TRACK TWO

Kids Ministry

A complete 45-60 minute lesson for elementary classes (about grades K-5), with notes for preschool and a take-home page for parents.

THE BIG IDEA

God sees my heart, and He gives grace to the humble.

LESSON PLAN

	45 MIN	60 MIN
Welcome and opening game	8	10
Bible story (told or film)	10	12
Object lesson	5	6
Craft	10	15
Small groups	7	10
Memory verse	3	4
Prayer and goodbye	2	3

THE STORY IN PLAIN WORDS

Years after the fiery furnace, King Belshazzar threw a huge party. He used the gold and silver cups taken from God's temple in Jerusalem, and he and his guests praised idols instead of God. Suddenly a hand appeared and wrote on the wall. No one could read it until Daniel, now an old man, explained it. God had weighed the king's heart and found it too light, because the king knew how God had humbled Nebuchadnezzar but would not humble himself. That night his kingdom ended.

READ BEFORE CLASS

Daniel 5, the whole chapter, and Daniel 4:34-37 (the earlier king who humbled himself). If you will show the film, watch it all the way through first.

What Kids May Ask

The drinking. The Bible says the king and his guests drank wine at the party (5:1-4). With younger kids, say *the king was having a big, wild party and showing off.* With older kids you can add: *They drank wine and praised idols, using God's special cups.* The Bible doesn't say how much they drank, and there's no need to say more.

"Was the hand scary?" It was surprising, and the king was very afraid (5:6). The Bible doesn't tell us how Daniel felt, but he trusted God and told the truth. Say: *God was in control, and He was giving the king a message.*

"What happened to the king?" The Bible says he was killed that night (5:30). Say it once, simply: *That night the king died, and his kingdom was given to someone else.* Don't add details. With preschoolers, say *that night his kingdom ended.*

"Why were the cups such a big deal?" They were special cups made for worshiping God. The king used them to praise idols instead of honoring God. Treating holy things like toys showed what was in his heart.

"Does God weigh me?" Reassure kids: God sees our hearts, and He loves to give grace to anyone who comes to Him humbly. Jesus makes us right with God. This story is a warning about pride, not a reason to be afraid.

Telling the Story

YOU'LL NEED a paper crown, a plastic cup wrapped in foil, a large sheet of paper taped to the wall, and a marker. *SAY lines are a dramatized paraphrase for children; READ lines quote the WEB.*

DO Put on the crown and raise the foil cup.

SAY I am King Belshazzar! I'm having the biggest party in Babylon, with a thousand guests! Bring me the gold cups from God's temple. We'll use them to cheer for our idols!

DO Take off the crown. Speak in your own voice.

SAY Those cups were made for worshiping God. Using them that way was like saying, "I don't need God." And right then...

DO Slowly write MENE MENE TEKEL UPHARSIN on the paper on the wall.

SAY ...fingers of a hand appeared and wrote on the wall! The king's face turned pale and his knees knocked together. None of his wise men could read it. Then the queen remembered Daniel, a man who loved God.

SAY Daniel told the king the truth. Long ago, God had humbled proud King Nebuchadnezzar until he praised God. Belshazzar knew that story, but he stayed proud. The words meant that God had weighed the king, like on a scale, and he was too light. His time as king was over.

READ Daniel 5:22 aloud: "You, his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, though you knew all this..."

ASK What did the king do that showed he was acting proud? What does it mean to be humble?

USING THE FILM INSTEAD. The film runs about 10 minutes. For grades 3-5, show 0:50 to 8:12, the full story. For grades K-2, show 2:18 to 7:18 (from the hand on the wall through Daniel's reading). These times come from the video's YouTube chapter list. Always preview: the section from 7:18 ("In That Night") shows the king's death without violence on screen, but the narration says he "was slain." Some kids may find that unsettling.

Opening Game: Mystery Message

Before class, write **GOD SEES MY HEART** on cards, one letter per card. Make one set for each team and mix up each set. Teams, each with a helper, race to unscramble their letters. For K-2, use **GOD SEES ME** with a picture clue on each card. Every team finishes.

Wrap up: *Today a king gets a mystery message from God, written on a wall, and only one man can read it.*

Object Lesson: Big but Light

YOU'LL NEED a sturdy clothes hanger, string, two paper cups or small open boxes, a big pile of cotton balls or crumpled paper, and one small closed water bottle.

Tie a cup or small open box securely to each end of the hanger so it balances like a scale. An adult holds it, kept low, the whole time. Ask: *Which looks bigger: this huge pile of cotton balls or this one water bottle?* Put them in and let kids watch the cotton side rise. **Say:** *Belshazzar looked big: a crown, a palace, a thousand guests. But when God weighed his heart, it was too light. God doesn't measure how big we look. He looks at our hearts* (1 Samuel 16:7).

