

Lessons from the book of Daniel

Designed for ages 8-11

(some activities could be used with older or younger, depending on your situation and on your particular students)

Includes:

- Extra notes for the stories
 - Discussion questions
- Activity booklet about Babylon
(with pop-ups, mini-booklet, and other crafts)
 - Fill-in-the-blank lions' den story
- Suggestions for supplemental pictures
 - Writing-on-the-wall cookie project
 - 3D winged lion
 - Ram and goat action pencil topper
 - Famous quotes Bingo game
 - "Readers' theater" play
 - 3D paper craft

This booklet represents a traditional, non-denominational Christian viewpoint.

All activities, patterns and artwork (except for the illustrations on page 7) are originals by Ellen J. McHenry.

©2010



ellenjmchenry.com

Daniel Chapter 1: Daniel and his friends

Extra notes for Bible story:

Taking young men captive and making them into highly educated members of the king's court was common practice in the ancient world. The ancient kings wanted to take advantage of not only the physical wealth that the conquered country, but the human resources as well. Highly skilled captives were put to work serving their new king and were expected to do their very best for him. Sometimes the conquering nation would be highly influenced by the culture of the people they had captured. This was the case in Babylon-- the Babylonians had absorbed the culture of the Sumerians and the other people groups of that area. The Babylonians spoke ancient Aramaic (Jesus spoke a later version of Aramaic) and they wrote with Sumerian cuneiform. Babylonian literature, music and scientific knowledge was taken straight from the Sumerians.

When Ashpenaz changed the names of the four young men, he was intentionally challenging their belief in their God, Yahwey. Here are the meanings of their names:

Daniel: "God is my judge."	Belteshazzar means "the god Bel (same as Marduk) will protect him"
Hananiah: "The Lord shows grace."	Shadrach means "under the command of Aku" (the moon god)
Mishael: "Who is like God?"	Meshach means "who is like the god, Aku?"
Azariah: "The Lord helps."	Abednego means "servant of Nego, the god of learning"

Read these verses after you have read the first chapter of Daniel. These verses give God's view of the situation and give God's advice to the captives. Jeremiah 26: 1-10, and Jeremiah 29: 4-7

Discussion questions:

- Why was Daniel in Babylon? (*God was punishing the nation of Israel for years of idol worship and sin*)
- Had Daniel and his friends done any of the sins that caused God to be angry at Israel? (*no*)
- Have you ever received punishment just because you were part of a group, even though you personally had not done the thing that the group was being punished for?
- What were your feelings toward the other members of the group and towards the adult who gave out the punishment?
- How could Daniel have felt about being in Babylon? (*bitter and angry*)
- There is no record of Daniel ever complaining about his life even though he served in the governments of foreign kings his whole life. Is he a good role model? (*yes!*)
- Why did Daniel refuse to eat the king's food? (*Daniel knew that Babylonians ate pigs and other food that God had told them was "unclean." It would have been a sin for him to eat such food. Daniel wanted to obey God rather than the king.*)
- Do we have to refuse to eat certain foods in order to please God? (*No. Jesus clearly stated that it is not what you eat that makes you unclean, it is your sinful behavior . Mark 7:14*)
- What was God's advice to the people who had been taken captive? (*quote the verses from Jeremiah*)
- Can you see how Christians living in the modern world might be similar to Jews living in Babylon? Is it wrong to work for non-Christian employers and governments? (*No, God told the Jews to submit to the Babylonians and to be a productive part of their society, working hard at their jobs.*)
- Is it okay to pray for the good of our country even though it may not be following God's ways? (*Yes, God told the Jews to pray for the peace of Babylon.*)
- Were the Jews supposed to give up being Jewish and just become Babylonians? (*No, they were to maintain their Jewish identity and hope to return to Judah.*)
- How can modern Christians be a part of their society and yet retain their identity as Christians?

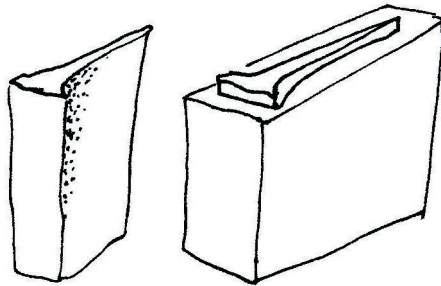
Activities for chapter 1:

1) Role Play: Make paper chains and have students pretend to be taken captive and led to Babylon. The adult(s) play the role of the Babylonians!

2) Show pictures of Babylon (ruins, Ishtar gate, standard of Ur, ziggurat) There are lots of pictures available online if you use Google image search.

3) Start Babylon book. Do the map, the cuneiform, and the constellations.

To make a cuneiform stylus, you could use Sculpey™ oven-hardening dough, or you could sculpt or sand the end of a piece of wood. Another idea would be to cut a thick piece of cardboard and glue it onto a small block of wood or onto a larger piece of cardboard. Use an ink stamp pad to ink the cuneiform stylus, as would ink any rubber stamper. Make sure the pad isn't too dried out. Alternatively, you may consider using black or brown paint spread out thinly on a paper plate.



Daniel undoubtedly had to learn to read and write cuneiform. It was the international written language of his era, much like English is today. Have the students pretend they are one of the Jewish captives having to learn cuneiform. Let them practice stamping out some words, then see if they can make some simple sentences.

NOTE: THE PATTERNS FOR THE BABYLON BOOKLET ARE AT THE VERY END OF THIS DOCUMENT.

Daniel Chapter 2: Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a statue

Extra notes for the Bible story:

The layers of the statue represent the following kingdoms:

Gold head: Babylon

Silver chest: Medes and Persians (Cyrus, Darius)

Bronze thighs: Greece (Alexander the Great)

Iron and clay feet: the Romans

The rock that struck the statue: the kingdom of God (visible to us as the New Testament church)

Dreams were extremely important to people of the ancient world. The dream of Nebuchadnezzar seemed to be of a different sort than an ordinary dream, and he knew it. Anyone who has had a vision will tell you that there is a distinct difference. Nebuchadnezzar knew this was no ordinary dream, which is why it upset him so much.

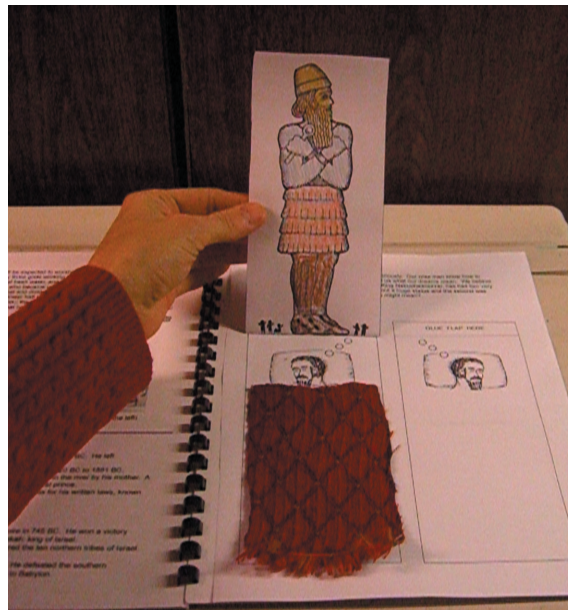
The term "Chaldeans" in the book of Daniel refers to a group of "wise men" and magicians. Originally, the Chaldeans were simply one of the people groups who inhabited an area of Mesopotamia. They were the conquerors for a time, and then they were conquered themselves, and their ethnic identity was lost. However, their knowledge of astrology and magic was retained by their conquerors, and eventually the word Chaldean came to mean a person who knew all the ancient knowledge of magic and astrology. Daniel was trained to be one of these "wise men."

Discussion questions:

- Why did Nebuchadnezzar not tell his dream to his wise men? What would the wise men have said and done if Nebuchadnezzar had simply told them his dream and asked them to interpret it? *(Of course, they would have made something up.)* Could Nebuchadnezzar have then been certain that they were right? *(No. Nebuchadnezzar needed a way to make sure he was getting the truth.)*
- Was Nebuchadnezzar a reasonable person? Was putting all his wise men to death a reasonable punishment for not being able to interpret the dream? *(No, it seems that the king was a bit crazy.)*
- Notice that Daniel saved not only himself, but also the other wise men. Can you think of a situation in which you might be able to think of others, not just yourself?
- What is the difference between astronomy and astrology? *(Astronomy is a scientific study of the stars. Astrology is the belief that you can tell the future by looking at the stars.)*
- What is the difference between magic tricks and "black magic"? Where does the power for "black magic" come from? *(Magic tricks are just for fun. Black magic is a real belief that a supernatural power can do things for you. The power for black magic can be none other than Satan and his helpers.)*
- What does God say about "black magic"? *(Read Deut.18:10)*
- What do we call it when God does something that seems magical? *(a miracle)*
- How does our culture encourage us to think about magic? Is there such a thing as "white" magic? *(Our culture is very much represented by Harry Potter and company. Our culture doesn't believe that magic comes from the devil. Modern witches say their power is just from nature. The Bible says that witchcraft in all its forms is wrong.)*
- Is it a sin to watch the Harry Potter movies or read the books? *(No. Daniel had to learn pagan things.)*
- Is it wrong to let these movies and books influence your beliefs about magic and Satan? *(Yes, our beliefs should always be based on what it says in the Bible.)*
- Do you think Daniel had to learn magic spells as part of his training as a wise man of Babylon? *(Yes, he probably did.)* Do you think he ever used them? *(No.)*
- Who or what is represented by the rock? *(God's kingdom, the New Testament church)*
- Are you a part of that rock? *(Yes, if you love Jesus.)*
- Did all of the prophecies of the dream come true? *(Yes, all the kingdoms came and went just as the dream predicted.)*
- Do we have to be afraid that Christianity will be wiped out by other religions? What does the dream predict? *(God's kingdom will fill the earth.)*

Activities for Chapter 2:

- 1) Assemble and read the Gilgamesh mini-booklet and glue it into the book where indicated. (Assembly instructions are given on the bottom of one of the booklet pattern pages.) As you read, note that Gilgamesh has a significant dream and has its meaning interpreted by this mother. Talk about other similarities between this story and Bible stories such as the account of the flood and the story of the serpent in the garden of Eden. There is a space below the Gilgamesh booklet for the students to draw a picture of what they think Humbaba looked like.
- 2) Do the statue pop-up picture on last page. Color the statue before gluing it onto the page. Use a piece of fabric for Nebuchadnezzar's blanket. The finished project should look like this:



NOTE: THE PATTERNS FOR THE BABYLON BOOKLET ARE AT THE VERY END OF THIS DOCUMENT.

Daniel Chapter 3: The fiery furnace

Extra notes for the Bible story:

Isaiah 43:2 possibly predicts this chapter of the Bible. It prophesies people who will survive fire and be unharmed. You may want to read this verse before reading the story.

The furnaces of the ancient world had bellows on them that fanned extra air into the fire, making them hot enough to melt metal. For a picture of a large blast furnace that would have been similar to the furnace in this story, go to moirafurnace.com.

Here's a great way to tell this story. Give the students hand motions for each one of the instruments mentioned and each one of the government officials as well. (Signs for the officials might include something related to a hand sign they might do, a piece of clothing, or hat they might wear. Just make it up.) Read the story out loud and at the mention of each instrument and each government official, have the students do the pantomime that does with it. The kids will think it is funny to go through the routine each time the list is read. You might also want to assign certain students to read the parts of the herald, the Jewish young men, the officials and Nebuchadnezzar. You could print the words onto a white board, or write them on index cards.

Discussion questions:

--What if God had allowed the three men to be burned up in the fire? What would have happened to them? *(They would have gone to heaven (or the Old Testament equivalent of heaven) and received everlasting life and rewards for their faithfulness.)*

--Would Nebuchadnezzar have won if the men had died? *(No, because to win he had to make the three men bow. Even if they had died, they still would not have bowed, thus Nebuchadnezzar lost.)*

--Does God always rescue his people from situations like this? *(No, sometimes he allows them to be martyrs and die for their faith. For example, many Christians were burned at the stake in Europe during the time period we call the Renaissance.)*

--What often happens when someone is willing to die for their faith? Hint: There is a famous saying that goes like this: "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." *(Often, God brings many people to faith because of the witness of the martyr. In place of that one believer, hundreds more spring up!)*

--If we are ever in a situation where our faith is tested, is this a good story to bring to mind? *(Yes! These men can be an encouragement to us in our trials. No matter what happens to us, God will save us and reward us for our faithfulness.)*

--Who was the fourth man in the fire? *(Most people believe it was Jesus. At the very least, it was an angel sent by God.)*

--Do you think Nebuchadnezzar learned his lesson? *(As we will find out, he'll need another lesson!)*

Activities for chapter 3:

- 1) Read the page in the booklet with the information about the gods.
- 2) Do the tile project. One thing the fiery furnace may have been used for is to produce the blue and yellow tiles for which Babylon was famous. The tiles were made of clay, hardened in the furnace, painted with colored glazes, then fired again. There is a blank tile pattern on one of the pattern pages. Provide students with your choice of art materials to decorate their tile. When finished, glue the tile into the book.

NOTE: THE PATTERNS FOR THE BABYLON BOOKLET ARE AT THE VERY END OF THIS DOCUMENT.

Daniel Chapter 4: The insanity of Nebuchadnezzar

Extra notes for the Bible story:

Isaiah 13: 17-22 predicts the destruction of Babylon. Babylon was conquered by the Medes and the Persians not too long after Nebuchadnezzar's time. Today the site of Babylon is just ruins.

You may want to show some pictures of the ruins of Bablyon, using Google image search and key words "ruins Babylon." You may find some sites that the modern Iraqis are beginning to restore, just the way we restore old forts and buildings from our past. But Nebuchadnezzar's glorious city is totally gone.

In this story, Nebuchadnezzar's downfall is his vanity about his accomplishments. One of the buildings that Nebuchadnezzar may have been looking at was his famous "hanging gardens." These gardens were built for his wife, who had come from Persia and missed the greenery of her native land. Archaeologists have recently discovered a site that they believe is was original site of the gardens, but there isn't enough there to be able to reconstruct what they looked like. We do have some descriptions written by ancient historians, but it is doubtful whether they saw the gardens firsthand. More likely, they were elaborating on the writings of a Chaldean historian of the 4th century BC (later than Nebuchadnezzar's time).

The Greek historian Strabo said:

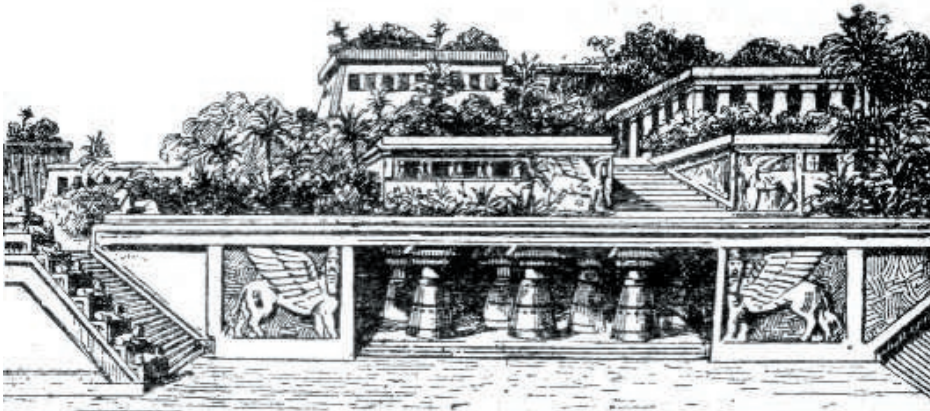
"The garden is quadrangular in shape, and each side is four plethra in length. It consists of arched vaults, which are situated, one after another, on checkered, cube-like foundations. The checkered foundations, which are hollowed out, are covered so deep with earth that they admit of the largest of trees, having been constructed of baked brick and asphalt — the foundations themselves and the vaults and the arches. The ascent to the uppermost terrace-roofs is made by a stairway; and alongside these stairs there were screws, through which the water was continually conducted up into the garden from the Euphrates by those appointed for this purpose. For the river, a stadium in width, flows through the middle of the city; and the garden is on the bank of the river."

The Greek historian Diodorus said:

"The Garden was 100 feet (30 m) long by 100 ft wide and built up in tiers so that it resembled a theatre. Vaults had been constructed under the ascending terraces which carried the entire weight of the planted garden; the uppermost vault, which was seventy-five feet high, was the highest part of the garden, which, at this point, was on the same level as the city walls. The roofs of the vaults which supported the garden were constructed of stone beams some sixteen feet long, and over these were laid first a layer of reeds set in thick tar, then two courses of baked brick bonded by cement, and finally a covering of lead to prevent the moisture in the soil penetrating the roof. On top of this roof enough topsoil was heaped to allow the biggest trees to take root. The earth was leveled off and thickly planted with every kind of tree. And since the galleries projected one beyond the other, where they were sunlit, they contained conduits for the water which was raised by pumps in great abundance from the river, though no one outside could see it being done."

Another ancient source describes it like this:

"And then there were the Hanging Gardens. Paracleisos going up to the top is like climbing a mountain. Each terrace rises up from the last like the syrinx, the pipes of pan, which are made of several tubes of unequal length. This gives the appearance of a theater. It was flanked by perfectly constructed walls twenty-six feet thick. The galleries were roofed with stone balconies. Above these there was the first of a bed of reeds with a great quantity of bitumen, then a double layer of baked bricks set in gypsum, then over that a covering of lead so that moisture from the soil heaped above it would not seep through. The earth was deep enough to contain the roots of the many varieties of trees which fascinated the beholder with their great size and their beauty. There was also a passage which had pipes leading up to the highest level and machinery for raising water through which great quantities of water were drawn from the river, with none of the process being visible from the outside."



You can view these copyright-free illustrations on Wikipedia.org "Hanging Gardens of Babylon."

Here are some ways that artists have imagined the hanging gardens. Our project will be a bit simpler than this. The gardens were probably based on a ziggurat shape, so our garden will be in the form of a ziggurat.



