

# 1

# D2BD

## LESSON ONE



## Dare To Be Different

### Key Focus:

Those who dare to be different for God are destined to make a difference in the world.



### SESSION OVERVIEW

The world is full of followers—people who tend to go with the flow and conform to the culture around them. Even those who think they’re dancing to their own tune are typically swayed by social trends and take cues from popular opinion. This is particularly common among young people, since many are self-conscious and striving to fit in. And yet most students really want to make a difference in the world. Why is that? It’s because God created each one of us with a special purpose—a purpose that will honor Him and positively affect those around us.

Your challenge in this session is to help students grasp the fact that their lives can have extraordinary meaning and purpose as they surrender to and follow God’s plan for their lives. By helping your students get a vision for how God can use them to impact the world, you can inspire them to break away from the crowd of conformists, part with popularity, and fulfill their God-given destiny.

Through the life and example of Daniel, your students will get a glimpse of what God can do through a young person who is surrendered to God and determined to follow His ways rather than the world’s ways. When kids are willing to stand up and stand out, God will use them in powerful ways.

### Through this session, students will learn that:

- God created and saved them, not just for their own benefit, but so they can influence others for Him.
- By pursuing God and His purposes above all else, they are making a choice to be distinctly different from their culture and those who don’t follow Jesus.
- As they resist pressure to conform to the world’s pattern, your students will see God work through them to bring positive change to the world and to their friends.
- God intends to use them to lead others into a personal relationship with Jesus.
- Being different can make a difference!



### PLANNING & PREP

#### For this session, you’ll need:

- 1) Student Field Manuals (one per student)
- 2) Bibles (one per student)
- 3) A chalkboard with chalk, or marker board with dry-erase markers
- 4) Paper and pens/pencils for all students
- 5) Reproducibles for Lesson 1 from [D2BDTeacher.com](http://D2BDTeacher.com)
- 6) *The Reel World* DVD (clip 1)
- 7) Modeling clay for all students
- 8) Music for “fashion show” and microphone for announcer
- 9) Several magazines, newspapers, ad fliers
- 10) Butcher paper or poster board, and marker or pens
- 11) “Steps to Peace With God” witnessing tool (one per student)





## JUMP-START THEIR HEARTS

TIME: 5–10 minutes

### OPTION 1: I'M A STAR!

**MATERIALS NEEDED:** Modeling clay

**TO BEGIN**, have students form pairs. Distribute clay or modeling dough to each student and ask them to quickly form a simple model of a star. Have them hold up their stars when they are finished. Ask volunteers to describe how they can tell what the images are. Now have them exchange stars with their partners, and allow one minute for everyone to transform their partners' stars into any food item or animal they choose. Then instruct students to hold their finished model in the air.

**EXCLAIM**, “Wow, these are really great stars! I mean, they’re still stars, aren’t they?” When students state that the models are definitely something other than stars, have a few individuals display their creations while volunteers try to guess what they are. Then discuss the following questions:

- **So how did our stars become something else? What happened to the clay?** (They applied pressure to the clay and molded it into something else.)
- **How is what we did to the clay similar to what people or situations can sometimes do to us?** (People and pressures around us can cause us to be something different from who we could or should be. If we’re not careful, we can be molded into something much different than what God created us to be.)

**Romans 12:2** says, “*Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let God remold your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all his demands and moves toward the goal of true maturity.*” (Phillips Modern English)

- **In what ways does the world try to “mold” people, and how can this cause us to compromise God’s plans for us?** (Cultural pressures and media messages often promote selfishness, greed, materialism, a desire for power, prideful attitudes, filthy language, improper views about sex, clothing that draws the

wrong kind of attention to our bodies, relationships that aren’t pleasing to God, etc. By imitating these things, we adopt beliefs and behavior that are common in the world but go against the standards in God’s Word.)

- **How can we resist the pressure to conform to the world’s patterns and purposes?** (Instead of conforming to beliefs and behaviors that are common to people who don’t follow God, we must continually be renewed and transformed to God’s way of thinking. This happens as we spend time with God in prayer, study His Word, and put the things we learn about Him into practice.)

**POINT OUT** how some of the most influential people in the world—those who are famous in entertainment, sports, or some other aspect of the culture—are often called “stars.” Many young people look up to these stars and even try to model their lives after them.

