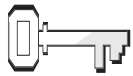


Healthy Choices



References

Daniel 1:3-20; *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 479-490



Memory Verse

"So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31, NIV).

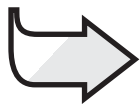


Objectives

The children will:
Know that they serve God best when they are healthy.

Feel that they can be responsible for keeping their bodies healthy.

Respond by making choices to keep their bodies and minds healthy.



The Message

I serve God when I choose to be healthy.

Monthly Theme

We serve God wherever we are.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah are taken to King Nebuchadnezzar's palace to be trained to serve him. When they are offered rich food that has been offered to idols, they discuss what to do. They decide that Daniel should ask the chief officer for simpler, more healthy food. That officer says no. Daniel then approaches the steward assigned to the four Hebrews, and he agrees to a 10-day test. After that trial period the steward sees that their way (God's way) of healthy living is best. He becomes their ally and friend. As he watches them every day, he also learns about their God.

This is a lesson about service.

Daniel and his friends served God by being positive examples of living God's way. We can serve God wherever we are. Making healthy choices makes us fit and better able to serve Him.

Teacher Enrichment

"At the very outset of their career there came to them a decisive test of character. It was provided that they should eat of the food and drink of the wine that came from the king's table. In this the king thought to give them an expression of his favor and of his solicitude for their welfare. But a portion having been offered to idols, the food from the king's table was consecrated to idolatry; and one partaking of it would be regarded as offering homage to the gods of Babylon. In such homage, loyalty to Jehovah forbade Daniel and his companions to join. Even a mere pretense of eating the food or drinking the wine would be a denial of their faith. To do this would be to array themselves with heathenism, and to dishonor the principles of the law of God" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 481).

"In the land of their captivity these men were to carry out God's purpose by giving to heathen nations the blessings that come through a knowledge of Jehovah. They were to be His representatives" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 479).

"As for these four youths, God gave them learning and skill in all letters and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams" (Daniel 1:17, RSV).

Room Decorations

See Lesson 5.

Program Overview

Lesson Section	Minutes	Activities	Materials Needed
Welcome	ongoing	Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled	none
1 Readiness Options	up to 10	A. <i>What's Good?</i> B. <i>Healthy Relay</i>	table, variety of healthy and unhealthy foods such as can of caffeine-free soft drink, canned drink with caffeine, cake, coffee, vegetables, milk, juice, water, beans (or use pictures); list of foods on display rucksack or tote bag, stones/books, sign "Unclean Food"
Any Time Prayer and Praise*	up to 10	Fellowship Songbook Mission Offering Prayer	none <i>Sing for Joy</i> <i>Children's Mission</i> box from Lesson 5 none
2 Bible Lesson	up to 20	Experiencing the Story Memory Verse Bible Study	Bible-times costumes, yarn, table, water none Bibles
3 Applying the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Health Check</i>	health chart (see p. 67)
4 Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Wheel of Health</i>	paper plates or circles of card stock, brass fasteners, small strips of card stock, markers, piece of fruit per child

***Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.**

TEACHING THE LESSON

Welcome

Welcome students at the door. Ask how their week has been—what they are pleased/troubled about. Listen to last week’s memory verse and encourage the children to share any experiences from last week’s lesson study. Have them begin the readiness activity of your choice.

1

Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

You Need:

- table
- list of foods on display
- pencil
- variety of healthy and unhealthy foods (real or pictures)

For example:

- can of caffeine-free soft drink
- canned drink with caffeine
- cake, coffee, vegetables, milk, juice, water, beans

You Need:

- rucksack or tote bag
- stones/books
- sign “Unclean Food”

A. What’s Good?

In advance, provide for each child a list of the foods on display. Be prepared to tell some nutritional facts about the foods. Invite the children to look at the foods and put a check mark ✓ beside each on their list if they think it is healthy or make an X if it is unhealthy.

Debriefing

Review the list with the class. Ask why some foods are more healthy than others. Ask: **Why is it important to think about what we eat? Which of these foods are good for you? Which are not? Our bodies are like an engine. If we put the wrong fuel in, they will not work efficiently. God wants us to be healthy and happy. Eating the right food plays a big part in this. In our story today we will learn about four boys who had to decide what to eat. Today’s message is:**



I SERVE GOD WHEN I CHOOSE TO BE HEALTHY.

Say that with me.

