

# The Writing on the Wall

## Teacher's Notes

When King Belshazzar profaned by using the vessels from the temple at his feast, judgment came swiftly. Belshazzar died and was replaced by a new king that very night. We need the light of truth to shine on our bad habits so, unlike Belshazzar, we can break free of them and make a fresh start.

Daniel 5 Lesson Plan		Materials Needed
<b>1. Welcome Activity</b> (2-3 minutes)	Mixing Good and Bad in Us pp. 1-2	yarn in two contrasting colors
<b>2. Focus on the Word</b> (5-7 minutes)	Read Daniel 5 and discuss p. 2	shortened version of text included on p. 3
<b>3. Learn by Doing</b> Choose 1-2 activities (15-20 minutes)	Writing on the Wall—3D Picture pp. 4-8	stiff paper; crayons, colored pencils or markers; glue; scissors; tape; gold or silver foil
	Make a Temple Goblet pp. 9-11	thick paper; crayons, colored pencils or markers; glue or tape; scissors <i>optional:</i> glitter and glue
	Picture to Color p. 12	crayons or markers
<b>4. Recitation &amp; Closing</b> (2-3 minutes)	Recitation and Closing p. 13	Parent Note p. 14

## New Church Concept Profanation

Profanation is mixing and linking good and evil together, and also truth and falsity together. *Arcana Coelestia* 3757

A person who profanes is in contact with the heavens and at the same time with the hells, through truths with the heavens and through the falsities of evil with the hells. As a result, in the next life a tearing apart takes place with such people, which destroys the whole of their inner life. See *Arcana Coelestia* 10287

## Welcome Activity: Mixing Good & Bad in Us

*Supplies Needed:* lengths of yarn approx. 18" (45cm) in two contrasting colors, e.g. orange and purple

This activity introduces the idea that it is not good to mix what is the Lord's with things that are not sacred. The Writings call this "profanation", and give a unique meaning to this word (see quotation above).

Knot the ends of the two strands of yarn together. Ask the students to pass the yarn around as you talk with each student adding one or two knots somewhere along the length.

1. Stories in the Word teach us about the things we do. The king in today's story took something from the Lord's house and used it for fun—for a party. Do you think that was a good idea? What might we do that is like this? (One way might be to use the Lord's holy name for the wrong purpose, as a "swear".)

continued on next page

## *Mixing Good & Bad in Us continued*

2. We must be careful to take care of what's holy from the Lord. If we don't do this, over time it will become hard for us to know the difference between what is good and what is bad. This can lead to bad habits.
3. (Look at the knotted yarn.) How easy would it be to separate the yarn now? When we develop bad habits it's difficult to separate good habits from bad ones, just as it's difficult to separate the knotted strands of yarn.
4. As you hear the story, pay attention to what the king does and what happens to him.

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### *Focus on the Word*

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**Read:** Daniel 5. A shortened version is included on the next page. For younger children you may wish to summarize some of the story and read aloud the sentences printed in **bold**.

1. **After King Nebuchadnezzar died, his son, Belshazzar, became king. His name sounds a bit like *Bel-te-shazzar*, the name Daniel was given when he arrived in Babylon. Belshazzar did not know the Lord but only thought of himself. One day he invited a thousand friends for a big dinner. Have you been to a special dinner with lots of people? Maybe at a wedding? What was it like?**
2. **Belshazzar and his friends were having fun when he asked his servants to bring out some special treasures that his father, Nebuchadnezzar, had taken from the temple in Jerusalem. He wanted to use them at the feast. Why was this a bad idea?** Because the treasures from the Lord's house were sacred or holy. They should have been used for worship, not at a party.
3. **What special worship things are in our church?** The Word, candles, holy supper cups, etc. **These things help us know the Lord and worship Him. We treat them with care and do not use them for other purposes.**
4. **As soon as the goblets from the temple were used at the feast a hand wrote the words "Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin" on the wall. Let's say these words, "Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin." The people did not know what the words meant because they were not in their language. They were very frightened. How might you have felt if you'd been there?**
5. **The queen (possibly Belshazzar's mother) suggested that Daniel could help. Where can you turn for help when you are frightened and don't understand something that is happening?** To the Lord and His Word; also parents or other trusted adults.
6. **Belshazzar had done something wrong. Sometimes we make mistakes. Our conscience—the voice inside us—may warn us that we are doing something wrong—just as Daniel told the king what was wrong. What does conscience do to help you?** Conscience is based on the truths we know from the Word. It is the Lord's voice telling us to change our ways.
7. **We need our conscience to help us recognize bad choices we make so that we can turn away from them and turn to the Lord instead. It's important for us to listen to our conscience and to do what we know the Lord wants us to do.**