**EXPLAIN** that God created us to be like a star—but not in the worldly sense. **God wants you to be a shining star that reflects His light and His love to the world. But you won’t be able to do that if you allow the world to squeeze and mold you into something else. Today we’ll consider someone who resisted the pressure to conform to the world’s pattern. And because he did, God worked through him to influence others and bring positive change to the world.**

### OPTION 2: WHAT AM I?

**MATERIALS NEEDED:** None

**RECRUIT** three volunteers, emphasizing that you are looking for actors. The more extroverted your volunteers, the better results you’ll get. Have a leader or another volunteer take the three actors out of the room and give them the assignment below. Encourage them to be overly dramatic in portraying their characters and actions (sound effects are encouraged). Before each actor re-enters the room to perform a part, tell the audience what they’ll see, as described below. During this exercise, the actors will be improvising one scenario while the audience believes they’re acting out something completely different. One at a time, bring the actors in to play their parts:

- The first actor will be told to portray a ballet dancer, while separately you’ve told the audience that the actor is portraying a professional football player.

- The second actor will be told to give the impression of riding a roller coaster, while you've told the audience that the actor is portraying someone in the library.
- The third actor will pretend to be cutting down a large tree, while you've told the audience that the actor is a brain surgeon.

**DISCUSS** the questions below as a follow-up to this activity:

- **How does it feel to look foolish in front of your peers?**
- **Why is the thought of being different from others often difficult or uncomfortable?**

**POINT OUT** how important self-image is to most students. For this reason, being different or singled out can be very intimidating. Most young people don't want to stick out in an odd way. Most are looking for a place to fit in and belong.

- **Do you think most people your age want to be similar to others around them or different, and why?** (It depends on the individual, the situation, and what others around him or her are like. In general, students—whether they admit it or not—don't want to feel odd or different. They would rather belong and have things in common with others.)
- **How, why, or in what circumstances can being different be a good thing? How or why can it be a not-so-good thing?** (Being different is good if those around you are in trouble or not doing the right things. Being different can set a better example. On the other hand, being different just for the sake of being different can lead to troublesome or rebellious behavior.)
- **How does this activity illustrate how people often perceive Christians? Is this good or bad?** (Many people see Christians as different, even odd, in their beliefs and practices. This is good in that God's ways are definitely different than the world's ways, and His people should reflect those differences. Yet,

God doesn't want us to be obnoxious or contentious toward others, nor does He expect us to force His message on those who aren't ready to listen.)

**Romans 12:2** says, *“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

**EXPLAIN** that most of us don't want to feel like the odd man out—different from everyone else. Yet, if we truly want to discover and fulfill the purpose for which God created us, we must resist the tendency to conform to the views and behaviors that are common in the world. These things typically go against the standards in God's Word and distract us from fulfilling His purposes.

**TODAY** we'll consider someone who resisted the pressure to conform to the world's pattern. And because he did, he was used by God to influence others and bring positive change to the world.



### INSTANT REPLAY

TIME: 5–10 minutes

**MATERIALS NEEDED:** “Instant Replay Discussion Guide” (Reproducible 1.1 from [D2BDTeacher.com](http://D2BDTeacher.com))

**DISTRIBUTE** copies of the “Instant Replay Discussion Guide” for session 1. Since this is the first session, you won't have a “Daniel Dare” to discuss or any follow-up memory work. Consider using this time to allow volunteers to share past experiences in talking to others about God or spiritual issues. The following questions may help guide the discussion:

- **What fears or concerns do you have about talking to others about God?**
- **Have you ever talked to people about your faith or about Jesus? If so, what did you learn from that experience?**
- **What do you hope to learn through this course about sharing your faith in Jesus?**

## THE REEL WORLD, CLIP 1, THE ONE WITH THE CLASSROOM

TIME: 5 minutes

**MATERIALS NEEDED:** DVD // “Reel World Discussion Guide” (Reproducible 1.2 from [D2BDTeacher.com](http://D2BDTeacher.com))

**PLAY** *The Reel World*, clip 1, “Dare To Be Different,” which portrays a group of kids giving a substitute teacher an incredibly hard time in class. One student, Erica, tries not to go with the flow and gets confronted by her friends about it ... This provides a “close to home” introduction to this session.

