



BRAVE

LIFE



in this series

STAND FOR JESUS

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STAND FIRM

• •

STAND OUT

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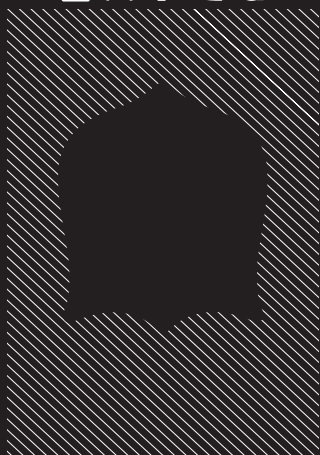
STAND ALONE

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STAND BRAVE



Brave



more LIFE resources available at
toolkit.salvos.org.au/youthandkids



1/5

STAND FOR JESUS



Have you made a decision to stand for Jesus?

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Luke 9:23
2 Corinthians 5:15-18
Ephesians 1:13-14

What's going to change in your life now, knowing
that you are set apart to stand up for Jesus?

2/5

STAND FIRM



What might standing firm look like for you?

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Daniel 1:1-21
Deuteronomy 14:1-21

What's something practical you're going to do
to help you stand firm for Jesus?

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NOTES

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NOTES

What's something practical you're going to do in a specific situation where you need to stand alone?

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Daniel 3:1-30

When's a time you've felt you had to stand alone?

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STAND ALONE

4/5

Write a prayer to God asking Him to help you stand brave.

Daniel 6:1-28

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

How does standing firm, standing tall and standing alone mean that you'll stand brave?

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STAND BRAVE

5/5

How are you going to use your skills, gifts, or passions to glorify God?

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Daniel 2:1-30

Who's someone that you know that stands out for good reasons?

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STAND OUT

3/5

1/5

STAND FOR JESUS

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summary

Today we spend some time looking at the decision to follow Jesus – to stand up for Him.

Standing up for Jesus is a decision we make for the first time when we become part of His family.

It is also decision we make time and time again each day as we choose to follow Him with our whole lives.



you will need

- A print out of *appendix 2*
- A print out of *appendix 3* cut up
- A print out of *appendix 4* cut up
- A permanent marker

If you choose to do "get-to-know-you bingo"

- 1 copy of *appendix 1* for each person in your group
- A pen for each person

If you choose to do the "name-ball game"

- A ball

keep in mind

Making a decision to follow Jesus for the first time is not an easy one; in fact it is a brave decision. And then to make the decision every day that you will follow Jesus also takes courage. Keep these truths in mind as you lead.



CONNECT



Choose one of the following games to play with your group so they can get to know each other (and then do some of the "Connect" questions to get your group chatting):

get-to-know-you bingo

Give each person in your group a print out of *appendix 1* and a pen.

To play you have to ask people questions to find out if they fit into the description in the square.

The winner is the first person to get 4 squares in a row (horizontal or vertical) but they can't have the same name as an answer twice in the set of 4.

OR

name-ball game

Have people go around the circle and introduce themselves using a single word to describe themselves. That word must start with the first letter of their name, for example Jovial John or Classy Cassie.

Once everyone has shared their name and description stand up in a circle.

Hand someone the ball. To pass the ball they must say their name with their description and then pass the ball to someone. Before they throw the ball they must say the description and name of that person.

To make this game trickier, you could add a rule that you must repeat the description and name of the 2 people who caught the ball previous to them.

("Connect" continues on the next page)



To help your group continue connecting, spend some time discussing the following:

- » Would you eat fries when they have fallen on the table? Why or why not?
- » When was the last time you laughed so hard you cried?
- » When you were younger, who was your favourite superhero and why?
- » What is something stupidly risky that you have done before? What were the consequences?
- » Have you ever played 'Truth or Dare' before? Do you normally pick 'truth' or 'dare'? Which do you think is the braver choice? Why?

DISCUSS



What do you think it means to 'follow Jesus'? If you had to explain what it means to someone who had never heard of the concept of following Jesus, what would you say?



Remember to be aware of the non-Christian in your group. We want to make sure the way we ask and phrase questions doesn't isolate them. Feel free to ask extra "what do you think?" or "what would you ask God about this?" kind of questions.

read the bible



Ask volunteers in your group to read from *appendix 2*:

Luke 9:23

- » Jesus says that you have to turn from your "selfish ways" (other translations say "you must deny yourself") to follow Him. Does this fit in nicely with how the world tells us to live? Why or why not?

("Discuss" continues on the next page)



- » Do you think it is easy to turn from living for ourselves to living for Jesus?
What reasons might we not want to turn from living our own way?
- » Why do you think living God's way and living our way/the world's way don't mix?
- » Why do you think it might be considered 'brave' to live God's way?
- » Can you think of a time when God helped you to be brave?
Share with the group how God helped you.
- » What makes it worth it to live for Jesus?



Be aware that this might be a choice some people in your group have made. Don't assume everyone is a Christian (even if they go to church).

read the bible



Ask volunteers in your group to read the following verses:

2 Corinthians 5:15-18

Ephesians 1:13-14

You will find these printed in *appendix 2*.

