



4. Daniel and the dreams

Age range: Primary

Theme: We gather as a community for collective worship that is **inspiring, invitational and inclusive**, reflecting the fact that we are a part of a diverse school family and the wider church community, serving the needs of our unique school communities. We begin this new term, and 2026, with a new story-saga theme, based on the story of Daniel and how his actions stood out in the challenging times in which he lived. Whilst we recognise that all these stories contain challenging themes, and imply that standing up for your beliefs could mean certain death, we take the positive messages from each story in how Daniel and his friends were such a contrast to the leaders they served. In our world today, we want to inspire resilience in our pupils to be confident in who they are and what they stand for, just like Daniel, and to be positive role models in your school community, even when it might be difficult. **This week, we continue our new series in the saga-story of Daniel, and find out how he helped King Nebuchadnezzar to understand some very strange dreams that he experienced. In Daniel's day (as also for some people today), dreams were often thought to have meanings: in the Bible God sometimes used dreams to speak to people (remember the stories of Joseph in prison...as well as Mary's husband Joseph, and the wise men who visited the young Jesus?) The (optional) opening question deliberately focuses on funny dreams, to try to avoid going down the rabbit-hole of talking about nightmares.**



How does this link to your school's Christian vision & values?

This week, encourage pupils to think / talk about what it was that King Nebuchadnezzar was supposed to notice about his dream, what he could have done about it, and how his circumstances changed during the story. The emphasis this week is on helping pupils to think about being wise: the opposite of the King's reaction on hearing Daniel's interpretation of the strange dream. How do your school's vision and values help you to be wise in how you live and serve others?

Resources:

- **Please remember that the resources that we provide should be adapted where needed, to suit the context of your own school and your own pupils. This week, as we explore King Nebuchadnezzar's strange dreams, please be aware that not all pupils like to share personal stories, and that there are many different views about dreams – and whether they mean anything!**
- This term, in addition to our usual gathering and sending slides, we are including a slide at the very start to help to 'still' pupils, and help them to enter into the 'sacred' space of collective worship, ready to think, reflect, talk or pray. You might also want to use this in your class to change the 'mood' for any class-based worship. Take this at whatever pace seems necessary for your pupils. It ends with a visual 'timetable', setting out some of the elements that will be included in our time together, which we hope may help some pupils. You can also find these as cards to print out to use in other collective worship if this helps you.
- As always, there are also some ideas for **reflective activities / ideas** to ponder for use in your reflective areas for this term, listed at the end of the script along with a handy wall chart to print each week for your reflective area. You can find all these as a separate file in our resources area, which may make it easier for teachers to print and use in their classrooms.
- The PowerPoint slides are numbered with a point in the script so you can find your way, and the parts in **bold** show you where to click on to activate the next slide or animation. There are slides to go with today's script, but you could quite easily use some of this collective worship without the PowerPoint if you preferred.
- **Slides 3&4:** There are 2 versions of the introductory **Spot the Difference** puzzle – one for younger pupils, another for older pupils. Choose which serves your context best.
- **Reflective prayer activity:** you will need to provide some star shapes for pupils to hold: if possible, use plastic ones e.g. glow-in-the-dark versions that are designed to stick onto the ceiling of children's bedrooms

Gathering:

Slide 1: Twinkling stars stilling exercise

Use the stilling slide if desired: the suggested words should be spoken slowly, leaving pauses inbetween to create a sense of stillness.

As you sit quietly, watch the stars twinkle....[PAUSE]

Now practise slower breathing.....in.....and out.....in.....and out.....keep this going as you continue to look at the stars....[PAUSE]

You maybe notice that you are feeling calmer and more relaxed....[PAUSE]

We come into this special / sacred space and time to be still....to think deeply.....to be together as a school community.....



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In our time together today, we will **look at a puzzle** and **talk together, share the next part of our story** and **then use it to help us to think**.

But first, let's welcome one another as we begin....

Slide 2:

Leader: As we gather together today....