After the video, discuss the following questions using the “Reel World Discussion Guide” for clip 1:

- **What do you think Erica does next? How could she explain why she didn’t go along with the others? What would you have done in this situation?**
- **God wants us to stand up and stand out from the crowd, but there are good ways to do that and not-so-good ways. What’s the difference?**
- **How can you tell when your differences are drawing attention to you rather than drawing attention to God?**

**EXPLAIN** that the group will talk about being different—but not weird different! And we’re not talking in terms of style. **We don’t want to be different just for the sake of being different, yet we must dare to be different in ways that can truly make a difference in people’s lives. The fact is that those who dare to be different for God are destined to make a difference in the world.**

Let’s take a look at someone who wasn’t afraid to be “odd for God”—though he was actually a pretty cool customer. He dared to be different, and eventually he would rock his world for God.



# X TREME TRUTH

## HERE WE GO

TIME: 15–25 minutes (including the main Bible reading)

**MATERIALS NEEDED:** “Xtreme Truth” Bible script from pages 4–5 of the student Field Manual (or Reproducible 1.3 from [D2BDTeacher.com](http://D2BDTeacher.com)) // Music for “fashion show” // Microphone for announcer

**IMPORTANT LEADER NOTE:** Unless you have an extended time period, you will *not* be able to cover all of the material in this main teaching session. The segmented format with blue directives allows you to pick and choose the paragraphs, portions, questions, illustrations, etc., that are best suited to your class and time frame. The material here is not intended to be used word for word, but simply to provide direction so you can convey the content in your own style.

**HAVE** students locate Daniel 1:1–21 in their Bibles or on pages 4–5 in their Field Manuals (or distribute copies of the “Xtreme Truth” Bible script for session 1) so they can read along.

**SELECT** five students to read aloud a portion of the Bible text. Assign one person to each of the five character parts: the narrator, Daniel’s friends, Daniel, Ashpenaz (the king’s chief of staff), and King Nebuchadnezzar. Help the students know who reads next by calling out the parts as they come up.

## Daniel 1:1–21

### NARRATOR:

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried off to the temple of his god in Babylonia and put in the treasure house of his god.

### KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR:

Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring in some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility—young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king’s palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians. The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from the king’s table. They were to be trained for three years, and after that they were to enter the king’s service.

### DANIEL’S FRIENDS:

Among these were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego.

### DANIEL:

But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way.

### ASHPENAZ:

Now God had caused the official to show favor and sympathy to Daniel, but the official told Daniel, “I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men your age? The king would then have my head because of you.”

### DANIEL:

Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, “Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see.”

### ASHPENAZ:

So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days.

### NARRATOR:

At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better than any of the young men who ate the royal food. So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead.

#### DANIEL'S FRIENDS:

To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds. At the end of the time set by the king to bring them in, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar.

#### KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR:

The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service.

#### NARRATOR:

In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom. And Daniel remained there until the first year of King Cyrus.

**EXPLAIN** that Daniel was a teen—not much older than most of your students—when Jerusalem came under attack by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. **This king took items from God's temple, along with some of the finest young men, including Daniel and three of his friends. They would learn the language and culture so they could eventually help run the government. To enter the king's service, the young men needed Babylonian citizenship. This was accomplished by giving them new names. Daniel's friends are better known by their Babylonian names: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.**

- **How would you feel if you were taken from home, from everything familiar, and then deported to another country? How do you think this would affect your faith in God?** (Daniel didn't lose confidence in God and didn't think of himself as a victim. Despite all of the changes, these young men remained loyal to God.)

**EMPHASIZE** that regardless of our circumstances, God has a plan for each of us, just as He did for Daniel and his friends. But we must rely on God to help us stay strong and true—no matter what.

- **What do you think it means that "Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine" (v. 8), and why did he do this?** (*Defile* means "to pollute or make dirty." By God's standards, Babylon's moral and spiritual climate was

corrupt. Much of what Daniel would be taught went against God's laws and standards. Daniel wanted to steer clear of customs that might weaken his faith, such as indulging in things that would make him care more about his physical appetite than his spiritual appetite. In addition, the king's food may have been offered to idols representing false gods. To eat such food would dishonor God, and drinking wine could have dulled Daniel's mind. Daniel determined from the start not to go against what he knew to be right and true—even if it cost him his life.)

**POINT OUT** that people who are determined to stay faithful to God when confronted with temptation can depend on Him for strength to resist. Those who don't prepare their minds and hearts to stay true to God and His Word, however, will find it difficult to resist the world's ungodly ideas and lifestyles.