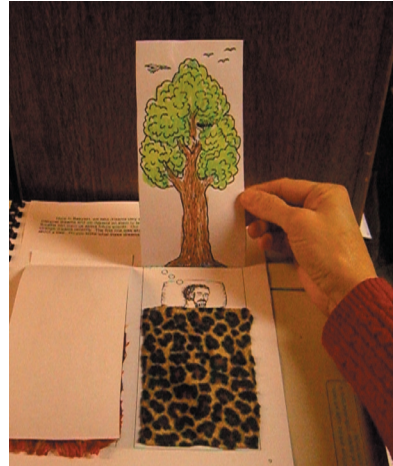
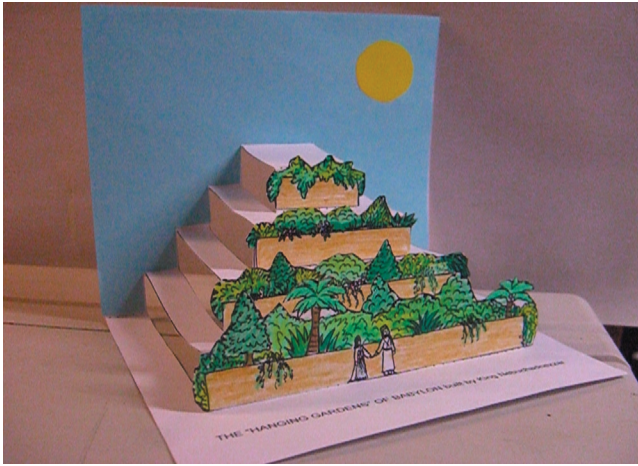
Notes about Nebuchadnezzar's mental illness:

The mental illness that Nebuchadnezzar suffered from is called "insania zoanthropia." In 1946, there was a man in a mental hospital in England who thought he was a cow, just like Nebuchadnezzar did. He picked and ate grass all day in the hospital yard and would only drink water from a bowl. Strangely enough, this man also experience unusual growth of his hair and nails. Other people with this illness may think they are some other animal. There is a record of a man who thought he was a rooster and tried to sleep standing up, as if he was on a perch. It may sound funny, but it's really sad when something goes wrong with the brain. These people had mothers and fathers and brothers and sisters who were sad to see them so sick.

Apparently, while Nebuchadnezzar was sick, someone ruled for him and was willing to turn the kingdom back over to him when he recovered. It is amazing that he had officers that were so loyal to him. Often in the ancient world, as soon as a king showed any kind of weakness at all, one of his officers or generals would try to assassinate him! God was protecting his kingship while he was sick.

Activities for chapter 4:

- 1) Finish Babylon book (do hanging gardens and pop-up of tree dream).



Note the optional addition of blue paper for the sky and a cut-out sun. You may want to do something different with your background, however.

-
- 2) Do a “final exam” quiz game, to test these “new Babylonian students” in their knowledge (just as Daniel and his friends were tested, back in chapter 1).

Questions:

- 1) Which of these is not a Babylonian god?
a) Markuk b) Bel c) Sin d) Ra
- 2) Sumerians made buildings called:
a) zigzags b) ziggurats c) temples d) pyramids
- 3) Which of these is not a constellation?
a) the Ax of Artemis b) Orion the Hunter c) Cassiopea the Queen d) Draco the Dragon
- 4) In the story of Ziusudra, what does Ziusudra build?
a) a palace b) a boat c) a temple d) a house
- 5) What are Nebuchadnezzar’s favorite colors?
a) blue and white b) blue and red c) blue and green d) blue and gold
- 6) What is our writing called?
a) heiroglyphs b) papyrus c) cuneiform d) pictographs
- 7) What was the name of the official who was in charge of you when you first came here?
a) Azariah b) Arioch c) Ashpenaz d) Nebuchadnezzar
- 8) In Gilgamesh’s dream, what did the double-edged ax represent?
a) a war b) a man c) a weapon d) a god
- 9) Ziusudra told Gilgamesh about a special plant that grew on the bottom of the ocean. What would this plant do?
a) make you to grow younger b) make you to die
c) let you to know the truth about everything d) give you victory over your enemies
- 10) Who were the hanging gardens built for?
a) the goddess Ishtar b) the god Marduk c) the citizens d) Nebuchadnezzar’s wife

Answers: 1) d 2) b 3) a 4) b 5) d 6) c 7) c 8) b 9) a 10) d

Daniel Chapter 5: The writing on the wall

Extra notes for Bible story:

Until the 20th century, skeptics of the Bible could point to this story as a reason not to trust the historical accuracy of the Bible. There was not a single ancient document other than the book of Daniel, that acknowledged the existence of a king named Belshazzar. Then, an archaeological artifact was discovered-- the "Cylinder of Nabonidus." This large clay cylinder is covered with cuneiform writing. (You can easily find a picture of it online by using the key words "cylinder Nabonidus" in a search engine that is set to search for images.) When scholars translated the cuneiform, they found references to "Belshazzar, son of Nabonidus." (Nabonidus was king right after Nebuchadnezzar, but apparently was not genetically related to him.) Instantly, the accuracy of the Bible had been confirmed. (As a side note, sources outside the Bible claim that Belshazzar's daughter, Vashti, was captured and given to the Persian king, Artaxerxes. This would be the same Vashti who was deposed as queen at the beginning of the book of Esther.)

From this cylinder we also learn that Belshazzar was ruling Babylon in place of his father, who had gone on a very long trip. Nabonidus, father of Belshazzar, spent 10 years outside his kingdom. It is unclear why he was away for so long. The cylinder makes it plain that he was a devotee of the moon god, Sin, and had helped to build a large temple to Sin in a place far from Babylon. So when Belshazzar made Daniel "third ruler" in the kingdom, the first two were Belshazzar and his father. No sooner does Belshazzar proclaim Daniel to be the third ruler of the kingdom, than he (Belshazzar) is killed. Since the first king isn't around at all, once Belshazzar is dead, who, technically, is in charge of Babylon?

Media and Persia are both located in the modern country of Iran. The people of these nations were very similar, in the same way that German and Dutch cultures are similar, or perhaps the US and Canada. They had common ancestors and had migrated from Asia several hundreds years earlier. The royal families of Media and Persia had recently intermarried at the time of this story. Their shared culture is attested to by the use of the term "the law of the Medes and the Persians." Eventually, Persia became stronger (militarily) and took over Media.

This story introduces yet another mysterious character who has remained unidentified: Darius the Mede. The historical annals of other nations have accurate records of their kings and what years they reigned. During the year that this story took place, the king of the Medes wasn't named Darius. In fact, historians think that at the time of this story, the Persians had already overcome the Medes and it was the Persians who came and conquered Babylon. Historians have argued over who this "Darius the Mede" could have been. Some say he was King Astyages, king of Media, and brother-in-law of Nebuchadnezzar's (Astyages sister would have been the wife for whom Nebuchadnezzar built the famous hanging gardens). Other scholars favor a man named Gubaru, a general in the Persian army who was given control (rule) over Babylon under King Cyrus. Gubaru didn't live very long after the invasion, however, so this story would have to have happened less than three weeks after the writing on the wall story. Many historians believe that somewhere along the line, during the many times that the book of Daniel was copied over and over again by scribes (before the day of printing) some scribes changed the name from whatever it had been to Darius, because King Darius was a very famous king right after King Cyrus. We don't know the reason that the name "Darius" was used for the "king" in this story. But the discovery of the Cylinder of Nabonidus should teach us a lesson about doubting the truth of these stories. There really was a Median/Persian ruler who threw Daniel into the lions' den and God really did save Daniel from the lions.

Activity for chapter 5:

1) Make “writing-on-the-wall” cookies. Use a standard sugar cookie dough recipe and make rectangular cookies that are at least 3 inches by 5 inches (bigger is even better!). Make edible paint by mixing cocoa powder with a little water. Use small watercolor brushes to paint the Hebrew letters onto the cookie walls. (They may want to practice the letters first on a piece of paper before painting them onto their cookie.)

Here are the letters in Hebrew:

ס ו ת מ מ
י פ ק נ נ
ן ר ל א א

If the letters were in English, it would look like this:

R U T M M
S P K N N
N A L A A

The A's here would have more of a short “e” sound. Adding the unwritten vowel between the M and the N, you often see it written as MENE.

Hebrew is written from right to left (←), and these are also written top to bottom. In Hebrew, many vowels (especially those with what we call “short” sounds) are not written at all.

2) You may want to look at Rembrandt’s painting of this scene. It’s one of his famous Bible paintings, and can be easily found on the Internet using an image search and the key words, “Rembrandt Belshazzar’s Feast” or “Rembrandt Writing on Wall.”

Daniel Chapter 6: Daniel in the lions' den

We now come to one of the most famous stories in the Bible. Even people who don't know much about the Bible are at least aware of this story. The students will probably have heard it before, so here is a way to tell the story without boring the students who have already heard the story multiple times. Write the following list of words on a white board (or paper to hand out) and tell the students that you are not allowed to say these words. Whenever you come to one of these words in the story, you will stop. The students must figure out what word you want to say and say it for you. (This will amuse all ages levels!)

The words/phrases the narrator cannot say are:

king	kingdom	God	heavens	earth
lions	den	decree	honest	pray/prayed/praying
stone	satraps	knees	sleep	food
law(s)	sundown	furnace	window	Medes and Persians

"O King, live forever!"

It pleased Darius to appoint 120 _____ to rule throughout the _____ of Babylon, and there were 3 administrators set over these 120 _____, one of whom was Daniel. The 120 _____ had to report to the 3 administrators so that the king could be sure he wasn't being cheated by them. Daniel distinguished himself among all these _____ by being _____ and working very hard. Darius, the _____ noticed this and planned to put Daniel in charge of the entire _____. Hearing this, the other two administrators along with some of the _____ tried to find fault with Daniel so that the _____ wouldn't trust him anymore and wouldn't put him in charge of the entire _____. But try as they might, the _____ could not find anything to accuse Daniel of because Daniel was _____ and never lied or cheated or stole. He wasn't even lazy! Finally, these other men said, "We can't find any basis for a charge against this man--- unless... it has something to do with his _____."

So the administrators and the _____ went as a group to the _____ and said, "_____! The royal administrators and _____ and advisors and governors have all agreed that the _____ should issue a royal _____ that anyone who _____ to any _____ or man during the next 30 days, except to you, O _____, should be thrown into the _____. Now issue this _____ and put it into writing so that it cannot be altered, in accordance with the _____ of the _____, which cannot be altered. So the _____ put the _____ into writing and made it a _____.

When Daniel learned about this new _____, he went home to his upstairs room where the _____ was opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his _____ and _____, giving thanks to _____, just as he had always done.

Then these men went as a group and found Daniel _____ and asking _____ for help. So they went to the _____ and spoke to him. They said, "_____. Did you not issue a royal _____ that anyone found _____ to any _____ or man besides you would be thrown into the _____? Daniel, one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O _____, or to the _____ that you put into writing. Daniel still _____ three times a day to his _____. When the

_____ heard this, he was greatly distressed. He was determined to rescue Daniel and made every effort until _____ to save him.

The men went to the _____ and said to him, "Remember, O _____ that according to the _____ of the _____, no _____ that the _____ has issued can be changed."

So the _____ gave the order and they brought Daniel and threw him into the _____. Then the _____ said to Daniel, "May your _____, whom you serve continually, rescue you!" Then the _____ gave the order to seal the mouth of the _____ with a _____. Then the _____ used his signet ring to place a _____ on the _____ so that no one could rescue Daniel. Then the _____ returned to his palace and spent the night without any delicious _____ or any entertainment and found that he could not even _____.

At the first light of dawn, the _____ got up and hurried down to the _____. When he came near, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice. "Daniel, servant of the living _____, has your _____ whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the _____?" Then Daniel answered, "_____! My _____ has sent his angel and he shut the mouths of the _____. They have not hurt me because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done you any wrong before you, O _____."

Then the _____ was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the _____. No wound was found on him because he had trusted in _____. At the command of the _____, all the men who had falsely accused Daniel were brought and thrown into the _____, along with their wives and children. They were overpowered by the _____ before they reached the bottom.

Then Darius the _____ wrote a letter to all the peoples, nations, and men of every language throughout his _____. He said:

May you prosper greatly! I am now issuing a _____ that in every part of my _____ people must fear and reverence Daniel's _____. For he is the living _____, and he endures _____. He rescues and he saves. He performs signs and wonders in the _____ and on the _____. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the _____."

Activity suggestion:

There are many pieces of artwork based on this story. You can find lots of them if you use "lions den" with Google image search. Bring in half a dozen of them and let the students study them, then tell you which one they think best represents the feel of the story. Also, you might want to bring in a wax candle and something to press into the freshly dripped hot wax, to show how a "seal" was used. (There are also pictures of ancient signet rings on-line.)

Discussion questions:

-- From the description of the lions' den, do you think it was below ground or above ground? (*This is a matter of opinion, but it does say "before they reached the bottom" when the satraps are thrown in.*)

--Was Darius a person of principle, or a person who is influenced by those around him? (*Very much a person influenced by the flattery of those around him.*)

--How is Darius a bad role model? (*He was easily misguided by flattery and tended to act hastily, without thinking.*) How is he a good role model? (*He was willing to admit he was wrong, and then followed up his repentance with a statement of praise to God. He told everyone the lesson he had learned.*)

Daniel Chapter 7: The vision of the four beasts

Extra notes for story:

You can find some neat pictures of Daniel's vision using Google image search "Daniel vision."
The beasts Daniel sees are:

Winged Lion: Babylon

Bear: Media and Persia

Leopard with four head and four wings: Greece

Great beast with iron teeth: Rome

The winged lion was one of the official symbols of Babylon. This lion has its wings torn off, a symbol of Nebuchadnezzar being stripped off this power when he went insane. At the end of his insanity he raised his eyes to heaven and recognized God as the ruler of all. This change of heart is represented in the vision by the lion being given the heart of a man.

The bear that Daniel sees is tipped up on one side. This represents the uneven distribution of power in the Median-Persian kingdom, with Persia eventually coming out on top. The three ribs in the mouth of the bear are generally understood to be Egypt, Babylon, and Lydia (the western part of the modern country of Turkey).

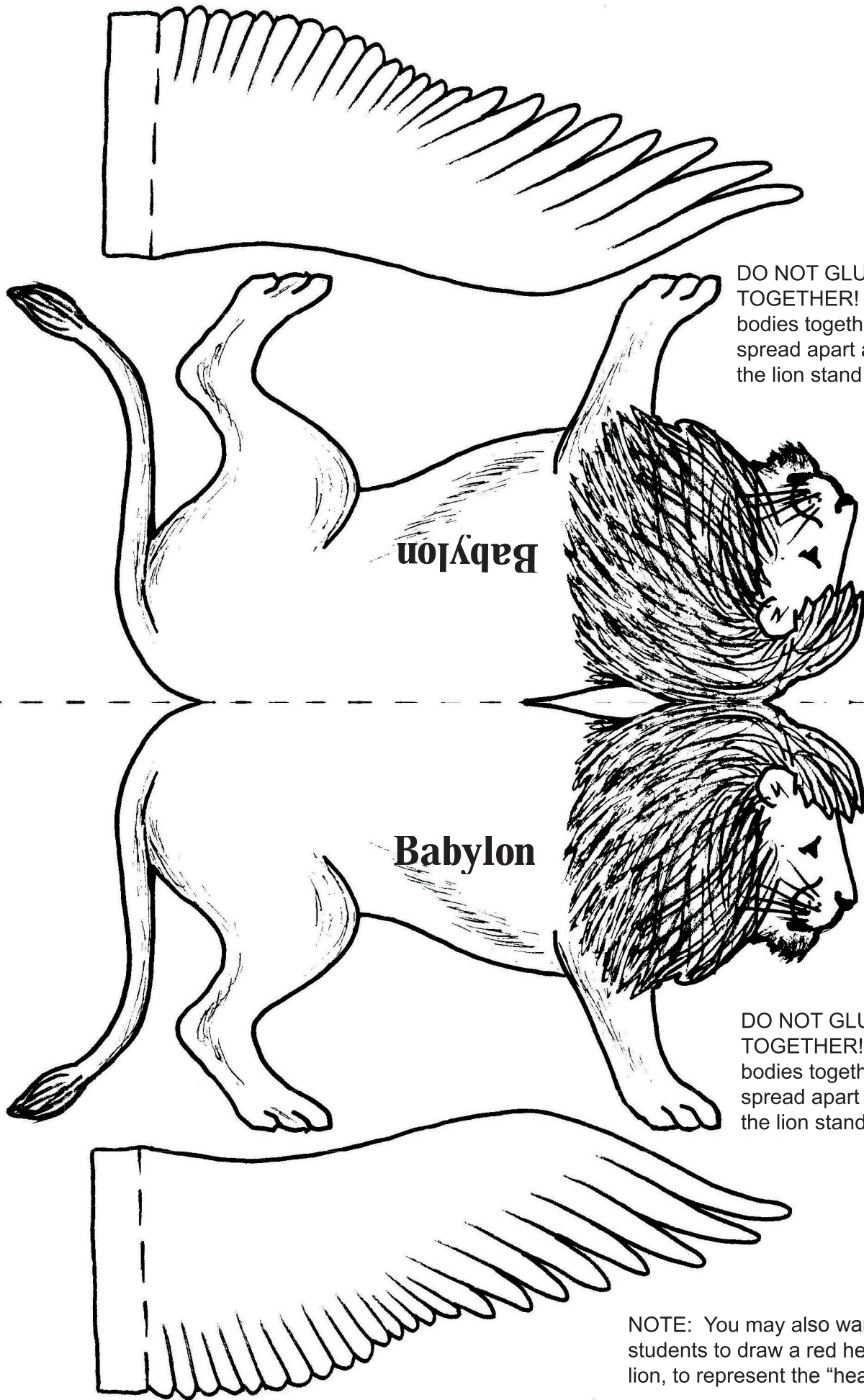
The leopard represents Greece, and in particular, Alexander the Great. The four wings and four heads represent the four generals who inherited his empire after he died.

The terrifying beast with iron teeth is the Roman Empire, which swallowed up all of the previous empires. It was this empire that ultimately crushed Israel out of existence and destroyed the temple for the last time. The ten horns are ten rulers that came out of the Roman Empire, but no one is sure exactly which ten rulers the vision refers to.

Notice the use of the term "son of man." Jesus called himself the Son of Man, a term right out of the book of Daniel. The phrase "coming with the clouds of heaven" (verse 13) was later quoted by Jesus describing his second coming. The "son of man" in the vision is given authority and is worshipped by all peoples. Jesus knew what he was saying when he used this term for himself. He wasn't saying he was a mere man, he was saying he was God and that all men would worship him.