- » Share with the group how reading these verse makes you feel.
- » Our life drastically changes when we follow Jesus. We are given some awesome promises and we have a heart shift that means we want to follow Jesus.
 - What promises are you excited about?
 - What ways can you feel your heart shifting (or have already seen your heart shift) towards living for Jesus?
- » What is something you want to ask Jesus about living for Him?



INVOLVE



We're going to spend some time thinking about being brave.

- » Do you think being brave means that you never feel scared or never feel fear? Why or why not?
- » When's a time you did something that you thought you couldn't do?

As a group do the activity below that will help everyone to think about following Jesus and being brave.

followers activity

Scatter the printed Bible verses from *appendix 3* on the floor or around the area where your group is.

Let each person in your group choose one of the "life situations" (from *appendix 4*).

Allow your group some time to walk around and read the verses.

Ask your group to collect a verse that speaks to them in relation to the situation they chose.

Come back as a group. Ask each person to share why they grabbed that verse and what it says to them about being bold as they follow Jesus.

Pass around a permanent marker have each person write the reference of that Bible verse on the bottom of their foot to remind them that they are bravely following Jesus.



APPLY



What is one thing you will do differently based on what we've talked about during LIFE group?

AND/OR

What's going to change in your life now knowing that you are set apart to stand up for Jesus?

OR

What is something that you need answers, to or help understanding, before you could stand up for Jesus?



This could be a good question for someone who isn't a Christian yet, or who is having some road-block issues with becoming a Christian.



APPENDIX 1



| | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|--|
| Has read all the Harry Potter books _____ | Walks to school from their house _____ | Is left handed _____ | Has the same favourite fruit as you _____ | Knows how to sew _____ |
| Has never been on a plane ride _____ | Is an only child _____ | Has a dog _____ | Can speak another language _____ | Doesn't drink soft drink _____ |
| Knows how to surf _____ | Can play piano _____ | Would rather holiday at the beach than the bush _____ | Has green eyes _____ | Has an android phone _____ |
| Has a brother _____ | Is a fan of Disney movies _____ | Is wearing a hat _____ | Has broken a bone _____ | Their favourite season is the same as yours _____ |
| Their name starts with the same letter as yours _____ | Has a cat _____ | Has had stitches _____ | Lives on a street starting with the same letter as you _____ | Has won something before _____ |



APPENDIX 2



Luke 9:23 (NLT)

Then he said to the crowd, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross daily, and follow me.

2 Corinthians 5:15-18 (CEV)

"And Christ did die for all of us. He died so we would no longer live for ourselves, but for the one who died and was raised to life for us. We are careful not to judge people by what they seem to be, though we once judged Christ in that way. Anyone who belongs to Christ is a new person. The past is forgotten, and everything is new. God has done it all! He sent Christ to make peace between himself and us, and he has given us the work of making peace between himself and others."

Ephesians 1:13-14 (NIV)

"And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory."



APPENDIX 3



David has been delivered from his enemies and he sings a song to the people about God:
God's way is perfect. All the Lord's promises prove true. He is a shield for all who look to him for protection. (2 Samuel 22:31) (NLT)

God is speaking to Israel, who he has chosen to be His special people and God says:

For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you. (Isaiah 41:13) (NIV)

David is reflecting on the way God looks after those who trust in Him:

Be strong and let your heart take courage, All you who hope in the LORD. (Psalm 31:24) (ESV)

King David is speaking of His trust in God:

The Lord is my light and my salvation— whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life— of whom shall I be afraid?(Psalm 27:1) (NIV)



APPENDIX 3



Teach me your way, O Lord. Lead me on a level path because I have enemies who spy on me. Do not surrender me to the will of my opponents. False witnesses have risen against me. They breathe out violence. I believe that I will see the goodness of the Lord in this world of the living. Wait with hope for the Lord. Be strong, and let your heart be courageous. Yes, wait with hope for the Lord. (Psalm 27: 11-14) (GW)

David reflects on those who follow and trust in God:

In the fear of the LORD there is strong confidence, And his children will have refuge. (Proverbs 14:26) (GW)

The wicked flee when no one is pursuing, But the righteous are bold as a lion. (Proverbs 28:1) (HSCB)

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. (Ephesians 6:10) (ESV)



APPENDIX 3



Joshua is leading God's people into the Promised Land and God speaks to him, reminding Joshua that He promises to be with him:

Be brave and strong! Don't be afraid of the nations on the other side of the Jordan. The Lord your God will always be at your side, and he will never abandon you. Then Moses called Joshua up in front of the crowd and said: Joshua, be brave and strong as you lead these people into their land. The Lord made a promise long ago to Israel's ancestors that this land would someday belong to Israel. That time has now come, and you must divide up the land among the people.
(Deuteronomy 31:6-7) (CEV)

Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.
(Ephesians 6:13) (ESV)



APPENDIX 3



Joshua is leading God's people into the Promised Land and God speaks to him, reminding Joshua that He promises to be with him:

The Lord commissioned Joshua son of Nun, "Be strong and courageous, for you will bring the Israelites into the land I swore to them, and I will be with you." (Deuteronomy 31:23) (HSCB)

Solomon has been put in charge of building God's temple and David is reminding Solomon that God has commissioned this project and promises to bring it to completion:

Then David said to his son Solomon, "Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Don't be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord God, my God, is with you. He won't leave you or forsake you until all the work for the service of the Lord's house is finished. (1 Chronicles 28:20) (HSCB)