- **How did God honor the young men for their devotion to Him, and what impact did this have on the officials who supervised them?** (God gave them insight and understanding as well as favor with those in authority. When it was time for their evaluation, the king found Daniel and his friends to be wiser and more capable than anyone—including the advisers already serving the king. This was a testimony of God's power, care, and guidance in the lives of those who are faithful to Him.)

**EXPLAIN** that the world is full of followers—people who tend to go with the flow and conform to the culture around them. **But God is looking for leaders—people who aren't afraid to stand up and be different. God can use people like that to lead others into a relationship with Jesus.**

**ASK** students to consider whether they tend to be trendsetters or trend-followers. Point out that most teens, whether they realize it or not, tend to follow the trends because they want to be "in style."

**RECRUIT** a volunteer to show off his or her style, while another volunteer plays an announcer. Do a quick fashion show in which the stylish volunteer pretends to stroll the catwalk and the announcer takes the microphone and describes what the person is wearing. Play background music and encourage

the audience to “ooh” and “aah” as the model displays his or her style. Then discuss the following questions:

- **Who determines what’s in style?** (Responses might include celebrities, media personalities, movie and TV stars, or fashion designers from New York or Paris.)
- **Who determines your personal style? Where do you get your fashion ideas?** (Most students will probably say that they choose for themselves.)

**POINT OUT** that most teens tend to view themselves as independent and original in their style. **But leaders in the fashion industry—who watch the younger generation intensely—understand that most people are followers. Very few kids are bold and inventive enough to set their own style. The industry calls them “edge kids.” They are the teens who set the trends.**

**EDGE KIDS** aren’t necessarily more popular, intelligent, or talented than the average kid. In fact, they’re often considered odd. **But they dare to do things out of the ordinary. At some point, their daring difference—something they do or wear or create—stands out enough that it begins to catch on with influential people. Suddenly, an edge kid’s odd style becomes a trend that many of us follow.**

- **Do you think edge kids worry about what others think when they try something new and different? Why or why not?**

**CHALLENGE** students to consider how cool it would be to come up with an idea that catches on around the world. Perhaps they don’t see their potential for that kind of influence, but the stuff edge kids do isn’t popular at first either. In fact, it may seem weird to people around them. But edge kids aren’t afraid of what people think. They dare to be different.

**EXPLAIN** that the issue is not clothing and fashions. **God created each of us for a special purpose, and He intends for us to have influence in ways that are far more important than the latest trends. God wants you to be a spiritual edge kid—like Daniel—honoring God no matter what others think.**

- **In what ways do people often view Christians as different or even odd? Why do they have such impressions?** (Sometimes Christians give off certain impressions—good and bad—by what they say and do. But many people have preconceived notions of what it means to be a Christian.)

**EXPLAIN** that when we dare to take a stand for God, we not only influence people who don’t know Jesus, but we also encourage those who do know Him to become bolder in their faith. **Daniel had that effect on his friends Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Like Daniel, they were spiritual edge kids. They dared to be different and influenced an entire empire.**

- **What do you think God could do through you if you dared to be different in a positive, God-honoring way?** (Encourage students to dream a bit about how God could use them if they really took a bold stand and trusted Him completely.)
- **In what ways do students your age think about making a difference in the world or making it a better place?** (They’ll likely mention things like taking care of the environment, helping the homeless, promoting peace, volunteering, etc. Point out that while these causes are worthy, there’s an even more important way—an eternal way—to impact people’s lives. We can help others see what it means to have a personal relationship with Jesus, so they can be with Him forever.)

**EXPLAIN** that in God’s kingdom, those who make the biggest difference are willing to be different. This doesn’t mean being odd or strange (although some will view Christians that way), nor does it mean being different just for the sake of being different. But as your students follow God’s purposes and live by His standards, they’ll think, act, and live differently from most people who don’t follow Jesus.

**POINT OUT** that the world entices us with a lot of fine-looking things—like those set before Daniel and his friends at the king’s table. We have the choice whether to take or leave what the world offers.

**Matthew 6:33** says, **“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”** In other words, when you put God first, He will take care of your needs and give you the fulfilling life He intends for you.

**EXPLAIN** that Daniel and his friends could easily have gone along with the culture. **Some Christians think that the best way to influence people is to**

become more like them so they can “relate.” But why would people want what we have if they don’t see a positive difference from what they already have?