Discussion questions:

- 1) If the winged lion represents Babylon, and Nebuchadnezzar in particular, what event is represented by the wings being ripped off? What happened to Nebuchadnezzar? (*He went insane, as punishment for not recognizing God as king.*)
- 2) Then the lion is given the heart of a man. Did Nebuchadnezzar have a change of heart? (*Yes, he gave God the glory and humbled himself.*)
- 3) The bear is Media-Persia. The bear was tipped up on one side. Which was the higher side? (*Persia, because Persia became stronger and took over Media.*)
 - What kingdom did the leopard represent? (Greece) Why did it have four wings and four heads? (*These four represented the four generals who would inherit Alexander's empire.*)
 - What kingdom is represented by the terrible beast? (*Rome.*)
 - Did God have any control over these kingdoms? (*Yes. God allowed these kings and kingdoms to do what they did. However, God did not cause them to do it, because God never causes evil.*)
 - What had God already shown Daniel would happen during the time that Rome ruled? Hint: Remember the dream about the statue in which a rock cut not by human hands, smashed the feet of the statue then grew to fill the whole earth. (*During the time of Rome, a kingdom from God would be established and would overcome these kingdoms. The founder of this kingdom is Jesus.*)
 - Is God still in control of world history? (*yes*)
 - Why does he allow bad rulers to come to power? (*We don't know God's mysterious workings and why he allows bad things to happen. We will find out the answers when we get to heaven.*)



DO NOT GLUE FEET TOGETHER! Glue only the bodies together. Feet will spread apart a bit to make the lion stand up.

COPY ONTO HEAVY CARD STOCK

DO NOT GLUE FEET TOGETHER! Glue only the bodies together. Feet will spread apart a bit to make the lion stand up.

NOTE: You may also want the students to draw a red heart on the lion, to represent the "heart of a man."

Daniel Chapter 8: The Ram and the Goat (and what the little horn did)

Extra notes for story:

This vision is similar to the previous one. Daniel again sees a representation of the kingdoms of Media-Persia and Greece. This time, Media-Persia is represented by ram with two horns. The larger horn is Persia. The Medes and the Persians were very similar in culture and language (perhaps like the US and Canada or Britain are today). They had both come from basically the same ancestors. The royal families began intermarrying, and a Median princess was given to a Persian prince. The baby that resulted from this union was Cyrus. It was foretold to the Median king that his grandson would murder him someday, and this came true. Cyrus officially recognized himself as a Persian, but he rallied support from the Median generals and took control of both kingdoms, merging them into one. Not many years after that, the empire became known simply as Persia. Cyrus was a good ruler, however, and was very tolerant of various religious practices in his empire. He gave the Jews permission to return to Israel to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple.

The shaggy goat is Greece, and the one horn is Alexander. Greece had been wanting revenge on Persia ever since the Persians came and sacked Athens. Now, with Alexander at the helm, Greece gets its chance at revenge. Alexander keeps going, though, and extends the empire all the way to the border of India. Not bad for a young man in his twenties! Alexander died at age 33 and four of his generals divided up his empire.

The goat's four horns are:

- 1) Cassander, who took Macedonia and Greece
- 2) Lysimachus, who took Asia Minor
- 3) Seleucus, who took Syria and Babylon (from who came the little horn)
- 4) Ptolemy, who took Egypt

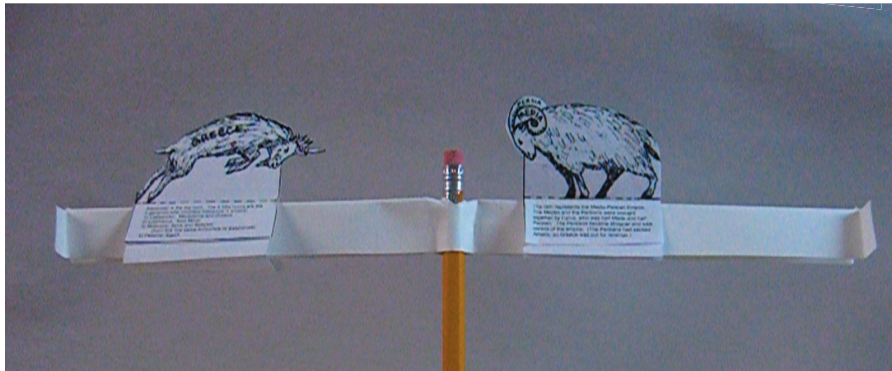
From Seleucus came the little horn that grew up, namely the Syrian ruler named Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who lived from 215 to 164 BC. (Most of the Middle East had been "Hellenized," that is, converted to Greek culture.) Antiochus made war on the Jews in Jerusalem and persecuted them more severely than anyone ever had up to that time. He murdered about 40,000 of them and sold another 40,000 into slavery. He forbade all Jewish customs including keeping the Sabbath, dietary laws and circumcision. Those who disobeyed were killed. He pillaged and looted the temple, stealing all the valuables and burning all the sacred scrolls. He set up an alter to Zeus right in the Holy of Holies and sacrificed pigs on the alter! This is the "abomination that causes desolation." When this act had been committed, the temple could no longer be used for proper worship of God. It had been made unclean.

The Jews were almost driven to extinction at this point. Then, Antiochus and his main army marched east to fight the Parthians. Antiochus left one of his generals in charge of the Jews. This general must have been a much easier target for rebellion, because a band of Jews under the leadership of Judah the Maccabee (meaning "hammer") managed to fight back, and after three years of hard guerilla-type fighting, were able to retake Jerusalem. Judah's band of fighters came to be known as the Maccabees. Their story is told in the book of Maccabees, which is included in some Bibles (but not in Protestant Bibles). After cleansing the temple, they rededicated it for worship of God. They went to light the sacred lamp stand but found that there was only enough oil for one day. It would take a week to get oil transported down from the northern territories where it was made from olives. Miraculously, the oil lasted for the whole week, until the new supplies came. This miracle of the oil is the basis of the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah.

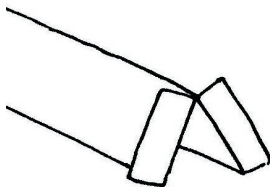
What happened to Antiochus? In Daniel's vision, he sees that "he will be destroyed, but not by human hands." In fact, Antiochus died suddenly of disease in 164 BC.

Activities for chapter 8:

- 1) Learn a bit about the holiday that commemorates this story: Hanukkah. Perhaps you might want to read a children's paperback that tells the story. I used a sticker book and had each student put in a few of the stickers.
- 2) Look at a painting that shows Antiochus pillaging the temple. (by Francesco Hayez, early 1800s)
<http://endtimepilgrim.org/templedest.jpg>
- 3) Make an "action" pencil topper featuring the ram and the goat fighting each other.
You will need a strip of heavy card stock paper cut from the long side. The dimensions of the strip should be 11 inches long by 1 1/2 inches wide. Fold the strip in half and cut a semi-circle in the middle of the folded side. Tape or glue this strip onto the pencil as shown below.



After assembling the ram and goat (see instructions on next page), slide them onto the strip, then cut and fold the ends of the strip as shown below.

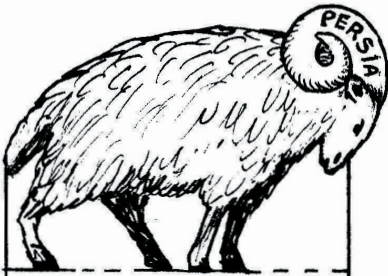


Animal assembly:



You may need to "fine tune" the shape of the triangular pieces so that they slide easily along the strip. They should slide back and forth very easily, so that a shake of the pencil makes them dart at each other as though fighting.

If you want to see how this craft works, I posted a very brief video clip on YouTube:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N3u-eFUhhMo>



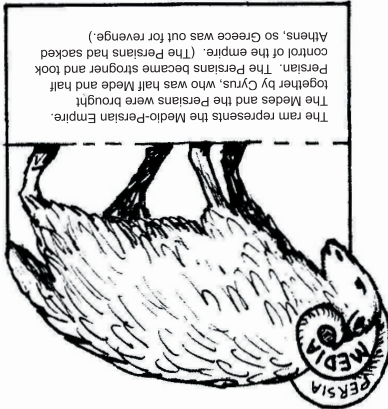
The ram represents the Medio-Persian Empire. The Medes and the Persians were brought together by Cyrus, who was half Mede and half Persian. The Persians became stronger and took control of the empire. (The Persians had sacked Athens, so Greece was out for revenge.)



Alexander is the big horn. The 4 little horns are the 4 generals who inherited Alexander's empire:
 1) Cassander: Macedonia and Greece
 2) Lysimachus: Asia Minor
 3) Seleucus: Syria and Babylon
 (from this line came Antiochus IV Epiphanes)
 4) Ptolemy: Egypt

NOTE:

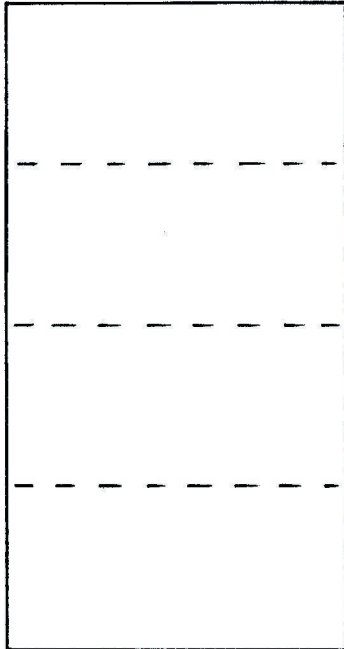
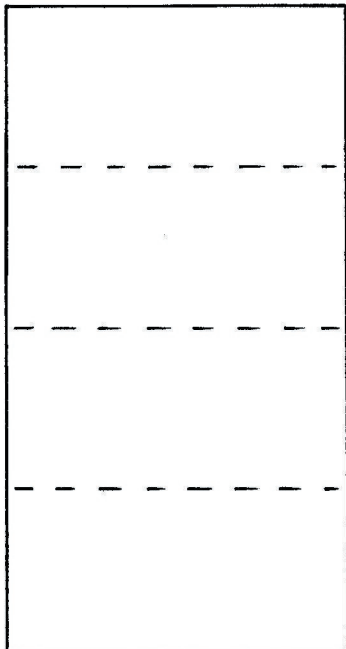
Don't glue the bottom flaps together (where the words are). The flaps will be glued to the sides of the triangular pieces below.



The ram represents the Medio-Persian Empire. The Medes and the Persians were brought together by Cyrus, who was half Mede and half Persian. The Persians became stronger and took control of the empire. (The Persians had sacked Athens, so Greece was out for revenge.)



Alexander is the big horn. The 4 little horns are the 4 generals who inherited Alexander's empire:
 1) Cassander: Macedonia and Greece
 2) Lysimachus: Asia Minor
 3) Seleucus: Syria and Babylon
 (from this line came Antiochus IV Epiphanes)
 4) Ptolemy: Egypt



Fold these rectangles along dotted lines to make triangular prism shapes. The ram and goat flaps will be glued to the tops of these.

Daniel Chapter 9 and 10: Daniel's prayer and another vision

This chapter has a long prayer by Daniel. You may want to use it as a “springboard” for a time of prayer for your country or for personal prayer, or you may want to discuss the content of the prayer as a way of reviewing once again just why the Jews are in the situation they are in-- they disobeyed God. Take special note that Daniel asks for restoration of the temple for the sake of God's reputation, not because of any repenting the Jews may have been doing. Some were sorry, to be sure, but others were not. Daniel asks that God glorify Himself through Israel, and make His name great among the nations.

Chapter 10 speaks of the “Anointed One” being “cut off.” Most commentators agree that the Anointed One must be Jesus, and being “cut off” must refer to his death on the cross. Interestingly, if you do the math making a week equal to 7 years, (a year being 360 days, not our modern 365), you end up with 483 years, which is almost exactly right for the amount of time between the decree to rebuild the temple and the year that Jesus ended the sacrificial system and brought in everlasting righteousness by his atoning death on the cross. Commentators have a variety of opinions about the last “seven” and what the “abomination that causes desolation” is. The original Hebrew text is a bit ambiguous, leaving lots of room for speculation.

Since these chapters don't lend themselves well to activities, here is a fun review activity to do.

Activity ideas:

1) A review bingo game. Provide each student with a copy of the pictures and a copy of the blank board. Have each student cut apart their pictures and glue them (glue sticks are great for this) randomly on their board, so that each student has a unique arrangement. Provide them with “markers” of some kind-- anything will do (pennies, pieces of paper, edible treats...).

The first round of clues are very straightforward and can serve as a quick review for anyone who needs some review. (The second round is a little more challenging and has an extra rule thrown in.)

First Round Clues:

- 1) This structure was built for Nebuchadnezzar's wife, who was homesick for Persia. (hanging gardens)
- 2) In Daniel's vision, this animal had ribs in its mouth and represented the kingdoms of Media and Persia. (bear)
- 3) This man was the leader of Greece for about 10 years. Under his leadership, Greece conquered Egypt, Media, Persia, Assyria, Babylon, Israel and Asia Minor (which is now Turkey). (Alexander)
- 4) This Syrian king set up a statue of Zeus in the Jewish temple and offered a pig on the altar. (Antiochus Epiphanes)
- 5) This young man had his name changed to Shadrach. (Hananiah)
- 6) This was the man that Nebuchadnezzar put in charge of the Jewish exiles. (Ashpenaz)
- 7) This is how Daniel saw God the Father in his vision. (Ancient of Days)
- 8) This man was one of Nebuchadnezzar's officials. He found Daniel and brought him to the king so that Daniel could save the lives of all the officials by interpreting the king's dream. (Arioch)
- 9) In Daniel's vision, this animal represented Babylon. (lion)
- 10) This young man had his name changed to Beltshazzar. (Daniel)
- 11) This king was using the temple cups for his party when he saw God's finger write mysterious words on the wall. (Belshazzar)
- 12) This angel was sent to Daniel to explain to him the meaning of the vision. (Gabriel)
- 13) In Daniel's vision, this animal had four heads and represented Greece. (leopard)
- 14) These were the wise men that Nebuchadnezzar consulted whenever he had a problem. (Chaldeans)
- 15) This king was tricked into passing a law that could not be changed. (Darius)
- 16) In Daniel's vision, this animal had a long horn that represented Alexander. (goat)
- 17) This young man had his name changed to Meshach. (Mishael)
- 18) These men were the governors who ran the kingdom of Babylon. (satraps)
- 19) This young man had his name changed to Abednego. (Azariah)
- 20) This is how Jesus appeared to Daniel. (Son of Man)
- 21) This man was both Median and Persian, but when he became king he decided to opt for Persian and made Media just a part of the Persian empire. (Cyrus)



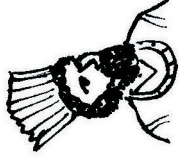
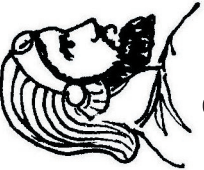
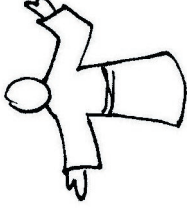

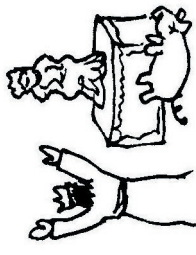


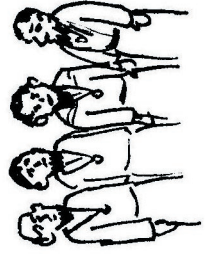
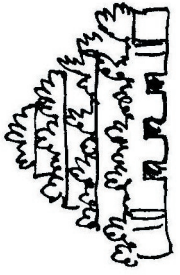




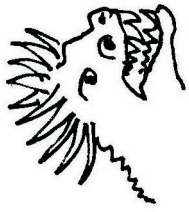

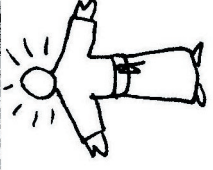
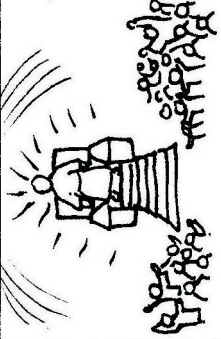
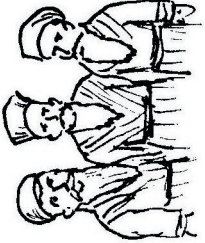

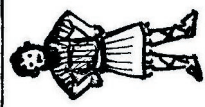



- 22) This person told Belshazzar that Daniel would be able to interpret the writing on the wall. (Queen of Babylon)
- 23) In Daniel's vision, this animal had two horns and represented Media and Persia. (ram)
- 24) In Daniel's vision, this animal had iron teeth and went about destroying everything in its path. It represented Rome. (terrible beast)
- 25) This king went insane. (Nebuchadnezzar)

Second Round of Bingo:

This round uses quotes from the stories. Obviously, the animals can't say anything, so to start out, the players will put markers on the following squares: lion, bear, leopard, beast, goat, ram, hanging gardens. (If this creates a bingo for anyone, that bingo will not count.) Also in this round, there are some repeats. For example, Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar have several quotes. When a second quote is called, you must REMOVE your piece from that square. If there is a third quote by that person, then you may put a token back on that square. A fourth quote removes it again, and a fifth quote puts it back again.