# The Writing on the Wall

<sup>1</sup>King Belshazzar gave a great banquet for a thousand nobles. <sup>2</sup>While Belshazzar was drinking his wine, he gave orders to bring in the gold and silver goblets that Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken from the temple in Jerusalem, so that the king and his nobles might drink from them. <sup>3</sup>So they brought in the gold goblets that had been taken from the temple of God in Jerusalem, and the king and his nobles drank from them. <sup>4</sup>As they drank the wine, they praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone.

<sup>5</sup>Suddenly the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall, near the lampstand in the royal palace. The king watched the hand as it wrote. <sup>6</sup>His face turned pale and he was so frightened that his legs became weak and his knees were knocking.

<sup>7</sup>The king summoned the enchanters, astrologers and diviners. Then he said to these wise men of Babylon, “Whoever reads this writing and tells me what it means will be clothed in purple and have a gold chain placed around his neck, and he will be made the third highest ruler in the kingdom.”

<sup>8</sup>Then all the king’s wise men came in, but they could not read the writing or tell the king what it meant. <sup>9</sup>So the King became more terrified and his face grew more pale.

<sup>10</sup>The queen, hearing the king and his nobles, came into the banquet hall. “May the king live forever!” she said. “Don’t be alarmed! <sup>11</sup>There is a man in your kingdom who has the Spirit of the Holy God in him. <sup>12</sup>Call for Daniel, and he will tell you what the writing means.”

<sup>13</sup>So Daniel was brought before the king, and the king said to him, <sup>14</sup>“I have heard that the Spirit of God is in you and that you have insight, intelligence and wisdom. <sup>15</sup>The wise men were brought to read this writing and tell me what it means, but they could not explain it. <sup>16</sup>If you can read this writing and tell me what it means, you will be clothed in purple and have a gold chain placed around your neck, and you will be made the third highest ruler in the kingdom.”

<sup>17</sup>Then Daniel answered the king, “You may keep your gifts and give your rewards to someone else. Nevertheless, I will read the writing for the king and tell him what it means. <sup>18</sup>Your Majesty, the Most High God gave your father Nebuchadnezzar a kingdom and majesty, and glory and power. <sup>19</sup>All nations and peoples feared him. <sup>20</sup>But when the king’s heart became arrogant and hardened with pride, <sup>21</sup>he was driven away from people and given the heart of an animal; he lived with the wild donkeys and ate grass like the ox; and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven, until he acknowledged that the Most High God is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth. <sup>22</sup>But you, his son, have not humbled yourself, though you knew all this. <sup>23</sup>Instead, you have set yourself up against the Lord of heaven. You had the goblets from His temple brought to you, and you and your nobles drank wine from them. You praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which cannot see or hear or understand. But you did not honor the God who holds in His hand your life and all your ways. <sup>24</sup>Therefore He sent the hand that wrote the inscription. <sup>25</sup>This is the inscription that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. <sup>26</sup>These words mean: *Mene*: God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end. <sup>27</sup>*Tekel*: You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting. <sup>28</sup>*Upharsin*: Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.”

<sup>29</sup>Then at Belshazzar’s command, Daniel was clothed in purple, a gold chain was placed around his neck, and he was proclaimed the third highest ruler in the kingdom.

<sup>30</sup>That night Belshazzar, king of the Babylonians, was slain, <sup>31</sup>and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom, at the age of sixty-two.

(Daniel 5:1-31 adapted from the NIV)

## Writing on the Wall—3D Picture

### Materials Needed

copy of the project pages pp 6-8 for each student printed on stiff paper; crayons, colored pencils or markers; glue; scissors; tape; pieces of gold or silver foil approximately 2 x 3 in (5 x 7.5 cm)

### Prepare in Advance

Print copies the project pages pp. 6-8 on stiff paper. Crop off the copyright notice and page number. Cut aluminum foil into small pieces, approximately 2 x 3 in (5 x 7.5 cm). Create a sample so you understand how the directions on p. 5 work.