1 Peter 2:11-12 says, “Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.”

- What do you think it means to live “as aliens and strangers in the world”?
- What kinds of good deeds or actions could you do that might help people see Jesus better and inspire them to trust and honor God?

**EXPLAIN** that Daniel understood others were watching him, and he knew how he lived would reveal the authenticity of his faith and the power of God. **It wasn’t Daniel’s skills or aptitude that made him effective for God. It was his faithfulness to God through a challenging situation.**

- From what we know about Daniel so far, what were some of the difficult and different circumstances he faced? (He had been taken to a *different* country, immersed in a *different* culture, subjected to a *different* routine, and given a *different* name. He was in a different world altogether, facing the challenge of what he would do with his faith.)

**POINT OUT** how Daniel’s situation is similar to the challenges students face as they proceed through middle school, junior high, and high school. Like Daniel, they have to decide whether the changes will have a positive or a negative effect on them. Daniel didn’t allow the pressures and practices of the surrounding culture to change him in a negative way. Instead, he determined to change his culture in a positive way. *By daring to be different, Daniel was destined to make a difference in his world. As we trust Jesus and let His life show through us, we can make such a difference in the world.*



# HOLY BIBLE



## BIBLE IN YOUR BRAIN

TIME: 5–10 minutes

**MATERIALS NEEDED:** Bible and/or pages 6–7 in the student Field Manual (or Reproducible 1.4 from [D2BDTeacher.com](http://D2BDTeacher.com))

**INVITE** the students to explore what else the Bible says about the difference Jesus makes in our lives and how daring to be different for God can help influence others in a positive way. (Have volunteers read the passages one at a time. Some of these you will recognize from the main teaching time. If you have time, briefly discuss the implications of each.)

**(LEADER NOTE:** Depending on your time frame, you may want to cover only a few of these passages, as students will cover most of them in brief devotional segments in their Field Manuals.)

### Romans 12:1–2

*“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

### 2 Corinthians 5:17

*“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”*

### Ephesians 2:10

*“For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”*

### Galatians 2:20

*“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”*

### 2 Corinthians 6:17–18

*“Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.”*

### 1 Peter 2:11–12

*“Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.”*

### Romans 1:16

*“I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.”*

**EXPLAIN** that God created each of us to make a positive difference in the world. **It’s not always easy to live for God while most people rebel against Him and go their own way, but if we’re not ashamed to stand out for Jesus, He can use us to influence others to follow Him. Remember this: Those who dare to be different for God are destined to make a difference in the world.**

**REFER** students to pages 6–7 of the Field Manual, where they will find these passages, along with a practical challenge and prayer focus for each day of the coming week.

## ACTIVITY ZONE

TIME: 5–10 minutes

### OPTION 1: PROMISES, PROMISES

**MATERIALS NEEDED:** Several magazines, newspapers, ad fliers, etc.

**BRING** to class several magazines, newspapers, or ad fliers. Divide into groups and give each group a few of these items. Give students a few minutes to look through the periodicals to find ads that make subtle or overt claims about how a product will enhance a person's life. For example, an ad might imply that you'll be cooler, more successful, or more attractive if you use the product. Bring students together and have volunteers describe the ad claims to the class. Then discuss the following questions:

- **What methods do these ads use to persuade people? Are they effective? Why or why not?**
- **In what ways do these kinds of ads sway people's attitudes, opinions, and behaviors?**
- **In what situations do you sometimes feel pulled or persuaded to do things you would rather not do and you know aren't right?**

**EXPLAIN** that outside influences, both positive and negative, tend to sway our thinking and behavior. Often, these influences come from the people we associate with every day. These influences tend to affect our relationship with God, one way or the other.

**DISCUSS** ways that Christians can try to persuade others to know and trust God. Point out that our actions and examples often speak louder than our words.

### OPTION 2: WORDS OF WITNESS

**MATERIALS NEEDED:** Butcher paper or poster board // Markers or pens

**DIVIDE** the class into groups of no more than four students. Give each group a large piece of butcher paper or poster board, along with markers or pens. Have them write the word *WITNESS* on their papers with the letters going down the left side of the paper.

**(LEADER NOTE:** Since you may not have dealt in-depth yet with the concept of being a spiritual witness, have students give their general ideas regarding what a “witness” is or does. These things may or may not convey spiritual ideas.)

