



# Lesson Twelve

## *Obey a Sovereign God*



### Growing as a Teacher

#### Scripture

Daniel 5

#### Bible Truth

King Belshazzar of Babylon learned that God is sovereign over all things.

#### Lesson Aim

To understand that we obey a God who is in complete control of our lives and everything else.

Celebrations are delightful. We all enjoy birthday parties, weddings and festive family reunions filled with laughter, fun and lots of good food. They remind us of God's blessings, our love for one another and the joys of living.

But imagine being shattered by tragedy or hearing very bad news in the middle of a special party. That happened to King Belshazzar at his lavish banquet. In the midst of all the revelry, he learned that his reign was about to end and his nation would be divided. That very night, Belshazzar was killed and his kingdom fell. God intervened in a dramatic way because Belshazzar lived with such little regard for God. God demonstrated his sovereignty in one swift move *and* punished Belshazzar's defiance.

**Ask God to humble your heart before him.**

Belshazzar's lack of humility is quite familiar. We, too, sometimes lose sight of God's sovereign control. We forget God is in charge and will accomplish what he sets out to do. Ask God to humble your heart before him. Pray that you and the children in your class will learn to put Jesus Christ, the only Sovereign and Lord, first and foremost in *all* your doings, being assured that "in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

#### *Bible Background*

The king of Babylon, Nabonidus, campaigned in Arabia to strengthen weakening Babylon while Belshazzar, the king's son, stayed home and ruled in his father's absence. Belshazzar was weak and self-indulgent. He ignored God and showed contempt for the Jews' faith by using dishes and goblets from the Jerusalem temple at a banquet honoring himself and false deities.

The wall inscription at the feast referred to units of money, and neither the king nor his wise men understood the meaning of the three words. Daniel, an old man by this time, was asked to interpret the mysterious—and ominous—message sent from God.

That night, Cyrus the Persian defeated Babylon by diverting the course of the Euphrates River, entering the city along the dry riverbed and finding the people at a drunken festival. He killed Belshazzar and defeated Babylon.



#### REVIEW:

JOHN 10:11

JOHN 14:15



## Lesson Twelve at a Glance

Step	Minutes	Children's Activities	Supplies (complete list, p. 11)
<b>1</b> Welcome	5–10	Play <i>Go Figure!</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> TA 12a cards* <input type="checkbox"/> Markers or pencils <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Optional:</i> copy of TA 12a (see <i>Practical Preparation</i> )
<b>2</b> Bible Time	15–20	Listen to the story of King Belshazzar and the fall of Babylon.	<input type="checkbox"/> TA 12b Belshazzar* <input type="checkbox"/> TA 12c Sovereign*
<b>3</b> Memory Verse	5–10	Review John 10:11 and John 14:15. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sing “Sing, Shout, Clap” (Songbook, p. 8).	<input type="checkbox"/> TA 10b John 10:11* <input type="checkbox"/> TA 1b John 14:15* <input type="checkbox"/> Songbook* <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Optional:</i> song poster, <i>Younger Elementary Vol. 2 CD</i>
<b>4</b> Activities	10–15	Do activities that review the Bible story and reinforce lesson truths.	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>At Home 12</i> ** <input type="checkbox"/> Pencils <input type="checkbox"/> Markers or crayons
<b>5</b> Final Focus	5	Say sentence prayers, thanking God that he is in control of everything. Read Jeremiah 29:11.	

Total time: 40–60 minutes

\* *Younger Elementary Teaching Aids Pack*  
 \*\* *Younger Elementary Student Activities Pack*



### Enrichment

Give the children paper and markers, and tell them to open their Bibles to Daniel 5:25–28. Have them write down the three special words that are revealed, and their meanings, found in this passage. During the Bible story, the children can show the words to the class and tell everyone what the words mean.



### Practical Preparation

Gather all the supplies needed for Lesson 12: pictures for the Bible story, Teaching Aids for memory review, copies of *At Home 12*, crayons, markers and pencils.

To prepare for the game *Go Figure!* separate TA 12a cards ahead of time. Before you separate the cards, you may want to make a copy of TA 12a and fill in the letters on the copy so you can display it as a help for your students.

Read Daniel 5. The account of King Belshazzar and the fall of Babylon is filled with drama. Practice telling the story with feeling and action; include emotions and gestures to bring the story to life.