B. Healthy Relay

Fill the rucksack or tote bag with stones or heavy books. Pin the “Unclean Food” sign on the outside. Form two teams. Say: **This is a relay race. Each member of your team must walk to the other side of the room, touch the wall, and walk back before the next person may go. The team with the rucksack or tote bag must pass it to the next person in line when they finish so that person can go.** Repeat the relay with the other team having the rucksack or tote bag.

Debriefing

Ask: **What was the difference when you were walking with the tote bag or rucksack? (It was heavy, slowed us down, etc.) What was it like when you were walking without it? (easy) Would it be easy to run and play with the rucksack on your back? When we make many unhealthy choices in food and drink, we have to carry extra weight. Our brains work slower, and we get tired more quickly and become more irritable. In our Bible story today we are going to hear about four friends who had to make some food choices. Today’s message is:**



I SERVE GOD WHEN I CHOOSE TO BE HEALTHY.

Say that with me.

Prayer and Praise

Any
Time



Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Allow time for sharing from last week's lesson study and review last week's memory verse. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special warm greeting to all visitors.



Suggested Songs

- "Dare to Be a Daniel" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 116)
- "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 119)
- "Trust and Obey" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 113)
- "Teach Me, Lord" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 110)
- "Whisper a Prayer" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 96)



Mission

Share a story from *Children's Mission*. Discuss how everyone has to make choices. Ask: **Who in the story made good choices? Making good choices is one way that we can serve God.**



Offering

Say: **When we give our offerings, we help to send missionaries to teach others about making good choices.**

You Need:

- offering box from Lesson 5



Prayer

Ask for prayer requests and thank-yous. Ask the children to name some of the positive choices God asks us to make. (Eat healthy food, study our Sabbath School lesson, go to church, etc.) Ask God to continue to help us make good choices.

Bible Lesson

You Need:

- Bible-times costumes
- yarn
- table
- water

Experiencing the Story

Characters: Daniel, captain of all captives, Hananiah, Azariah, Mishael, crowds of captives, Melzar, soldiers

Encourage the children to act out the story as you read or tell it.

Setting the scene:

Say: **When King Nebuchadnezzar's army invaded and conquered Judah, the king told them to capture all the young Hebrews from the royal family and other important families, and take them to Babylon.**

Read or tell the story.

[March the four friends and the other captives around the room. Link them together with yarn.] Daniel, Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael were just four of the many Hebrew lads who were sent off on the long journey to Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar was kind to the captives. He saw that some could help him rule his vast empire. But first they had to learn the Babylonian language and customs. Daniel and his three friends knew they were to serve the king, but they decided that their first loyalty and service would always be to God.

[The four prisoners stop and look around as soldiers remove "chains" (yarn).] There were lots of new and interesting things to see in Babylon: great temples to idols, parks shaded by strange trees, and hanging flowering plants that came from all parts of the empire.

After their long journey everyone was looking forward to their first meal in Babylon. *[All captives gather around*

the table.] It was the tastiest meal Nebuchadnezzar's servants could provide. There were rich roasted meats served with sweet wine, followed by the sweetest desserts in the whole land. All of the captives, including those from Judah and other parts of the empire, were delighted with the food. All except Daniel and his three friends. *[All except Daniel and his friends mime eating, drinking, laughing.]*

Daniel and his friends refused to eat. *[Fold arms and shake head.]* They knew that this food was not good for them. They also knew that some of the food and wine had been offered to idols. They could not eat . . . they would not eat. They had decided to serve God before Nebuchadnezzar, no matter what happened.

Daniel asked the officer in charge of all the captives to serve them a meal of water and simple foods instead. *[Mime asking for food. The officer says no and looks afraid.]* The officer refused. He was afraid. King Nebuchadnezzar himself had ordered the meal. The officer thought Daniel and his friends might get sick if they did not eat the proper foods. And if that happened, the king would have the officer killed.

Then Daniel did a strange thing. He went to Melzar, the steward the captain had assigned to watch over Daniel and his friends, and asked him for a test! *[Daniel asks for something and mimes eating. Melzar looks doubtful and shakes his head. Daniel holds up 10 fingers and Melzar finally agrees.]* "Let us eat and drink vegetables and water for ten days," he asked. "If we are not as healthy as the other boys, do with us what you will."

Melzar agreed. At the end of ten days, Daniel and his three friends were stronger and more alert than any of the other Hebrews. With God's help, they had

passed the test, and they were given the diet they wanted. *[Melzar inspects the boys and looks pleased.]* During all three years of training, they were served simple food and water.

[Daniel and friends sit down at table and mime eating and drinking.] God was pleased with Daniel and his friends. The Bible says God helped them with their studies. He gave them wisdom and understanding. And He gave Daniel the ability to understand dreams.

