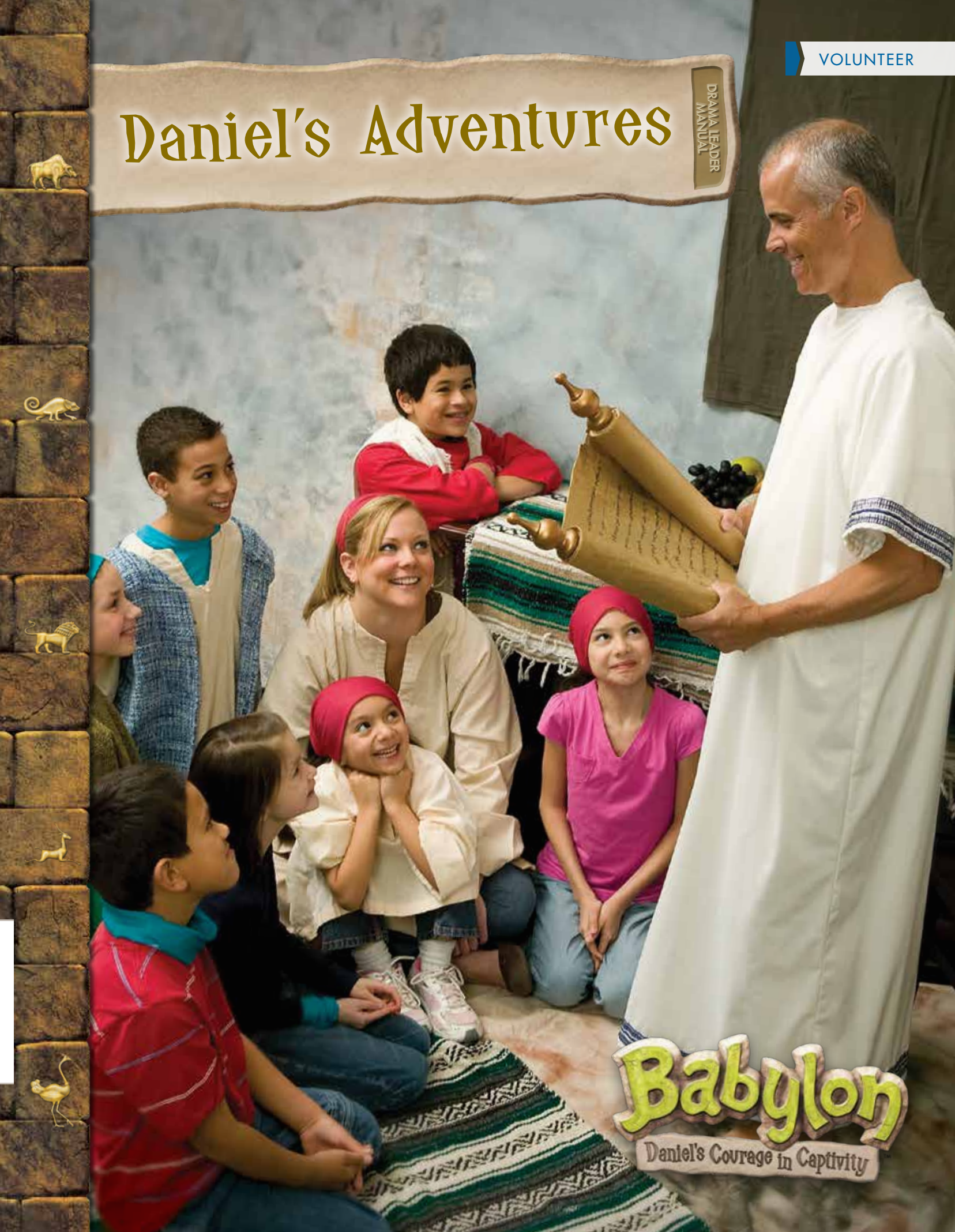


Daniel's Adventures

DRAMA LEADER
MANUAL

Babylon
Daniel's Courage in Captivity





Daniel's Adventures

DRAMA LEADER MANUAL



LOVELAND, COLORADO
GROUP.COM/VBS

Group



2023 HOLY LAND ADVENTURE VBS

Babylon

Daniel's Courage in Captivity™

DANIEL'S ADVENTURES DRAMA LEADER MANUAL

Copyright © 2012, 2023 Group Publishing, Inc./0000 0001 0362 4853

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any manner whatsoever except where noted in the text and in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews.