APPENDIX 3



The disciples receive the Holy Spirit and it makes them bold to proclaim the gospel:

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. (Acts 4:13) (ESV)

The disciples receive the Holy Spirit and it makes them bold to proclaim the gospel:

After they had prayed, the meeting place shook. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and bravely spoke God's message. (Acts 4:31) (CEV)

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:16) (ESV)



APPENDIX 3



So that we can confidently say, “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?” (Hebrews 13:6) (ESV)

Paul is encouraging Timothy and his church to share the gospel and be bold as they do so:

For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline. So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner. Rather, join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God. He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. (2 Timothy 1:7-9b) (NIV)

Paul is giving final instructions to the Corinthians church and he wants to encourage them to:

Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. (1 Corinthians 16:13) (NIV)



APPENDIX 3



Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life. (Revelation 2:10) (ESV)

I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world. (John 16:33) (ESV)

Jesus has overcome sin and death and this is our response:

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain. (1 Corinthians 15:58) (NIV)



APPENDIX 4



When we are being persecuted for following Jesus and we need to remember God is our strength and He makes us brave.

When life is difficult and we want to remember to have an eternal perspective about God's deliverance of those who follow Him.

When you need a reminder that God cares for those who trust in Him.

Remembering that the righteousness of Jesus covers us and makes us brave.

When we are scared that we are not good enough or don't have the right words to say.

When we need to remember to be bold because Jesus has already saved us.



APPENDIX 4



When we need boldness to be people who speak about Jesus who saves and wants others to follow Him.

Remembering that God has given us His Spirit to dwell in His followers.

A reminder that we don't stand in our own strength, we stand in the strength of Jesus and in the might of His power.

In times of struggle and suffering, remembering God is faithful and brings those who follow Him through life to eternal life with Him.

Having boldness in our struggles, because Jesus has overcome every struggle.



2/5

STAND FIRM



summary

Daniel and his friends find themselves in an unfamiliar country with people around them who don't love and serve God. They must stand firm in how God has told them to live as followers of Him.

Our situation is similar. We live in a land that is not distinctly Christian and we live among friends, family and peers who don't know, love, follow and obey Jesus. How are we to stand firm amidst all of this?

Today we take a look at Daniel and his example. We'll see how he is an encouragement to us to stand firm!



you will need

- 5 copies of *appendix 1* (if you choose to read the passage as a script)
- *Appendix 2* printed and cut up for “Involve”

keep in mind

- King Nebuchadnezzar is pronounced: “NEB-EE-KEN-EZ-AR”.
- ‘Standing Firm’ is not us putting down our foot and getting our way – it is standing firm in God’s way of living.



CONNECT



To help your group connect on a relaxed level, spend some time discussing the following:

- » What would you prefer, having really long, sharp pointy teeth or no teeth? Why?
- » What would be your ultimate holiday?
- » If you only had \$10 left what would you spend it on? And why on that item?
- » What do you think classifies as a meaningful life?
- » Is there something that you've done that required you to be brave? Did it pay off in the short term or the long term?

DISCUSS



read the bible

The passage for the Bible reading has been turned into a script to involve multiple people in your group (*see appendix 1*).

There are 5 parts: Narrator 1, Narrator 2, Nebuchadnezzar, Official, Daniel.

Read out the script (the difficult names in their passage have been written out phonetically to help with pronunciation).

OR

You could have someone read **Daniel 1:1-14** from their Bible.

('Discuss' questions continue on the next page)



- » What things in the story point to Daniel being an 'everyday kind of guy'?
- » Does anyone have any ideas what has been happening to God's people just prior to this passage? (They have been taken into exile and are living in a foreign land).
- » What do you think the passage is talking about when it says "eat and drink only what God has approved for his people to eat"?



Allow for some discussion with the question, but don't worry about getting a right answer here, you're about to look at Deuteronomy to get some context.

read the bible



Ask someone to read out loud, they can pass onto the next person when they've had enough of reading.

Deuteronomy 14:1-21



Try not to get bogged down in the specifics of what they can and can't eat. This passage is for context - try to just look at the fact that God does have laws for His people regarding food.

- » Does reading this passage help Daniel's comment about eating to make more sense? How?
- » It says that Daniel "resolved/made up his mind to eat and drink only what God has approved for his people to eat". Do you think it would have been easy in this situation to stand firm? Why or why not?
- » What do you think you would have done in Daniel's situation?
- » Do you know what some of God's guidelines for living are for us? Discuss ones that are relevant for us today? (Keeping our tongue from speaking evil, thinking pure thoughts, living holy lives, honouring and respecting others, loving others etc)
- » It would have been so much easier for Daniel to eat the food placed before him, but he was so passionate about wanting to follow God's way of living that he refused to eat the food and instead requested food that God allowed His people to eat. Are you this passionate about following God's way of living?
 - If yes, in what things?
 - If no, in what things?

('Discuss' questions continue on the next page)



- » What is Daniel's manner as he speaks to the chief official and guard? (He is not demanding, but is reasonable.)
- » What do you think we can learn from Daniel about how we should act when we are standing firm?
- » Are you surprised at the result for Daniel and his friends? Why/Why not?

read the bible



Ask a volunteer (maybe someone who didn't have a part in the script if you chose that option) to read:

Daniel 1:17-21

- » Do you think this passage is about eating vegetables and drinking water, or something more? (Daniel and his friends obeyed God and God looked after them – this is the point, far more than some interesting diet instructions!)