Craft: The Hand on the Wall

Kids trace their own hand on the paper "wall" and write **God gives grace to the humble** inside it. Older kids can write the words in white crayon and paint over them with watercolor to reveal a hidden message.

SUPPLIES (PER CHILD)

- Brown or tan construction paper
- A crayon or marker
- Rounded-tip scissors (grades 3-5, supervised)
- A glue stick
- Optional for grades 3-5: a white crayon and watercolors

Small Groups

GRADES K-2

1. What do you think the king's big party was like?
2. How do you think the king felt when he saw the hand writing on the wall?
3. Who explained the writing to the king?
4. What are some ways you can be humble, like saying sorry or letting someone else go first?

GRADES 3-5

1. Why was it wrong to use God's cups to praise idols?
2. Daniel said the king "knew all this" (5:22). Why is knowing about God not the same as listening to Him?
3. What does pride look like at school or at home?
4. Daniel turned down the king's gifts. Why do you think he did?
5. How does Jesus help us when we've been proud?

Memory Verse Practice

MEMORY VERSE

"God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

JAMES 4:6, WEB

Scale motions: on "proud," raise one hand high; on "humble," lower the other hand and bow your head. Say it slow, then fast, then in a whisper. K-2: learn "...gives grace to the humble."

Prayer

Invite kids to close their eyes and quietly tell God one time this week they acted proud. Then pray: *God, You see our hearts. We're sorry for the times we act like we don't need You. Thank You for giving grace to the humble, and for Jesus, who forgives us. Amen.*

CLASSROOM TIPS

- **Attention signal:** say "Weigh in!" and kids hold out both hands like a balance and go quiet.
- Mix ages on each game team so younger kids aren't left out.
- Scale items: only a small closed water bottle and crumpled paper. No coins, rocks, or small objects (choking hazards).
- **Safeguarding.** If a child or teen tells you about abuse, neglect, self-harm, harmful drinking or drug use at home, or anything else that makes you worried for their safety: stay calm, listen, and thank them for telling you. Don't promise to keep it secret, don't question them for details or investigate, and don't confront anyone involved. Write down what they said as soon as you can, and report it the same day to your church's designated safeguarding lead, following your church's safeguarding policy and any mandatory-reporting law that applies to you. If anyone is in immediate danger, stay with them and call emergency services. Telling a church safeguarding lead does not replace any report the law requires you to make directly to child-protection authorities or police.

FOR PRESCHOOL (AGES 3-5)

- Plan for 20-25 minutes: story, the scale, hand tracing, and prayer.
- Tell it as a *big party* and a *message from God*. Leave out the wine and the king's death.
- Questions: *What did the hand do? Who did God help to read it?*
- Practice "...gives grace to the humble" with the scale motions.

TAKE-HOME PAGE · FOR PARENTS

Today in Kids Ministry

The Writing on the Wall

DANIEL 5

WHAT WE LEARNED

At a proud king's party, a hand wrote a message on the wall. Daniel explained it: God had weighed King Belshazzar's heart and found it too light, because he knew about God but would not humble himself. **Big idea:** *God sees my heart, and He gives grace to the humble.*

TALK ON THE WAY HOME

1. What do you remember most about the writing on the wall?
2. What does being humble look like in our family?
3. When is it hard for you to say "I was wrong"?

MEMORY VERSE

"God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

JAMES 4:6, WEB

TRY THIS AT HOME

Make a hanger scale: tie a paper cup or small open box securely to each end of a clothes hanger, and hold it low. Put a pile of something light (cotton balls or crumpled paper) in one and a small closed water bottle in the other. Ask: *Does God weigh how big we look, or what's in our hearts?* Read 1 Samuel 16:7 together.

Watch the film together

Scan, or visit youtu.be/dwrmPL33TgM. Free on YouTube, about 10 minutes. Parents, please preview it first: the film shows the king's death, without graphic violence.

GO DEEPER AS A FAMILY

The **Family Study** track of the full companion guide has the story in simple words, questions for ages 4-7, 8-12, and teens, a family activity, and a prayer.

PRAY TOGETHER

God, You see our hearts. Help us to be humble, to say sorry quickly, and to thank You every day. In Jesus' name, amen.

KIDS: DRAW THE HAND WRITING ON THE WALL

Bible Stories Brought to Life · Scripture from the World English Bible (public domain) · Free to copy for church and family use