Visit our websites ➡ group.com | group.com/vbs

Credits

A big thanks to our courageous VBS team:

Laura Baldwin-Stout, Jody Brolsma, Stephen Caine, Ardeth Carlson, Shelly Dillon, Cindy Hansen, Jan Kershner, Michael Paustian, Mike Porter, Joani Schultz, Rodney Stewart, and Amy Taylor.

Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright ©1996, 2004, 2007, 2013, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation.

Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.






ISBN 978-1-4707-7085-3

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 25 24 23



Contents

Babylon Overview	4
Sample Daily Schedule	6
Daniel's Adventures	7
Creating the Environment	8
Supplies	10
 DAY 1 When things change, God is with you.	12
 DAY 2 When you need help, God is with you.	17
 DAY 3 When you're afraid, God is with you.	22
 DAY 4 When you're lonely, God is with you.	28
 DAY 5 When you're thankful, God is with you.	33
Daniel's Friends (Optional Role)	39

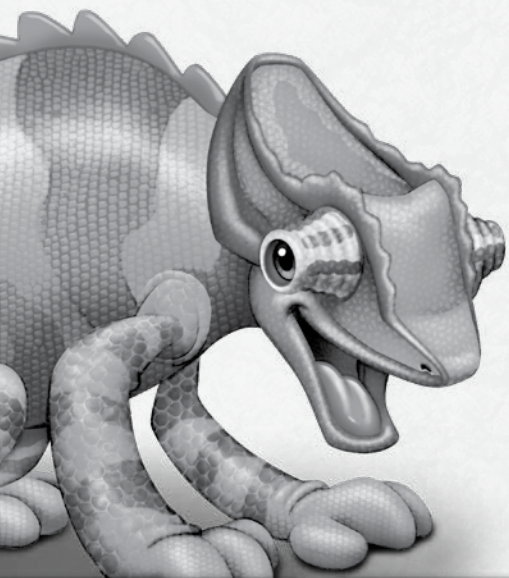


Babylon

Daniel's Courage in Captivity™

You'll reinforce Bible learning in a big way because the daily Bible Point is carefully integrated into each activity. That's why each center is so important to the overall learning experience.

Explore the entire program at a glance. Refer to the chart to see how each center's activities supplement other activities to make the Bible come to life at your church!



Bible Content

Celebration

Tribe Time

Daniel's Adventures

Palace Playground

Marketplace Shops



Day 1

Bible Point:

When things change, God is with you.

Key Verse:

"For God has said, 'I will never fail you. I will never abandon you.' "
(Hebrews 13:5)

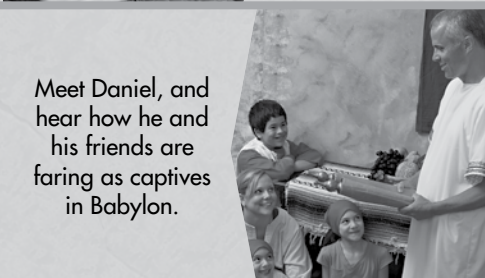
Bible Story:

Enemies capture Daniel and his friends and take them to Babylon. (Daniel 1)

- Learn the Day 1 Bible verse and motions.
- Meet all the Tribes at Babylon.
- Sing "Through It All," "Watching Over You," and "Stand Firm."



Draw pictures on Color-Changing Paper, and discover that God is always with them.



Meet Daniel, and hear how he and his friends are faring as captives in Babylon.



Race and stack sugar cubes, wooden blocks, and grocery sack "bricks"—buildings fit for a king!