INVOLVE



Divide your group into pairs. Give out the different scenarios from *appendix 2* to the pairs and ask them to act out or discuss how they might stand firm whilst being reasonable and not demanding.

Be aware of the suitability of the scenarios for your age group.

option 1

Give each pair a chance to act it out or discuss it with each other and then change scenarios and have a go at a different one (you could even mix up the pairs).



This is a very important activity as the group begins to turn the theory of what they have been discussing into practical application in their life.



If you have kids in your group who aren't Christians - they might not know what God's rules or expectations are in certain circumstances. Be aware of this and don't assume that they will know.



option 2

Give each pair 2 minutes to come up with their little dialogue then present or talk through the discussion with the rest of the group.

APPLY



What is one thing you will do differently based on what we've talked about during LIFE group?

AND/OR

Did any of the scenarios stand out to you as something that happens in your life? How will you practically stand firm in what God has said when these things happen to you?

LEADER NOTES

- God's people were living in exile because they didn't stand firm in God's way of living. Because of their disobedience God allowed the King of Babylon to capture them and take them off into exile to a foreign land.
- God's food laws are all about being set apart as God's special people and living holy lives. This is no longer the same for us as we live in the New Covenant era, a time post-Jesus and post His death and resurrection. Jesus declared that all foods are now ok for us to eat, the Old Testament food laws do not apply to us (Mark 7:19).



APPENDIX 1



Script

Passage: Daniel 1:1-14 (CEV)

Parts: Narrator 1, Narrator 2, Nebuchadnezzar, Official, Daniel

| | |
|----------------|--|
| NARRATOR 1 | In the third year that Jehoiakim (JO-HO-A-KIM) was king of Judah, King Nebuchadnezzar (NEB-EE-KEN-EZ-AR) of Babylonia attacked Jerusalem. The Lord let Nebuchadnezzar (NEB-EE-KEN-EZ-AR) capture Jehoiakim (JO-HO-A-KIM) and take away some of the things used in God's temple. And when the king returned to Babylonia, he put these things in the temple of his own god. |
| NARRATOR 2 | One day the king ordered Ashpenaz (ASH-PEN-AZ), his highest palace official, to choose some young men from the royal family of Judah and from other leading Jewish families. The king said, |
| NEBUCHADNEZZAR | "They must be healthy, handsome, smart, wise, educated, and fit to serve in the royal palace. Teach them how to speak and write our language and give them the same food and wine that I am served. Train them for three years, and then they can become court officials." |

Continued On Next Page



NARRATOR 1 Four of the young Jews chosen were Daniel, Hananiah (HAN-AN-EYE-A), Mishael (MISH-ALE), and Azariah (AZ-A-RYE-A), all from the tribe of Judah. But the king's chief official gave them Babylonian names: Daniel became Belteshazzar (BELT-SHAZ-AHH), Hananiah(HAN-AN-EYE-A) became Shadrach (SHAD-RACK), Mishael (MISH-ALE) became Meshach (ME-SHACK), and Azariah (AZ-A-RYE-A) became Abednego (AB-ED-NAY-GO).

NARRATOR 2 Daniel made up his mind to eat and drink only what God had approved for his people to eat. And he asked the king's chief official for permission not to eat the food and wine served in the royal palace. God had made the official friendly and kind to Daniel. But the man still told him,

OFFICIAL "The king has decided what you must eat and drink. And I am afraid he will kill me, if you eat something else and end up looking worse than the other young men."

NARRATOR 1 The king's official had put a guard in charge of Daniel and his three friends. So Daniel said to the guard,

DANIEL "For the next ten days, let us have only vegetables and water at mealtime. When the ten days are up, compare how we look with the other young men, and decide what to do with us."

NARRATOR 2 The guard agreed to do what Daniel had asked.



APPENDIX 2



Scenarios to act out/workshop

- Scenario 1 -

Your friends are gossiping in the quad at school about a boy/girl in your class. You don't want to join in with the gossip but you also don't want to simply sit quietly and let them talk. How could you respond in this situation? Take turns in your pair acting out/discussing this situation and your possible response.

- Scenario 2 -

Everyone in your group is bagging out a teacher. Even though you know that what they are saying could be true, it is not kind. What could you do and say in this situation? Take turns in your pair acting out/discussing this situation and your possible response.

- Scenario 3 -

All your friends are sleeping with their boy/girlfriends and you're struggling with wanting to do this too. You know that God's Word (the Bible) says sex is for marriage. What kind of conversation might you need to have with your boyfriend or girlfriend? Take turns in your pair acting out/discussing this situation and your possible response.

- Scenario 4 -

You are shopping with some friends and they are shoplifting items and asking you to join in with them. How could you be firm in your beliefs that stealing is wrong and explain this to your friends without sounding high and mighty or judgemental? Take turns in your pair acting out/discussing this situation and your possible response.



- Scenario 5 -

Your family are telling you that God doesn't exist and that you are stupid for believing in Him. You want to be a good example and stand firm even if it is hard. What can you do and say in this situation? Take turns in your pair acting out/discussing this situation and your possible response.