Instruct them to creatively think of words or phrases that start with the letters W-I-T-N-E-S-S that describe a witness. For example:

- W** = **W**inning our world, **W**orking with Christ, **W**hat did I see?  
**I** = Christ **I**n me, **I**mpact my world, **I**nvestigating a scene, etc.  
**T** = **T**otally sold-out, **T**alking about Jesus, **T**elling what I know, etc.  
**N** = **N**ot ashamed, **N**othing but the truth

After a few minutes, bring the class back together and have someone from each group report what they came up with for each letter. Briefly discuss the following questions:

- **What is a witness?** (A witness is essentially someone who tells the truth about what he or she has seen or heard regarding a particular situation or individual.)
- **What do you think it means to be a witness for Christ? How does this happen?** (It simply means that we're willing to communicate what we know personally about Jesus. It means that we willingly share the truth about Him with others. This happens not only through words, but also through attitudes, choices, and actions.)



## WITNESS WORK

TIME: 10 minutes

**MATERIALS NEEDED:** Student Field Manual (or Reproducible 1.5, “My Story,” from [D2BDTeacher.com](http://D2BDTeacher.com)) // Paper and pencils // “Steps to Peace With God” witnessing tool

**EXPLAIN** that it’s one thing to dare to be different and be willing to take a stand for Christ, but it’s another to know what to say or do when people sincerely want to know about that difference. **It’s crucial to know what we believe and to be able to clearly communicate our faith in Christ. That doesn’t have to be difficult, but it helps to have a plan or at least have given some thought to what we might say to someone who asks why we do some things differently.**

**One of the most effective and powerful tools every Christian has to influence others for God is a personal story of what God means and how He’s affected his or her life.**

1 John 4:14 says, **“And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent His Son to be the Savior of the world.”**

- **What does it mean to testify? What is a Christian’s testimony?** (It means to tell the truth about what you’ve seen or heard or what you know about a situation. A Christian’s testimony is a personal account about his or her experience with Christ.)
- **In what ways is sharing a personal testimony helpful when communicating the message of Christ?** (Among other things it demonstrates that God is personal, and it allows the hearer to see the difference Christ can make in a life.)

**DISTRIBUTE** paper and pencils and have students write down responses to the following questions:

- **How has being a Christian made you different or made you better?** (If any students have not yet made the decision to follow Christ, have them describe how they think knowing God would or should affect a person’s life.)

- **What is your personal “faith story” (or testimony)?** (Refer to page 8 in the student Field Manual, where they will refine their story outside of class. If they don’t have manuals, use Reproducible 1.5, “My Story,” from [D2BDTeacher.com](http://D2BDTeacher.com). For now, have them write a preliminary draft on a separate sheet.)

**REMINDE** students that a testimony doesn’t have to be dramatic. They can simply respond to the following:

- 1) What was my life like *before* I became a Christian?
- 2) What made me decide to accept Christ as Savior, and *how* did I do that? (Helpful hint: How did you hear about Christ? What did you hear about Christ? How did you respond?)
- 3) What difference has Jesus made in my life? How have things changed *since* I made that decision?

Students can work from these questions or—if they have very little life history before receiving Christ—they can take another simple approach to presenting their stories: *why* they are Christians, *how* they became followers of Christ, and *what* difference it makes in their lives.

**POINT OUT** that students will further develop and practice their testimonies in sessions to come.

**HIGHLIGHT** Step 1 of the “Steps to Peace With God” witnessing tool, along with the related Bible verses that they’ll memorize between now and the next session.





## THE OWN-ZONE

TIME: 5 minutes

**CHALLENGE** each student to consider one of the following as it applies to their lives:

1. **Is there any aspect of life in which you have not dared to be different in a way that would please God? Maybe something about your behavior isn't setting the best example or it's sending out the wrong message about being a follower of Christ.**
2. **Perhaps you're daring to be different and taking a bold stand for God. Now you're ready to step out and really make a difference for Jesus. Maybe you can invite some new friends to a youth event. You might even have an idea to start a new ministry.**
3. **Perhaps you haven't made a personal decision to follow Jesus. Maybe you come to church—even to this class—because your parents make you come or because you feel you need some "religion" in your life. But following Jesus is not about religion. Religion is about people attempting to relate to God through their own efforts or good works. On the other hand, following Jesus is about a relationship with the One who created you. If you're not experiencing this, you may want to simply ask God to reveal to your heart just how special you are and what He could do through your life to make a positive difference in the world.**

**ALLOW** each student to find a place in your room where he or she can get alone with God and talk to Him about one of the issues above as it applies to his or her life. Challenge students to renew their commitment to take a bold stand for Christ. Encourage them to ask Jesus for help, guidance, and strength as they take the steps necessary to accomplish His plans and impact others for Him.

