



Group Discussion Guide: The Pressure to Conform | June 6, 2021

(~90 minutes needed)

Begin with Scripture + prayer (5-10 minutes)

Read all of Daniel 1 to begin your time together. *This week's topic is "The Pressure to Conform". The purpose of this reading is to remind ourselves of the story of Daniel and his friends as they were newly exiled in Babylon after the Fall of Jerusalem.*

After you finish reading the Scripture, have a specified person in the group pray for your time together – that your conversation, your words, etc. will be pleasing to God and uplifting to others.

Setting the stage for this series as a whole group (5-10 minutes)

As we begin this series in Daniel, we're going to learn about Daniel and others who have been taken from their homes and exiled by the powerful Babylonian army. Lives were lost, property and homes were destroyed and taken away (including the Temple in Jerusalem, the center of worship of God in Jerusalem.) Those exiled have lost everything that mattered except their own lives. They are in a foreign land with no real power. We likely haven't faced situations like this in our own life, but we can relate in many ways. We have all faced great uncertainty, loss, confusion, and struggle. We may ask things like, "Where is God in all of this? What is God doing?"

- Thinking about all of this, what do you hope to gain from this series?
- How can we best use our time together to achieve this?

NEW RESOURCE! A helpful resource to you in this series and moving forward is our new podcast available at thecreek.org/sermons. This is something for everyone to listen to after hearing the sermon in preparation for your group time. There will be some discussion questions posed in the podcast that will be asked as a group in these guides.



Stay together to answer these questions as a debrief of the sermon (40 minutes). *There are several questions here, pick some out that you think your group needs to talk through.*

- From this week's sermon, what challenged you? Inspired you? Grabbed your attention?
- What were the pressures to conform that Daniel and the others faced? If you were in Daniel's position, how do you think you would have responded?
- As followers of Jesus, God is shaping our character into that of his Son (Romans 8:29, 2 Corinthians 3:18). As you think about your life in Christ, share the ways God has shaped you. What are the means God has used to further shape you (e.g., experiences, relationships, trials, suffering, spiritual disciplines, Scripture, etc.)?
- Daniel and his friends had God-honoring character and were able to trust God while under Babylonian pressures to conform. What are some ways that you can grow in your relationship with God to be better prepared for pressures you will face? Have you "resolved" (verse 8) like Daniel? How can we help each other as a group to do this? Consider reading Romans 12:2.
- Dan said, "God is calling us to be a person of character, not of compromise." In what area(s) of your life are you feeling the pressure to conform to worldly patterns and ways? In what ways are you trying to "fit in" at the cost of compromising your character?
- Today, what cultural influences fill your mind, teaching you the "literature and language of the Babylonians" as stated in verse 4 (e.g., the songs we listen to, movies/shows we watch, books we read, the views of friends and family, the school we attend, etc.)? In what ways do you notice the pressure it places on your thinking and the impact they have/had on you?
- Read Luke 6:40. Who are the "teachers" in your life? Have you ever noticed a season of life when the things you regularly watched, read, or listened to impacted your thinking, words, and actions? Explain.
- In what ways has community shaped your character? How has this group helped shape your character to become more Christ-like?

Before transitioning, have someone read Psalm 33:16-22 aloud. Take time to pause and reflect in silence. Enter into a brief time to allow anyone to respond in prayer. The leader can close in prayer.



Transition to smaller same-gender groups for accountability (10-15 minutes) *Ask some of the questions below to hold one another accountable. Don't feel like you have to use this list like a checklist. If needed, feel free to stop, dive deeper, and pray over one another.*

- Are you feeling the pressure to conform? What is the situation and how are you doing?
- What has your prayer time been like this week?
- What has your time in Scripture been like this week?
- In what ways have you wrestled with temptation this week?
- How can we pray for you?

Finish with intercessory prayer in your split groups (10 minutes)

Like each week, finish your group session with prayer. You might designate someone in your group to write down everyone's prayer requests and then send them to the whole group for everyone to be praying about through the week.

- What is on your heart that you need prayer for?
- Who in your life needs prayer?

Have someone close your time together by interceding for the requests that were shared.