## Welcome

5-10 minutes

Before class, tack the cards from TA 12a to the bulletin board or lightly tape them to the wall, and have markers or crayons available for the children. You may choose to use all 20 cards or as few as you think you have time to do. As the students arrive, welcome them and point out the cards around the room. *Say* It's hard to figure out what the words are, isn't it? Some of the letters are missing. It's almost like trying to read a foreign language. Well, here's a hint. The words are taken from our Sunday school lessons of the past several weeks. Tell the children they are going to play *Go Figure!* The goal of the game is to figure out the missing letters in the words and write them in the blanks using markers or crayons. Provide clues, if necessary, to help the children complete each word. Have available a photocopy of the TA with the words filled in to help those who need it.

At the end of the game, ask the children to identify the words. If there is time, ask volunteers to say one thing that they know about each word. For example, the word *wisdom* reminds us that Solomon asked God to give him wisdom. This exercise will help the children recall some of what they have learned in past lessons this quarter.

*Before moving on to the next step, say* Today you will learn about a king who became very scared when he saw some words appear on his palace walls. He didn't know what the words meant and he had to get help to figure them out.



## Bible Time

15-20 minutes

Gather the children around you and open your Bible to Daniel 5. *Tell the children* I am going to tell you a story about a Babylonian king, about the prophet Daniel and about God, who is in control of everything.

Some time after Nebuchadnezzar died, Belshazzar (*bel-SHAZ-ubr*) became the king of Babylon. One day he decided to give a great banquet for hundreds of his important officials. There was much to eat and drink at the banquet. While Belshazzar was drinking wine, he gave a bold command to his royal servants: "Bring me the gold and silver cups that Nebuchadnezzar took from the temple in Jerusalem so that we may drink wine from them." Belshazzar and all his people then drank wine from the special goblets and praised their false gods made out of gold, silver, bronze, iron and wood.

All at once, a human hand appeared out of nowhere and mysteriously started writing on the palace wall. The frightened king

12a

Sau_	k_ ng
Lo_ d	wi_ dom
tru_ t	Da_ iel
p_ ay	Da_ id
lo_ e	Jo_ sh
Eli_ ah	she_ herd
po_ cr	fol_ ow
o_ ey	So_ omon
than_	g_ _ d
Jo_ ah	Je_ e_ iah



## Answers to TA 12a\*

Saul	king
Lord	wisdom
trust	Daniel
pray	David
love	Joash
Elijah	shepherd
power	follow
obey	Solomon
thank	good
Jonah	Jeremiah

\*You may want to post these words to help your students.



To add dramatic impact to the Bible story, have early arrivals write the following words in bold print on a large piece of paper before the class begins: **MENE, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN.** They can make the letters as decorative as they want to add interest. Have them fold the paper up and give it to a couple of student volunteers to unfold during the Bible story while you tell about the handwriting on the wall.



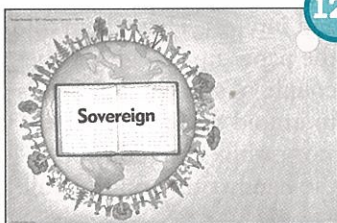


Keep TA 12b for Lesson 13.



## From the Bible

Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble. *Daniel 4:37*



Keep TA 12c for Lesson 13.

watched as the hand wrote. As the letters formed and stayed on the wall, the king turned pale and trembled in horror. *Show the children TA 12b Belshazzar.*

Belshazzar called for the wise men of Babylon. “If you can read this writing and tell me what it means, then I will give you a great reward,” he said.

The wise men looked at the strange words on the palace walls. None of them could tell Belshazzar the meaning of the message. The king became even more upset, and his wise men grew very concerned.

But the king’s mother knew exactly what to do. “Don’t be upset,” she told the king. “There is a wonderful man named Daniel in your kingdom. He has great wisdom and understanding. King Nebuchadnezzar made him ruler over all his wise men because he found that Daniel could explain all sorts of dreams and riddles, and solve difficult problems. Call for Daniel. He will explain the writing to you.”

Belshazzar promised to give Daniel fancy robes, gold jewelry and a high position in the kingdom if he could explain the meaning of the words on the wall. But Daniel said he could keep his gifts. “I don’t want your rewards,” he said. “But I will tell you the meaning of the words.”