The expression seeing the “writing on the wall” comes from today’s story. It means something is about to change or end. While in a drunken stupor, Belshazzar took the vessels from the Lord’s house to use at a party. A hand appeared and wrote a message he could not understand. Daniel was called for help and explained the grim meaning.

Students will create a 3-D picture of Belshazzar and the goblets at the banquet with a corner that can be turned down to reveal a hand writing on the wall in Hebrew. Photo directions for assembly are provided on p. 5.

### New Church Concept Profanation

“To drink out of the vessels of the temple of Jerusalem and at the same time to praise or worship [false] gods” signifies the profanation of good and truth by evils and falsities in worship. By profanation everything spiritual in a person is destroyed. See *Apocalypse Explained* 587.17

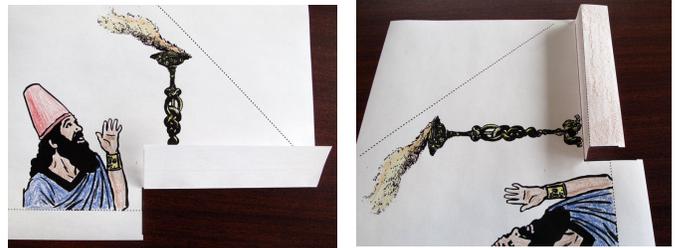
1. Give students copies of the project pages (p. 6-8). Invite them to color King Belshazzar, the table, and the hand.
2. Guide the students step by step through the *3D Picture Assembly Directions* (p. 5), numbers 1-7.
3. If you have used stiff paper the model may stand unaided. If not, it may need to be propped against a wall.
4. Give each student a few pieces of foil and help them form goblets as described in number 8 on page 5.
5. Have each student make 2-3 goblets and tape or glue them to the left-hand side of the tabletop, near the king, as shown in the picture above.
6. Have students fold back the triangular flap in the picture to show the hand appearing and the writing on the wall above the king.

# 3-D Picture Assembly Directions

1. Take the *Belshazzar Page*. Use scissors to cut along the heavy black line in the middle of the page.



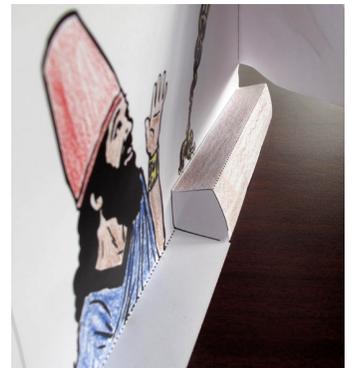
2. Fold the table flap upwards. Then fold the table downwards along the second dashed line to create a 3-D table that sticks out from the page.



3. Place the *Belshazzar* and *Hand* pages back to back, so Belshazzar is on one side and the *Hand* is on the other side. Tape or glue the backs of the pages together being careful not to get glue on the table flap.



4. Fold the glued pages along the dotted line at the bottom of the page towards the picture of Belshazzar. Tape the table flap to the flap at the bottom of the page, giving the table a bottom. Secure with tape.



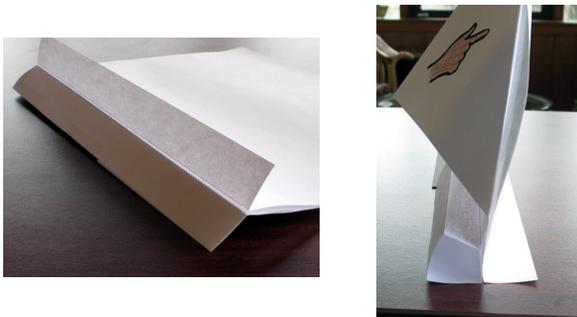
5. Fold the page along the dotted line at the top right hand corner to make the hand “appear” before king Belshazzar when folded back.



6. Place the page with the writing on it behind the other page so that the writing shows when the flap is folded back. Tape along the top and the unfolded parts of the two sides.