Daniel served God first. He obeyed God's rules about eating and drinking. And God rewarded Daniel in return. Daniel's service to Nebuchadnezzar would lead that great ruler to know the true God.

When we put God first, He can use us to show others the great things He can do.

Debriefing

Ask: **How do you think the four friends felt when they came to Babylon?** (alone, afraid, curious, interested in what was happening)

What did they think when they saw the food? (hungry, concerned, disappointed)

Why did they decide not to eat the king's food when the other captives from Judah ate it? (They had decided to put God first, to serve Him before anyone else.)

Why do you think they looked better after just ten days? (They followed God's plan. God helped them. The rich food made it harder for the others to think and act clearly.)

The same thing applies today. When we choose to live healthfully, we can serve God better. Let's say our message together:



I SERVE GOD WHEN I CHOOSE TO BE HEALTHY.

Memory Verse

Read aloud 1 Corinthians 10:31 and use the following actions as you teach the verse:

So whether you eat Mime eating.

or drink Mime drinking.

or whatever you do, Stretch arms out wide.

do it all Move arms in a circle.

for the glory of God. Point up.

1 Corinthians 10:31 Palms together, then open.

Repeat until the children know the verse.

Bible Study

Say: **Let's read the story of Daniel and his friends in our Bibles. Turn to Daniel 1:3-20.** (Adults assist as needed.) Divide the children into two groups. The groups will read alternate verses.

Debriefing

Ask: **What did you learn about healthy choices from these verses?** (We honor God when we choose to eat only healthy foods. [verse 8] When we make choices that honor God, He will not let us down. [verse 15] Healthy food helps us to have healthy minds and bodies. God is able to help us learn things [verses 17, 19, 20]. We have better communication with God [verse 17].) **Let's say our message together:**



I SERVE GOD WHEN I CHOOSE TO BE HEALTHY.

You Need:

- Bibles

3

Applying the Lesson

You Need:

- health chart (see p. 67)

Health Check

Talk about and list where all may see some things we need to keep our bodies healthy. Include sleep, exercise, fruit, vegetables, water, fresh air. Use the following scenarios to get started. The children are to select the best answer.

Dennis is a good football player. To keep playing well Dennis needs to:

Sleep eight hours every night.

Get quick energy by drinking a soft drink before each game.

Walk in the fresh air every day.

Pat loves school. To get good grades, Pat needs to:

Watch TV every afternoon.

Study until midnight every night.

Eat fruits and vegetables every day.

Say: **I have given you an example of one thing we all should do every day.** Give each child a health chart (see p. 67). Help them write in the left-hand column things they need to do to be healthy.

Debriefing

Say: **Every day we make choices that decide if we will be healthy. What is the hardest thing to remember to do? What is the easiest? What is good about having a healthy body?**

During this week put a check mark under each day when you do things on our list. Let's say our message together.



I SERVE GOD WHEN I CHOOSE TO BE HEALTHY.

4

Sharing the Lesson

You Need:

- paper plates or circles of card stock
- brass fasteners
- small strips of card stock
- markers
- piece of fruit per child

Wheel of Health

Distribute the paper plates or card stock circles. Help the children draw on them some things they need for a healthy life based on the list made in Applying the Lesson. Attach a small strip of card stock to the center of the circle with a brass fastener so that it rotates.

Divide the children into pairs. Have them spin the card stock pointer and explain to their partner why that factor is important for good health.

Debriefing

Say: **Why are healthy choices**

good for us? Why do they make God happy?

We have a basket of fruit here. Take a piece and give it to someone. Show them your health wheel and explain why healthy choices are good for them.

Let's say our message together:



I SERVE GOD WHEN I CHOOSE TO BE HEALTHY.

Closing

Form a circle. Ask God to help each child make healthy choices.

For Lesson 6, page 66. Applying the Lesson.

Things I Need to Do to Be Healthy	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sabbath
Eat a good breakfast.							

Things I Need to Do to Be Healthy	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sabbath
Eat a good breakfast.							

Permission to photocopy this page granted for local church use. Copyright © 2003 General Conference Corporation of Seventh-day Adventists®.

Healthy Choices

References

Daniel 1:3-20;
Prophets and Kings,
pp. 479-490

Memory Verse

“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31, NIV).

The Message

I serve God when I choose to be healthy.

Imagine you are very hungry, and you are invited to a banquet. You sit down at the table, and you find wine and unclean foods that you know you shouldn't have. What will you do? Daniel and his three friends faced that problem. Let's see what they did.

