

Breathe

Module: PEOPLE WHO BREATHED

Lesson 2: DANIEL

Objectives:

- Students will understand how Daniel used specific habits to keep his relationship with God strong under pressure.
- Students will be equipped with a fresh perspective on prayer.

Materials Needed

- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Chart paper and marker
- ☐ Optional: magazines, scissors, tape/glue and Bristol board

Minds On

Brainstorm habits that people have - good and bad - and write them or have a volunteer write them on the chart paper. Examples could include turning off lights when leaving a room, checking Facebook when you get home from school, chewing gum or biting your nails.

As an alternative, have students cut out pictures from magazines or flyers that represent habits and allow them to glue or tape them together on a display board.

Prompt: Does anyone know how long it takes to make or break a habit? (Allow for discussion) To be honest, it probably depends on the person and on the habit. Some sources say 21 days of consistent behaviour will create a habit, but if you don't keep it up, you can lose it just as fast. One of the biggest obstacles to keeping up a good habit is when things change. Summer vacation starting or stopping, moving to a new house, even joining a new team or club can change your schedule and interrupt habits you have developed, maybe without even thinking about it.

Action

Prompt: Today we are going to look at someone from the Bible who had a habit of spending time with God every day. Daniel is famous because God rescued him from being eaten by lions in the lion den, but there is a lot more to the story. Daniel had been captured when his country was conquered by the Babylonians and he was trained to serve the king. Daniel was very wise and he was promoted to a very high position in the kingdom. However, even with all of these changing circumstances, Daniel never gave up his daily practice of praying three times a day. Let's read the story in Daniel 6:1-10.

Have a volunteer read the passage while other students follow along in their own Bibles if possible. It might be helpful to explain that satrap means governor, so it is clear that Daniel's position had a lot of prestige and responsibility! Ask the following questions:

- Why did the king's officials hate Daniel so much?
- What reason would King Darius have to make the law that people could only pray to him?
- Is there another way that Daniel's enemies could have trapped him?
- How did Daniel respond to the law?

Think/Pair/Share: Give students time to think about the following question for a minute or so, and then have them share their answer with a partner before discussing as a whole group. **Ask:** If you were in Daniel's position with so much success and responsibility, would you break the law just to pray? Why or why not?

On a fresh piece of chart paper, sketch a table with four categories: Where, When, How, What. Select 5 volunteers (one to read Daniel 6:10 and assign each of the remaining four with one of the categories). Have one volunteer read Daniel 6:10 and the other four will each write the answer on the chart: where, when, how, and what Daniel prayed (In his upper room; three times a day; on his knees; giving thanks); they can receive help from other students if needed. Then, allow students to brainstorm and add to the chart their own ideas of where, when, how and what they could pray. If you have more than 5 students, you can divide into groups of 3-4 so everyone can participate, and a "secretary" can take notes or add the group's ideas to the chart.

Consolidate/Debrief

Once the groups have all added their ideas, discuss some of the suggestions and give time for the students to reflect which ones they could incorporate into their life.

Ask students if they have any prayer habits, and if so what they are: when, where or how do they usually pray? If they don't have a pattern of spending time with God, encourage them to make a plan with specifics to start building a new habit this week. Depending on your group, you may want to leave more time for discussion of how or why students want to incorporate time with God in their lives. Feel free to share your own experience/struggles when it comes to making time and space to be alone with God in your daily life. Remind students that prayer doesn't have to be complicated to be effective, and you don't have to follow a strict pattern. However, having a plan of where and when you will pray can make it much easier to make it a habit so that it is a regular part of your life.

Breathe In: Read James 4:8 "Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you." Remind the students that making the effort to get closer to God is the most important step to making that change because God helps us. (Leader's note: You may want to post this passage to your students via Facebook, Twitter or text three days after the lesson to help remind them of the verse.)

Breathe Out: Suggest that students choose two ideas from the brainstorming chart as a new way to experience prayer this week. They may even want to attempt this with a friend (e.g. meeting each day after school for five minutes to pray together). Next week you can leave time for students to share what was different about praying at a different time, in a different place, or in a different position than usual.