

MISFITS

WEEK 1 - FAITHFUL IN A FOREIGN LAND

SEPTEMBER 13, 2026

Main Point: The story of Daniel (and ultimately Jesus) is all about what it's like to live in a world where belonging to the life God wants meant *not belonging* to the world he lived in.

This Week's Message:

After Babylon conquered Judah, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego found themselves as foreigners in their own home. They were positioned for power and comfort in the new empire. However, they rejected that to remain faithful to God.

Scripture:

Daniel 1:1-4, 5-7, 8a, 9-14, 15-16, 17-20; John 17:15-19

This Month's Memory Verse:

You call on a Father who judges each person's work without favoring one over another. So live as outsiders during your time here. Live with the highest respect for God. -1 Peter 1:17

Provided Videos: See www.glendalechristian.org/summitvolunteerresources

- Game Video
- Bible Story Video
- Review Quiz Video
- Worship Video: Kids
- Worship Video: Runnin
- Worship Video: Praise You Anywhere

Suggested Order of Service:

1. Game Video – 3 Min
2. Icebreaker Activity – 5 Min
3. Message – 25 Min Total
 - a. Lesson – 15 Min
 - b. Bible Story Video – 2 Min
 - c. Discussion Time – 5 Min
 - d. Review Quiz Video – 3 Min
4. Memory Verse Activity – 10 min
5. As time allows:
 - a. Work on Take-Home Page
 - b. Worship Videos

GAME VIDEO:

Exploding Cupcakes 2

ICEBREAKER ACTIVITY

"Never Have I Ever"

This game is designed to be quick, fun, and an opportunity for students to learn about one another and share their unique experiences. This can be done with all students, or in groups, depending on the group size. Have all the students stand up. The leader will say "Never have I ever [insert a statement listed below here]." If a student has done the action, they must sit down. If they have not done the action, they must stay standing. Say enough of these phrases so that you have 30-50% students sitting.

Then have the "sitters" find "standers" and briefly share their experiences. Model for them by going to a leader and saying "Hi I'm [Your Name]! I've never [insert phrase]! Can you tell me what that was like for you?" Give them around 2 minutes to introduce themselves and share their experiences.

Here are some examples you can use:

"Never have I ever worn my shirt inside out."

"Never have I ever tried to eat a crayon."

"Never have I ever met someone who has the same birthday as me."

"Never have I ever had a dog, cat, or pet other than a goldfish."

"Never have I ever gone an entire day without talking to a grown-up."

"Never have I ever gone to a different state."

LESSON:

Main Point:

The story of Daniel (and ultimately Jesus) is all about what it's like to live in a world where belonging to the life God wants meant *not belonging* to the world he lived in.

Scripture:

Daniel 1:1-4, 5-7, 8a, 9-14, 15-16, 17-20; John 17:15-19

Introduction

Have you ever been somewhere where you felt like you just didn't fit in? Maybe it was your first day at a new school, and everybody knew each other, except for you. Or maybe you started playing a new sport and everybody else knew what was going on, but you didn't. Or you found yourself in a place where everyone dressed differently, talked differently, and acted differently from you. You probably felt uncomfortable, insecure, and a little shy. You felt like a misfit – someone who just doesn't fit in.

We can feel like misfits when we don't know the unspoken rules about how to fit in. Once you know those rules, it's a lot easier to fit in – to conform. Conforming is about changing to be like those around you.

Have you ever thought, "I can't wait until my parents let me have social media!" Why? So you can be like other kids? Look around your school, and you'll probably notice that most kids wear the same types of clothes. It's a way to show that we conform, so we don't feel like misfits. Adults do it too. Often they buy things they can't afford to impress people that they don't even know.

Transition

The book of Daniel is a story about some guys who dealt with the same things almost 3000 years ago – 500 years before Jesus was born. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were forced to live in a place where following God meant being a misfit.

Daniel 1:1-4 (condensed)

Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem. He took the articles from the temple, and put them in the temple of his god in Babylon. Then he ordered his court official to bring young, intelligent Israelite men into his service. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians.

King Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the land of Judah, took it over, and changed everything. The ultimate goal was to show, "you belonged to me now." Daniel now found himself in a horrible situation, and could've gone along with what King Nebuchadnezzar wanted.