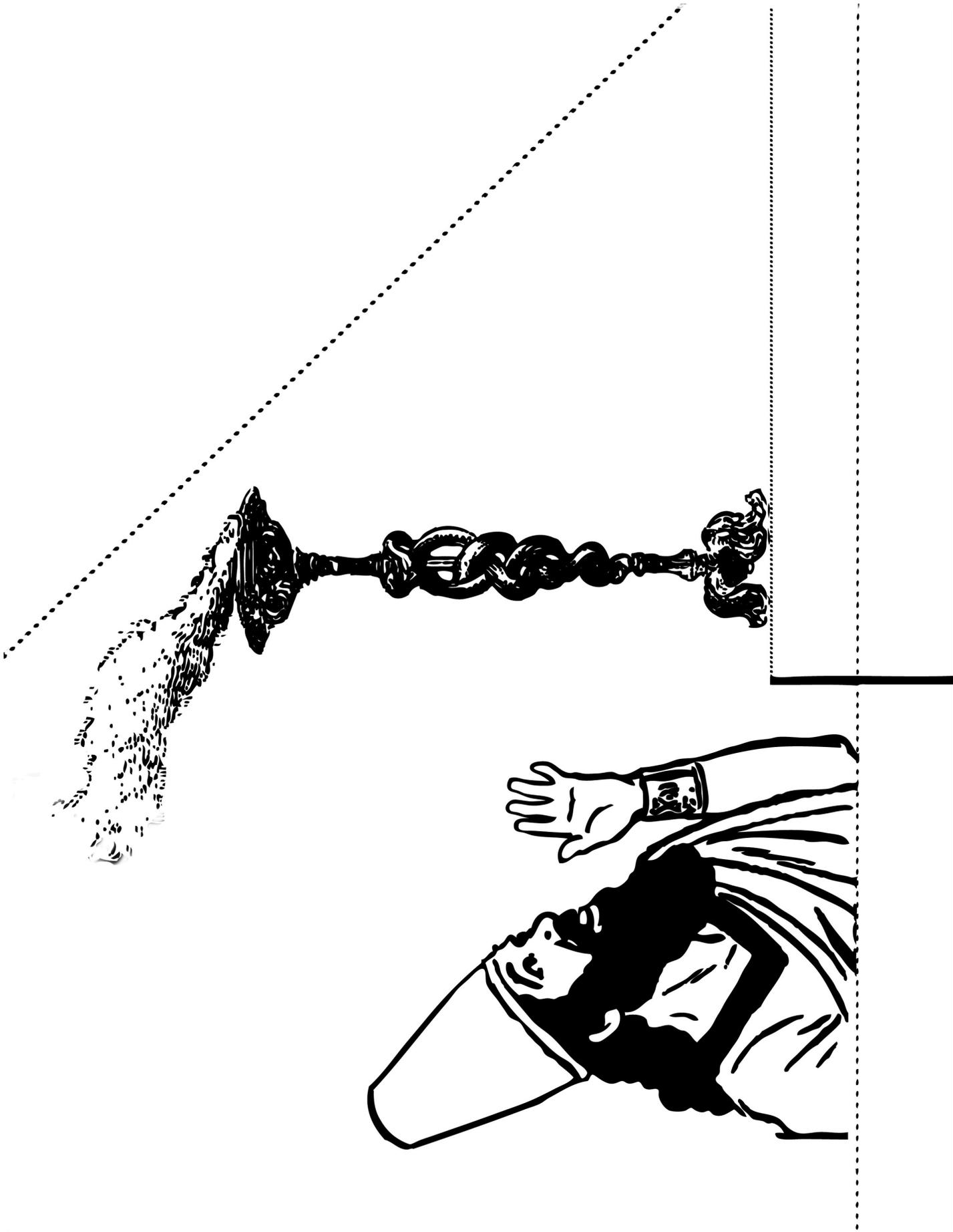
7. Fold the bottom of the page with the writing on it back so that the picture can stand. Tape as needed.



8. Wrap the top part of a small piece of foil around one finger to form the bowl part of a goblet. Crunch the foil together just below the finger to form the stem of the goblet.

Flatten the very bottom of the foil to form the base of the goblet.