- Scenario 6 -

At your part-time job your co-workers are being really lazy and not doing their jobs or things the manager is asking them to do. What would you do? What would you say when your co-workers tell you to slack off with them, or tease you for being a "goody-two-shoes"? Take turns in your pair acting out/discussing this situation and your possible response.

- Scenario 7 -

You team mates on your sporting team are trying to get away with as much cheating as they can when the referee is not looking. What would you do in this situation? What would you say to them if they ask why you won't cheat too? Take turns in your pair acting out/discussing this situation and your possible response.

Other scenarios to potentially discuss with your group:

- gaming and 18+ games
- inappropriate movies (R 18+ or even MA movies)
- sexting
- online bullying



3/5

STAND OUT



summary

Being a Christian means we will look different to the rest of the world – we will stand out!

It's not easy to stand out, more often-than-not we like to blend in, but God desires something different from our lives. He desires people who are obviously living for Him. People who are using their gifts, talents and skills for His glory.

Daniel's commitment to his faith means he stands out.

The way Daniel lives his life means he stands out.

Daniel refuses to blend into his culture.

Is there some way that you are blending in, when you should be standing out?



you will need

- Butcher's Paper
- 1 A4 piece of paper for each group member
- A texta for each member of your group
- 3 different pads of coloured sticky notes
(For example: yellow, pink, blue)

If you do the game activity in "Connect":

- A packet of Skittles

keep in mind

- We don't want our group to think we stand out for the sake of standing out – we stand out for Jesus! Daniel stands out because of his upright nature and actions, inspire your group to be similar and to stand out so that others might know that they live this way because they love Jesus.
- In "Involve", your group members will be asked to circle some skills, gifts and talents they think God has given them. Be ready with a few ideas of these in case an individual in your group has low self-esteem or is not good at self-reflection and can't identify any for themselves.



CONNECT



To help your group connect on a relaxed level, spend some time discussing the following OR play the "skittles question game":

- » What is something you are passionate about?
- » You are asked to donate an item to a charity auction. What is something that you own that is special that you would donate? (It isn't allowed to be a junk item).
- » What is your favourite season? Any why?
- » Who is someone you know in life (at work/school/sport etc) who stands out for:
 - good reasons?
 - bad reasons?

OR

skittles game

Have each person pick out a single skittle from the packet. Have them answer the question that corresponds with the colour they picked:

Red: Have you ever donated blood before? If you have how many times? If you haven't would you consider donating blood? If no, why?

Orange: Who's life do you think has had the biggest impact on you? Why have they impacted you so much?

Yellow: What is something that makes you happy? Why do you think this thing has that effect on you?

Green: What cause would you get involved with? (Environment, Animal rights, Human Rights etc) Why would you choose this cause? What would get you motivated to do something?

Blue: Would you rather go swimming in a pool or at the beach? Why?

Maroon: Is there anything that you have passed up in life that you wish you hadn't? What is an opportunity that you are looking forward to now?



DISCUSS



read the bible



Ask a few volunteers to read out-loud:

Daniel 2:1-13



People can 'tag' onto the next person when they have read a few verses each.

- » Do you think the King's request was reasonable? Why or why not?
- » What do you think was the purpose of King Nebuchadnezzar demanding that his counsellors, advisors, magicians and wise men tell him the meaning of his dream without actually telling them what the dream was about? (He was testing their genuine-ness, it is easy to make up a meaning for something you have been told, but it's humanly impossible to tell someone what they dreamed).

read the bible



Have someone read out-loud:

Daniel 2:14-24

- » In what ways do you think Daniel is brave in this situation? How is he standing out for God?
- » When Daniel finds out that the King is going to kill the wise men because they can't tell him the meaning of his dream, how does Daniel respond?
- » In a tricky situation Daniel does the following: asks for more time to respond, meets with wise friends and prays to God for help. Share some times in life when it might be good to, ask for some more time, meet with wise people and pray to God? Try and be specific. (Making big decisions about life stages, when you are counselling someone, when life is difficult, when someone asks for your advice etc).

("Discuss" questions continue on the next page



read the bible



Have someone read out-loud:

Daniel 2:25-30

- » Daniel had the meaning of the dream revealed to him by God, and yet he doesn't claim it to make himself look good – Daniel gives all the credit to God. Are there times when we should be pointing to how amazing God is rather than pointing to ourselves?
What times might we be able to glorify God, rather than ourselves?

INVOLVE



We want to be glorifying God above anything else with all the gifts and talents He has given us. As we use them for His glory rather than our own – we will definitely stand out!

If you have time do part 1 and part 2 below, if you don't have time jump straight to part 2.

Part 1

Spend some time brainstorming onto butcher's paper some of the different skills, gifts, talents and passions that God gives people.

Ask people to circle and put their name next to the skills, gifts, talents and passions that resonate with them.

("Involve" questions continue on the next page



Part 2

Give each person an A4 piece of paper and get them to write one skill, gift, passion or talent at the top of that piece of paper, that they'd like to think more deeply about.

Give each person a few sticky notes of each colour and ask them to individually brainstorm onto different coloured sticky notes what the effect would be if you used _____ (insert skill gift or talent here) for God's glory and not just for your own enjoyment, pleasure or glory?

