

Facilitators Guide

(including notes for intergenerational groups using Kids Remix)

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Daniel Dialogue

daniel

Daniel Dialogue notes

The book of Daniel contains prophecies and stories. The prophecies reveal the nature and magnitude of some of the conflicts between God and the forces of evil, while the stories graphically portray the character qualities necessary to stand for God.

Although Jesus encouraged the reading of the entire Bible the only book He specifically named was the book of Daniel.

What is a Dialogue?

Today people wish to explore and discuss life. We can learn from each other—for the insights of each person are valuable. No one person has all the information. A Daniel Dialogue gives the opportunity to discuss life issues while interacting with the implications of the prophecies and stories of this ancient book. The focus will be upon what it means to our lives—rather than precise understandings of every detail. That kind of study can come at another time.

Invite friends & neighbours to Dialogue

Simply go to your neighbours and friends, work mates or fellow students, and suggest the possibility of getting together for a Daniel Dialogue. You could invite friends to your home for a meal, or perhaps it could be for morning or afternoon tea. You could meet in a local café or café book shop. You could meet in a student lounge or library. You could use the **Daniel Dialogue Invitation Card**—to give your friends a written invite.

One older woman simply went to neighbours in her street and invited them to morning tea—for a Dialogue opportunity. 8 to 10 neighbours joined her in her home, one morning each week for 10 weeks. An older couple invited a younger couple to their home for a simple but tasty meal each Monday evening. They called in on their way home from work—and their Dialogue led to their baptism.

Planning your Daniel Dialogue

Conducting a Daniel Dialogue is not difficult—but there are important plans to make. Here is a check list:

1. Where will your group meet? Decide on the home or alternative venue.
2. What day and time will you meet? The time of the day will determine who may be able to come.
3. Who will you invite? Make a list of friends and neighbours to invite—using the **Invitation Card**.
4. Do you or your friends have children? Plan to use the **Daniel Dialogue Kids Remix** ideas.
5. What refreshments will be appropriate—and who will arrange for this?
6. Who will be the group facilitator? If you are planning this as a team—who will lead the Dialogue?
7. What supplies will you need? Do you have sufficient Reading Guides, Bibles, pens, Kids Remix guides and activities sheets—and coloured pencils and soft toys for the children. (See page 2 for more details on what to have for the Kids Remix activities.)

What is your role as the facilitator of a Daniel Dialogue?

If you are the facilitator—you are not a teacher or preacher. You are not a lecturer. If you are able to encourage every person in your group to read the through the book of Daniel—and involve each person in sharing how they understand the story for their lives—you will have been the most effective facilitator.

We have not provided you with a PowerPoint presentation—for that would make you into a teacher. We are providing you with Reading Guides—so that there is some structure to your group activities and you will cover each story or chapter—however, the purpose of a Dialogue is for people to build relationships with each other and with God.

What is the Daniel Dialogue Kids Remix?

The **Kids Remix** is not a children's program, that segregates the age groups. Children will not be in one room—with adults in another. All will be together in the one room. By using the **Kids Remix** materials the Daniel Dialogue will be intergenerational—integrating the activities of the children and adults into one combined group. Sometimes both the children and the adults will be doing the same activity and sometimes not—but all will be working on the same theme and discussing the same aspect of God's character. This is called a **Kids Remix** as we have taken the adult material and reworked it to allow all age groups to engage in a dialogue about the book of Daniel.

There are some really important reasons for including children in your Daniel Dialogue -

1. *Parents need children to be occupied* so that they can focus—and they also want a program that works for the whole family.
2. *Children need to know that they are loved by God and adults*—and including them (even in small ways) tells them that they matter.
3. *Children can learn about spirituality* through the book of Daniel. This book of the Bible provides an excellent foundation for understanding God. We're offering some important building blocks for the foundation of faith in the lives of kids.
4. *We want to encourage children to be part of Bible study* so they can feel like active members of a community—which is what church is all about. We want to build a resilient generation.
5. *Children can contribute to the spiritual tone of the program*—for children have unique insights into scripture and their perspectives can enrich our own experience of scripture. Also, the material he children can be a teaching tool for the adults.

The **Kids Remix** has been specifically designed to be a lounge room program and can be conducted in that environment. The activities and discussion questions are understandable and straightforward, and do not require large amounts of preparation on the part of the facilitator. Also, the activities are affordable—mostly just involving some photocopying.