**INVITATION OPTION:** If there are students in your group who don't have a personal relationship with Jesus, invite them to trust Him today so they can become all He created them to be and make a positive difference in their world. Lead them in a short prayer, asking God to forgive them for their sins because of what Jesus did on the cross, and trusting Christ to be the Leader (Lord) of their lives. (Note: Use the sample prayer on the included "Steps to Peace With God" witnessing tool to help guide this time if needed.)



## THE DANIEL DARE

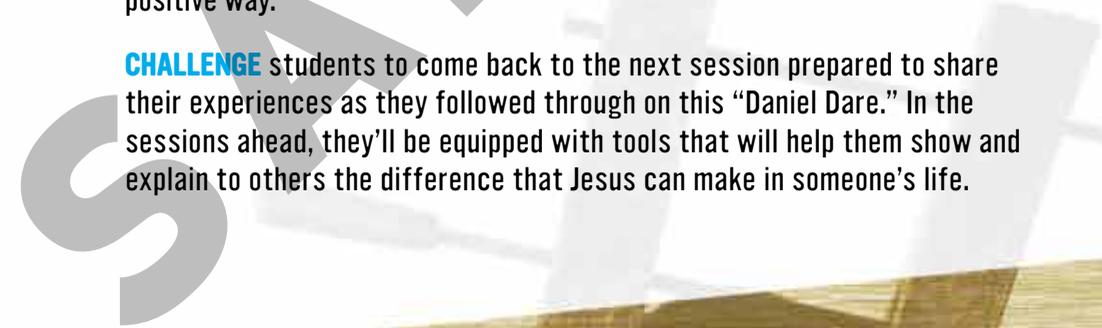
TIME: 5–10 minutes

**MATERIALS NEEDED:** Student Field Manual (or Reproducible 1.6, "Daniel Dare" for session 1, from [D2BDTeacher.com](http://D2BDTeacher.com))

**REFER** students to pages 12–13 in the Field Manual. (If they don't have manuals, distribute copies of Reproducible 1.6.) If you have extended time, students can start on this exercise; otherwise, briefly describe what they'll do outside of class.

**EXPLAIN** that this week they'll note several ways in which they're tempted or pressured to compromise their faith and relationship with Jesus. In these situations they must, like Daniel, make a deliberate choice not to corrupt themselves spiritually, but instead to do what pleases and honors God. In each of these situations, they'll honestly describe the choice they made. In addition, they'll list ways they chose to be different from others around them in attitudes, words, decisions, and actions. Then students will describe how these choices could affect their witness for Christ and influence others in a positive way.

**CHALLENGE** students to come back to the next session prepared to share their experiences as they followed through on this "Daniel Dare." In the sessions ahead, they'll be equipped with tools that will help them show and explain to others the difference that Jesus can make in someone's life.





## CLOSING

TIME: 5 minutes

**REMINDE** students that God created and saved them, not just for their own benefit, but so they can reach and influence others for Him. By resisting the pressure to conform to the world's pattern, God can work through them to bring positive change and lead others into a personal relationship with Jesus. *If they dare to be different for God, they are destined to make a difference in the world.*

**ASK** for a volunteer to close in prayer, or lead students in the following prayer:

*Dear Jesus, I thank You that I was created to know You and have a personal relationship with You. I want to help others experience that same purpose. I love You and want to obey You with all my heart, regardless of the cost. I want to take a stand for You, as Daniel and his friends did, and be willing to tell others about You. Help me make choices that will honor You and allow others to see Your work in my life. I want to be the kind of person who will inspire others to want to know You. I know I can't do this on my own. I need You to help me and to make me into the person You want me to be. I ask this in Your Name, Jesus. Amen.*

**DON'T FORGET** the memory work, daily devotions, and "Daniel Dare" in the student Field Manual. Be prepared to share your progress in the next session.