Day 2

Bible Point:

When you need help, God is with you.

Key Verse:

"God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble."
(Psalm 46:1)

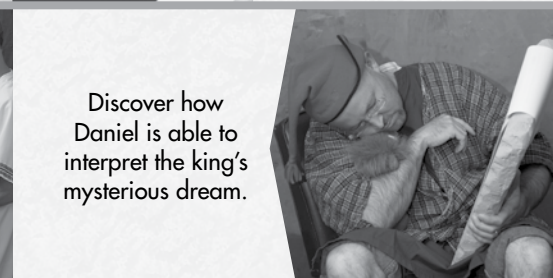
Bible Story:

Daniel interprets Nebuchadnezzar's dream. (Daniel 2)

- Hear a few God Sightings from the whole group.
- Learn the Day 2 Bible verse and motions.
- Sing "God Is for Me," "Only a Prayer Away," and "Where Do I Go?"



Explore a Dark-to-Dazzling Board, and discover that God is with them in life's darkest times.



Discover how Daniel is able to interpret the king's mysterious dream.



Play Birthday Tag and other games that have to do with things on a calendar.

Choose a few shops to visit each day:



Royal Animal Courtyard



Astronomy School



Cylinder Seal Shop



Food Court





Day 3

Bible Point:

When you're afraid, God is with you.

Key Verse:

"Don't be afraid, for I am with you.
Don't be discouraged, for I am your
God." (Isaiah 41:10)

Bible Story:

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego
survive a fiery furnace. (Daniel 3)

- Talk about their daily mission in the Marketplace.
- Learn the Day 3 Bible verse and motions.
- Sing "Thankful," and "Come, Thou Almighty King."



Day 4

Bible Point:

When you're lonely, God is with you.

Key Verse:

"I am with you always, even to the
end of the age." (Matthew 28:20)

Bible Story:

Daniel prays, even though it means he
might get into trouble. (Daniel 6:1-16)

- Learn the Day 4 Bible verse and motions.
- Sing "Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)."
- Review Days 1-3.



Day 5

Bible Point:

When you're thankful, God is with you.

Key Verse:

"Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good!
His faithful love endures forever."
(1 Chronicles 16:34)

Bible Story:

God saves Daniel from the lions.
(Daniel 6:16-28)

- Learn the Day 5 Bible verse and motions.
- Hear Tribe cheers.
- Celebrate all the Bibles they're sending to kids around the world through Operation Kid-to-Kid.



Use Trembling Teeth
and a Yikes Poster
to share times
they're afraid.



Hold Sticky Sin Slime,
and realize that Jesus
took our sins upon
himself at the cross.



Celebrate all they
have to be thankful
for as they use
Praise Poppers.



Find out what
happens to Daniel's
friends when they
won't worship the
king's statue.



Watch as Daniel is
arrested because he
won't stop praying.



Discover what
happens when Daniel
is thrown to the lions.



Launch and catch
crazy stuff with big,
bigger, and biggest
catapults.



Sneak up on a
sleeping lion,
pretend to be
a long-necked
ostrich, and pull
like a strong team
of oxen.



Catch a shooting
star, hop along a
constellation, and
race around a
starry sky.



Hanging Gardens
Nursery



Jewelry
Bazaar



Metalworking
Shop



Mosaic Studio



Music Shop



Operation
Kid-to-Kid™






Day 1

DAILY SCHEDULE

BIBLE POINT: When things change, God is with you.