- 1) "Is this not Babylon the great, which I have built by my mighty power?" (Nebuchadnezzar)
- 2) "You may keep your rewards and give your gifts to someone else. Nevertheless, I will read the writing on the wall." (Daniel)
- 3) "This is what is decreed for you, Nebuchadnezzar: Your royal authority has been taken from you." (Ancient of Days (God))
- 4) "I am afraid of what the king will say. What if you look worse than the other young men your age?" (Ashpenaz)
- 5) "I looked up and there before me was a ram with two horns." (Daniel)
- 6) "O king, live forever! Tell us the dream and we will interpret it." (Chaldeans)
- "Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?" (Nebuchadnezzar)
- 7) "O king, I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can tell the king what his dream means." (Arioeh)
- 8) "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, our God is able to save us from it. But even if He does not, we will not worship the image of gold you have set up." (Hananiah, Azariah or Mishael-- your choice)
- 9) "If you can read the writing and tell me what it means, you will be clothed in purple and have a gold chain placed about your neck, and you will be made the third highest ruler in the kingdom." (Belshazzar)
- 10) "Gabriel, tell this man the meaning of the vision." (Son of Man)
- 11) "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!" (Darius)
- 12) "O king, live forever. My God sent his angel and he shut the mouths of the lions." (Daniel)
- 13) "Get up and eat your fill of flesh!" (Ancient of Days (God))
- 14) "O King Darius, live forever! We have all agreed that you should issue a decree that anyone who prays to any god or man during the next thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be thrown into the lions' den." (satraps)
- 15) "To all peoples, nations, and men of every language, who live in all the world. May you prosper greatly! It is my pleasure to tell you about the miraculous signs and wonders that the Most High God has performed for me." (Nebuchadnezzar)
- 16) "We will not worship the image of gold that you have set up, O king." (Hananiah or Mishael or Azariah, you choose.)
- 17) "O king, live forever! Don't be alarmed. Don't look pale. There is a man in your kingdom who has the spirit of the holy gods in him. He will tell you what the writing means." (Queen of Babylon)
- 18) "The two-horned ram that you saw represents the kingdoms of Media and Persia." (Gabriel)
- 19) "O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with all who love him and obey his commands, we have sinned and done wrong." (Daniel)
- * 20) "Set up a statue of Zeus and make all the Jews worship it!" (Antiochus Epiphanes)
- * 22) "Go and rebuild the temple in Jerusalem." (Cyrus)

* Not exact quotes, but good clues

 <p>Azariah</p>	 <p>Belshazzar</p>	 <p>Darius</p>	 <p>Cyrus</p>	 <p>Gabriel</p>
 <p>Queen of Babylon</p>	 <p>Antiochus Epiphanes</p>	 <p>Alexander</p>	 <p>Daniel</p>	 <p>satraps</p>
 <p>hanging gardens</p>	 <p>ram</p>	 <p>goat</p>	 <p>bear</p>	 <p>leopard</p>
 <p>terrible beast</p>	 <p>lion</p>	 <p>Son of Man</p>	 <p>Ancient of Days</p>	 <p>Chaldeans</p>
 <p>Nebuchadnezzar</p>	 <p>Ashpenaz</p>	 <p>Arioch</p>	 <p>Hananiah</p>	 <p>Mishael</p>

Daniel chapter 9- 10, continued:

2) Here's a more serious activity idea: Pray for God's suffering people around the world.

Daniel was grieved by what he learned from the visions. God had told him that His people would undergo much suffering. Certainly much of Daniel's prayer time must have been focused on praying both for the Jews who alive at that time and for those who would be alive at the time of the events in his visions. Daniel was sad to the depths of his soul to know what terrible times were coming, and he spent three weeks in prayer and fasting.

We, also, should be concerned about God's people around the world and should remember to pray for them. I chose to focus on the Middle East, since that is where Daniel lived. I used video clips from YouTube that interviewed Christian believers in Iraq and Iran (Babylon and Persia!). Then we had a time of prayer for them. (You may want to choose areas of the world where your church has missionaries, or areas about which you have detailed knowledge.)

Daniel chapter 11: The political soap opera before the time of Christ

Extra notes for story:

Historians pretty much agree on the interpretation of this vision up until verse 14. After that, no one is sure just how quickly the vision progresses through time. Since the kings are always just from the north and south, without any proper names attached, the only way to guess who is being discussed is to compare historic events to the descriptions in the vision. Some people see verses 14-19 as describing Julius Caesar (with the daughter being Cleopatra), while others think the king of the north is still Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Some people think that the tax collector in verse 20 is Caesar Augustus, who ordered the census at the time of Jesus' birth. This would make the "successor" Tiberius Caesar, who was the emperor at the time of Jesus' crucifixion. Other people see the time scale as progressing more quickly, making the contemptible person come after the destruction of the temple in 70 AD.

Those with a quickly-progressing time scale put the last prophecies of this chapter into our modern age, and often see the last prophecies as having not yet been fulfilled. Those who favor a slow time scale in this chapter can align the "king who exalts himself" in verse 36 with either Antiochus Epiphanes or with Julius Caesar. However, making Julius the last king means the tax collector can't be Augustus, leaving us to wonder who the tax collector was. (One commentator I read on-line interpreted the last king as the Pope and said that the book of Daniel was to be "unsealed" in the year 1789 AD. That's going way beyond the actual text!)

Unfortunately, the pronouns and the descriptions in this chapter aren't sufficiently precise for us to be totally certain of the interpretation. This is very frustrating because we want so much to get a glimpse into the future (thus the existence of fortune telling). It's hard to say that we don't know, and leave it at that, but in this case, I believe that's the best thing to do.

So... what to do? I'm choosing to stay with facts and simply present the political landscape that led up to the time of Christ. Most historians agree that verses 2-13 talk about the Seleucid and the Ptolemaic dynasties, so that's "safe territory." These dynasties were a mess! Then Rome came along and took over both of them. No matter which king in the vision represents Rome, it was the empire that ruled during Jesus' life and it was the empire that finally crushed Jerusalem for the last time in 70 AD. Those are all historical facts. We don't know for sure how these facts match up with verses 14-45. A reasonable approach to teaching children is to present facts that don't have to be unlearned when a new Bible teacher comes along. Let's stick to facts. The point is that God knows history before it happens and is using even the terrible parts of history to achieve his purpose: saving a people for himself and making His kingdom grow and fill the earth.

NOTE: I do not recommend reading this whole chapter to the students. It gets very tedious trying to keep track of who is attacking whom, and after a few paragraphs they will lose interest. I suggest just reading the first few paragraphs so they can get the feel of the writing, then switching over to the skit, and telling them they will learn more of what is in the vision as they do the skit. (Just turn the Bible so they can see how long the chapter is and they'll agree the skit is the better choice for them!)

“The Political ‘Soap Opera’ Before Christ” (based on Daniel 11)

Cast:

The North:

Seleucus I (Seh-LOO-cuss)
Antiochus II “Theos” (which means “God”)
Laodice, the queen (Lay-o-DEE-kay)
Servant
Person of Northern town
Antiochus III “The Great”
Antiochus IV “Epiphanes” (ee-PIF-an-eez) (means “God with us”)

The South:

Ptolemy I (TAHL-uh-mee)
Ptolemy II “Philadelphus” (meaning “lover of the city”)
Ptolemy III “Euergetes” (Yu-air-GET-eez) (means “does well”)
Ptolemy IV “Philopater” (meaning “loves father”)
Watchman of Egyptian army
Ptolemy V “Epiphanes” (Ee-PIF-an-eez) (meaning “God with us”)

Others:

Narrator
Gaius Popillius, a Roman general
Judah Maccabee (MACK-uh-bee) (a nickname, meaning “the hammer”)
Hasmonean 1 (Has-mo-NEE-an)
Hasmonean 2
First citizen of Jerusalem
Second citizen of Jerusalem
Third citizen of Jerusalem
Fourth citizen of Jerusalem
Fifth citizen of Jerusalem
Sixth citizen of Jerusalem
Seventh citizen of Jerusalem
Alexander (Jewish king/high priest)
Hyrcanus (*Hir-CANE-us*)
Aristobulus (*Air-is-TOB-u-lus*)
Pompey (*Pom-PEA*)
Parthian general
Herod
Babylonian Jew

SCENE 1: The founders of the dynasties

PTOLEMY 1: Well, Seleucus, congratulations on conquering the other two parts of Alexander’s empire (may he rest in peace!). And don’t ever forget, you did it with MY help!

SELEUCUS 1: Yeah, thanks, Ptolemy. You’re a pal for helping me out. It’s awesome to own three-quarters of Alexander’s empire! But don’t forget-- you only have one quarter of the empire down there in Egypt, and I am not obligated to listen to your advice. You have your empire and I have mine. And I have big plans for my empire-- I plan to make it even bigger! I might even take Palestine and Jerusalem from you someday.

PTOLEMY 1: We’ll see about that. You may have grand plans, but can you get your army to carry them out? You’re not Alexander, you know.

SELEUCUS 1: Oh yeah? Well, I won't give them a choice. They'll do it. And if you live long enough, you'll see my empire grow and become even greater than yours. Someday historians will credit me with founding a dynasty-- they'll name it after me: the Seleucid Dynasty. (*Seh-LOO-kid*)

PTOLEMY 1: I hope your son can keep your empire together after you are gone.

SELEUCUS 1: My son, Antiochus, can do anything. In fact, his nickname is "Savior."

PTOLEMY 1: Well, my son Philadelphus lives up to his name; he loves our cities and won't ever let anyone conquer them.

SELEUCUS 1: Good luck, Ptolemy. May Zeus be with you.

PTOLEMY 1: Zeus, and all of the Egyptian gods, too!

SCENE 2: The next generation...

PTOLEMY 2 "PHILADELPHUS": Now then, Antiochus, I have a proposal for you. I propose that our kingdoms be at peace with each other and this peace be guaranteed by the marriage of yourself to my daughter, Berenice.

ANTIOCHUS 2 "THEOS": To me? But I am already married! I have two sons!

PTOLEMY 2 "PHILADELPHUS": You're the king. You can do anything you want. Just tell Laodice she can't be queen anymore. She'll understand.

ANTIOCHUS 2 "THEOS": You don't know Laodice. This will be difficult. But I like the idea of joining our kingdoms and bringing back the glory days of Alexander's empire, when we were all united in one huge empire.

PTOLEMY 2 "PHILADELPHUS": So, will you do it?

ANTIOCHUS 2 "THEOS": Well... I guess so.

PTOLEMY 2 "PHILADELPHUS": It's a deal then. The child born to you and Berenice will be the heir to both of our kingdoms. Just think of it-- the empire of Alexander will be reborn. Zeus be praised!

Scene 3: Divorcing Laodice

ANTIOCHUS 2 "THEOS": Laodice, you are no longer the queen. I am officially divorcing you. Berenice, daughter of Philadelphus, is now my wife.

LAODICE: How could you do this to me? It's so unfair. I have born you two sons who were to be king someday. I hate you Antiochus! You are so unfair!

ANTIOCHUS 2 "THEOS": Sorry, dear, it's nothing against you, really. It's just that Ptolemy and I want to reunite our kingdoms and recreate the glory days of Alexander's empire.

LAODICE: You'll never bring back the good old days, Theos. Never!

ANTIOCHUS 2 "THEOS": Well, I am certainly going to try! Good bye, dear!

Scene 4: Several years later

SERVANT: I have important news for King Antiochus Theos.

ANTIOCHUS 2 "THEOS": Yes?

SERVANT: Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt and father of your wife, Berenice, is dead.

ANTIOCHUS 2 "THEOS": Dead? Are you sure?

SERVANT: Yes, sir. His son, Ptolemy Euergetes now rules Egypt.

ANTIOCHUS 2 "THEOS": Well, I have been having my doubts about this scheme to reunite the empire. I really don't think it is going to work. I think I will divorce Berenice and take back my first wife, Laodice, again. The sons I have with Laodice will inherit my kingdom, not Berenice's son.

Scene 5: What Laodice did

LAODICE: Do you think you can just take me back again, Theos? What do you think I am-- your pet dog or something?

ANTIOCHUS 2 "THEOS": But honey, I really want you to be my wife again.

LAODICE: And so I shall, but on my own terms. I want Berenice and her son executed.

ANTIOCHUS 2 "THEOS": What?

LAODICE: You heard me. Kill them!

ANTIOCHUS 2 "THEOS": If you insist dear.

LAODICE: I do insist. But before you go, dear, why don't you have a nice drink of this delicious wine?

ANTIOCHUS 2 "THEOS": All right, if you insist.

LAODICE: I do.

ANTIOCHUS 2 "THEOS": This wine tastes funny. *(pause)* This is.... this is.... aghhh! *(falls over dead)*

LAODICE: I'll finish your sentence for you. This is... poison. Yes, dear, that's how I say thank you for how you've treated me. I think the boys and I can manage on our own now, without you! Long live the king-- my son Seleucus Callinicus!

Scenc 6: What happend when Ptolemy Euergetes found out his sister was dead

PTOLEMY 3 "EUERGETES": I can't believe what those jerks in the north did to my sister! I am outraged! I'll get revenge on them! Guards, call up the army! We're invading the north!

NARRATOR: And so Ptolemy's armies marched northward. Surprisingly, many towns welcomed him and gladly switched their allegiance to Egypt.

PERSON OF NORTHERN TOWN: Here comes Ptolemy! Open the city gates for him!

PTOLEMY 3 "EUERGETES": Everyone who can fight, come along with me and join my army!

TOWNSPEOPLE *(everyone join together and shout)*: Hurray for Ptolemy! Hurray for Ptolemy!

NARRATOR: So Ptolemy Euergetes went right through the land of Israel, up into Syria, and got his revenge on Antiochus Theos. He wrecked many buildings and stole as many things as he could, including idols made of gold and silver. His ultimate revenge was killing Laodice.

LAODICE: Aaaa!!

Scene 7: What the northern kingdom thought of all this

ANTIOCHUS 3 "THE GREAT": I'm still angry over what that lousy Ptolemy Euergetes did to our kingdom! Even though it's been a few years now, I just can't forget about all the things he stole. I think I'll give Egypt what it deserves. I'll march south and they can see how it feels to be invaded!

NARRATOR: So Antiochus the Great took his armies and marched south.

WATCHMAN OF THE EGYPTIAN ARMY: Sound the alarm! I have news from the north! I have been told that the army of Antiochus the Great is on its way south!

PTOLEMY 4 "PHILOPATER": I'll show Antiochus the Great that he isn't so great! Soldiers, march!

NARRATOR: The two armies met each other near the land of Israel, at Gaza. (Gaza had been the land of the Philistines during the time of King David.)

PTOLEMY 4 "PHILOPATER": Even though I only have 73 elephants and Antiochus has 102 elephants, I have more men. He only has 62,000 soldiers and I have many more than that. I will win!

NARRATOR: Egypt did win the battle. It was the year 217 BC.

ANTIOCHUS 3 "THE GREAT": I'll never accept defeat to the Ptolemies! Wait a minute-- I've got a better idea than battle. I'll try to trick Ptolemy Philopator into a marriage alliance between my daughter, Cleopatra, and his son, Ptolemy Epiphanes.

NARRATOR: This is not the Cleopatra that married Mark Anthony. This is Cleopatra the First. The one that married Mark Anthony was Cleopatra the Seventh.

ANTIOCHUS 3 "THE GREAT": My daughter will be able to work from inside the Egyptian kingdom and then I will have some allies down south.

NARRATOR: Great idea, but it didn't work. Once she was in Egypt, Cleopatra sided with the Ptolemies.

ANTIOCHUS 3 "THE GREAT": Drat! How could she do this to me! I have a traitor for a daughter! I think I'll vent my anger by robbing some temples.

NARRATOR: Antiochus the Great was killed as tried to rob a temple.

PTOLEMY 5 "EPIPHANES": Thanks for joining our side, Cleopatra. You'll help make our kingdom great. I think I'll write a long paragraph about my greatness. I'll tell my scribes to engrave it onto a large black stone in both Greek and Egyptian, so that everyone in my kingdom will be able to read it.

NARRATOR: This stone would become famous someday. It would be called the Rosetta Stone and it would allow language experts to figure out how to read Egyptian heiroglyphs.

Scene 8: The king of the north who defiled the Jewish temple

ANTIOCHUS 4 "EPIPHANES": Finally, I am king! You think you've seen political intrigue? You haven't seen anything yet. I survive by my wits. My childhood was spent being a hostage in the Roman Empire. When I finally got back to my father's kingdom, I found my brother on the throne instead of me. Fortunately, one of my brother's generals assassinated him. Unfortunately, my brother had a baby who was then proclaimed king. Fortunately, babies are easy to get rid of and I arranged for the baby to be killed. Then I proclaimed myself king. Who cares that I had a nephew that should have been king instead of me? I say let the strongest man win!

Now that I am king, I am going to give those Egyptians what they deserve. I'm going to start going south slowly, though. I think I can bribe a lot of towns into accepting me as their king. That way I won't have to fight so much. In fact, I bet I can even bribe those Jews in Jerusalem.

NARRATOR: Antiochus Epiphanes did manage to bribe the Jews. In fact, Antiochus was able to install a high priest of his own choosing-- a priest who was more interested in politics than in worshiping God.

ANTIOCHUS 4 "EPIPHANES": Things are going so well, I think I am ready to invade Egypt.

NARRATOR: He did. And while he was there, a rumor began to circulate that he had been killed. This rumor reached Jerusalem.

FIRST CITIZEN OF JERUSALEM: Did you hear that Antiochus Epiphanes is dead? With Antiochus gone, we can get rid of the terrible high priest he appointed and choose someone who really cares about God.

NARRATOR: The people of Jerusalem killed the high priest of Antiochus. When Antiochus heard this news, he was furious.

ANTIOCHUS 4 "EPIPHANES": I'll deal with those rotten Jews! Rebel against me, will they? I'll teach them!

NARRATOR: Antiochus Epiphanes stormed into Jerusalem.

FIRST CITIZEN OF JERUSALEM: Oh no, he is headed for the temple!

NARRATOR: He stole all the articles of gold and silver from the temple and told the people it was now illegal to be a Jew. If they tried to practice their religion they would be killed.

SECOND CITIZEN OF JERUSALEM: I think I'll just do what Antiochus says. I don't want to be killed.

FIRST ANOTHER CITIZEN: What? You can't do that. You must obey God.

SECOND CITIZEN OF JERUSALEM: I don't want to end up dead. I'll just start speaking Greek and wearing Greek clothes and maybe they won't notice I'm a Jew.

ANTIOCHUS 4 "EPIPHANES": Now that I have the Jews under control, I think I'll make a second try at conquering Egypt.

NARRATOR: Antiochus Epiphanes headed for Egypt, but before he got there he was met by a Roman general named Gaius Popillius.

GAIUS POPILLIUS: Antiochus, you'd better think twice before invading Egypt. The emperor of Rome wants Egypt and he will send out a huge army to fight you if you try to invade it. Are you going to invade Egypt?

ANTIOCHUS 4 "EPIPHANES": I will discuss it with my council at the next meeting.

NARRATOR: At this point, Gaius Popillius drew a circle in the sand around the feet of Antiochus.

GAIUS POPILLIUS: Before you step out of that circle, I want your answer. Are you going to invade Egypt?