**מבוא מנצח**  
**תקול ופרסון**



## Make a Temple Goblet

King Belshazzar used a goblet that was holy to the Lord for an unholy act. Drinking wine from the temple vessels means “to draw truths from the Word”. Praising the gods of gold, silver, brass, iron, wood, and stone “means worship from the love of self and the world, for these gods signify profanation” (see *Apocalypse Explained* 376).

Like Belshazzar we may use truth from the Word in false ways—like hearing the command to love your neighbor and telling others it means they have to do what you want them to do. This is because truths or “vessels” in our minds for supporting good may be used falsely, to support evil. We are to cherish true ideas and use them for serving the Lord and blessing others. Children will make a goblet reminding them to cherish true ideas from the Word.



1. King Belshazzar used a goblet that was holy to the Lord to drink wine at a party. Using a goblet for the wrong purpose doesn't seem so bad, but this story has a hidden inner meaning. Goblets from the temple are like true ideas from the Word that help us serve the Lord and others. King Belshazzar used the precious goblets (ideas) to worship other gods, so his kingdom was taken away.
2. We are going to make paper goblets to remind us to cherish true ideas from the Word. We do not know what the goblets looked like, but the goblets we will make are decorated with pomegranates and the Hebrew letters of the Lord's name, “Jehovah” or “Yehowah”.
3. Hand out *Goblet* templates p. 10. Decorate the top half of the goblet with crayons, colored pencils or markers.
4. Overlap the ends of the shorter sides of the paper to form a tube. Secure the entire edge of the tube where the designs meet using a stapler, or tape.
5. Place a hand in the decorated end of the tube and scrunch the end of the paper into a goblet “stem”. Slit the very end of the scrunched goblet “stem” using scissors. See the video at [newchurchvineyard.org/resource/video-make-a-goblet-with-one-piece-of-paper/](http://newchurchvineyard.org/resource/video-make-a-goblet-with-one-piece-of-paper/) for help.
6. Give students a *Base* (p. 11) and a piece of thin cardboard. Follow the directions on that page for preparing the bases and attaching them to the goblet stem.
7. *Optional*: Decorate the goblet with glue and silver or gold glitter.

### Materials Needed for Each Student

copy of the *Goblet* p. 10 printed on regular paper; one of the circles from the *Base* p. 11 printed on stiff paper; crayons, colored pencils or markers; stapler or tape; scissors; a piece of thin cardboard  
*optional*: glue and glitter