King Nebuchadnezzar's army had invaded and conquered Judah. All the young men from the royal family and other important families had been taken to Babylon. Daniel, Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael were among the young Hebrews.

Nebuchadnezzar's empire was enormous. The king knew that the Hebrew captives had many abilities. So he decided to train some of them for work in his government. They could help rule some parts of his vast empire. But first they had to learn Babylonian ways. They needed to learn the language. They had to learn the way things were done in Babylon.

Daniel and his three friends knew that they were to serve the king. But they decided that God would be first in their lives. They would serve Him first, no matter what happened.

There were many new and interesting things to see in Babylon. Great temples for worshiping idols were everywhere. The young Hebrews saw parks shaded by strange trees and hanging flowering plants. The cit-



ies of Babylon were truly beautiful.

After their long journey, everyone looked forward to their first meal in Babylon. They were to eat the best food! It was the same food served at the king's table. Rich roasted meats and sweet wine were on every table. The sweetest desserts in the whole land were there for all.

All of the Hebrews were delighted with the food. All except Daniel and his three friends. They could not eat it. They knew that this food was not good for them. They also knew that some of the food and wine had been offered to idols.

Daniel and his three friends determined to serve God, no matter what happened. So Daniel asked the officer in charge of all the Hebrews for help. He asked for simple food with water to drink.

Although the king's officer respected Daniel, he refused. He was afraid for his life. King Nebuchadnezzar himself had ordered the meal. If Daniel and his friends didn't eat that food, they might not be as strong as the others. And if that happened, the king might have the officer killed.

But Daniel did not give up. The officer had appointed Melzar, a steward, to watch over Daniel and his friends. Daniel appealed to Melzar. "Test us," he said. "Let us eat simple food and drink only water for ten days. If we are not as healthy as the other Hebrews, do with us as you will."

The steward agreed.

At the end of ten days, the four Hebrews were stronger and more alert than the other captives. With God's help, they had passed the test. During all three years of their training, they were served simple food and water.

God was pleased with Daniel and his friends. The Bible says God helped them with their studies. He gave them wisdom and understanding. And He gave Daniel the ability to understand dreams.

Daniel served God first. He obeyed

God's rules about eating and drinking. And God rewarded Daniel. Daniel's service to Nebuchadnezzar would lead that great ruler to know the true God.

When we put God first, He can use us to show others the great things He can do.

Daily Activities

Sabbath

- If possible, take a walk with your family and enjoy the fresh air. Talk about exercise. Why is it important? How much should each family member have? What can each one do for exercise each day?
- Thank God for fresh air.

Sunday

- Write the memory verse and tape it to a cup. Put the cup where you will see it every day. Say the memory verse often during the week. Teach it to your family during worship today.
- If you made a Health Chart in Sabbath School, be sure to fill it in every day. If not, make a chart and every day note down what you eat, drink, when you go to bed, when you get up, and when you exercise. Ask God to help you.

Monday

- Read and discuss Daniel 1:3-20 during family worship.
- Ask your parents to tell you about a time they had to make a difficult choice. What did they do?
- Ask God to give you the courage always to make the right choice.

Tuesday

- Read and discuss Revelation 22:1, 2 for family worship. Where is that river?
- Draw a circle and cut it out (or use a paper plate). On one side draw a happy face; on the other a sad face. Which face do you have when you feel healthy?
- Doctors say that we should drink 6-8 glasses of water every day. Find out why water is so important.

- Where is your nearest water reservoir? If possible, go to see it.
- Find out how water is purified.
- Thank God for water and the River of Life.

Wednesday

- Discuss 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20 during family worship. What does it mean to be the temple of God?
- Find out how much of your body is made up of water.
- Fan fold a piece of paper. Draw half a person. Cut around the person, making sure to leave them joined at the hands and feet. Open, and on each person draw a healthy choice.
- Pray that God will help you keep your body as His temple.

Thursday

- Help plan your Sabbath dinner menu.
- Try to make up a poem, rhyme, or song about good and bad things to eat.
- Make a poster or a collage showing healthy foods.
- Thank God for good food.

Friday

- Help get ready for Sabbath by cleaning your room.
- Ask if you can choose a healthy drink for supper tonight.
- During worship, act out the story of Daniel with your family.
- Show and explain your Health Chart to your family. Have you had a healthy week?
- Repeat your memory verse together; then sing "Dare to Be a Daniel" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 116). Ask God to help you to be brave like Daniel.