ANTIOCHUS 4 "EPIPHANES": Well, I'm not totally stupid. You and I both know my forces won't stand up against the legions of Rome.

GAIUS POPILLIUS: Then off with you! Go home!

NARRATOR: Antiochus Epiphanes was seething with anger but he had to admit he could not stand up to Rome. Unfortunately, his way home went right through Israel.

ANTIOCHUS 4 "EPIPHANES": I am still really, really angry about that stuck-up Roman general. I feel like taking it out on someone. I know-- I think I'll stop in and see those rotten Jews. I'll teach them another lesson. I'll enter the city in a big parade on the Sabbath day. I won't let them know what I am up to until it is too late.

FIRST CITIZEN OF JERUSALEM: Watch out everyone, here comes Antiochus Epiphanes again!

SECOND CITIZEN OF JERUSALEM: I'm not afraid. He won't kill me. I'm one of his citizens now. I look and act like everyone else-- you can't tell I'm a Jew.

ANTIOCHUS 4 "EPIPHANES": Soldiers, kill all these Jews!

BOTH CITIZENS: Ahhhh!!!!

NARRATOR: The army of Antiochus Epiphanes killed 40,000 Jews and enslaved another 40,000.

THIRD CITIZEN OF JERUSALEM: Oh no, Antiochus is heading for the temple!

ANTIOCHUS 4 "EPIPHANES": I'll show these Jews my power. Their god doesn't scare me! I'll put this statue of Zeus inside their temple. And just to insult their god, I'll sacrifice a pig on their altar. I've been told they think pigs are forbidden for sacrifice, and this will make their temple unusable. Good! They can just learn to pray to Zeus instead!

NARRATOR: After this, Antiochus went off to the east to fight other wars and left one of his generals in charge of Jerusalem.

Scene 9: The Maccabees

JUDAH MACCABEE: Now that Antiochus is gone, let's try to overthrow his general and get our temple back. Who is with me?

OTHER MACCABEES (*everyone join and shout*): We are! We are!

NARRATOR: Judah and his followers fought for three years and finally drove out the army of Antiochus Epiphanes.
JUDAH MACCABEE: Now that those foreigners are gone, we have the hard work of cleaning up our temple so that we can use it for the worship of God again.
EVERYONE: *various shouts of; "Hurray" "Let's go!" "To the temple!" "Praise God!" "Let's work!"*
JUDAH MACCABEE: Now that we are a free people again, we need to form a government. My brothers and I will now lead the nation of Israel. We will protect our new country from the Seleucids in the north and from the Egyptians in the south.
FOURTH CITIZEN OF JERUSALEM: What about the Romans in the west? I've heard they are coming our way.
JUDAH MACCABEE: We'll deal with them when they get here. I'm not going to worry about that now. Right now we need to get organized.

Scene 10: The Hasmoneans bring in the Romans

NARRATOR: The Maccabee brothers were the beginning of a new line of kings in Israel, called the Hasmoneans. (*Has-mo-NEE-ans*) The Seleucids (*Seh-LOO-sids*) and the Romans kept a sharp eye on the Hasmonenas and monitored everything they did. Sometimes they fought with the Hasmoneans and other times they made treaties with them and agreed to leave them alone. With the encouragement of the Seleucids, the Hasmoneans decided that the king of the Jews should also be the high priest. This had never been done before.
FIFTH CITIZEN OF JERUSALEM: I'm not sure this is a good idea. I think we should keep the offices of king and high priest separate, like we've done since the time of King David.
SIXTH CITIZEN OF JERUSALEM: I agree with you. I'm not sure I trust the Hasmoneans.
HASMONEAN 1: I think we should be more like the Greeks. They are great thinkers. I admire them.
HASMONEAN 2: No! We are Jews. We should be different. We should try to follow the law of Moses in every detail.
HASMONEAN 1: Don't be so old-fashioned. You're no fun.
HASMONEAN 2: It isn't about fashion or fun. It's about following all the laws of Moses. What's wrong with that?
HASMONEAN 1: You are overly strict with all your rules and regulations. You're a Pharisee.
HASMONEAN 2: There's nothing wrong with being a Pharisee. We are the experts in the law. You Sadducees (*SAD-yu-sees*) shouldn't even call yourself Jews. You don't even believe that there is life after death.
HASMONEAN 1: But we represent a large part of our Jewish population. There are lots of people who think the same as we do.
HASMONEAN 2: You mean like our high-priest-king, Alexander? How could a Jew take such a Greek name, anyway? Alexander was an ungodly person. In fact, we Pharisees are so outraged we are going to demand that we go back to having a separate king and high priest.
NARRATOR: The Pharisees went to Alexander and demanded that he give up being high priest.
ALEXANDER THE PRIEST: I will not give up being high priest. Just for that, I am going to let the Sadducees run the temple however they want to.
PHARISEES (*everyone*): No! No! No!
SADDUCEES (*everyone*): Yes! Yes! Yes!
NARRATOR: There was a riot in the temple and the Sadducees won the fight. Then Alexander died. His wife was from a Pharisee family. Their oldest son, Hyrcanus, supported the Pharisees. Their younger son, Aristobulus, supported the Sadducees. Thus, the argument continued.
HYRCANUS: I will be the next king and we'll do it the Pharisee way!
ARISTOBULUS: No! I will be the king and we'll do it the Sadducee way!
HYRCANUS: Pharisee way!
ARISTOBULUS: Sadducee way!
HYRCANUS: Pharisee!
ARISTOBULUS: Sadducee!
SIXTH CITIZEN OF JERUSALEM: Look out! Here comes the Roman general, Pompey! His army has broken through the city walls, We've been invaded!
POMPEY: Okay, I'm taking over here. You guys are causing such a racket I can't stand it. I'm officially taking over the land of Israel. You are now officially part of the Roman Empire. But I don't want to govern this miserable little town myself, so I'll let one of you do it for me if you promise me you'll be faithful and not rebel against me.
HYRCANUS: I promise!
POMPEY: Okay, you can be in charge. Just make sure you behave!
HYRCANUS: You can trust me to do a good job, sir.
POMPEY: And while I'm in town, I want to look at your temple and see for myself this famous building that everyone is always fighting over.

NARRATOR: Pompey went into the temple and peeked into the Most Holy Place, thinking to find a statue of the Jewish god.

POMPEY: What? No statue? What kind of temple is this? There's just a bunch of paper scrolls here! I'm leaving. Good-bye.

Scene 11: The political landscape when Jesus came into the world

NARRATOR: While the Romans ruled Israel, the Parthians came from the east and attacked Jerusalem. The Parthians had been part of the Persian Empire and had now grown strong enough to take over that part of the world.

SEVENTH CITIZEN OF JERUSALEM: Oh, no! Not the Persians again! I thought they were gone!

PARTHIAN GENERAL: We're taking over now. Hyrcanus, you can't be king anymore. We are going to cut off your ears so that you'll never be able to be a priest ever again. We know you Jews have a rule that says the high priest can't be missing any body parts.

HYRCANUS: Aahhh!

PARTHIAN GENERAL: And now we're going to haul you off to Bablyon. You can live with the Jews who stayed there.

NARRATOR: Hyrcanus was taken to Babylon and he lived there for a number of years. Then the Romans attacked again and tried to drive the Parthians out of Israel.

PARTHIAN GENERAL: Oh no! Our side is losing! The Romans are going to beat us! I'm out of here!

NARRATOR: The Romans reclaimed Israel and appointed a man named Herod to be the King of the Jews. The Romans were not going to trust the Jews to rule themselves.

HEROD: Well, I am King of the Jews now. But I think I need to make sure that the previous king, Hyrcanus, is gone for good. I think I will dispose of him.

HYRCANUS: I just got an invitation from Herod to return to Jerusalem. He says I can be high priest again.

BABYLONIAN JEW: Don't go back. It's probably a trick! He'll kill you.

NARRATOR: It was a trick. And Hyrcanus did get killed.

HEROD: I'm the King of the Jews and I'll get rid of anyone who tries to take my place!

Daniel Chapter 12: The message of this book

Extra notes for this chapter:

No matter how you interpret the visions, the message of the book stays the same: God is in charge of history and will be victorious in the end. God is coming back to judge the world and God's people will be rewarded for their faithfulness. As Jesus said, God the Father is preparing a place for his people to live forever-- a place of perfect joy, with no pain or sorrow. That was an important message to give Daniel because the Jews were about to undergo several more centuries of persecution.

When God declares that the time will be "a time, times, and half a time" the meaning of the word "time" is symbolic. The word "time" means "God's perfect pre-determined amount of time." The word "times" suggests a fairly long amount of time, because "times" has to be longer than just a "time." The term "half a time" suggest an amount of time that has been cut short. If you have half of something, it has been cut by someone. You can have a very small loaf of bread that is the same size as half a loaf. Even though they are the same size, the half loaf has been acted upon by the person who cut it. So the message of this phrase, "a time, times and half a time" is that God has predetermined how long it will be before Jesus returns. It will be a fairly long time, but it will be ended suddenly by God himself. History won't go on forever.

This chapter also hints at a rather intense period of persecution right before the end. This isn't something we like to ponder. Sure we all think we'd love to still be alive when Jesus returns, but do we want the persecution that surrounds that event? Probably not. Why does God allow such persecution? Why does God allow Satan to make war against the saints? This is a profound question and not one we can adequately answer, but here is an interesting thought to ponder. Consider God's viewpoint. He sees all of history all at once. It's like a giant story unfolding. God isn't threatened by anyone or anything, and he can resurrect and restore everyone and fix everything. He will remake the world and fix every problem. From his perspective, the important thing is that history culminates in the greatest victory possible over Satan and sin. Now think about stories for a minute. What makes a good story? Would a story without problems and bad guys be interesting? When we are taught about good story writing techniques the first thing we learn is that we need a conflict as the basis for the story. The conflict should rise and get more intense, then finally result in a satisfying conclusion. A story gets more exciting if the good guys almost get beaten by the bad guys, but then finally pull out a victory in the end. The more you think the good guys are going to lose, the more you cheer when they finally win. So if God wants to really have an exciting finish to world history, why not let Satan really have at it and put forth his worst, right? Let Satan think he's winning, and then when things look really bleak for God's side, then come forth from heaven light lightning and strike Satan down utterly and completely and banish him to the fiery pit forever. It's like something from an adventure film, isn't it? Perhaps God gave us this instinctive sense of drama so that we could understand why he is letting world history flow the way it is. Good drama doesn't always have the good guys winning in every chapter. So what kind of chapter are you in? Are things peaceful in your chapter? Or are you experiencing persecution? Either way, God is in control and you are part of a cosmic drama that will be won in the end by the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, our Lord Jesus! He will come, as Revelation says, riding on a white horse, with a sword in his hand, and will be victorious.

Amen! Come Lord Jesus!

Questions for discussion:

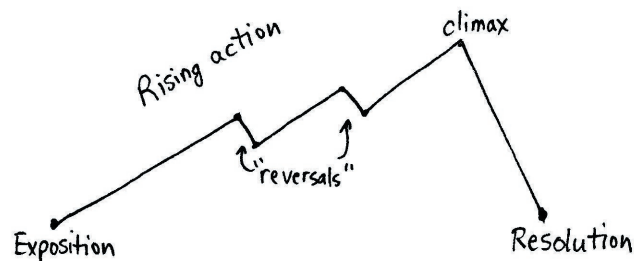
- 1) Who is Michael? (*the angel in charge of God's army of angels*)
- 2) Do angels fight with actual physical weapons? (*No, because they are not physical creatures like we are.*)
- 3) According to verse 10, why does God allow troubles to come upon His people? For what purpose? (*To refine them and make them holy. Just as a metal smith uses heat to drive the impurities out of the metal, so God uses persecution and problems to drive out our spiritual impurities and make us more holy.*)
- 4) Has knowledge increased since the time of Daniel? (*Yes, it sure has!*)
- 5) Did Daniel understand the things he saw in his vision? (*No, except for the parts that were interpreted for him.*) Did God explain everything in the visions? (*no*)
- 6) What will ultimately happen to Daniel? (*He will arise at the Last Judgement and be given his reward, along with all who have loved God and trusted in Him.*)

- 6) Will you be there to see Daniel receive his inheritance? *(Yes, if you love Jesus, you'll be there!)*
- 7) Will you receive a reward from God if you are faithful to Him? *(yes!)*
- 8) What kind of reward might God give to us in the new world he will create? *(You might want to read Psalm _____ your heart's desire)*
- 9) What is the alternative to being in the new world with God? *(Being in hell. Verse 2 puts it mildly as "everlasting shame and contempt." In other places, the Bible is quite clear about the miseries of hell.)*
- 10) Can you think of things that Jesus said that relate to this chapter? Perhaps verses about the Judgement Day?

Activity ideas for this chapter:

- 1) Create a "plot diagram" for the Bible.

Many creative writing guides have student create "plot diagrams" for stories. The student must draw a horizontal line that goes up and down as the plot rises and falls. A simple plot diagram would be something like this:



The exposition is where the main characters are introduced as well as the basis of the conflict. As the action "rises" the conflict gets more intense. There can be "reversals" in the plot where you have the action rising and falling on a smaller scale, but still in line with the main plot. The climax is the chapter or event where the conflict comes to a head (usually when the hero finally wins in some way or other). The resolution is simply a short follow-up, allowing the reader to see what became of the characters and perhaps where they are headed in the future. The high points on the line represent times of intense conflict, where tension heats up. There may be a battle, or fighting or persecution. The lower parts represent times that are relatively more calm. They are still important, as they add to the rhythm of the plot. The story can't be tense all the time!

Have the students collaborate on a plot diagram for the Bible. You may want to use a white board or chalkboard, or you could use a series of sheets of paper taped together. You might also want to have each student make their own, but collaborate as a group as to what the diagrams should look like.

You should have some major up and down trends with minor ups and downs embedded in those lines. What is the exposition? *(Answer: the first few chapters in Genesis, where we meet the main characters-- God, humans, and Satan. The main conflict that is set up is that humans have sinned and are doomed unless God saves them.)* What is the rising action? *(all of history)* What is the climax of the story? *(Jesus comes back and defeats sin and Satan for all time.)* What is the resolution? *(God creates the new heavens and earth,)* What are some minor ups and downs (reversals) on the line? *(There are lots of possibilities here, including the Flood, the enslavement in Egypt and Exodus, the battles for Canaan, Saul, David, the dividing of the kingdom into north and south, Elijah on Mt. Carmel, the deportation of the northern tribes, the deportation of Judah, the attack of Antiochus Epiphanes, the Maccabees, the life and death and resurrection of Christ, the persecution of the early church, the Reformation, the Inquisition, etc.)* What might be low points (calm times) on the graph? *(Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, times of peace during Judges, Ruth, Solomon, peaceful times in the kingdom of Judah, period exile, rebuilding of temple under Nehemiah, the decades before Jesus, the early life of Jesus, the period of church growth under Constantine and in the Middle Ages, period of growth and prosperity in modern times)*

2) Paper star craft

NOTE before you begin: This craft is a little tricky in its final stages. The cutting is easy, the folding is easy if scoring is done ahead of time, and the assembly of each star point is easy. The assembly of all five star points into the star shape needs some adult input. The joints must be glued accurately to avoid gaps along the final seams. Even 9 and 10-year-olds may need some help gluing the last joints. The very last joint is tricky because you can't stick anything inside to press the seam. If you think this craft is too advanced for your group, you might want to consider just cutting two flat stars and gluing them together, back to back (like the Bible verse circle).

You will need:

- Copies of the pattern page (on card stock)
- White glue (NOT "school glue") and scissors
- A ruler and something to score with such as a compass point or nail (scissors will also do)
- Thin string or heavy thread (about 12 inches per student)

Copy the pattern on the following page onto heavy card stock. Bright yellow (or orange) is nice if you can find some, but white will do.

Before you cut out the pieces, score along the dotted lines using a ruler and something semi-sharp such as the point of a compass, a medium-sized nail, or the edge of a student scissor. Don't cut too deeply. You only want to score these lines so that they will fold very easily. You may want to practice scoring first, before scoring these lines.

NOTE: You might want to consider pre-scoring the lines for the students if class time is limited or the students don't have the tools (or perhaps the coordination) to do the scoring themselves. You don't have to cut out the pieces to score them. Just score them, leaving the cutting for the students.

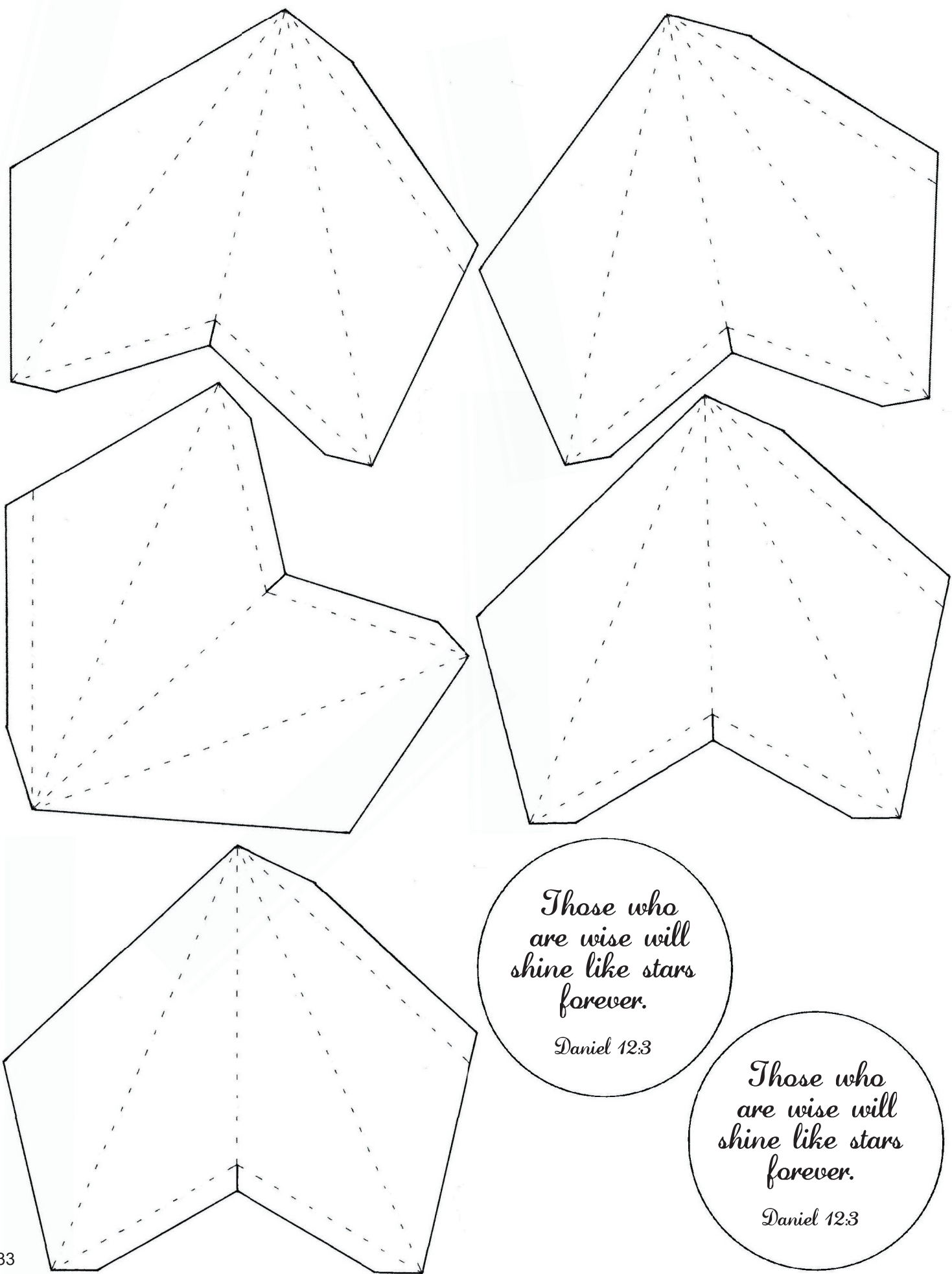
After the scoring is done, have the students cut out all the pieces. Then fold along the dotted lines. If you don't want the dotted line to show on your final project, fold so that the dotted lines will be on the inside of the fold. **IMPORTANT: Make sure the folds are nice and crisp!**

Use white glue (such as Elmer's glue-- but **NOT** "school glue" as it is terrible for quick adhesion) to assemble the star.