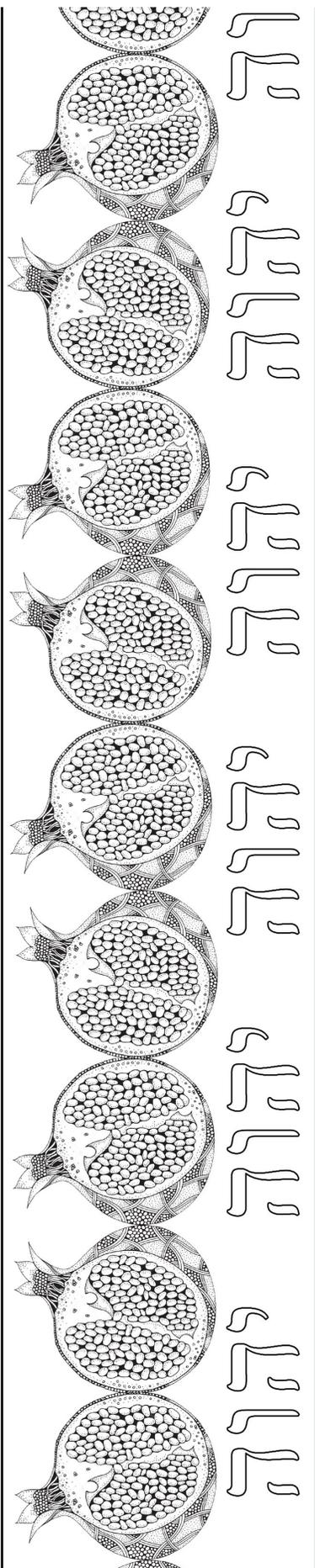
### Prepare in Advance

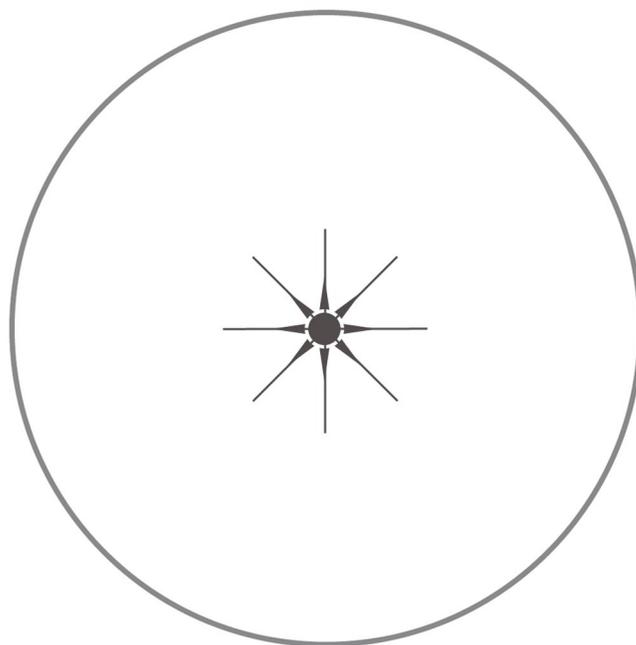
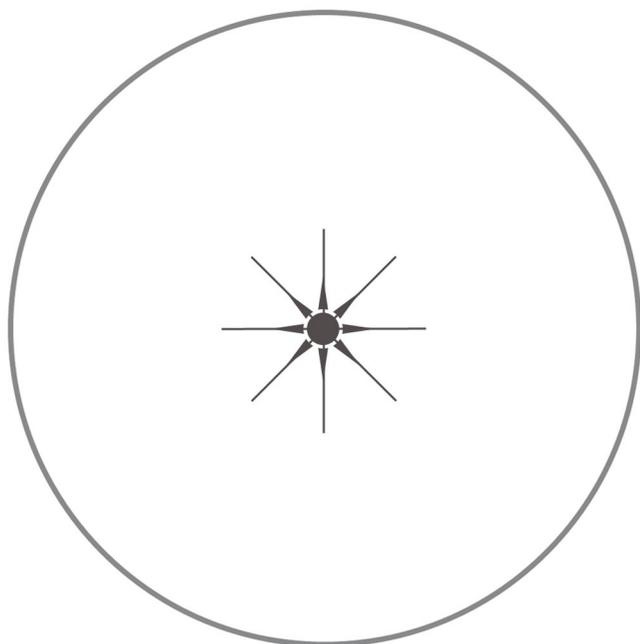
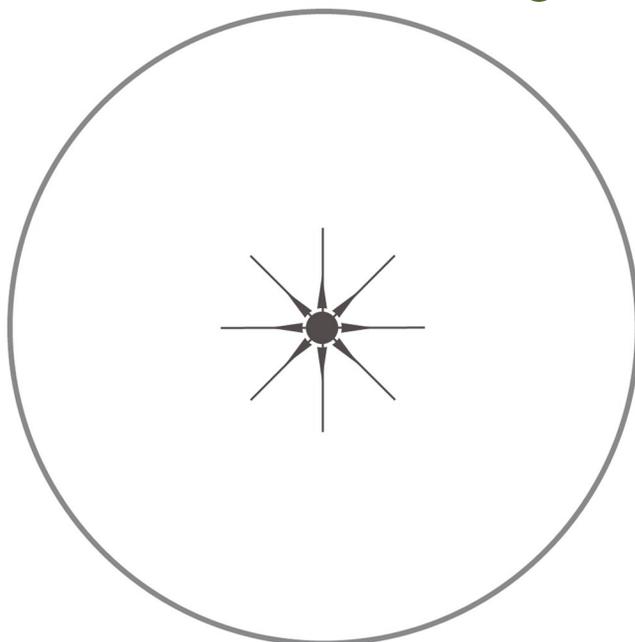
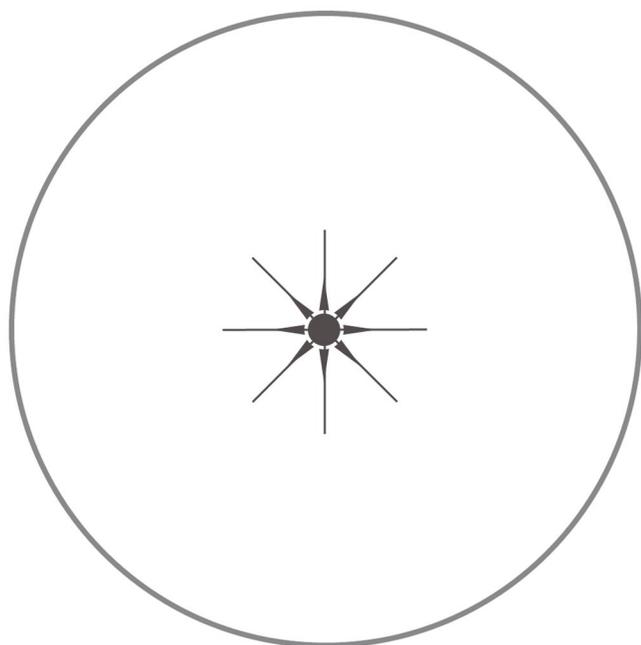
Print copies of the *Goblet* p. 10 on regular paper and the *Base* p. 11 on stiff paper. Gather supplies. Watch [newchurchvineyard.org/resource/video-make-a-goblet-with-one-piece-of-paper/](http://newchurchvineyard.org/resource/video-make-a-goblet-with-one-piece-of-paper/) for help.