BIBLE STORY: Enemies capture Daniel and his friends and take them to Babylon. (Daniel 1)

 TIME	GROUP A	GROUP B	GROUP C	GROUP D
	Tribes <u>Issachar</u>	Tribes <u>Gad</u>	Tribes <u>Joseph</u>	Tribes <u>Levi</u>
	<u>Naphtali</u>	<u>Simeon</u>	<u>Zebulun</u>	<u>Reuben</u>
6:00–6:15	Celebration	Celebration	Celebration	Celebration
Allow 5 minutes to travel to the next station.				
6:20-6:35	Tribe Time	Tribe Time	Tribe Time	Tribe Time
Allow 5 minutes to travel to the next station.				
6:40-6:55	Daniel’s Adventures	Palace Playground	Visit Marketplace	
Allow 5 minutes to travel to the next station.				
7:00-7:15	Palace Playground	Daniel’s Adventures		
Allow 5 minutes to travel to the next station.				
7:20-7:35	Visit Marketplace		Daniel’s Adventures	Palace Playground
			Allow 5 minutes to travel to the next station.	
7:40-7:55			Palace Playground	Daniel’s Adventures
Allow 5 minutes to travel to the next station.				
8:00-8:15	Tribe Time	Tribe Time	Tribe Time	Tribe Time
Allow 5 minutes to travel to the next station.				
8:20-8:30	Celebration	Celebration	Celebration	Celebration

TODAY'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:



Daniel's Adventures

Welcome!

We're glad you've joined the staff of this exciting Holy Land Adventure! During this event, families explore the culture of ancient Babylon, where Daniel and his friends lived in captivity. As Daniel, you'll give the inside scoop on what it was like to stay committed to the one true God in a land of false gods and idols. You'll help children and adults understand that Daniel was surrounded by people who didn't believe in God and temptations to betray his faith (much like today). But with God's help, Daniel and his friends remained true to God. Kids and adults walk away with the encouragement of knowing that God is always with them, through every situation and emotion.

Families spend 15 minutes visiting with Daniel (that's you!) and listening to him share about his adventures in Babylon.

Make Each Visit Count

Smile! As Daniel, your hospitality and kindness should make families feel warmly welcomed. Engage families in conversation, as if they're truly guests in your home.

Dig into your role. Imagine being taken from your home, your family—everything you knew and loved. Taken captive to a strange new land, where you were expected to undergo a strenuous education to learn a new language, culture, customs, science, mathematics, all under the king's watchful eye. Worst of all, no one believed in the one true God in this new land. Imagine the pressure Daniel and his friends must have felt to fit in. It would have been so easy to simply give up their past and do their best to comply with their new culture. To deny God, or at least remember him in secret. Instead, Daniel and his friends showed almost unbelievable courage in situations that could easily have ended in death. They knew God was with them, so they refused to denounce or hide their faith.

Be prepared. It's important for you to know and understand what you'll cover, since it connects to what is said and done in other areas of the program. Practice your script several times with the person playing Ashpenaz so you both feel comfortable with your lines.

Be consistent. It's important that you're available to be at every session of Babylon VBS.



Palace Pointer

One-quarter of the Tribes (groups of about 10 people) will visit with you at a time. For example, if you have 120 people at your Babylon VBS, 30 of them will come to visit at one time. Check with your Director to see how many people you should prepare for at each rotation.



Creating the Environment

Costumes

As a student in the king's court, Daniel probably spent much of his time somewhere in or near the palace. Even so, he was a captive. For your Daniel costume, a Bible-times tunic, belt or sash, and sandals will suffice. Ashpenaz was the king's chief of staff, so he can be dressed similarly to you but perhaps with a little extra pizzazz! (Remember, Babylon was a cultural center, so it's okay to wear something lively and cheery.)

You may want to call local churches and see about borrowing several good-quality Bible-times costumes.

Daniel's Palace Room

First, find a room that will comfortably accommodate one-quarter of the total Tribes. If possible, find a place that's quiet and removed from the bustle and noise of the Marketplace and the games area.

Then transform your space into a Bible-times room. The easiest way to decorate is to hang tan or brown cloth from the ceiling to create plain walls. This also helps everyone use their imaginations, since they're not distracted by modern-looking bulletin boards, white boards, posters, and furniture.

If you can't move furniture, hide it under solid-colored sheets and set large baskets on top. Scatter rugs and pillows on the floor, and fill shelves or tabletops with fancy candles (unlit, of course!) and clay tablets.