Daniel 1:5-7 (condensed)

The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from his table. They were to be trained for three years before entering the king's service. Among those chosen were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, who were given new names. Daniel was called Belteshazzar. Hananiah became Shadrach. Mishael became Meshach. And Azaria was called Abednego.

Daniel was part of a group of guys who would be trained to be successful servants of King Nebuchadnezzar. They were bright, capable guys who would be trained to serve King Nebuchadnezzar. That's not a bad deal. They even got to eat all the best food from the king's table.

Daniel 1:8a

But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way.

Why would Daniel not want to eat the best food Babylon had to offer? Here's why, the Israelites followed strict dietary laws given by God, which prohibited them from eating certain animals or food sacrificed to idols. The Babylonian royal food violated these sacred rules, forcing Daniel to choose between his comfort and his covenant with God. So Daniel asked the guy in charge if he could just have vegetables and water.

Daniel 1:9-10

But the official told Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men your age? The king would then have my head because of you."

The official was afraid he'd get into trouble for this. So Daniel suggested a ten-day test: let him, and his three friends eat only vegetables and drink water, then compare their appearance to the other young men who ate the king's food. The official agreed. Daniel was willing to prove his devotion to God's law, even though it was risky.

Daniel 1:15-16

At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food. So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead.

After ten days, Daniel and his friends looked stronger and better than the guys who were eating the rich royal food.

Not only did they survive, but God gave them superior wisdom and understanding. When they were presented to King Nebuchadnezzar, he was totally impressed by them. He said that they were ten times better than any of his other wise men.

These guys figured out a way to *live* in Babylon while still *belonging* to God, and they were blessed for it. God proved that standing with Him leads to a better outcome.

God continues to prove this point and call his people to be *in the world, but not of the world* all throughout the Scriptures, and most importantly through Jesus.

The full and complete example of this idea is the story of Jesus. Jesus could've come down from heaven and led an army to take over the world in two minutes. But Jesus didn't play by the rules of the world. He brought this idea of an "Upside Down Kingdom." In Jesus' Kingdom, the losers are the winners, the poor are the rich, and the children are better than the adults. He brought this completely different reality into the world. The religious and political leaders of the time felt threatened by Jesus because His message of a new kingdom challenged their power and control.

John 17:15-19

My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

Jesus prayed for you. Yes, you. That when you live your life every day, God would give you the strength and wisdom to recognize who you were created to be, and how you are supposed to live; in other words, to be in the world, but not *of* the world, just like Daniel and his friends were in Babylon, but not *of* Babylon.

Conclusion

You will be in Daniel's shoes over and over again for your whole life. The story will most definitely be different, but the feelings and choices will be the same. When you're at school, and everyone is piling on to that one kid about their clothes, are you going to be just another bully, or someone else? When that substitute teacher comes into class, what kind of respect will you bring? These are all tough questions because they cause us to choose which world we belong to. There is a right or wrong choice, and often the right choice leads to a difficult path.

God blessed Daniel and his friends when they chose to be of God while in Babylon, and I believe God will bless you too. Their tough decision led to a better life and outcome than the one King Nebuchadnezzar offered them, and now it is up to us to put our faith in that truth, and live it out.

PRAYER

Dear God,

Thank you for showing us through Daniel's story that we can belong to you, even when the world tells us to conform to something else. Give us the courage to stand up for what is right, just as Daniel did. Give us the wisdom to see that our choice to belong to Jesus will help others see where they belong too. Help us to live in the world, but not be *of* the world.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. If you could only eat one food for the rest of your life, what would it be?
2. What was the King's name who Daniel "worked for?"
3. What did Daniel choose to do in order to remain faithful?
4. How does this story connect to Jesus?
5. What do you think would've happened if the guard said "NO! EAT THE FOOD!"
6. What do you think made the guard go along with Daniel's plan?
7. If your friends are all doing something mean? What can you do as a "Misfit" for Jesus instead?

REVIEW VIDEO

MEMORY VERSE CARD GAME ACTIVITY:

You call on a Father who judges each person's work without favoring one over another. So live as outsiders during your time here. Live with the highest respect for God. -1 Peter 1:17

Printed cards are provided for the memory verse games. There are 3 stacks of cards - one is easier, one is harder, and one is words that are not in the verse to make it harder for kids as needed. See the Memory Verse Card Games Guide for a variety of games you can choose from to help your students memorize the verse in fun and interactive ways.