ALL:we bring our thoughts and our hearts into this sacred space.

Here are BSL actions for some of the words:

Leader's words:

Gather: <https://www.signbsl.com/sign/gather> (1st video)

Today: <https://www.signbsl.com/sign/today> (1st video)

Pupils' response:

Thoughts: <https://www.signbsl.com/sign/thoughts> (1st video)

Hearts: <https://www.signbsl.com/sign/heart> (1st video)

Engaging:

Slide 3: for younger children

We're going to start today with a puzzle, and a question! I wonder if you have ever done one of these? – there are some differences to spot between the two trains. Let's see how many differences you can find....

[Fruit in the carriage; colour and number of wheels; smoke from funnel; colour of light on the front]

Slide 4: for older children

We're going to start today with a puzzle, and a question! I wonder if you have ever done one of these? There are some differences between the top picture and the bottom one. Let's see how many differences you can find....

[Here's what we spotted!: Windows on the rocket; ring around the planet; red alien – missing web on one hand, short tail, tummy marking; middle alien – extra eye, buckle on belt; yellow alien – missing eye, missing tusk, missing hair, missing dong on bell; planet – missing crater]

Later on today, we'll have a chance to think about another type of spot the difference puzzle together, but now.....let's carry on with Daniel's story.

Slide 5: We heard last week that God had given Daniel a special talent in understanding dreams – which seems an unusual thing to be able to do, but it does indeed come in very useful in this week's part of the story....

Slide 6: ...and that King Nebuchadnezzar was a very proud, powerful and bossy king and was very used to getting everything that he wanted. But his encounter with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego had helped him to see things differently.....or had it?.....

Slide 7: In Daniel's day, it was thought that dreams had special meanings and King Nebuchadnezzar often asked his advisers about the things that he dreamed.....and he dreamed about some very **strange things!!**

Slide 8: One night, as he slept, he dreamed about a very large tree. It was so big it grew right up to the sky and its leaves spread all over the whole world.

The tree provided **food** for the animals and **homes** for the birds.

Slide 9: As he watched, an angel appeared and ordered, 'Cut down the tree, shake off the leaves and scatter the fruit. Drive the animals and birds away!'

Slide 10: Then the angel declared: 'Let grass grow on him, and rain fall on him, and let him live like an animal.' In his sleep, King Nebuchadnezzar felt that the angel was talking about him – and woke up with a start!

Slide 11: The King summoned all of his wise advisers from across his kingdom, but not one of them could tell him what the dream meant.

Slide 12: Then Daniel came to visit King Nebuchadnezzar. 'I know no secret troubles you,' the king said. 'Explain my dream to me. Do not let the dream or its meaning make you afraid.'



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Slide 13: Daniel went away and prayed to God, the King of heaven and earth, and asked him for his wisdom. Then returned to King Nebuchadnezzar with the meaning of the dream.

Slide 14: 'You, O King, are like the tall tree that touched the sky: your power reaches to the far parts of the earth. But you have not treated the people in your kingdom as you should, especially those who are poor: those whom you could have sheltered in the branches of your kingdom, you have treated cruelly. You are puffed up with pride and think you are more powerful than anyone else – even God! And so, like the tree, you will be cut down to size!'

Slide 15: Daniel left the King, but for a whole year nothing happened and so King Nebuchadnezzar forgot all about the dream, and God's warning. His kingdom prospered and everything went well, until, one day he was looking at his magnificent palace and his heart swelled with pride. 'This is my great empire,' the king boasted. 'I built it with my power. I am mighty. Look how important I have become! I am the King of the Universe*!!'

*[*From an ancient inscription, it is believed that this is how Nebuchadnezzar thought of himself.]*

What dangerous words – and how very unwise!!

Slide 16: And then, just like that, it happened as the angel had said it would: the king went mad and for seven years lived in the wilderness like an animal, in the rain and the wind...' Until just as suddenly....

Slide 17:he was better again, and ran, delighted back to his beautiful palace feeling rather different than before.