### New Church Concept Temple Vessels

By the “temple at Jerusalem” from which the vessels came, is signified in the supreme sense the Lord, in the representative sense His kingdom and church. The kingdom of Belshazzar being “divided” signified the dissipation of good and truth, and he himself being “slain that night” signified the loss of the life of truth and good, thus damnation; for “to be divided” denotes to be dissipated; “a King” denotes the truth of good.

*Arcana Coelestia* 9093



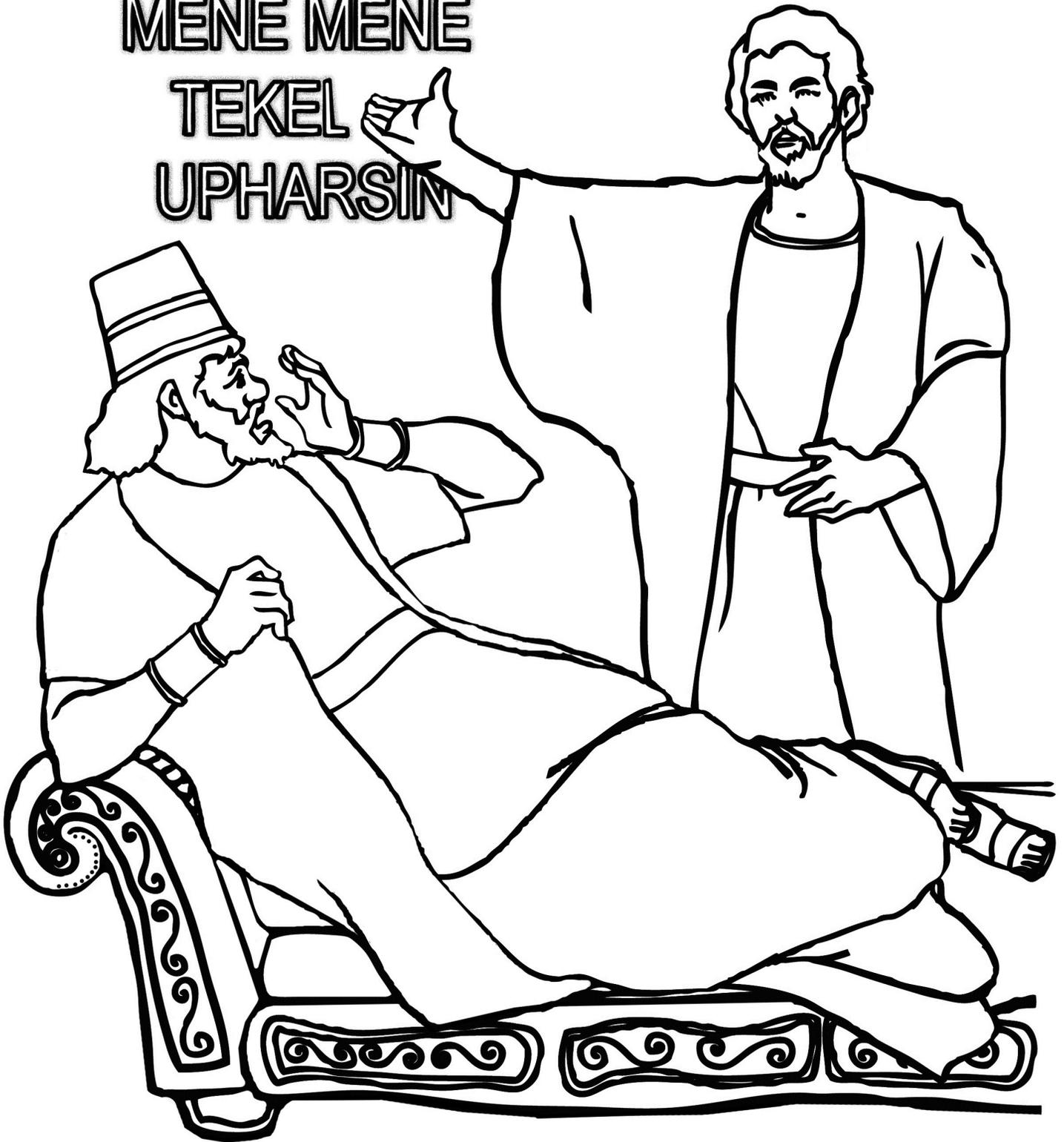


### **Directions for Base**

Each student needs one base.

1. Use scissors to cut around the base. Place the base on a piece of thin cardboard and draw around it. Cut out the circle of cardboard.
2. Cut out along the lines in the center of the base. Do not cut the middle of the cardboard circle!
3. Thread the ends of the stem of the goblet through the cut base. Open the slits and tape to the underside of the base. Cover the bottom of the base by taping the cardboard circle underneath.

MENE MENE  
TEKEL  
UPHARSIN



## *Recitation and Closing*

Each lesson in the Daniel series includes a recitation. The recitations are taken from prayers in the book of Daniel. Most of the sentences were spoken by Daniel after he received the power to explain Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Daniel 2). They are arranged in an order that reflects the story for each week. The sentence for lesson three was spoken by Nebuchadnezzar after he recognized the Lord as the true God (Daniel 4). We will be learning one sentence with each lesson, and building on each until all six sentences can be recited together.

Introduce the 5th sentence of the *Prayers in Daniel*, the recitation for this lesson, "He removes kings and raises up kings." The Lord told Daniel the meaning of the writing on the wall that nobody could understand. The writing revealed what was about to happen: the king would be removed and a new king would be raised up.

Try saying the sentence aloud and inviting the children to repeat it after you. Finish by repeating sentences 1-5.

### *Prayers in Daniel*

1. Blessed be the name of God forever and ever.
2. He reveals deep and secret things.
3. How great are His signs!
4. He gives wisdom to the wise.
- 5. He removes kings and raises up kings.**
6. I thank You and praise You, O God.

*Daniel 2:20-23; 4:3 adapted*

### **Closing**

When Belshazzar did something wrong the Lord warned him about what would happen as a consequence. When we make mistakes—or are about to make mistakes—a voice inside us may warn us not to do it. Our conscience is the Lord's way of telling us to change our ways.

We need our conscience so we can recognize bad choices and turn away from them and toward the Lord instead.

Give each student a *Parent Note* (p. 14) to take home.

Cut the Parent Notes apart and give one to each student.

### *The Writing on the Wall*

Dear Parents,

Today we heard a dramatic story about a hand that appeared during Belshazzar's feast. The writing warned the king that he was doing something wrong—just as our conscience lets us know when we are tempted to make a bad choice.

We are learning one sentence a week from *Prayers in Daniel*. Please help your child remember the first five sentences this week. You could say them at meal time, bed time, or when you are brushing your teeth!

Thank you.

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