At the front of the room, away from the entrance, you'll need a table for Daniel and a chair for Ashpenaz. Near where Daniel will stand, you'll also need a "window." We just hung small curtains on the wall, as if covering an actual window. Only Daniel and Ashpenaz will move the curtains and peek out, so it doesn't have to be an actual window.

Did You Know?



Babylon was the capital city of Babylonia in Mesopotamia (in contemporary Iraq, about 70 miles south of Baghdad).



© 2011 Jupiterimages Corporation.



Understanding the Roles

Find a hammy male volunteer to play Ashpenaz (pronounced “ASH-pen-azz”), the king’s chief of staff. (Ashpenaz is a real Bible character—just look at Daniel 1:3!) Be sure you and Ashpenaz understand each character’s personality and role.

- Ashpenaz doesn’t believe in the one true God...and he can’t understand why Daniel remains true to his faith. Ashpenaz’s disbelief gives kids and adults a chance to verbalize their faith and practice sharing the truth of who God really is. The Bible tells us that God gave Ashpenaz respect and affection for Daniel, so we can suppose that their relationship was on friendly terms. In past Holy Land Adventure programs, this kind of character has provided some of the most powerful, memorable moments in the entire program!
- The character of Daniel should be a friendly, tactful, likable character that kids and adults enjoy spending time with. The Bible says that only “strong, healthy, and good-looking young men” were brought to the palace for training. Help the families in your church see Daniel as a *real* person—someone who stood firm in the face of adversity, encouraged his friends, and got along with the Babylonians he met.

Practice with Ashpenaz ahead of time so that his entrances, your dialogue, and his exits can be smooth and natural. On Day 1, Ashpenaz will meet Tribes outside the palace room. On Day 5, he’ll be the one who will meet Tribes inside the palace room.



Field Test Finding

At our field test, kids *loved* Ashpenaz! They looked forward to his entrances and antics, and by the end of the week, they were boldly telling him about the one true God.





Supplies

All Week

- ❑ simple Bible-times costumes for Daniel and Ashpenaz
- ❑ tan or brown cloth to cover the walls, if necessary
- ❑ small "curtain" to create a window
- ❑ pillows and rugs for Daniel's palace room
- ❑ table for Daniel
- ❑ chair for Ashpenaz
- ❑ large "clay" tablet for Ashpenaz

Day 1

- ❑ plates of thinly sliced baby carrots for each group of Tribes
- ❑ cylinder seal* for Daniel (from the Cylinder Seal Shop)

Day 2

- ❑ childlike slippers for Ashpenaz (the wackier the better)
- ❑ nightcap
- ❑ stuffed lion*
- ❑ paper
- ❑ baskets of crayons or markers

Day 3

- ❑ cookie sheet or large lid wrapped in gold foil
- ❑ long sheet of waxed paper with writing on it (1 for each rotation)
- ❑ black permanent marker
- ❑ large, clear, fire-proof jar with lid
- ❑ lighter
- ❑ cups of water (1 for each rotation)
- ❑ fire extinguisher
- ❑ hand warmers* (1 per Tribe for each rotation)
- ❑ black and gray washable markers
- ❑ wet wipes



Day 4

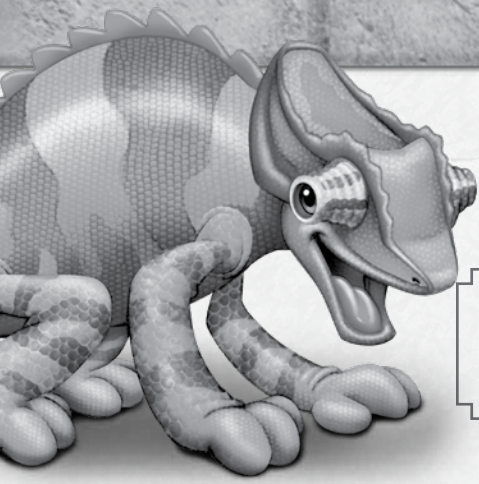
- ☐ "Lions Roaring" sound effect (available at group.com/vbsTools)
- ☐ stuffed lion*
- ☐ chain to use as handcuffs
- ☐ helper (optional)

Day 5

- ☐ Celebration Music CD*
- ☐ CD player
- ☐ paper scroll
- ☐ stuffed lion*
- ☐ black permanent marker

*available from group.com





Day 1

**Key Verse: "For God has said, 'I will never fail you.
I will never abandon you.'" (Hebrews 13:5)**

Bible Point: When things change, God is with you.