The **Kids Remix** is a spiritual program—with all activities based on the themes of Daniel. The material emphasizes who God is and who Daniel is—and what that relationship teaches us about our own experience with God. For each Dialogue there is an activity sheet—exploring the theme through a puzzle, quiz, drawing or theatre box. A theatre box is like a craft for the kids—where they read the chapter and then color in the characters, cut them out and act out the story in a theatre box.

You may have children of different ages in your Daniel Dialogue group. You will need to tailor your program to the age groups that you have—applying the principles to your setting and using the materials as a resource to help include the children and make them feel comfortable:

- **Preschool (0-7):** A child under 6—who does not have reading skills—will enjoy playing with soft toys, love coloring and thrive on being spoken to (and answering questions).
- **Early primary (7-10):** A child who is 7-10 will enjoy a puzzle and coloring. They can read most of the instructions themselves—and will most likely to be a participator in the discussion.
- **Pre-teens (10-12):** A 12 year old does not need guided questioning—and is able to follow conversations. They will most likely enjoy the puzzle—but would find coloring childish. They may simply like to be involved in the adult discussions.
- **Teens:** Teens can participate with the adults. They may need to be encouraged to participate—but your interest in them will open them to sharing some significant insights.

For your **Kids Remix** you will need -

- The Kids Remix Activity Sheets.
- A supply box - with colored pencils and blunt-ended scissors.
- A basket of appropriate toys: These will include blocks, cars, dolls and books. Don't include toys that make a loud noise or those that are difficult to play with—or those that require help (such as jigsaw puzzles).

Important Guidelines for each Dialogue

- Choose the meeting time and place—and always start on time. Each Daniel Dialogue will last for 1 hour and 15 minutes—and must always end on time.
- Create an environment of affirmation and encouragement. Long after the program is over—adults and children will remember how you treated them. Every person's opinion is valid—and we do not need to focus upon what is right or wrong. Focus on what the story says and how people relate.
- If you are the facilitator, we recommend that you read through the Daniel chapter four or five times (even in different translations, for people may use different versions)—and make sure you have done the lesson (including the children's puzzle), so there are no surprises during the program.
- Ensure that each person has the opportunity to share in the conversation. Some people will dominate and take over the conversation—while others will be hesitant. Make sure everyone has the opportunity to speak.
- Remember that in a Dialogue people learn by *osmosis*—so don't get too hung up trying to make sure that the kids (or adults) get all the details right. The goal is to interact—not to preach at your friends. Let them explore the Bible—and then invite them to the evangelistic meetings.
- If you get confused at any time in the program remember that the title of the lesson brings you back to the main theme of the passage.
- In every Dialogue group you will hear strange ideas shared. Some members have strange and unbiblical ideas—and people who have never read the Bible will also share ideas that may surprise you for they are just learning to interpret scripture. We must not embarrass them. We don't want to affirm error, but in a small group setting we need to be very sensitive—for if we embarrass people they will not come back. Ask people why they think as they do—and how they feel it relates to what the Bible story shares.

A typical program outline for your Daniel Dialogue

There are six main parts to each Daniel Dialogue group program -

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Group Discussion question
3. Reading the Bible story
4. Kids Activity & Adult Dialogue
5. DISCUSSION
6. Final Personal Word

Here are some suggestions for each of these important parts -

1. **Welcome & Introductions:**

As people arrive at the home (or meeting place)—have someone designated to welcome them and offer something (hot or cold) to drink. You could perhaps have some simple finger food. People relax in this way. (But do not allow the preparation of food to become a burden—not should this take up large amounts of time.) Ask people how their week has been—and listen to people as they share!

Remember that most people need to feel they belong before they will believe. Taking a small amount of time to ask about their lives helps them feel accepted and important—and they will be more open to learning about God in this kind of environment.

It is most important that in the first week people meet each other and get to know the names of the others in the group. They may have never been to the home (or meeting place) where you are holding your Dialogue—so basic hospitality will be help ensure that they return. Explain to people where to find the bathroom/toilet—and ensure that everything is laid out for guests.