The three areas to look at:

- » Themselves (blue)
- » Others (yellow)
- » God's family - church/youth group etc (pink)



Encourage your group to think about how they can practically stand out for God and bring him glory.

APPLY



What is one thing you will do differently based on what we've talked about during LIFE group?

AND/OR

What is a skill, gift or passion that you have become aware of today that you would like to use for God's glory? What is a specific situation that you will do this in? How will you stand out for God as you use it? (Who is someone you trust who you can talk to about putting this into practice?)

OR

What is something that you need to stop doing to be living a more righteous life and stand out for Jesus?



LEADER NOTES

- God has made us all unique and we want to encourage our group members that God wants us to be confident in who He has made us. This can be a really brave decision for those who feel scared to stand out in the way God has made them. Inspire them to be brave as you have discussions.
- Daniel's life and the life of all the other wise men hung in the balance depending on Daniel being able to interpret the dream for the King. At this point it is interesting to consider for ourselves if it matters if we use our gifts for God or not.
If you would like to think more about this as a leader, have a look at the Parable of The Talents (Matthew 25:14-30). There are two options when Jesus returns, He'll either say to us "Well done good and faithful servant" if we have used out time, gifts and talents well or He'll say "you wicked and lazy servant" if we've wasted them.



4/5

STAND ALONE

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summary

Being a Christian can sometimes be tough.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego had to stand alone against a King and a whole nation.

As people who love Jesus we want to live for Him - standing firm and standing out.

Sometimes this can mean that we have to stand alone in what we believe.

Despite the different pressures and persecutions God wants us to stand firm for Him, even if no one else stands with us!



you will need

- Enough A5 pieces of paper for 2 per member in your group
- Pens for each group member
- 3 copies of *appendix 1* for people to use as they pray (cut up)

keep in mind

- The Biblical truth is that we are NEVER alone. Jesus has promised in Matthew 20 that He will always be with us and He has sent His Holy Spirit to dwell in us. But despite knowing and believing this truth, we can often feel alone when none of our friends or family are Christians. In this sense, we can stand alone in our convictions and beliefs. If this is how individuals are feeling in your group, affirm their feelings of 'alone-ness' and encourage them with the truths from the story of Daniel and the rest of the Bible.
- It would be good to have some everyday examples from your own life of times you have had to stand alone for Jesus, this could be helpful for getting people in your group to think about times they have had to stand alone.



CONNECT



To help your group connect on a relaxed level, spend some time discussing the following:

- » If you could only watch live TV or DVD's for the rest of your life which one would you pick and why?
- » What song could you currently listen to on repeat?
- » What is something that you have witnessed that has weakened your faith in humanity? What about it was so disappointing for you?
- » What would you say is the biggest lesson someone could learn from your life?

DISCUSS



Have you ever had someone challenge you about your faith or what you believe? Share with the group what happened and how you felt.

read the bible



Ask a volunteer to read out-loud:

Daniel 3:1-12

- » What do you think you would have done in Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego's situation?
- » Why do you think Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego decided not to bow down to the statue? (Hint: think about the 10 Commandments specifically commandments #1 and #2 (see **Deuteronomy 5:7-10** if you group is interested in reading the commandments). Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego choose to fear God and obey Him, rather than fear man.)

("Discuss" questions continue on the next page)



- » Daniel and his friends are "everyday guys" living for God in their context. They make a decision to stand alone and not bow down to the statue. What is an 'everyday situation in your life' where you have to decide to stand alone because of what you believe?

read the bible



Ask a volunteer to read out-loud:

Daniel 3:13-23

- » The King seems pretty angry and yet Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego stand firm in their decision to stand alone. Where does their confidence to stand alone lie at this point in time?
- » Does anything about what they say surprise you?
- » Do you think God promises to always save us in times when we stand alone and people mock us, or threaten us?
- » What do you think God *does* promise to do in situations like this? (Some ideas: never leave us (Matthew 28:20), be with us through the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8) give us strength in Him (Psalm 37:39, Philippians 4:13), never test us more than we can bear (1 Corinthians 10:13) and give us a family of believers who we can stand with (Galatians 6:10).)

read the bible



Ask a volunteer to read out-loud:

Daniel 3:23-30

- » God chooses to save Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in this situation and He keeps them safe in the furnace. Is there something about this part of the story that surprises you?
- » King Nebuchadnezzar says "They trusted their God and refused to obey my commands...they chose to die rather than to worship or serve any god except their own" (3:28b). It's a pretty drastic choice to die rather than compromise. Is there a place in your life at the moment where you are not worshipping the true-God and are worshipping something else (like popularity, fashion, money, a boy/girlfriend etc)?

("Discuss" questions continue on the next page)



- » How could you go about having the resolve to die rather than worship the other thing in your life?
- » Can you think of any modern day examples of people who are making difficult decisions putting Jesus first even when it might have been dangerous?



See the Leader Notes for some modern-day examples of individuals if your group would find this encouraging.

INVOLVE



Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were given an ultimatum by the King; "you can bow down to the statue and all will be fine, or you can not bow down and you will be thrown into the furnace".

Brainstorm as a group times in life when you might be given an ultimatum like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were. Write down the different scenarios that your group comes up with on different pieces of (A5) paper.