Daniel said, “O king, the Most High God gave King Nebuchadnezzar a great throne and a powerful kingdom. But King Nebuchadnezzar became very proud, and God took away his kingdom and he lived like a wild animal. He lived with wild donkeys and ate grass like cows. When Nebuchadnezzar finally learned that God is the most powerful ruler of all, then God gave him his throne and kingdom back.

“You know all this, Belshazzar, but you have not honored God. Like King Nebuchadnezzar, you have tried to make yourself greater than the God who holds your very life in his hand. You have taken the holy cups that came from God’s house for your drinking, and you have worshiped false gods that cannot see, hear or understand. For these reasons, God sent the hand that wrote the message on the wall. These are the words on the wall: *MENE, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN* (*mE-nE, mE-nE, tE-kul, PAR-sin*). Now listen as I tell you what the words mean.” *Show the children TA 12b.*

“*MENE* means that God has *numbered* the days of your kingdom and they are over.

“*TEKEL* means that you have been *weighed* on the scales and you have failed the test.

“*PARSIN* means that your kingdom is already *divided* and given to the Medes and the Persians.”

When the prophet finished speaking, the king ordered his officials to bring Daniel his reward. Maybe this was the last command the king ever gave, because that night Persians entered and conquered the city, and Belshazzar was killed.

*Give the children a few seconds to take in the impact of the story; then show them TA 12c Sovereign. Say Look at the word Sovereign. Say this*

word with me. It means that God is in control of everything. He is in control of nations and of all that he created. He is in control of you and me. The feast that started as a proud boast against God ended with the death of the disobedient king and the destruction of his kingdom. Sadly, Belshazzar refused to believe that God is sovereign, or in control of everything.

God took care of his people and gave Daniel a very high position in the new kingdom, eventually returning his people to their homeland. God could do these things because God is what? Sovereign!



## Memory Verse

5–10 minutes

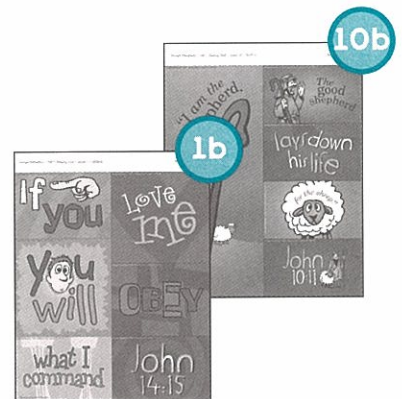
Arrange the shapes from TA 10b John 10:11 in random fashion (see sidebar, p. 7). Have a volunteer arrange them in the correct order, then ask the children to say the verse together. Remove shapes one by one and ask the class to say the verse again. Do the same with TA 1b John 14:15. Remind the children that God sent the Good Shepherd to be their Savior and protector, and they can thank him for his great love and awesome power.

Now stand in a circle and sing the first part of “Sing, Shout, Clap.” After singing the song a couple of times, change one word in the song. To emphasize the Bible truth learned today, change the last line of the song to “. . . the Lord, He is *sovereign* God.” Sing the song this way.



## From the Bible

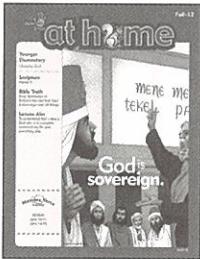
“. . . the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes.” *Daniel 4:25*



3

“Sing, Shout, Clap”  
Songbook, p. 8





# 4

## Activities

10–15 minutes

Give each child a copy of *At Home 12*. Make sure that there are pencils and crayons or markers for everyone. Read aloud the title and directions for the part(s) you choose to do.

In *A Wall of Words*, read the words aloud one at a time, going left to right, top to bottom. Decide which ones are from the Bible story.

In *Puzzle It Out!* the children may need to write the words both in the sentences and the acrostic to help with reading.

Turn to the *What About You?* activity on the back page. It will help the children personalize this lesson. **Say Do this activity at home with your parents. Think about the words and be honest as you answer.**



# 5

## Final Focus

5 minutes

Gather in a circle. **Say God is sovereign. He is in control.** Now ask the children to repeat this important truth after you. Say the sentences aloud two or three times.

Read Jeremiah 29:11 to the class. God says: “For I know the plans I have for you . . . plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Children may say sentence prayers, thanking God that he is sovereign, that he takes care of us, that he knows everything about our lives and that he gives us the power to obey him. Close in a final prayer.



### Items to Send Home

- *At Home 12*