It will be important to establish some guidelines/values for the group, in your first Daniel Dialogue group meeting. You could explain that you have selected some values—and ask: Would you all be happy with these? Would you like to add any other point? Here are some **guidelines/values** -

- Confidentiality: We will not tell everybody personal things that some may share.
- Respect: Even if we do not agree, we will still respect people and their opinions.
- Kindness: Each person is really important—and we want to encourage each one.
- Value: If we cannot be present for a Dialogue group—we will call to let our host know.
- Involvement: Every one will be given the opportunity to share—at the level they wish.

2. **Group Discussion question:**

Each Reading Guide starts with a **Group Discussion** question—a question that everyone can answer. This is a good way for people to get to know each other much better. This question is for everyone, but you will need to ask the children directly for their answer to the question. At first (especially with small children), you may need to help them participate with guided questioning. Guided questioning brings the question down to their age level by creating yes/no questions rather than information questions. For example:

What's your favorite color? Is it blue?
I think you'd like blue? Or, maybe green?

This **Group Discussion** question is a launching pad into the children's activity and the adult dialogue. Always use a person's name when talking with them—it's the first building block in relationships. This is very important for children as well. Over time, if you persist, children they will grow in their confidence and their ability to contribute. Their input can be amazingly insightful and spiritual—and the time it takes to build that environment makes for comfortable parents and the faith of little children leading adults towards God.

3. **Reading the Bible story:**

For a meaningful Dialogue, it is important that all be very familiar with the story. Most of the chapters in Daniel are not much more than one page long. One person—one who is a really good reader—should read the story to the group. DO NOT have different people read one or two verses—or read around the group. The person who is the reader could use a modern translation (such as the New Living Translation) — for it will be more understandable. However, choose the best translation for the particular story.

After the first weeks you will find that everyone is reading the story at home—and completing their Reading Guide. It will then not be necessary to always read the whole story. (Note: When you get to the story of Daniel chapters 10-12, it will be best to read the story of Daniel 10, then comment on the main story of chapter 11 (in 2-3 minutes), after which you can read the story of chapter 12.)

4. **Kids Activity & Adult Dialogue:**

It is now time to move into the main activity and Dialogue time. By this time you may have spent 30 minutes together—and, this activity/Dialogue time may take another 25-30 minutes.

- **Leading into the Children's Activity:** Using the guided questioning technique, it may be useful to take a minute to explain some of the story that has just been read. A few questions about the basic facts makes a natural lead into the children's activities. You could use about three questions to cover the main events of the story. For example—for the story of Daniel chapter 2 you could say -

- ◇ In the story we just read that someone had a dream. Do you remember who it was?
- ◇ It was King Nebuchadnezzar, and he had a dream about the future. Who helped him understand his dream?

Then explain to the children that you have a special activity for them. Read the sentence explanation—and ensure that know what they will be doing, otherwise their activity could become quite disruptive to the adult part of the program. Taking a few minutes to explain things to the children and settling them into the activity makes the whole program run

smoother.

If the children finish early you can guide them to an alternative activity while the adults finish their discussion.

- **Adult Dialogue:** It will be important to simply remind the group of our shared values—confidentiality, respect, kindness, value and involvement.

The group facilitator will then lead the group in reviewing their answers to the questions in the Reading Guide—to touch on some of the main ideas.

5. **DISCUSSION:**

Make sure that you always have about 15 minutes to cover the DISCUSSION questions at the end. You will note that there is always a **Kid's DISCUSSION** question—giving an opportunity for children to share their insights—and a **Key Verse** question.

- **Kid's DISCUSSION QUESTION:** This is the time to bring the children back into the main discussion. Have them show their work and ask them to share what they discovered in their activity. Remember the children's material is always on the same theme as the adult Reading Guide—and provides an excellent summary of the main theme. Emphasizing the Key Verse will be valuable for both the adults and the children. The children's program is written so that they take their activity home—where they can put it on the fridge. The children will feel important—and the parents will be reminded of what has been taught.

6. **Final Personal Word—and Prayer!**

This is where you sum up—and remind the group of the chapter to read and the Reading Guide to complete before next week. It is important to be very personal. How will our lives be different because of what we have read and discussed?