Assembly:

- 1) Before you glue the seam on the first point, place a looped piece of string (about 10 inches long, and folded in half) into the point and apply a small dot of glue. (This piece of string will become a "hanger" from which you can hang your star when it is finished.) Use a small amount of glue on the flap and press and hold the seam for about ten seconds, or until it sticks well. Let the piece "rest" for a few minutes before attaching another section.
- 2) Assemble the other four points.
- 2) Next, take a short piece of string (about 2 inches long) and glue one end between the two circles so that they are back to back with the string coming out directly above the words (right side up!). Press firmly.
- 3) Now take two of the points and put them together by gluing a "flap side" to a "non flap side." Right before you join these two pieces, put the free end of the string (the string sticking out of the circle) into the joint so that the circle will hang from that joint (as seen in photo above).
- 4) Join the other points making sure that the point with the hanger is directly opposite the joint with the circle (so that it hangs correctly when finished).





*Those who
are wise will
shine like stars
forever.*

Daniel 12:3

*Those who
are wise will
shine like stars
forever.*

Daniel 12:3

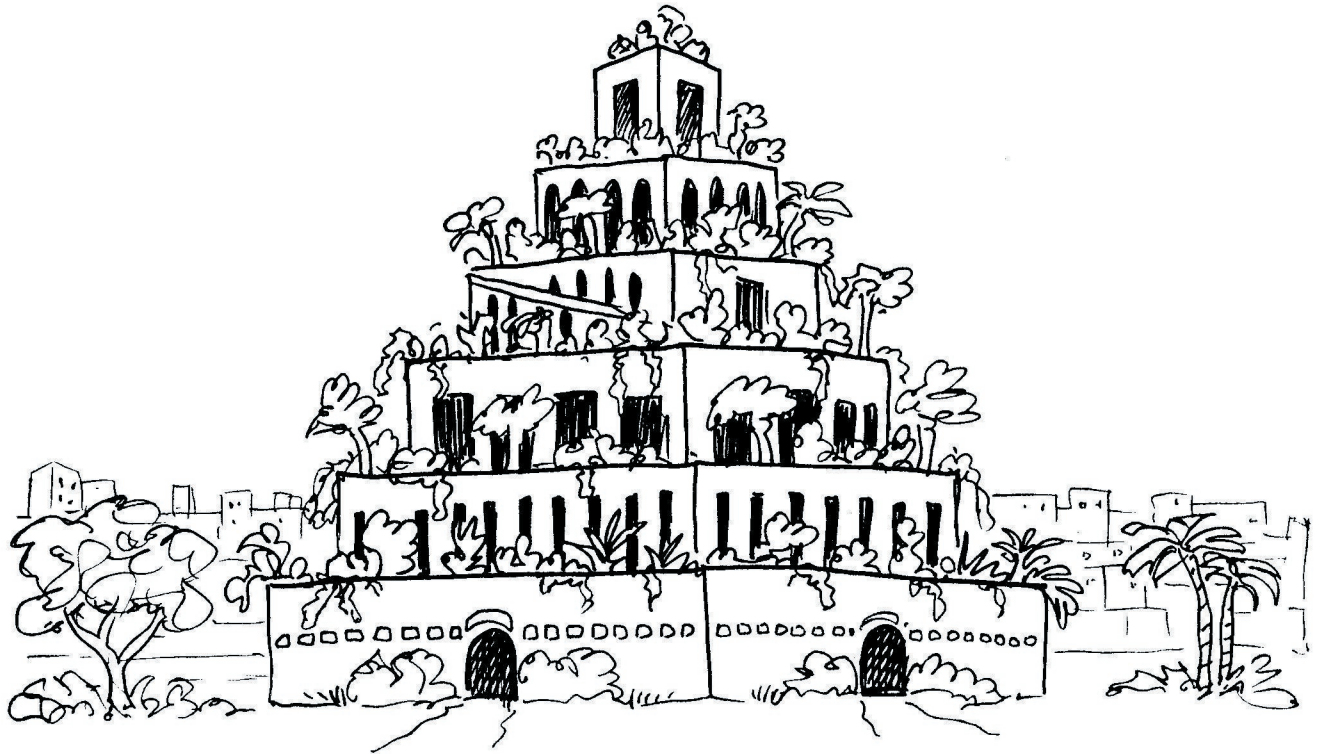
The following pages contain the patterns for the “Welcome to Babylon” booklet, plus the patterns for the various items that go into the booklet.

The first section, containing the patterns for the actual pages of the booklet, should be double-sided, with the title page as page on top. The back of the title page is blank. The page with the map (page 1) should be the top of the second page. The last page (9) is blank on the back and can be used as the back cover. (The pages are ready for double-sided printing if your machine can do double sides. Just hit PRINT and enter PAGES 37-47.)

RECOMMENDED: Copy the pages of the booklet onto heavy card stock paper. This will make the booklet much more durable.

.

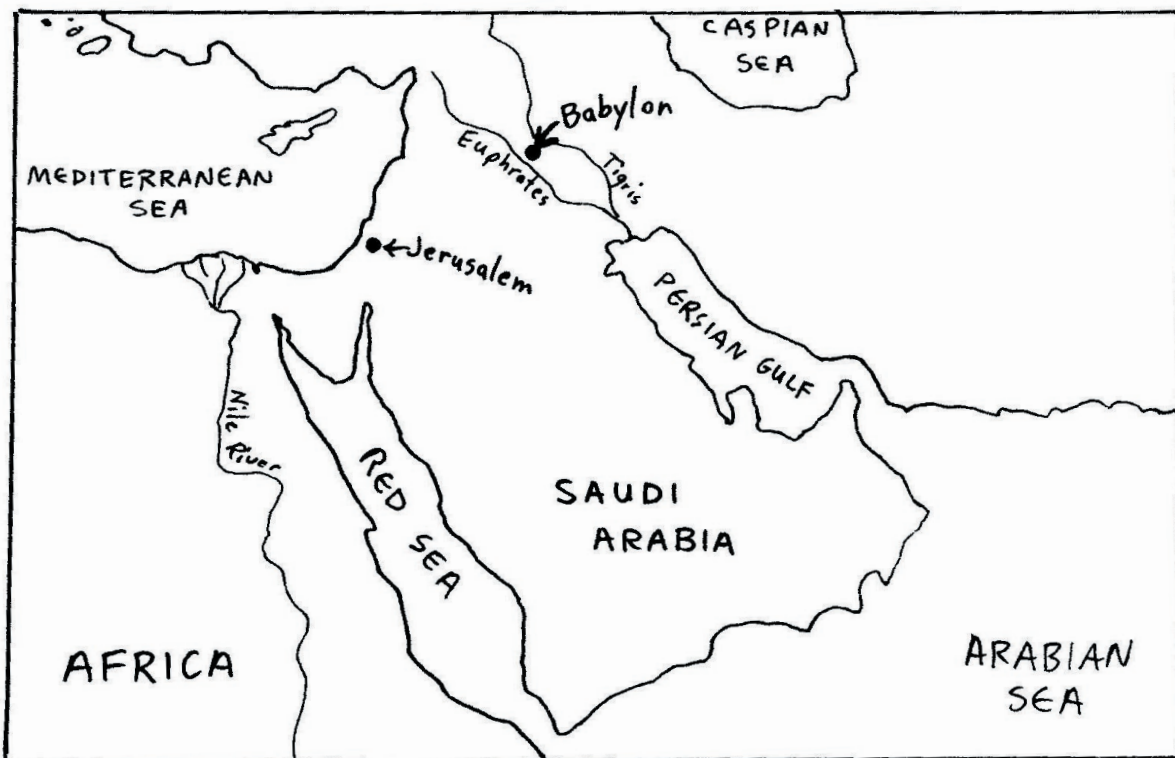
WELCOME
TO



BABYLON

Where is Babylon?

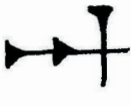





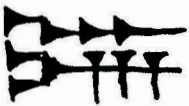




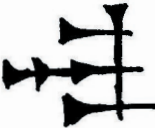





We are located along the Euphrates River. The land between the Euphrates River and the Tigris River is called Mesopotamia (meaning "between the rivers"). Our land is very fertile, meaning it is excellent for growing crops such as wheat, barley and lentils. We also like to grow lettuce, onions, garlic, mustard, chickpeas, and dates. We eat the meat of cows, sheep, chickens and pigs. The weather is warm all year round making it a very pleasant place to live.



Before we Babylonians came to Mesopotamia, the land between the rivers had been inhabited for thousands of years by the Sumerians. They had developed a way to write down their language. Their "cuneiform" writing was done on wet clay using a small wedge-shaped tool called a stylus. They Sumerians did a lot of writing and there are thousands of clay tablets that still exist today. They wrote letters, they wrote down their laws, and they wrote tablets about music, math, astronomy, medicine and magic. When we Babylonians came here and began living among the Sumerians, we found that we really liked their culture. We read their stories, played their music, learned their math, wrote with their cuneiform, and copied their art and architecture. Sumerian culture has become our culture.



To be a successful Babylonian, you will need to learn to write in cuneiform. You can see that you will need to study very hard to be able to write like this. Begin by learning the words on this list, then use your stylus to write them on your tablet.

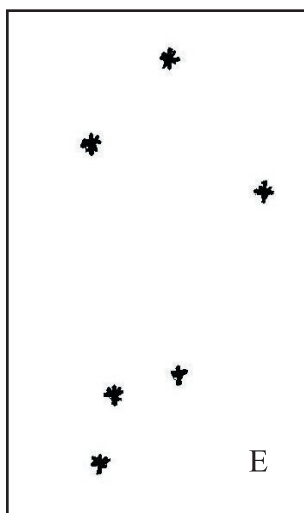
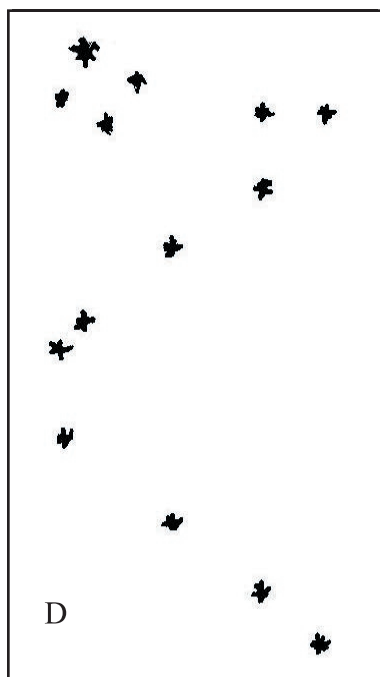
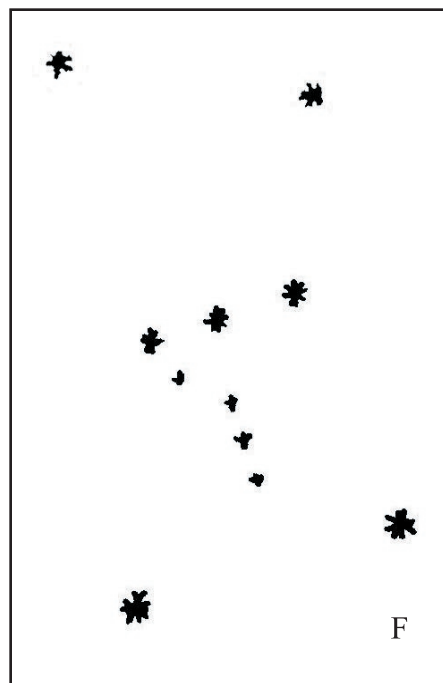
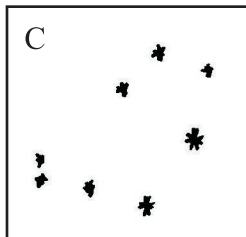
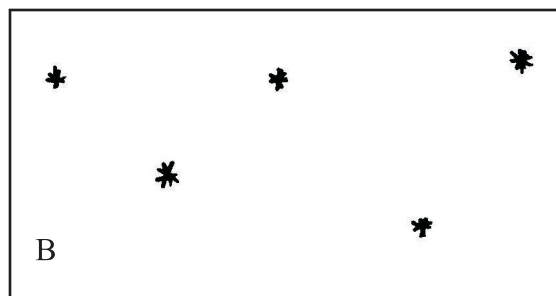
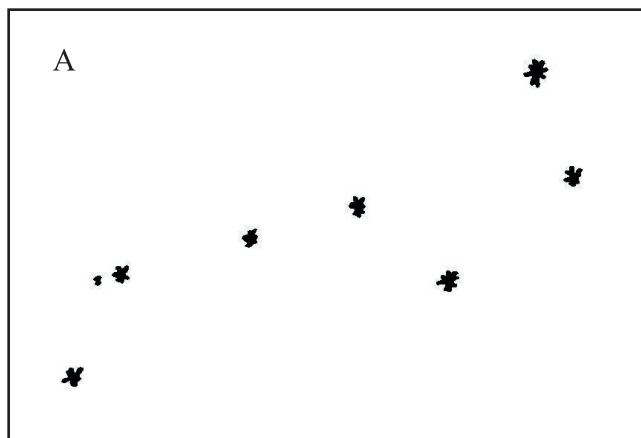
	heaven or god		mouth or "to speak"		fish
	earth		"to eat"		barley
	man		water or "in"		sun or day
	woman		"to go" or "to stand"		"to plow"
	mountain		bird		ox
	food		cow		

Cuneiform sentences have very simple grammar, which makes them easy to write and hard to read. Putting the symbols for “man,” “go,” and “mountain” together could mean “the man is going to the mountain,” “the man went to the mountain,” or “the man will go to the mountain.” Make up some sentences using the words on your list and write them here on your tablet:



We Babylonians are very interested in the stars. If you want to have a good job in the Babylonian government, you need to know a lot about astronomy. You can start by learning some of the constellations. Try to match the name of the constellation with its picture. (The answers are under the flap.)

- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| 1) Libra, the lyre (harp) | 2) Orion, the hunter |
| 3) The Pleiades (also called The Seven Sisters) | 4) Cassiopea |
| 5) The Big Dipper | 6) Draco, the dragon |



(Glue a flap over the answers.)

Answers:
 1) E 2) F 3) C
 4) B 5) A 6) D

GLUE HANGING GARDENS HERE

The Sumerians built large pyramids called ziggurats. The most famous of their ziggurats is called the Ziggurat of Ur. (It is located in the city of Ur, down where the Tigris and Euphrates join together.) It was built around 2000 BC, the time of Abraham. We Babylonians build ziggurats, too. The most famous one is very unique-- we call it "The Hanging Gardens."



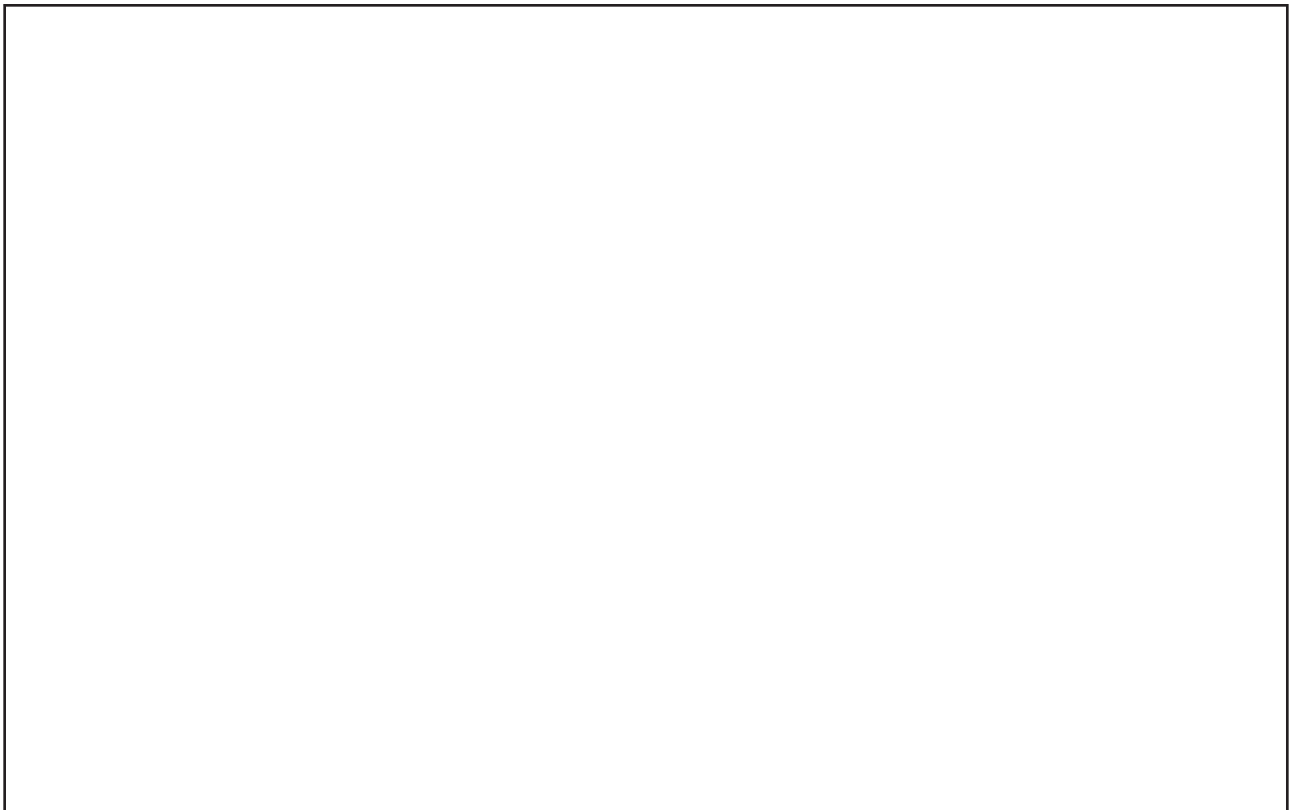
The Ziggurat of Ur

It was built by King Nebuchadnezzar for one of his princesses who was homesick for the forests and gardens of her native country. (Mesopotamia is great for growing crops but we don't have a lot of trees.)