Why It Matters

Wow, talk about change! Daniel and his friends faced a new home (without their families), a new language, a new culture—a new everything! Yet they remained true to God. How easy it would have been to compromise, so far from home and faced with such difficult circumstances. The kids and adults in your VBS face similar challenges—new schools, new job situations, new family dynamics. Use today's activities to help kids and adults realize that, like Daniel and his friends, they can be *in* this world but not of it. Their identity can come from God—for God. No matter what changes they encounter, God will be with them!

Bible Story: Enemies capture Daniel and his friends and take them to Babylon. (Daniel 1)

Read the Passage With This in Mind...

- By taking young men from royal families as hostages, Nebuchadnezzar not only gained promising recruits for his own service but also reminded the people back in Jerusalem that they should not revolt against recently imposed Babylonian rule.
- The meat offered to the captives was probably taken from animals sacrificed to the patron gods of Babylon (Marduk, Nebo, and Ishtar, as examples). The wine, too, was most likely tainted by cultic usage.
- The menu for the captives came from the king's own kitchens. Refusing the food could have branded Daniel and his friends as being uncooperative and might easily have spoiled their chances for advancement.
- Rejecting the menu could also be seen as rejecting the king and could result in the very real threat of severe punishment. (Ancient kings, including Nebuchadnezzar, were capable of extreme cruelty!)
- God moved the Babylonian authorities to regard Daniel with respect and affection. He also graced Daniel and his friends with superior intellect. God showed he was with them all the way!



A Time for Courage

Getting Ready

For each group that visits, place a plate of carrot sticks within easy reach of Daniel, but out of sight.

Ashpenaz will meet Tribes outside the door to Daniel's palace room. After Tribes enter, Ashpenaz will wait out of sight, with the door open slightly so he can listen for his cue. He will enter the room when he hears Daniel say: "So I decided to ask Ashpenaz for help."

Meeting Ashpenaz

(Ashpenaz, holding the clay tablet, stops Tribes at the door.)

Ashpenaz: Who goes there? *(Peers closely at the Tribes.)* Oh, you must be the new visitors. Well, I am the king's chief of staff—a very important man in Babylon. My name is Ashpenaz. People are always mispronouncing my name, so I made a rhyme to help.

Here it is—repeat after me. Ash-pen-az has pi-zazz! *(Waits for Tribes to repeat the rhyme.)* Again! Louder! *(Leads everyone in chanting the rhyme over and over before shushing them.)* Okay, okay, that's enough.

(Straightens his tunic.) Since I am in charge of Daniel and the other captives, I have to screen who can get in to see Daniel. *(Checks the clay tablet.)* I don't see your names here, but...*(looking around to make sure no one is watching)* I'll let you in this once.

(Ashpenaz lets everyone into Daniel's room, closing the door most of the way but leaving it partially open so he can hear his cue to enter.)

Permission to photocopy this resource from Group's Babylon VBS granted for local church use. Copyright © 2012, 2023 Group Publishing, Inc., Loveland, CO. group.com/vbs

Supplies for Today

- plates of thinly sliced baby carrots for each group of Tribes
- cylinder seal* (from the Cylinder Seal Shop) for Daniel

*available from group.com

Meeting Daniel

You will be busy at your "desk," rolling a cylinder seal, as Tribes enter. Stand to greet them.