This is also the time to introduce PRAYER. Remember, there will be some in your group who may have never prayed—privately or publicly. This is not the time to suggest a prayer time—and certainly not the time to “pray around the circle.” Here is a suggestion for the first weeks -

- Invite the group to spend one minute with their eyes closed—reflecting on how their lives would be different if they applied some of the ideas that they have learnt from Daniel's story. (Suggest some may like to use this time to talk silently to God.)
- At the close of one minute—one person could pray a simple prayer: “God we want to thank you for the story of Daniel and for your care. We thank you that we are getting to know You better through this story. Be with each of us this next week—until we are together again. Amen.”

We have included a section (at the end of these notes) on Conversational Prayer. You will find some good ideas there for your group—as they grow in their relationship with God.

Some notes for your Daniel Dialogue sessions!

In the following pages you will find some added suggestions for each of your **Daniel Dialogue** group sessions.

Daniel Dialogue NOTES 1

You may wonder **why we start with Daniel 2 in the first session**—and then go back to chapter 1 in the second Dialogue group. This is quite intentional—and you can tell your Dialogue group about this. We want people to experience some of the drama and excitement of Daniel's life—and we have found Daniel chapter 2 does this really well. Then in the second session we back-up and start working systematically through the story.

Make sure you plan to make everyone comfortable and relaxed—and give time for each person to be acknowledged and known.

Note -

1. We are not giving you answers to each question—for there is no right or wrong answer. The idea is that you will discuss the answers that people find in the story.
2. For Question 1—you may want to check up on what a dictionary (or even better, a Bible dictionary if you have one!) says about magicians, sorcerers, enchanters and astrologers.
3. For page 2—you will want to note that the Kingdoms are—Babylon (head of gold), Media-Persia (chest of silver), Greece (thighs of brass), Rome (legs of iron), divisions in the world (feet of iron & clay), God's kingdom (the rock).

The story is clear. God is going to put an end to the kingdoms of this world. He will establish His Kingdom. In Matthew 25:31-34 Jesus made it clear that God's Kingdom will be set up w h e n he returns to this earth. The "stone" which crushed the image represents the dramatic, glorious second coming of Jesus Christ.

4. Encourage everyone to read chapter 1 for next week—and work through the Reading Guide.

GOD KNOWS. The prophecy of Daniel 2 has come true. God knows what is happening in this world. He wants to control your life so that you will be ready for Jesus to come. Will you let Him control your life? It will mean peace, meaning and eternal life.

Daniel Dialogue NOTES 2

Remember—although this is your second Daniel Dialogue, you will be exploring the story of Daniel chapter 1. It is important that you become very familiar with this story—and also familiarise yourself with the background history. You can do this by checking out the stories of Jeremiah and 2 Chronicles referred to on the first page of the Reading Guide. Also get familiar with where Daniel fitted into the Bible story—by checking out the chart on page 2.

Note -

1. By this Dialogue, most of the group will have completed their Reading Guide—and this will lead to even livelier discussion.
2. Check out Question 4 (page 3). Their Hebrew names were connected to their true God. Here are the meanings of their Hebrew names -

Daniel	“judge for God”
Hananiah	“gift of the Lord”
Mishael	“who is what God is”
Azariah	“whom Jehovah helps”

This is a really important story—and the group will find some important insights. You are asking: how does Daniel’s life inform and influence how I will live? Remember—GOD CARES about you wherever you are!

Daniel Dialogue NOTES 3

As you read each story of Daniel—ask 3 important questions -

1. What does it say about God?
2. What does it say about my life today?
3. What does it say about the days in which we live?

Note -

1. In preparation—make sure that you check out each of the questions very carefully. Question 3 invited participants to read parts of Revelation 13. Notice that you will not be giving a Bible study on the Beast, Image or Mark. You will simply be exploring the similarities in the stories. A study of the details of this prophecy is not the task of this Dialogue. (You will find further notes on pages 2 and 3 of the Reading Guide that will help you and your group.)
2. Also be very familiar with the commandments in Exodus 20—as background for Question 3.

Daniel chapter 3 tells us that in the times of greatest trouble (when the flames are about to consume us) - Jesus is with us! GOD RESCUES in surprising ways.

Daniel Dialogue NOTES 4

Check out the material on **Conversational Prayer**—at the end of these notes—for there may be some ideas that you could start using with your Dialogue group

Questions -

1. Are you as a group remembering your shared values—confidentiality, respect, kindness, value and involvement? Would it be good to review these with your group?
2. Is each person in the group being valued—and cared for?
3. Are there any adjustments needed to facilitate the **Kids Remix** activities?

