



The
Circle
Maker

For more Parent Resources please visit www.nestudentministries.wordpress.com

“Make Circles” Bible Study

Big Idea: The answer to our prayers is a direct reflection of our walk with God.

James 5:16b (ERV) says, “Anyone who lives the way God wants can pray and great things will happen.” The first thing to learn about prayer is that our prayers are shaped by how we live our lives. Who we think is in charge of our life will determine how we pray and what we pray for. If we live as if we are in charge, we may not ever pray at all. If we think that we determine what we do, how we behave, and how we treat people, we have no reason to consult God when we make decisions or interact with people on a daily basis. If we think that God is control of some aspects of our life, but we are in charge of the rest, our prayers will reflect that. We will only go to God in prayer when we face a situation that we realize that we have no control over. Perhaps a loved one is rushed to the hospital or our parents start talking about divorce. But if we live every day like God is in charge of every aspect of our lives, our prayers will reflect that as well. We will consult God’s opinion in every facet of our life and be in a constant state of prayer.

The prayers of Daniel and the way that God answered them was a direct reflection of how he lived his life. He walked daily with God and because of that he gained insight into the will of God. When he prayed, things happened because he understood what God wanted to happen. There are so many times we pray for things that God will never deliver because we don’t know what God wants to happen. When we begin to understand God’s will by walking daily with him, we will begin to pray for the things that God wants to happen and those are the prayers that God will answer. When we ask God for a miracle, but have no relationship with him, why do we think that he will give us that miracle?

Reading Guide

Day 1: Daniel 1 (Key Verses: 8 – 15)

Daniel and his friends lived the way that God wanted them to live and as a result of that, God gave them wisdom and insight into his will. The same happens for us when we live the way God wants.

Day 2: Daniel 2 (Key Verses: 45b – 48)

Daniel could have easily prayed and asked God to change the king’s mind about killing him. But instead, he used the wisdom and insight that God gave him to execute what God actually wanted to happen. God performed a miracle through the way Daniel lived his life.

Day 3: Daniel 3 (Key Verses: 26 – 29)

Like Daniel, the three friends had a faithful relationship with God and walked daily with him. When they found their selves in a seemingly impossible to get out of situation, that faithful relationship with God saw them through it.

Questions to Generate Discussion

- What did you read? (Have them explain the Daniel narrative in their own words)
- What did you learn? (What timeless truths can we learn from the Daniel narrative?)
- What are you going to do about it? (How can we apply the timeless truths to our own life?)

As you discuss the beginning of the Daniel narrative, steer the conversation back to the Big Idea. Ensure that their primary takeaway is that the way they live their life matters and it affects the effectiveness of their prayers. Daniel’s prayers were only effective because he had a relationship with Christ.

Weekly Action Step

Come up with one way that you can improve your daily walk with God.

Prayer

End by praying for wisdom and insight into God's will. Ask God for strength when it comes to living every day the way he wants us to.

“Dream Big” Bible Study

Big Idea: Inconceivable things happen when we realize how inconceivable God is.

The Bible is brimming with examples of God doing what man considers completely inconceivable. In a time when rain itself was beyond the imagination of man, God flooded the whole earth. When man thinks of a ruler of an empire as the most powerful, God sends plagues upon his empire and sets free his entire slave population. When man thinks that a giant is impossible to beat in a fight, he sends a young boy to end the giant’s reign of terror. When man thinks that sin and evil have won by slaying the hope of the world, God resurrects that hope and overcomes death. It is no different in the book of Daniel. God brought a seemingly untouchable world leader to his knees. He subjugated an unstoppable empire under the control of another. And he saved the life of a man sentenced to an inevitable death. When all seems lost, time and time again, God shows up.

Reading Guide

Day 1: Daniel 4 (Key Verses: 31 – 35)

King Nebuchadnezzar was the most powerful man in the world because he was the ruler of the most powerful empire. When he said, “Jump,” you said, “Off what cliff?” What he said was the law of the land. No man could match the power that Nebuchadnezzar wielded. But because he did not submit himself before the Lord Almighty, God brought him to his knees in humiliation. Overthrowing the king of Babylon seemed inconceivable, but God is more powerful than any king of earth.

Day 2: Daniel 5 (Key Verses: 1 – 6)

Once King Nebuchadnezzar was out of the picture, the Babylonian Empire was instantly weakened, but it didn’t help that the successor, Belshazzar, was only concerned with partying. Instead of being concerned with maintaining the security of his empire, Belshazzar spent all his time carousing with trollops. Even though the Babylonian Empire was weakened, it was still the world’s superpower with the strongest economy and most invincible military. The thought of this nation falling was completely inconceivable, but God builds empires up and he tears them back down.