The Hanging Gardens has an irrigation system that pumps water from the river all the way to the top of the tower. What powers this system? Slaves, of course. They work all day to keep the pumps going so the plants won't dry out.

Here in Babylon, we are proud of our beautiful city. The king said that the buildings should glitter in the sun, so the artists put a shiny glaze on the surface of the yellow, white and blue tiles. The archway shown here is called the "Ishtar Gate" and is the entrance into our city. (Ishtar is one of our most important goddesses.) The animals on the tiles are lions and dragons.

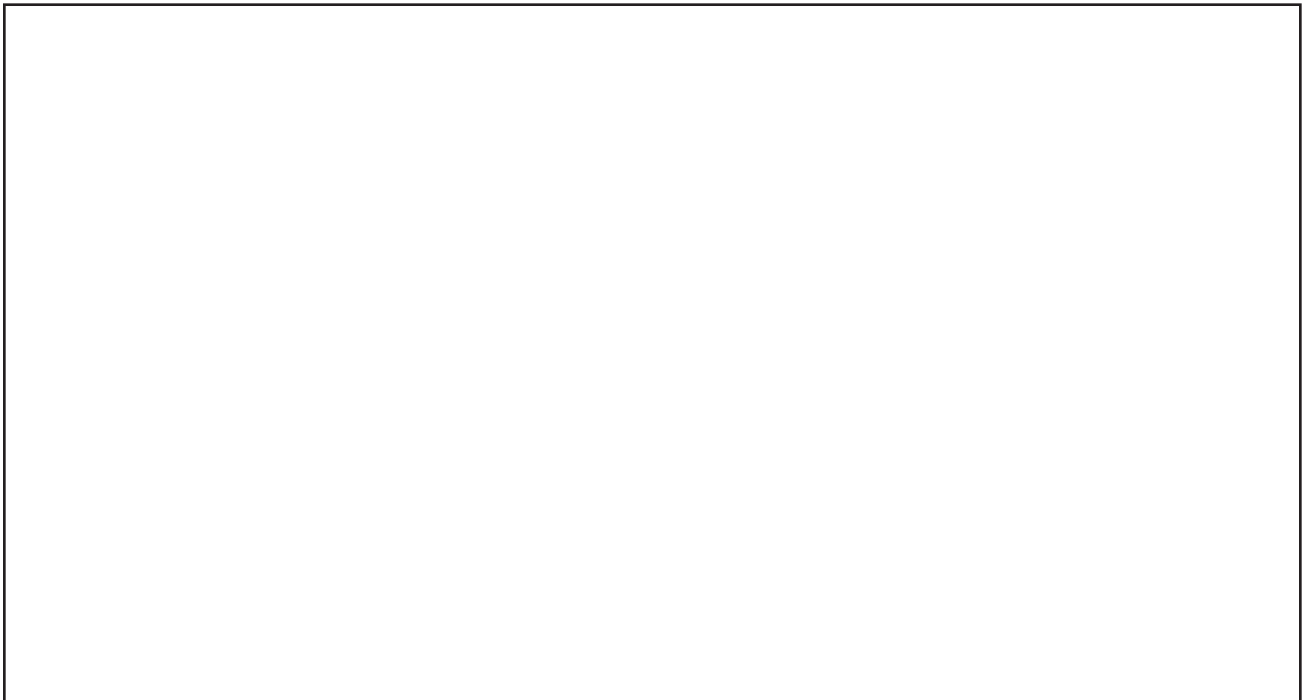
Try your hand at designing a section of tiled wall. You can make a geometric pattern or you can make it look like an animal. Use only blue, white, and yellow so it will match the Ishtar gate.



To be a successful Babylonian, you will also have to do a lot of reading. We learned many stories from the Sumerians and you will have to memorize all of them. You should begin with the most famous story of all: "The Story of Gilgamesh." Read the story then draw a picture of what you think Humbaba looked like.

GLUE GILGAMESH BOOKLET HERE

Humbaba



While in Babylon, you will be expected to worship our gods. We believe the world was created by three gods working together: Tiamat, the god of salt water, Apsu, the god of fresh water, and Mumma, the god of “the deep.” These gods had children, who became gods and goddesses. One of these gods, Marduk, killed Tiamat and divided her in half. Her upper half became the heavens and her lower half became the earth. Marduk eventually became the strongest god-- the god of storms.

Here are some of the gods that came from Apsu and Tiamat:

Sin: god of the moon

Shamash: god of the sun

Enlil: god of air and agriculture

Ea: god of arts and crafts

Ishtar: goddess of love and war

Nintu: the goddess who created humans out of clay



Marduk



Sin, the moon god (on the right)



Ea, the god of wisdom and art (on the left)

Famous Sumerians:

Abram: He lived in one of our largest cities, Ur, around the year 2000 BC. He left Mesopotamia to go to the land of the Canaanites.

Sargon: The first king of Babylon. He ruled Mesopotamia from 1920 BC to 1881 BC. Legend says that he was of humble birth and was put in a basket in the river by his mother. A member of the royal court found him and he was raised as a royal prince.

Hammurabi: He ruled from 1699 BC to 1686 BC. He is famous for his written laws, known as Hammurabi’s Code.

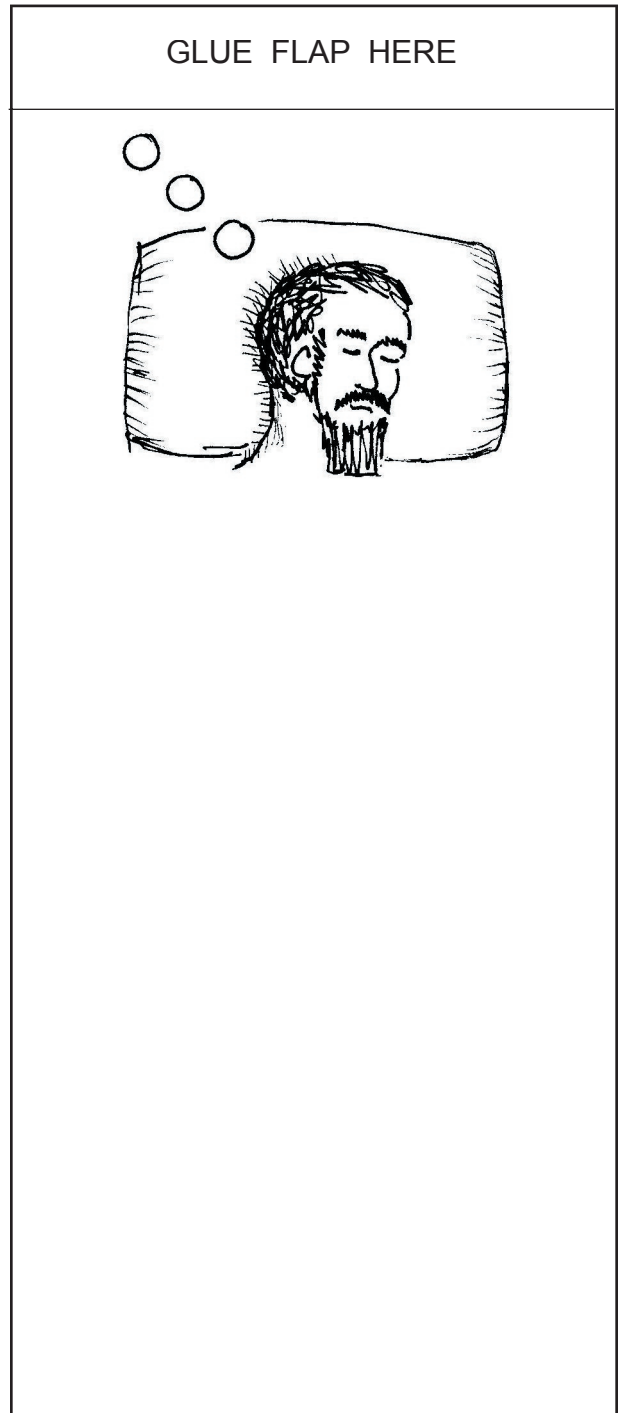
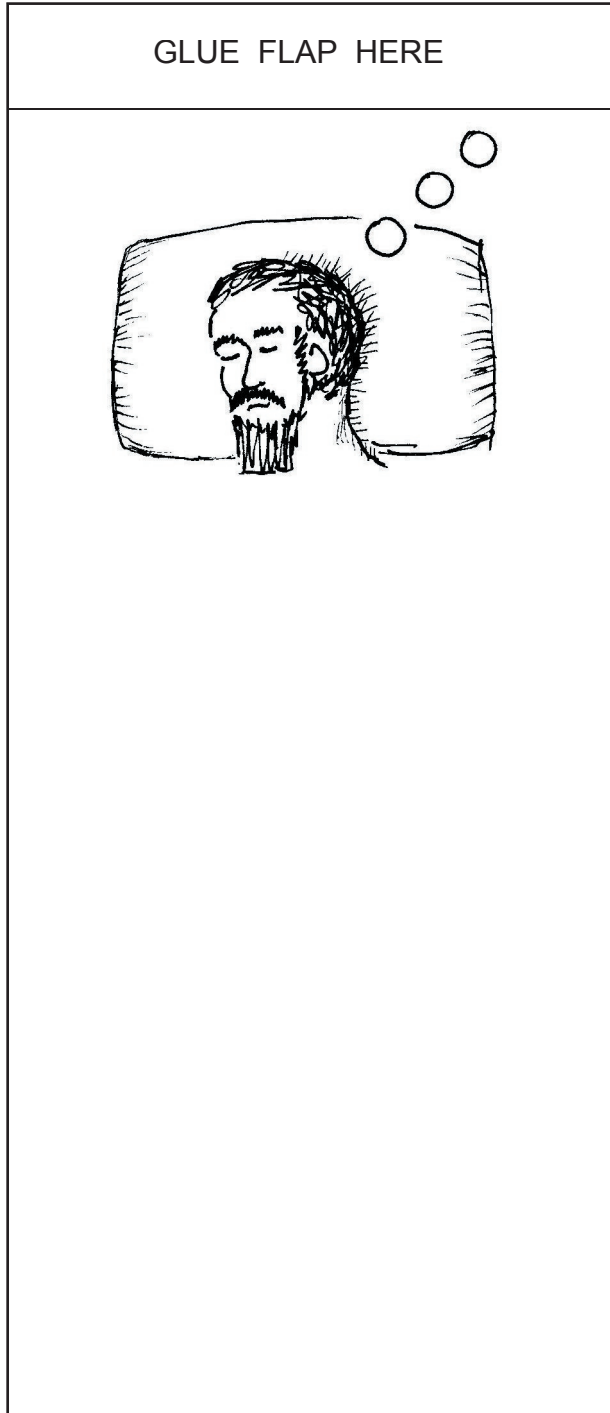
Famous Babylonians:

Tiglath-Pileser III: He founded the New Babylonian Empire in 745 BC. He won a victory over Azariah (Uzziah), the king of Judah, and defeated Pekah, king of Israel.

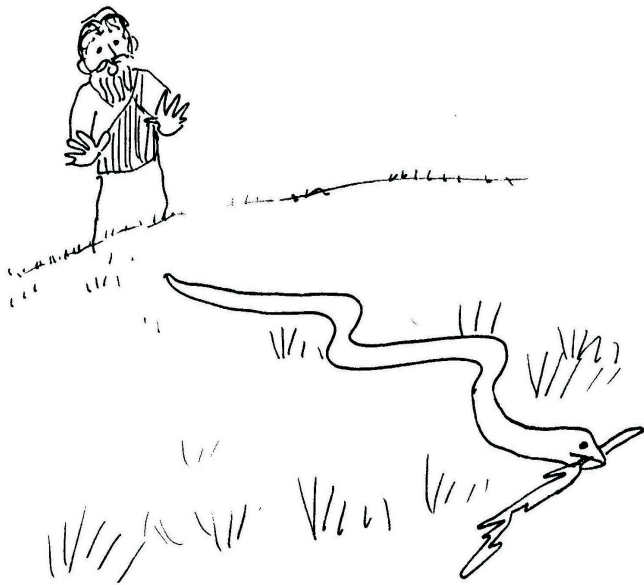
Sennacherib: Ruled from 704 BC to 681 BC and conquered the ten northern tribes of Israel. He deported the Israelites to other places in his empire.

Nebuchadnezzar II: Our current ruler in the year 587 BC. He defeated the southern Israelite kingdom of Judah and brought many captives here to Babylon.

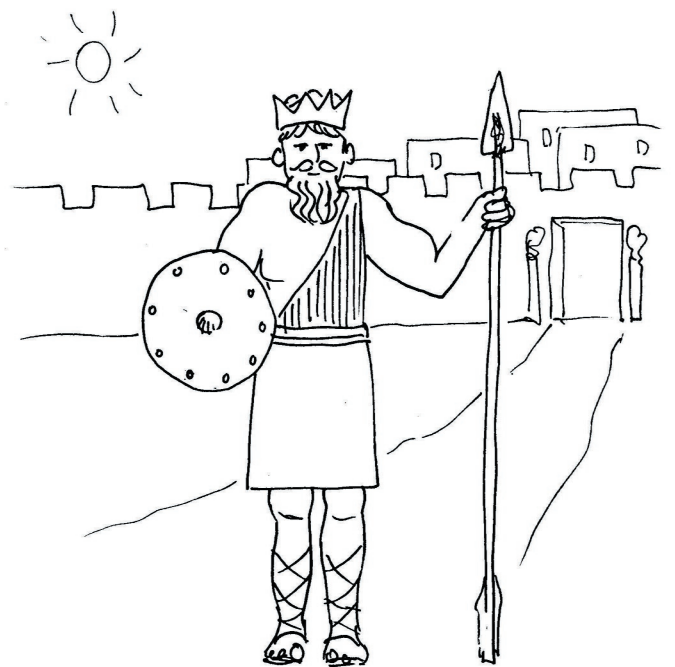
Here in Babylon, we take dreams very seriously. Our wise men know how to interpret dreams and we depend on them to tell us what our dreams mean. We believe dreams can warn us about future events. Our King Nebuchadnezzar, has had two very strange dreams recently. The first one was about a huge statue and the second was about a tree. Do you know what these dreams might mean?



The next section of pages contain the patterns and instructions for various items that will be glued into the “Welcome to Babylon” booklet.



Gilgamesh succeeded in getting the plant, but later a snake came and stole it and slithered away.



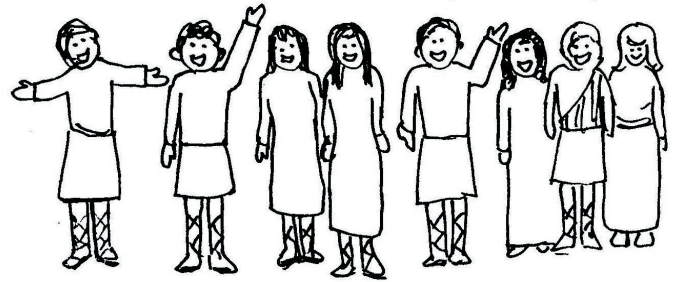
Gilgamesh was the king of the city of Uruk. He was ten feet tall and was a fearless warrior.

The legend of Gilgamesh is the oldest written story in the world. It has been translated into many languages and appears in some form or another in the literature of many ancient cultures.



The elders of the city complained to the gods that Gilgamesh made them work too hard on improving the city walls. They wanted a break. They convinced the gods to create something that would be a distraction, causing Gilgamesh to forget about the city walls. The gods decided to make another man like Gilgamesh, to challenge him. They named him Enkidu.

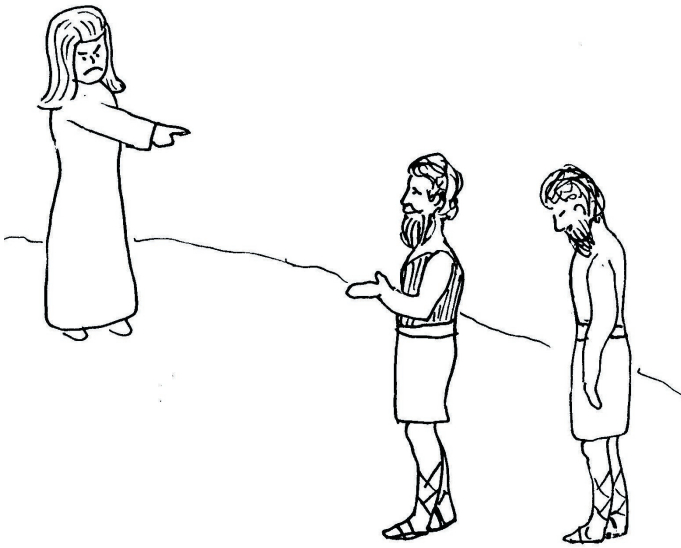
LET US TELL YOU ABOUT GILGAMESH!