Daniel Dialogue NOTES 5

Once again—this is a story that is rich in lessons and meaning. Allow the group to explore the key ideas deeply—for through this they will be making decisions for God.

Daniel Dialogue NOTES 6

Here are a few ideas that may help you with the comparisons on the bottom of page 1 of your Reading Guide -

Similarities		Differences	
Daniel 3	Daniel 6	Daniel 3	Daniel 6
1 Death decree	Death decree	Test—2nd command	Test—1st command
2 All administrators	All	Motivation—pride	Motivation—jealousy
3 Issued by ruler	Issued by ruler	Issue—disobedience	Issue—relationship with God

Daniel Dialogue NOTES 7

With Daniel chapter 7 you are back into the prophecies of Daniel. It is important to have a good definition of prophecy. Remember, **prophecy is simply a message from God**. Use this definition a few times, as it will be useful for the adults and it will make the information much simpler for the children.

The basic story line of each of the chapters—Daniel chapters 7-12—is simple: **Daniel is given a special message from God** -

- In Daniel chapter 7, Daniel is lying in his bed and has a dream.
- In Daniel chapter 8, Daniel has a vision similar to the first one (in chapter 7).
- In Daniel chapter 9, Daniel prays because he has been disturbed by the earlier messages and God gives him another.
- In Daniel chapters 10-12—Daniel receives another vision.

Some of these visions are quite detailed—and the details revealed the future to Daniel. These details have given confidence in the Bible and the fact that God knows the future. This level of detail is too technical for children—but, the overall picture of what God told Daniel are important building blocks in children's faith. To make it easier for you, we have done a special activity for each of the lessons 7 through ten. Each is a picture of Daniel with a vision bubble, an explanation of the big picture of the message

from God is given in a few sentences and kids can then draw the message in Daniel's bubble. Each of the coloring pictures for this section are a summary of the theme. For example, in Daniel chapter 8 God Restores. He is the "builder" who will fix our world—so the coloring sheet is a picture of a builder.

There are pictures that you can buy that are made up of hundreds of little pictures, that all come together to make a big picture. When you stand close to the picture you can see each tiny detail—but, when you stand far away you see the overall picture. In some ways we are doing a bit of both in the process of reading the stories of Daniel. The adults are standing closer and seeing more of the details, which leads them to see the big picture of who God is and how He can change their lives. With the children, we just show them the big picture.

Here is a caution! Sometimes people get so focused on the details of Daniel that they miss the major themes of this amazing story. We want to introduce people to the God of the prophecy not just the prophecy itself. With the children there is the temptation to ignore the prophecies, but this big picture method is an invaluable tool to make the information accessible.

Note -

1. Page 1 outlines three prophetic keys. Check out the verses carefully—and you will see that in Bible prophecy -

Winds = strife & wars
 Sea (water) = multitudes of people
 Beasts = kingdoms or political powers

2. The details of DANIEL'S DREAM are found in the verses on page 2—but here are some details -

FOUR BEASTS	INTERPRETATION
1. Lion	Babylon
2. Bear	Media-Persia
3. Leopard	Greece
4. Monster	Rome (4th kingdom)
Little Horn -	
eyes, boastful, pulled up 3 others	another power—from divisions
Judgement	God's everlasting kingdom established

3. You will notice in Daniel 7:25 (Question 1 on the bottom of page 2) - that the little horn uses -

1. False teachings.
2. Persecution.

4. And God's answer (Question 4—page 4) includes -

1. God's judgement.
2. God's eternal kingdom is established.

GOD JUDGES—He's the fairest umpire of them all! This is the main message of this story. Do not get involved in detailed discussions of who the *little horn* may be. Explain that those details will be covered in the meetings that will follow. Focus upon getting the big picture relationship with God at this stage.

Daniel Dialogue NOTES 8

Here are a few notes that may help fill in the story -

1. Question 5—"understand that the vision concerns the **time of the end.**"
2. Question 6 (part 2)—the prominent horn represents **the first king (Alexander the Great).**
3. Question 6 (part 3)— "another horn" comes up—**a stern-faced king.**
4. Questions 7, 8 & 9 allow you to discuss this "stern-faced king" and his character, campaigns and defeat.