Say: **Hello! Welcome! Please, sit anywhere. I heard you singing outside. It made me so happy to hear people praising the one true God. But it made me homesick, too. I'm not from Babylon, you know.** Look intently at people's clothing. **Where are you from?** Listen to answers. **Hmm...I've never heard of those places. No matter, I'm just glad you're here.**

Where are my manners? I haven't even introduced myself. My name's Daniel. Who are you? Point to a few people and ask their names. **I'm from the Tribe of Judah in Jerusalem, far from here. What Tribes are you from?** Go around the room and have each Tribe say its name.



Field Test Finding

For the clay tablet, we used a large rounded foam shape painted gray. Not only was it a funny prop for Ashpenaz but it provided a place for him to keep his script out of sight.





Tribe Troubles

Say: **When I point to your group, chant which Tribe you're from. You could chant, "We are Judah! We are Judah!" or "We are Benjamin! We are Benjamin!" Keep chanting until everyone is chanting.**

Point to each Tribe in turn, and prompt them to start chanting. When everyone is chanting, encourage Tribes to chant louder and louder. Then suddenly call a halt. As soon as it's relatively quiet, continue. Point to one Tribe.

Say: **What if I said you can't be from the Tribe of [Tribe's name]? Point to another Tribe. And you can't be from the Tribe of [Tribe name]. In fact, let's forget all of this "Tribe" business. I want you to get up and move away from the people in your Tribe. Form a group with new people.**

Pause as kids and adults form new circles. Let young children stay with their parents or original Tribes.

Say: **Hmm...I see you all have those cloths to show what Tribe you're from. And some of you have even written your names on them, haven't you? Well, you'll have to give those up, since you're not part of your Tribe anymore. Give that cloth with your name on it to someone else in your new group. Don't put it on—just hold it. Pause. See? You don't have your own Tribe anymore, and now you don't even have your own *name* anymore! Ask:**

(?) How do you feel right now about all these changes? Tell your new group.

Pause a few moments, and then ask for report-backs. Say: **Hmm...you feel about the changes the same way I do. Let me tell you what's changed for me. But first, you can go back and sit with your own Tribe.** Pause as Tribes regather.

Palace Pointer

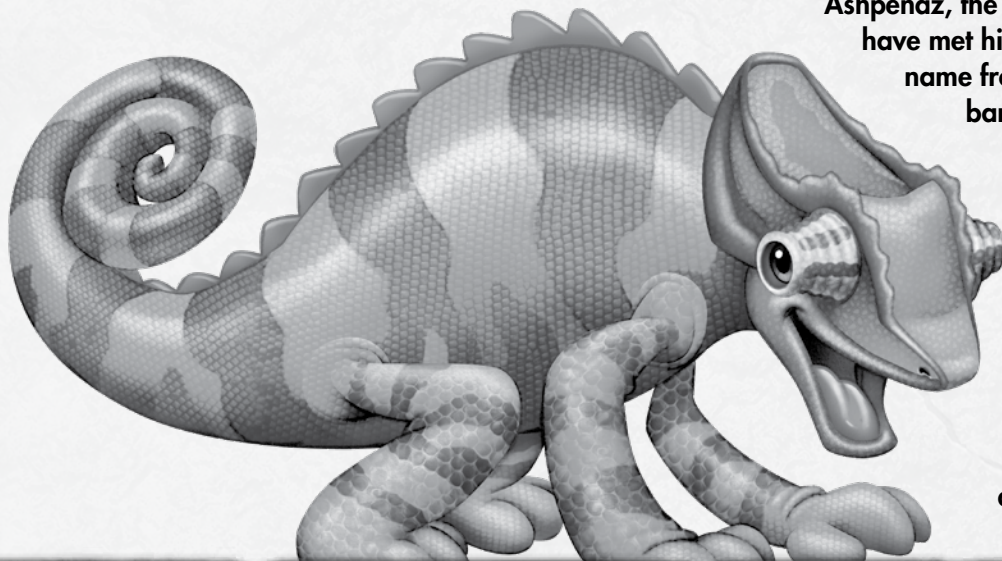
When you ask for report-backs after a question, be sure to repeat the answer that a child or adult gives. Some people are soft-spoken, and you may have ambient noise from the Marketplace that makes it hard for others in the room to hear. By repeating the answers aloud, you'll help everyone feel like they're part of the conversation.