He now understood what God had meant in his warning – and how he should behave as King.

This story is the last time we hear about King Nebuchadnezzar in the book of Daniel – so we don't really know what happened next.....except that a new King will follow him! More of that next week.....

Slide 18: We started our time today with a spot the difference puzzle: we are going to do a slightly different one now!

I wonder what differences there were between how Daniel behaved and how Nebuchadnezzar behaved in the story.... I wonder which one you would prefer was a leader in our school?!

You might want to talk to a partner now about your thoughts..... *[gather some ideas, particularly focussing your thinking on how Daniel was humble and the King was proud. Draw out the meaning of the word 'proud' in this context – it's not the same as being proud of something you've done well, though it can easily become a negative kind of proud!]*

Slide 19: There's a very ancient proverb that says: 'Pride comes before a fall.' (Proverbs 18:12) It's a warning that being proud in the wrong way can mean that, like King Nebuchadnezzar, our pride will trip us up. If we're too proud, then we forget to be kind and generous to people and think that others should notice us or keep giving us praise for what we have done, or that we don't have to follow the same rules as everyone else – and nobody likes that kind of leader!

But it's also a reminder that, as King Nebuchadnezzar found, our pride will trip us up eventually.

Slide 20: Responding and words for worship

We've heard today about the strange things that King Nebuchadnezzar dreamed – and the strange things that happened when he didn't pay attention to the angel's warning in his dream.

We also thought about leaders – and the differences between Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar.

Pause for a few moments now and think about what we might have learned from this story *[leave pauses between each]*.....about ourselves....about others....and maybe about God.....

Now let's wonder together.....

....I wonder what difference King Nebuchadnezzar's experiences might have made to how he ruled as King?....

....I wonder what difference this story might make to how we live as part of our school community?....

....I wonder what sort of a leader you would want to be?....



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[We recommend that you give some time this week to talking in class about these pondering questions – the reflective materials will help with this.]

We're going to be quiet and still for a few moments now before I use some words to pray, from another part of the Bible. You might want to make this prayer yours, or just listen to the words....

Slide 21: Prayer

They are some words about Jesus – you might remember this story of Jesus washing his disciples' feet from Jacqui Parkinson's panels last term.

Dear God,

When we act, we pray that we would not let selfishness or pride guide our actions. Help us to be humble: to be interested in the lives of others and to give more honour to others than to ourselves. May we think and act like Jesus, who was like you in everything.... yet made himself nothing, coming to earth to serve others....

*Adapted from Philippians 2:3-7**

**When you do things, do not let selfishness or pride be your guide. Be humble and give more honour to others than to yourselves. Do not be interested only in your own life but be interested in the lives of others. In your lives, think and act like Jesus, who was like God in everything and was equal with God. Yet he gave up his place with God and made himself nothing, coming to earth to serve others....*

Slide 22: Amen.

Sending: Slide 23

Leader: As we leave this place & time and go into the day ahead...

All: May we shine like stars!



Pupils' response:

Shine: <https://www.signbsl.com/sign/shine> (4th video)

Stars: <https://www.signbsl.com/sign/stars> (4th video)

To listen to / sing:

Choose a song from the selection for the first half of term e.g. [Shine](#) (NBD) or [Let our love show](#) (NBD)



Slide 24: Reflective areas

Hold a star shape in your hands and think about this week's story, and what it shows us about how to act.....with wisdom and humility.

Think: Who would you rather be like – Daniel or King Nebuchadnezzar?

Talk: What does this mean for how we might treat others this week? How might we serve each other and be wise in our actions towards others?

Do: Pick up a star and hold it in your hand. You might want to turn your thoughts into a prayer, like Daniel did.



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Be wise: act humbly



Who would you rather be like – Daniel or King Nebuchadnezzar?



What does this mean for how we might treat others this week?
How might we serve each other and be wise in our actions towards others??



Pick up a star and hold it in your hand. You might want to turn your thoughts into a prayer, like Daniel did.