Day 3: Daniel 6 (Key Verses: 16 – 24)

After the Persian Empire conquered the Babylonian Empire, a law was passed that ordered all subjects of the empire to worship the emperor as a god. When Daniel refused to worship any god other than the God of Israel, he was sentenced to death by lion. He was thrown into a den of lions and seemingly his fate was sealed. Even the idea of Daniel being alive the next morning was completely inconceivable, but closing the mouths of lions is nothing to God.

Questions for Discussion

- What did you read?
- What did you learn?
- What are you going to do about it?

During discussion, talk about how we live as if God cannot do the inconceivable. What would it look like if we truly believed that God could do the impossible? What would our prayers sound like if we truly believed that? How would that change our life?

Weekly Action Step

Think of one huge dream to pray about for the upcoming year. Make it so big that only God can make it happen.

“Pray Hard” Bible Study

Big Idea: Sometimes God puts a vision in our hearts that requires our persistence to see it through.

The big dreams that God places on our hearts are not turned into reality overnight. They are big after all. The bigger the dream, the more persistent the prayers need to be. It took 70 years for the Israelites to return to Jerusalem. And over 500 years passed before Jesus arrived on the scene. Our big dreams might not be achieved in a month. It may take a year, two years, or maybe even an entire lifetime to make them come true. We need to be persistent in our prayers in order to see them actually happen.

Reading Guide

Day 1: Daniel 7 (Key Verses: 23 – 27)

Day 2: Daniel 8 (Key Verses: 19 – 26)

Chapters 7 and 8 describe the same vision in two different ways. Chapter 7 describes the vision poetically and chapter 8 gives the details of the vision in narrative form.

Day 3: Daniel 9 (Key Verses: 4 – 19)

Chapter 9 describes how Daniel received the interpretation to his vision. The vision has a pretty elaborate historical interpretation. But the important thing is that it shows that God’s plans are usually long-term plans. The events of Daniel’s vision describe events that take place over the course of hundreds of years and ultimately lead up to the arrival of Jesus Christ. Only through faithful persistence are the goals of God achieved.

Questions for Discussion

- What did you read?
- What did you learn?
- What are you going to do about it?

This section of Scripture can be confusing. Daniel sees some pretty weird stuff in his vision. But everything that he sees is significant because it helps us to know that God is always in control. No matter how uncertain things get in our lives, we can always hold on to the knowledge that God is in control of it all. Even though Daniel lived over 500 years before Jesus, God was telling him exactly what was going to take place. Even though the dreams that we want to achieve may seem like they will never happen, if we are persistent, God will make them happen.

Weekly Action Step

Formulate a weekly prayer schedule to use as a reminder to pray for your big dream persistently throughout the next year.

Prayer

End by praying that God would strengthen each one of you to be persistent in your prayers. Pray that God holds that big dream in your heart until it comes true.

“Think Long” Bible Study

Big Idea: Sometimes our dreams outlive us.

Just like the vision that Daniel had outlived his lifetime, the same happens in our own life. The big dream that we have may not even be achieved in our lifetime. John F. Kennedy’s dream of landing a man on the moon happened over five years after his death. The dreams of people like Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, and Harriet Tubman for racial equality was not achieved for many years after they had passed away. Even though we may never see our dreams become reality in our lifetimes, we should still dream about them. We should still pray about them. We should still work to achieve them. It is possible that our persistent prayers about our big dreams may impact the lives of our children, our grandchildren, and for generations to come.

Reading Guide

Day 1: Daniel 10 (Key Verses: 15 – 19)

Day 2: Daniel 11 (Key Verses: 40 – 45)

Day 3: Daniel 12 (Key Verses: 1 – 3)

These final chapters go into detail about the interpretation to Daniel’s vision. Kingdoms will rise up and kingdoms will fall down, but God’s plan of salvation continues to move along. The Israelites will eventually go back to Jerusalem and be freed from captivity, but God’s ultimate plan to free the entire world from its spiritual captivity to sin will be achieved through his Son, Jesus Christ. And he will establish his kingdom that will reign forever. The vision of Daniel is a clear picture for us to see the faithfulness of God. Prayer is ultimately us realizing that our dreams are not dependent on us, but on him.

Questions for Discussion

- What did you read?
- What did you learn?
- What are you going to do about it?

Try not to get bogged down in the details of the vision or the interpretation during discussion. The important thing to focus on is that the vision that Daniel had provided hope for the Israelites. It helped the Israelites know that no matter how bleak the circumstances looked; God had a plan to achieve their dream of going back to their home in Jerusalem. Likewise, the dreams that God places on our hearts give us hope that God has a plan to achieve them even if that plan lasts long after we are gone.

Weekly Action Step

Spend some time this week praying for your future children and grandchildren; that they would grow up to walk with God and work to achieve the dreams that are too big for just you.

Prayer

End by praying that God would remind you that his plans are big. Pray that he would help you have dreams so big that your grandchildren will still be working to make them happen.