New Names

Say: **Just like you lost your name when you gave up your cloth, I lost my name when I was taken captive and brought here to Babylon.**

Ashpenaz, the king's chief of staff—I think you might have met him outside—anyway, he changed my name from "Daniel" to "Belteshazzar." I can barely even say *that*! And he changed my three best friends' names to "Shadrach," "Meshach," and "Abednego." What strange names! Look toward the door and lower your voice. But you can still call me Daniel, okay?

Like I said before, I'm from the Tribe of Judah. But since they brought me to Babylon, it's like I don't even have a Tribe now.



Missing Home

Say: We had to leave everything—our homes, our families, our friends, our school, our temple—everything we knew and loved. Think about how you would feel if you were in my shoes—I mean, my sandals. Ask:

- ? What would you miss most if you were taken from your home to a new land? (I'd miss my family; my friends; my dog.)
- ? Being taken captive was the biggest change I've ever been through. What's the biggest change or challenge you've ever had to face? (Moving to a new school; swimming without any help; when my parents got divorced.)

Menu Matters

Say: Thanks for sharing those answers. We've all been through changes. In my life, it felt like *everything* changed. But I knew that when things change, God is with you. And my faith in God is the one thing that *didn't* change! They could take me from my home, give me a new name, change everything in my life—but they couldn't change my faith in God!

And because of my faith in God, I ran into a bit of a problem. I knew God wouldn't approve of the food and wine that came from the king's kitchen. And that was a problem because, well, you gotta eat, right? So I decided to ask Ashpenaz for help.



Field Test Finding

One little girl said her biggest challenge was her first sleepover. But then she qualified her answer by saying, "But I wasn't a Christian then." So sweet!



A Visit From Ashpenaz

(Ashpenaz runs into the room.)

Ashpenaz: *(Looks around excitedly.)* Did I hear my name? Did someone say my name?

Daniel: *(Surprised.)* Uh, yeah. I was just telling my new friends here about the food at the palace, and how I asked you...

Ashpenaz: *(Motions with pointer finger over lips.)* Shhh! Don't tell anyone about that!

Daniel: Why not? I thought you were here to congratulate me.

Ashpenaz: Oh. Yes, that's right. I am here to congratulate you. *(Motions toward kids.)* But these people look clueless. Haven't you told them what happened?

Daniel: *(Rolls eyes.)* Well, I was just about to when someone burst into the room and interrupted me.

Ashpenaz: *(Looks around.)* Where? Who? *(Shakes head.)* Well, never mind, he's gone now. *(Stands tall.)* Since I am the Chief of Staff, I will tell what happened.

Yours truly over there *(points to Daniel)* didn't want to eat the king's food. *(Lowers voice.)* And to put it bluntly, I was afraid of the king. What if Daniel and his friends got sick? It would be my fault, and the king might kill me!

Daniel: But I had a plan.

Ashpenaz: *(Interrupts.)* Excuse me. Who is telling this tale? Anyway, Daniel said, "Test us for 10 days on a diet of vegetables and water. Then see how we look compared to the other young men."

Today is Day 11. I was just coming to tell Daniel the good news. When we compared Daniel and his friends to the other young men, Daniel and his friends look very healthy!

Daniel: *(Flexes muscles, then brings out plate of vegetables.)* Look what I have—vegetables! *(Holds out the plate to Ashpenaz.)* C'mon, dig in!

Ashpenaz: *(Sniffs, then holds nose.)* No, thank you! I think...I think...I might be sick!

(Ashpenaz runs from the room.)

Daniel: Hmm, I guess Ashpenaz doesn't like vegetables. Oh well! Would you like a snack as you leave? I'm sure you're ready to explore more of Babylon. But I hope you come back and visit me tomorrow.

(As Tribes exit, Daniel offers each person a carrot stick.)



Field Test Finding

We were surprised at what a hit the carrot sticks were. Kids even asked for leftovers during the rest of the week!