Remember that our situations don't have to be as huge as bowing down to a statue or being thrown into a furnace. It could be something like having to tell a friend that you won't participate in a particular activity because you believe it is wrong.

As a group brainstorm some suggestions and helpful tips of how we could resolve to stand alone in these situations.

As a group spend time praying for each individual in the group that they would stand alone in current situations (if individuals have specifically shared) or in situations that may come in the future. They can use the suggested prayers from *appendix 1* inserting the name of the individual they are praying for. Or if people in your group are confident prayers and would like to pray their own prayer they can.



APPLY



What is one thing you will do differently based on what we've talked about during LIFE group?

OR

What is a situation that you know you will face where you want to stand alone for Jesus? What is one practical thing you are going to do in this situation?

OR

Take home one of the printed out prayers and pray that for yourself and for members of your LIFE group (you could even write down everyone's name on the back of the prayer so you can pray for them by name).

LEADER NOTES

- In this story God chooses to vindicate Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego as they stand for Him in their situation. We must be really careful not to promise to people in our group that God is always going to save us when we are being ridiculed or persecuted for Him. Sometimes God chooses not to take away the problem, or not to save us. We still need to trust in God at this point in time and still hold to the fact that He is good.
- Your group may start to share that not only have they felt alone amongst others but that they have felt isolated from God. It may be encouraging to your group to know that even those we considers heroes of the faith felt alone, and expressed their frustration at this. David wrote in Psalms, "Why, O Lord, do you stand far off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble" (Psalm 10:1) In Matthew 27:46 even Jesus cried out when he felt left by God. Mother Theresa wrote in her journal for years that she could not hear God and did not sense his presence yet her feeling of loneliness did not hold her back.

("Leader Notes" continue on the next page)



- Your group will not likely face a situation where they are threatened with death like Shadrach, Meschach and Abednego yet it is not only in Bible times that young people are persecuted for their faith. Consider the story of Rachel Scott. She was 17 years old when she was shot at her high school in Colorado America. The teenage gunman said, "Do you believe in God?". Knowing it was a life or death question she replied, "Yes, I believe in God." "Why?" asked her executioner, but he never gave her the chance to respond. Young people around the world face danger and persecution for their faith while we are free in Australia to follow and express our beliefs. Though you may not face death for Christ it may be that people tease you, disrespect you or exclude you because of your faith. This too is what standing alone looks like.



APPENDIX 1



Suggested Prayers for praying people to stand alone in difficult situations.

Dear God, please help _____ in times of trouble. In times when it looks dark and dangerous ahead, give _____ hope and light, in times of difficulty give _____ strength.
When _____ feels burdened from hard situations be with him/her and remind _____ of Your promise that You will never leave or forsake him/her. Amen

Heavenly Father, I pray that You would give _____ the boldness to stand alone for You. Help him/her to live a quiet life with courage that is found in You. Please help _____ not to forget that You are with him/her in times when it is hard to be a follower of You. Amen

Almighty God, give _____ a patient hope and an unshaken trust in You when he/she struggles with _____ (specific situation).
We pray for the specific situation he/she has shared with us.
Please give _____ strength, patience and endurance through Your Holy Spirit that dwells in him/her. Amen.

God we thank you that You are _____ 's hope, strength and help in all troubles. Please help _____ not to fear, even when life is difficult, when the whole world seems to be against him/her remind _____ of the truth that You, God sit in heaven and that You are Lord of all and in control of everything. Amen.



Father God, when the world around us is full of darkness, when _____ feels too weak and helpless please give him/her strength to stand for You. Remind _____ of Your love, strength, holiness and protection. Please take away the worries and stresses that he/she feel in regards to the shared situation. Remind _____ that You have called him/her to stand for You. Amen.

Dear God, thank You that You are _____ 's safe refuge, strong tower and resting place. Please help _____ as he/she perseveres in standing for You in tricky situations. Please give _____ knowledge and a firm hope in Your loving kindness and grant that _____ may stand up for You, even if he/she has to stand alone. Amen.

Our Father, thank You for the instruction of Your Word. Thank You for the example we read in Daniel to stand up for You, even when no one else does. Please help _____ to do this in the little and big situations in life. Help _____ to be obedient to You call to stand for You. We ask this in Jesus's name. Amen.



5/5

STAND BRAVE



summary

As we stand firm, stand tall, stand out and stand alone we stand brave!

Today we'll spend some time wrapping up this whole 'Brave Series' and look at some super practical applications of standing brave that we can take beyond our LIFE group.



you will need

- *Appendix 1* printed 6 times (if you choose to do the Bible reading as a script)

keep in mind

- This is a summary, wrap up study. We want people in our groups to really go hard with the application and think practically about how standing brave works for them in their life.
- Make sure you keep pushing you group to practical application in their lives.



CONNECT



To help your group connect on a relaxed level, spend some time discussing the following:

- » Which fashion faux-pas would you rather commit, socks with sandals or horizontal and vertical stripes with spots?
- » Share with the group what your favourite confectionary item is and why it's your favourite.
- » If you only had one year left to live, what would be your top 3 priorities? What is stopping you from doing those things now?

recap

- » We've spent a lot of time series talking about standing. Which of the 'standings' has stood out to you the most? (Stand for Jesus, Stand Firm, Stand Out or Stand Alone) Why?