Here you can talk a little bit about the Old Testament Sanctuary -

In the court-yard was the **altar of burnt offerings** where the sacrifices were made. Between the altar and the sanctuary was the **laver (where the priests washed)**. Inside the first room (Holy Place) was the **table of bread** (on the right), the **candlesticks** (on the left) and the **altar of incense** (straight ahead—in front of the curtain between the Holy Place and Most Holy Place).

In the Most Holy Place was the **ark of God**—where God's glorious presence was (it was like God's throne) and inside the ark were two tables of stone on which God had written with His own hand, the Ten Commandments.

5. Make sure that you have read carefully and can summarize in 2 or 3 minutes the main ideas in Leviticus 10 (Question 10) and Leviticus 16 (Question 11). Here are some main ideas for these Questions -

Question 10 -

1. Sacrifice
2. Priest
3. Forgiveness

Question 11 -

1. Sacrifices were offered
2. The High Priest was involved
3. The High Priest went into the Most Holy Place on the Day of Atonement
4. Their sins were taken from the camp
5. The people were clean

6. Question 14 is very important. The sanctuary represents the Father and Jesus—and all God does to save us. This makes the sanctuary story so simple.

Daniel Dialogue NOTES 9

This is a really wonderful chapter. Make sure you read and re-read the prayer of Daniel. To miss this prayer means you will miss the meaning of the message in the prophetic part of the story. Make sure you do not miss the big picture in this story. It is the story of God's plan to rescue all!

Notes -

1. The introductory sections of your Reading Guide (on page 1) and Daniel 9:1-3 provides the setting for this story. Daniel is a very old man. He is living near the end of 70 years of his people's captivity in Babylon.
2. Question 1—three aspects of prayer would include: praise, confession, and requests. See what you can find in these verses.
3. Question 4—What was Daniel's request? To summarize it very simply, Daniel was saying, "**God, save Your people!**"
4. Question 6—(1) Daniel had been praying about the end of their 70 years of captivity.
5. Question 7—Daniel was troubled by the fact that they had been in captivity for 70 years, and now he is told that his people will have another 70 (**years**) x 7 to see their full salvation. This equals 490 **years**.
6. Question 10—Daniel was told that "**the Anointed One**" would come. This is a very interesting term—for this is the meaning of the Hebrew title Messiah; and, it is the meaning of the Greek name Christ.

After "seven 'sevens'" and "sixty-two 'sevens'" (that is, 483 years) - from the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem (see Question 9) - the Anointed One would come. The command was given in 457 BCE—and, Jesus was baptized (and anointed with the Holy Spirit) 483 years later, in AD 27. (See Question 11.)

7. Question 12—draws attention to the death of the Anointed One (the Messiah).
8. Question 13—draws attention to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple after Jesus ascended to heaven.

Daniel Dialogue NOTES 10

The last 3 chapters of Daniel are one story. The amazing thing is—when we compare the description of Daniel with that of John in the Revelation—Jesus came to meet Daniel. (See Question 1.)

It is important in this story (especially in Daniel chapter 11) to get the big picture. That is why in this Daniel Dialogue we will not try to understand every small detail. So, stand back and get the big view.

Note -

1. Question 3—there will be **a great war**.
2. In Chapter 11 (page 2) - this war goes back and forth. But, there is one who will really set himself up against God (verse 36) - but, "he will come to his end, and no one will help him." (verse 45) (See Question 4.)
3. Chapter 12 is an amazing chapter. For Question 5 the group members may choose a number of different words to summarize the main thoughts in Daniel 12:1-4. Here are some further suggestions -
 1. Salvation
 2. Persecution

3. Deliverance from persecution
4. Resurrection
5. Rewards

Ending well! During the last ten weeks you have grown in your understanding of God—and also, of each other. You have shared your life journeys. As the facilitator—make sure that you affirm each person. Remember, the people in your Daniel Dialogue will remember how you treated them far longer than they will remember the details of the prophecy. The way you treat them is for them a picture of God's character. This is how God designed it. It is in the community of believers that people learn of, and experience, God.

What next? Have you invited all of your group to attend the series of evangelistic meetings? Have you planned to meet again? Perhaps, after a short specified break, the group would like to get together to read another Bible book. What book of the Bible would they like to read next? If they choose the gospel of Mark, for example, we can provide you with a simple approach to use. This can be used for most Bible books. If you choose to read the Revelation of Jesus Christ—you will possibly need some reading guides.

