

SHARING SCRIPTURE

Discover • Jesus • Together



From Reading to Understanding

For use: Dec. 29 - Jan. 4

Texts: Luke 24:25-27; 2 Peter 3:11-13; Jonah 3:3-10; Numbers 14:34; Daniel 9:23; 10:11, 12

Making it to state was a dream come true for the North Haven Indians' high school girls' soccer team. Captain and central figure Katie Ryan led them to the victory by shouting tips to teammates on the field and stopping opposing forwards. She mostly played outside midfielder and then switched to outside defender, until her coach Gary Collins studied an analytics report and spotted a problem.

Most of their opponent's goals came up the middle, so he knew something needed to change to turn the tide for the soccer team. He needed a quick and forceful leader. Collins asked Katie if she was willing to change positions and fill the void. She accepted. Collins explains, "It showed her character as a leader that she was willing to bypass a position she was more comfortable with to help her team win games and get us to the State Tournament."

Her central role allowed her to scan the entire field and predict the moves of players on both teams, giving her the ability to provide guidance and protection that ultimately led the North Haven Indians to victory.

This new quarter, we're studying the Old Testament book of Daniel, a prophetic slice of Scripture that highlights a central figure—Jesus Christ—who is in a position to see the entire field of play in the greatest battle for victory on our planet. The apocalyptic prophecies we will study show us the trustworthiness of God's Word by accurately portraying the rise and fall of kingdoms up until our day. The book affirms God's ability to accurately see everything before it happens, even if sometimes we may think that God is

watching from the sidelines.

Katie was sidelined part of the season and says, “It was hard for me, because I had to watch them struggle and couldn’t do anything on the field to help...” But in Daniel, we see Christ—who appears to be far away from the center of action—actively involved in helping God’s people overcome the enemy in the face of life-threatening situations. When Daniel and his friends were faced with overwhelming odds, God rewarded their faithfulness and brought about victories. God acts on behalf of us because God loves us.

Likewise, Katie loved leading the North Haven soccer team. “I’ve been playing with these girls since we were little, so we’re like a family. It’s good to bring everyone together and, because of our team bond, we were a lot closer than we’ve been in the past.”

Similarly, Daniel was close to his heavenly family. He was not only spoken of as “greatly beloved” (Daniel 9:23; 10:11, 19), but anticipated the day in which the Head Coach will bring together “everyone who is found written in the book” (12:1). Earthly trophies cannot compare to these faithful players who will shine “like the stars forever and ever” (v. 3).

~Curtis Rittenour

[1] <https://www.zip06.com/profile/20191226/ryan-was-a-central-figure-in-the-indiansx2019-resurgence>

For Reflection

Connecting: Have you ever played on a sports team which repeatedly won games? How important was a central figure to the team’s victories?

Sharing: How is Christ portrayed as a central figure in the book of Daniel?

1. Daniel 2:44, 45. Christ’s eternal kingdom is revealed as a stone “cut out of the mountain without hands.”
2. Daniel 3:25. Christ is seen standing with Daniel’s friends in a fiery furnace.
3. Daniel 7:13. Christ is described as the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven.
4. Daniel 9:26. Christ is presented as the Messiah, a sacrificial victim to bring salvation to people.
5. Daniel 12:1. Christ is portrayed as Michael, a great prince who stands up to deliver God’s people.
6. Other...

Applying: Can you find Jesus in every chapter of Daniel? Divide your group into subgroups of two or three and randomly assign each group one chapter in Daniel. Ask them to carefully review that chapter and look for Christ within those verses. Then have each group report what they have found.

Valuing: Is Jesus a central figure in your life? Pray with one other person that Christ will be foremost in your life during this coming week.

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people with whom you share it.

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Executive Director

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