After more wanderings, Gilgamesh finally found Enkidu, but the gatekeeper of the Place of the Dead refused to let Enkidu go. Gilgamesh was so upset that he fell over and died. The people of Uruk made Gilgamesh into a hero and told stories and sang songs about him. They called him the "most glorious of heroes."



Gilgamesh decided to go and find the gods and ask them why they had done this thing, and also to find the secrets of life and death. He crossed the Bitter River and went through the deep dark caverns under the Earth and finally reached the place where the Ziusudra lived. He told Gilgamesh how he survived the flood and became a god. He told Gilgamesh that a certain plant at the bottom of the ocean would make a person grow younger.



The goddess Ishtar had been watching the fight. She fell in love with Gilgamesh and commanded him to marry her. Gilgamesh refused. Ishtar became angry and decided to punish Gilgamesh by causing Enkidu to die.

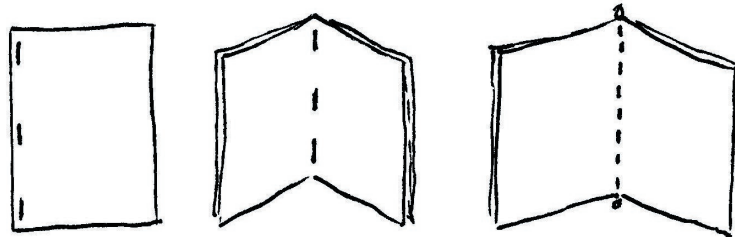


Gilgamesh had a curious dream one night. A double-edged ax came out of the sky and almost struck him. He told the dream to his mother, for she often knew meanings of dreams. She told him to be careful because the ax represented a man very much like himself-- strong and fearless-- who would challenge him.

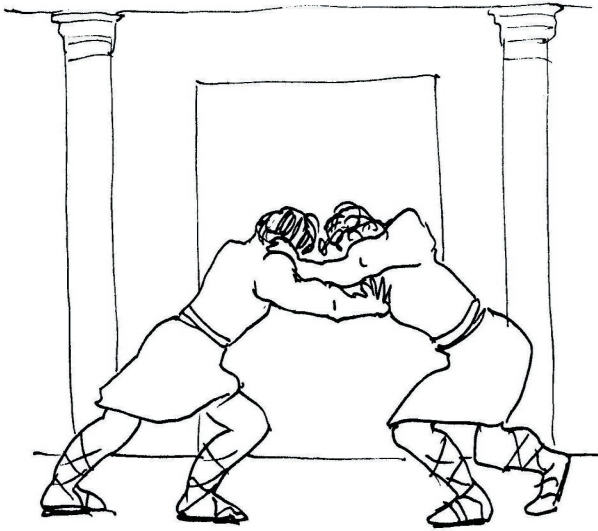
ASSEMBLY NOTE:

Photocopy the Gilgamesh pages (regular paper is fine) so that they are double sided. (Obviously, the 4-picture pages to back-to-back and the 2-picture pages go back-to-back.) Cut the pages in half on the heavier black line and fold on the lighter line.

The pages of this mini-booklet can be either staple or sewed together. If you want to go fancy and have a nice seam on which to fold the booklet, just set your sewing machine on baste, and sew on the fold line up the middle. Tie the threads securely so they won't unravel. If you use staples, you can use either method shown below.



staple or staple or sew



Soon after his dream, Gilgamesh met Enkidu in front of Ishtar's temple. When Enkidu stood in the doorway in front of Gilgamesh, a fight broke out between them. Gilgamesh fell down during the fight and would have lost, but Enkidu called it a tie and they soon became good friends.

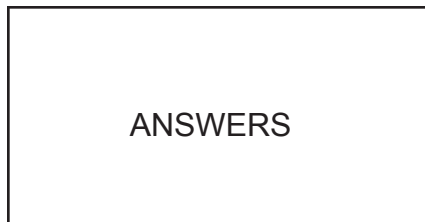


Gilgamesh talked Enkidu into going with him to slay a terrible fire-breathing beast that was terrorizing the people of certain towns. They called the beast Humbaba. He lived in a deep, dark, scary forest. As Gilgamesh and Enkidu drew near to the beast, they could hear his giant heartbeat and smell the smoke from his lungs. His face was full of wrinkles like grooves on an old rock. Humbaba smashed down trees as he walked. Working together, Gilgamesh and Enkidu managed to kill him.

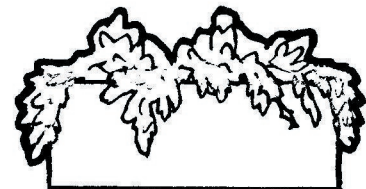
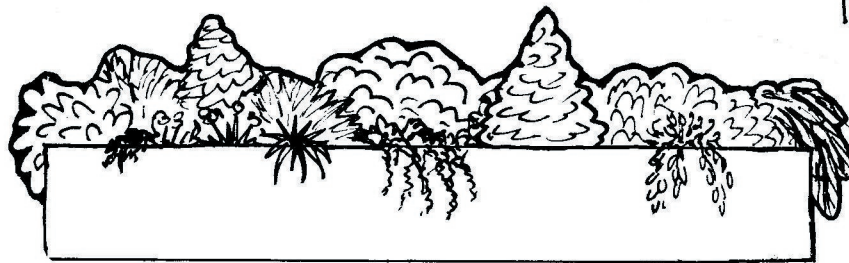
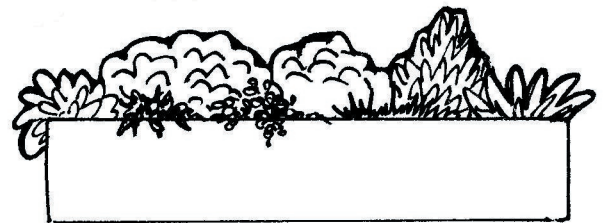
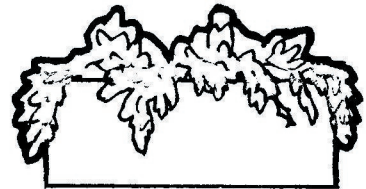
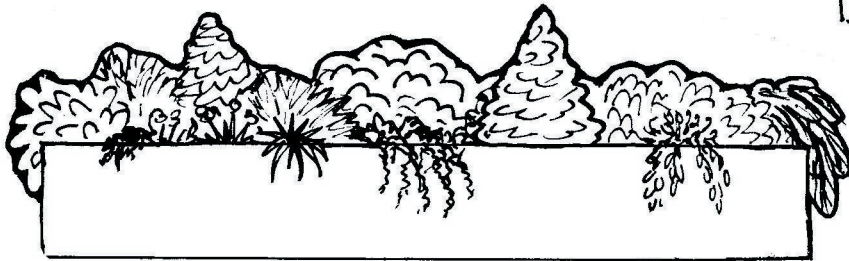
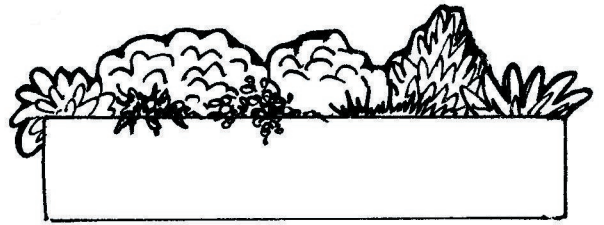
COPY THIS PAGE ONTO WHITE CARD STOCK
OR
MEASURE THESE RECTANGLES AND CUT YOUR OWN
(eliminating the photocopying)



Here is the section of tile to be cut out, colored with blue and yellow, then glued in place in the booklet.

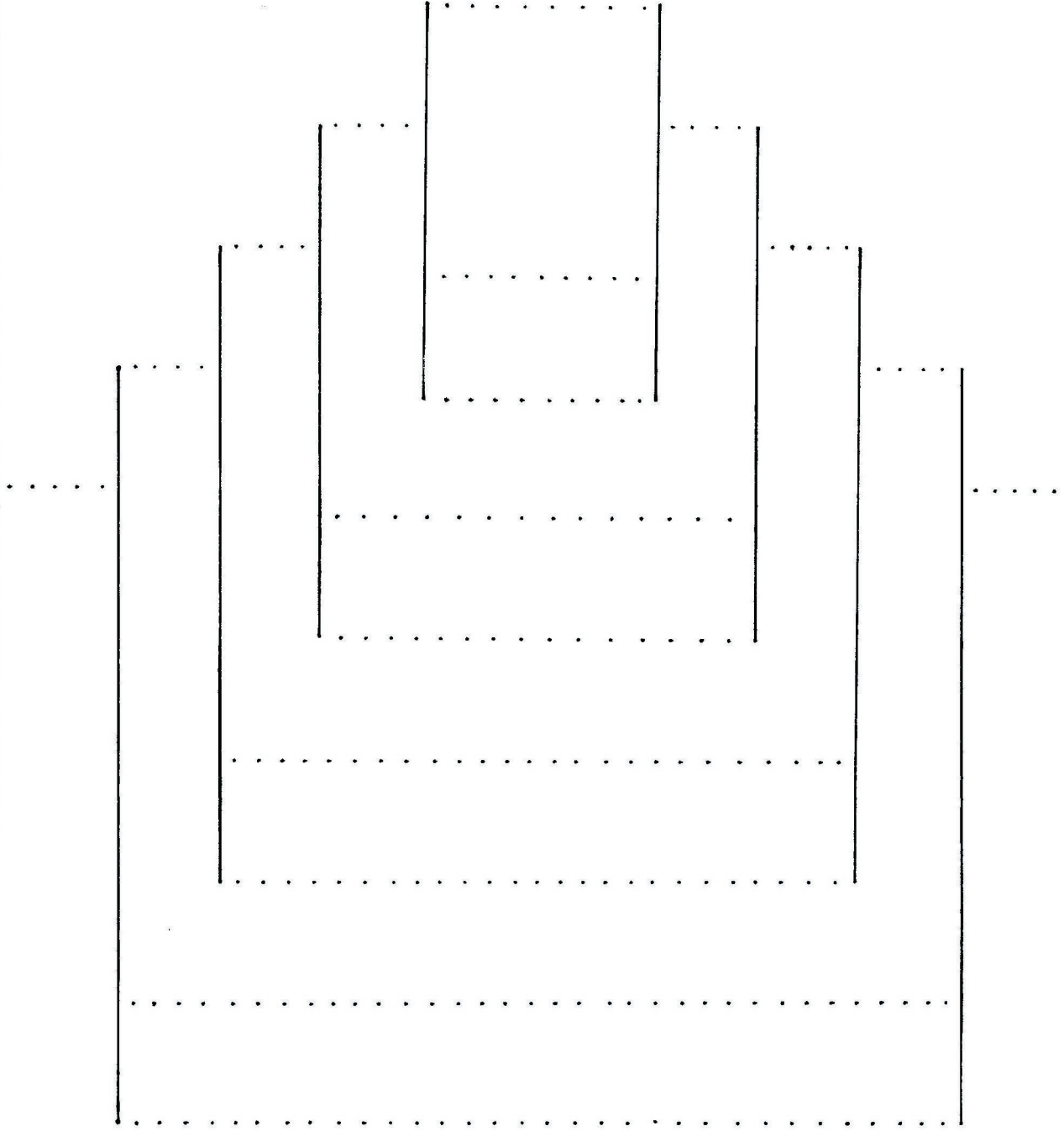


Cut out this flap and glue it over the answers on the constellations page. (Just glue along the top edge, of course, so the flap will lift up.)



COPY ONTO CARD STOCK.

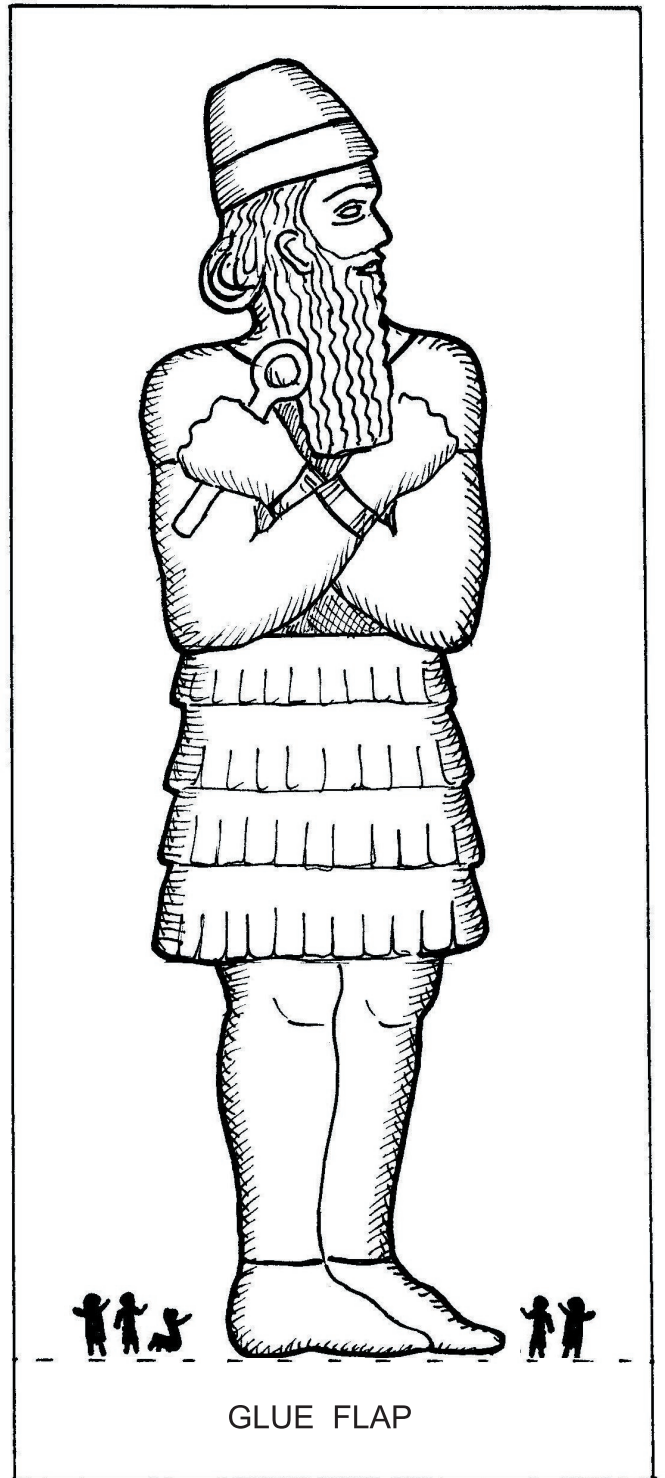
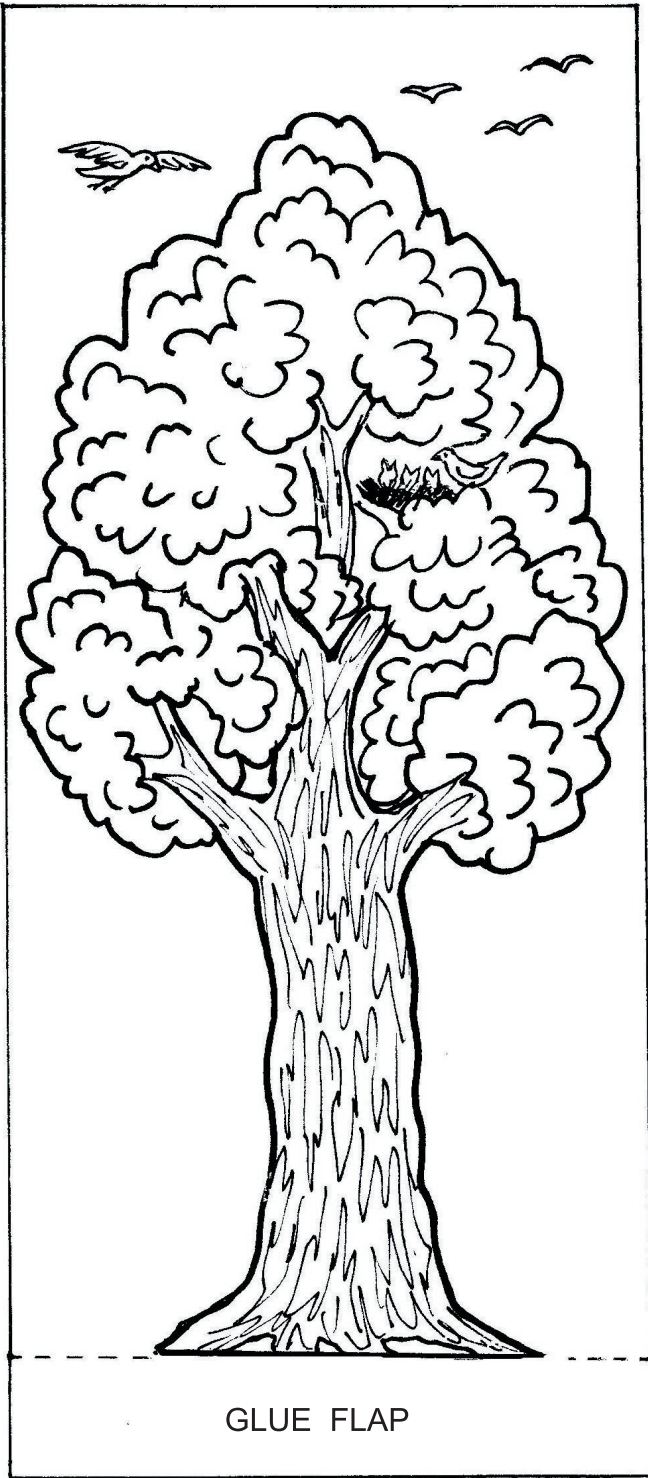
Use scissors to trim along this outer edge line. Use X-acto or razor blade to cut along solid lines inside pattern. Fold on dotted lines.



THE "HANGING GARDENS" OF BABYLON built by King Nebuchadnezzar

Use scissors to trim along this outer edge line. Use X-acto or razor blade to cut along solid lines inside pattern. Fold on dotted lines.

COPY ONTO CARD STOCK.



COPY ONTO CARD STOCK

Cut out these rectangles and fold on dotted line. Glue flap to top of Nebuchadnezzar's bed.