For copies of reading guides for Revelation—or for a simple approach for all other Bible books—write to peter@newchurchlife.com and explain what you would like.

Daniel Dialogue Conversational Prayer

Conversational prayer is perhaps the best way to teach people to pray – and certainly one of the most enjoyable ways to experience fellowship with God and friends. Christians who are hesitant about praying in a group also find conversational prayer meaningful.

The five essentials of Conversational Prayer

1. There is no need to take time to discuss prayer requests before the group starts to pray. These naturally arise in prayer. It is OK to take time to clarify these requests and needs in the midst of the conversational prayer.
 2. Never pray around the circle. This will make guests and those who have not prayed publicly very uncomfortable. It also means that individuals will prepare their speeches, rather than listen carefully to the prayers and thoughts of others. Foster interaction.
 3. Address one topic or theme at a time. This is like in any meaningful conversation with friends. Listen carefully and respond to the prayers of others. Affirm others with “Yes!” and “That’s right!” etc.
 4. The leader prays first and models conversational prayer. When a group is learning, it will be best to have a leader. When a need is mentioned, this person can support and affirm. If the group starts praying around the circle, the leader can interrupt the ‘circle’ by praying!
- Each person can pray briefly and often – or choose to remain silence and just enjoy the conversation with God. It is like a good conversation around a table.

Topics for Conversational Prayer

The three most commonly used themes for conversational prayer are – thanks to God, praise and worship and the needs of those in the group and their friends.

Enjoy Conversational Prayer

- **Singing Songs of Prayer:** In the midst of the conversation, it is really meaningful to sing a prayer or worship song that expresses the thoughts and emotions of the moment.
- **Praying with Eyes Open:** Because we say so much with the nod of a head, a frown, a smile, a movement of the eyebrow, etc – some groups find it very meaningful to pray with their eyes open.

- Praying with Closed Eyes: If you pray with your eyes closed it will be important to express yourselves verbally (to take the place of nods, smiles, etc) – so that others can understand your thoughts.
- Enjoying Silence with God: Agree as a group that it is OK just to be with God. It can be very pleasant just sitting with friends, in God's presence. Be comfortable with silence. Explain this to your friends – and they will be comfortable just being with you and God.
- Relax. You don't have to speak! Even some who enjoy praying may find that they wish to just be with God and friends. It is OK to remain silent and listen to the prayers of others.

Teaching a new Christian Conversational Prayer

1. Points to remember –

Don't make prayer complicated.
This is talking with God.
It is OK to talk with each other – while also talking with God.

2. What could you say when leading a person to prayer for the first time? –

When you are with a person is not used to praying, you could say:

I would like to pray with you. Prayer is talking with God – and He is right here with us. Prayer is like a conversation and so we can share this together. We can just share short sentences or just a word or two. It's very easy. I'll lead.

3. Then just start to pray. People will follow your lead. You could say:

Father, we are glad that we can talk with You. Jesus, we are glad you are alive and present by your Holy Spirit. It is really good to be with my friend/s – and we want to spend a few minutes talking with you.

4. You can then lead – perhaps by saying:

The first thing we would like to do is express our thanks. I want to thank you for ... And I know my friends have things to thank you for as well. And so (name your friends) – you may like to say 'thank you' to God. Some may like to just be with God – in His presence ...

5. Give people time to reflect and pray –

Remember to affirm what they say.
Listen carefully to each other and pray about what the previous person raised.
As the prayer leader, interrupt any 'going around the circle'.
If a person wishes to change the topic/theme and you sense that all who wished to speak on the previous them have prayed, affirm the person and move to the next theme raised by that person.

If you have never prayed conversationally – you are about to start on an exciting journey of deep spiritual fellowship. You will find it as easy to pray as to sit around a table to speak on any theme.

Conversational Prayer – in the local café! This is a great way to pray with friends in a café, the forest, on a beach – in fact, wherever you are! If the group is comfortable praying with open eyes you will find that you can pray together anywhere. Unchurched friends will listen, and the time will come when they want to also say something to 'your God'.

Kylie Ward & Wendy Jakupec developed the **Daniel Dialogue Kids Remix** and contributed to ideas in this Guide