DISCUSS



read the bible



Read out-loud:

Daniel 6:1-28

You could read this straight from a Bible, with people in your group reading a few verses each.

OR

Use the script from the *appendix 1*.

There are 7 parts: Narrator 1, Narrator 2, Man 1, Man 2, King Darius, Daniel, Messenger

- » The governors and officials couldn't trap Daniel based on his character because he was living an upright life. Do you think that people could say that about you? Why or why not?
- » Daniel stood out because of his faith, the officials knew he was a God-fearing and God-following man. Do people know you are a Christian? If they do, how do they know? If they don't, what ways could you let people know?
- » What ways
 - Are you brave as you stand for Jesus (up, firm, out, alone)?
 - Do you struggle to be brave for Jesus?



INVOLVE



There are a lot of areas in our life where we can stand for Jesus, in our families, at school, in our workplace, on the sports field, with our friends or as we spend time in the community.

Stand as a group in a circle. Go around the circle and one-at-a-time ask each person to step into the middle of the circle, declare out loud an area of their life and one way they would like to stand brave for Jesus in this area. (Remind them of the ways we've looked at standing the last few weeks – standing up, standing firm, standing out and standing alone).

Then have someone else in the group pray out loud a short prayer asking God to help them do this and that they would stand for Him. If people feel comfortable everyone could lay hands on the person as they are prayed for.

Repeat this until everyone has had a turn in the circle.

APPLY



What is one thing you will do differently based on what we've talked about during LIFE group?

AND/OR

Remember one of the ways you shared about standing for Jesus in a particular area and pray each morning that God would give you the strength to do that.



APPENDIX 1



Script

Passage: Daniel 6:1-28 (CEV)

Parts: Narrator 1, Narrator 2, Man 1, Man 2, King Darius, Daniel, Messenger

Narrator 1: Darius divided his kingdom into a hundred and twenty states and placed a governor in charge of each one. In order to make sure that his government was run properly, Darius put three other officials in charge of the governors. One of these officials was Daniel. And he did his work so much better than the other governors and officials that the king decided to let him govern the whole kingdom.

Narrator 2: The other men tried to find something wrong with the way Daniel did his work for the king. But they could not accuse him of anything wrong, because he was honest and faithful and did everything he was supposed to do. Finally, they said to one another,

Man 1: "We will never be able to bring any charge against Daniel, unless it has to do with his religion."

Narrator 1: They all went to the king and said:

Man 1: Your Majesty, we hope you live forever! All of your officials, leaders, advisors, and governors agree that you should make a law forbidding anyone to pray to any god or human except you for the next thirty days.



APPENDIX 1



- Man 2: Everyone who disobeys this law must be thrown into a pit of lions. Order this to be written and then sign it, so it cannot be changed, just as no written law of the Medes and Persians can be changed."
- Narrator 2: So King Darius made the law and had it written down.
Daniel heard about the law, but when he returned home, he went upstairs and prayed in front of the window that faced Jerusalem. In the same way that he had always done, he knelt down in prayer three times a day, giving thanks to God.
- Narrator 1: The men who had spoken to the king watched Daniel and saw him praying to his God for help. They went back to the king and said,
- Man 2: "Didn't you make a law that forbids anyone to pray to any god or human except you for the next thirty days? And doesn't the law say that everyone who disobeys it will be thrown into a pit of lions?"
- King Darius: "Yes, that's the law I made, and just like all written laws of the Medes and Persians, it cannot be changed."
- Narrator 2: The men then told the king,
- Man 1: "That Jew named Daniel, who was brought here as a captive, refuses to obey you or the law that you ordered to be written. And he still prays to his god three times a day."
- Narrator 1: The king was really upset to hear about this, and for the rest of the day he tried to think how he could save Daniel. At sunset the men returned and said,



APPENDIX 1



Man 2: "Your Majesty, remember that no written law of the Medes and Persians can be changed, not even by the king."

Narrator 1: So Darius ordered Daniel to be brought out and thrown into a pit of lions. But he said to Daniel,

King Darius: "You have been faithful to your God, and I pray that he will rescue you."

Narrator 2: A stone was rolled over the pit, and it was sealed. Then Darius and his officials stamped the seal to show that no one should let Daniel out. All night long the king could not sleep. He did not eat anything, and he would not let anyone come in to entertain him.

At daybreak the king got up and ran to the pit. He was anxious and shouted,

King Darius: "Daniel, you were faithful and served your God. Was he able to save you from the lions?"

Daniel: "Your Majesty, I hope you live forever! My God knew that I was innocent, and he sent an angel to keep the lions from eating me. Your Majesty, I have never done anything to hurt you."

Narrator 1: The king was relieved to hear Daniel's voice, and he gave orders for him to be taken out of the pit. Daniel's faith in his God had kept him from being harmed. And the king ordered the men who had brought charges against Daniel to be thrown into the pit, together with their wives and children. But before they even reached the bottom, the lions ripped them to pieces.

King Darius then sent this message to all people of every nation and race in the world:



APPENDIX 1



Messenger:

"Greetings to all of you! I command everyone in my kingdom to worship and honour the God of Daniel. He is the living God, the one who lives forever.

His power and his kingdom will never end. He rescues people and sets them free by working great miracles. Daniel's God has rescued him from the power of the lions."





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