

## Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Daniel 3

**MAIN POINT:** God was with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fire.

**KEY PASSAGE:** Daniel 2:20-21

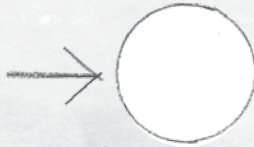
**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** How can we obey God? We trust God to give us strength to obey Him.

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**SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES**  
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### Leader BIBLE STUDY

Nebuchadnezzar built a tall gold statue and issued a new law: “When you hear music, you are to fall down and worship the statue.” The penalty for defying this law was severe. “Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a furnace of blazing fire” (Dan. 3:6).

So when music played, all the people bowed down and worshiped the gold statue. Well, almost everyone. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to bow down and worship the statue. They loved and worshiped the one true God. Only He was worthy of their worship.

The Book of Daniel says that the Chaldeans—a group of astrologers and dream interpreters (see Dan. 2:2,4)—took this opportunity to go to the king and tell on Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. But not even the threat of death could convince the three friends to renounce their loyalty to God.

As you teach, lead kids to consider the possibilities: God could keep the friends from being thrown into the furnace. Or, once in the furnace, God could keep them from being harmed. Or if they perished, God would receive them into heaven. The friends' trust in God enabled them to stand firm no matter what—even as they were tied up and thrown into the fire.

Then something miraculous happened. Nebuchadnezzar saw four men in the fire! They were walking around, unharmed! The Lord not only rescued Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, He was with them.

On the cross, people mocked Jesus: “He saved others; He cannot save Himself!” (Mark 15:31). Jesus was not physically unable to save Himself. He chose to do His Father's will, and His love for sinners kept Him on the cross. Jesus chose not to save Himself *so that* He could save others.



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# The BIBLE STORY

## Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego

*Daniel 3*

**Nebuchadnezzar** (NEB yoo kad NEZ uhr) was the king of Babylon. One day, Nebuchadnezzar made a tall statue out of gold. His herald made an important announcement from the king: “When you hear the sound of music, you must fall down and worship this statue. Anyone who does not obey this rule will be thrown into a fiery furnace!”

The rule was for everyone in Babylon. So when the people heard the sound of music, they fell down and worshiped the gold statue like the king commanded. But not everyone bowed down and worshiped the statue. Three men from Judah—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—refused to bow down to a statue.

Some men went to King Nebuchadnezzar to complain about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They did not like these men from Judah who did not obey their king.

“You have made a rule for all the people,” they reminded the king. “But some of the men from Judah do not bow down and worship your statue.”

This news made King Nebuchadnezzar angry! He called for the men and asked them, “Is it true that you do not serve my gods or worship the gold statue? If you do not bow down when you hear the music, I will throw you into a fiery furnace! Then what god could rescue you from my power?”

The three friends answered, “King, the God we serve is able to rescue us from the fiery furnace. He can save us from you. But even if God chooses not to rescue us, we will not serve your gods. And we will not bow down and

worship the gold statue.”

King Nebuchadnezzar was even angrier! He told the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. The soldiers threw them into the fiery furnace.

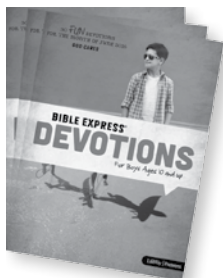
Suddenly, King Nebuchadnezzar jumped up. “Didn’t we tie up three men and throw them into the fire? **Look!**” the king shouted. “I see four men walking around in the fire. They aren’t tied up, and the fourth man looks like a son of the gods!”

Nebuchadnezzar quickly went to the door of the furnace. He called out, “Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego—servants of the Most High God! Come here!” So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out of the fire. They had not been hurt by the fire at all!

Nebuchadnezzar praised God. “The God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego sent an angel and rescued His servants!”

King Nebuchadnezzar made a new law for all the people. “Anyone who says anything against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego’s God will be punished! No other god can save people like this!” Then the king gave Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego even more important jobs in the kingdom of Babylon.

*Christ Connection: God was with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fire. Only He could rescue them. God rescues us too, through His Son, Jesus. Only Jesus can save us from our sin. Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross provided the way for us to be rescued from sin and have eternal life.*



**WANT TO  
DISCOVER  
GOD’S WORD?  
GET  
BIBLE EXPRESS!**

Invite kids to check out this week’s devotionals to discover that God alone has the power to save His people. Hundreds of years later, God sent Jesus to save people from sin. (Matt. 1:21)

Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out [www.lifeway.com/devotionals](http://www.lifeway.com/devotionals).

# Small Group OPENING

**SESSION TITLE:** Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Daniel 3

**MAIN POINT:** God was with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fire.

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**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** How can we obey God? We trust God to give us strength to obey Him.

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## Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Ask kids to think about or describe a situation in which they would need help to stay safe.

**SAY** • There are many times when we need someone to help us or keep us safe. God takes care of us by putting people in our lives to protect us—like parents, teachers, firefighters, and other helpers. Sometimes God provides a miracle to take care of us. In today’s Bible story, we will learn about a time when God miraculously took care of His followers.

## Activity page (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Truth Revealed” on the activity page. Kids should color in the specified letters to reveal a hidden message: *The God we serve is able.*

**SAY** • Today’s Bible story is about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These three friends worshiped the one true God. They knew they would be punished for worshiping God, but they trusted God to take care of them no matter what.

- “Truth Revealed” activity page, 1 per kid
- crayons

## Session starter (10 minutes)

### OPTION 1: Fire safety review

Discuss what your class would do in the event of a fire. Explain that a fire alarm or smoke detector might go off. Remind kids that they should stay calm. Talk about your exit strategy and where kids will gather outside.

Explain that firefighters who are trained to safely handle fires will arrive to help protect the people at your church and keep everyone safe.

**SAY** • Today we are going to learn about three friends who were threatened to be thrown into a fire as punishment for worshipping God, but God gave His followers strength to obey Him no matter what. Let's listen to the story to hear about the miraculous way God cared for these friends.

### OPTION 2: Imaginary scenes

Instruct kids to stand up and spread out. Direct them to close their eyes and listen as you describe a scene or event.

As kids imagine the scene, they should act out how they would respond to the situation. (Suggestions: building a snowman in your bathing suit, playing basketball on the moon, exploring an underwater city, roasting marshmallows on the surface of the sun, and so forth)

**SAY** • Some things are difficult to imagine! Can you imagine being thrown into a fire? Today we will hear about three friends who were thrown into a fire. But God did something miraculous to rescue His followers. Let's listen to hear what God did.

## Transition to large group



# Large Group LEADER

**SESSION TITLE:** Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego

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## Countdown

• countdown video

Show the countdown video as your kids arrive, and set it to end as large group time begins.

## Introduce the session (3 minutes)

• leader attire  
• bandages  
• dark makeup

*[Large Group Leader enters quickly and out of breath, wearing an apron and bandages on his or her hands. Smudge black or dark brown eyeshadow on face and arms to simulate ashes.]*

**LEADER** • Whew! You guys! I'm sorry I'm so frazzled today.

There was ... um ... *[looking down at bandages on hands]* ... an “incident” with one of our brick ovens. The fire in the oven got slightly out of control, but the oven was full of delicious pizza, which was covered in Nonna’s famous special sauce!

So, without even thinking, I reached in to rescue those delicious pizzas, except I forgot my oven mitts, and ... I got burned. Mamma mia, fire is hot! And it burns people who don't have the proper protection.

You know, that reminds me of something. *[Walk to giant timeline and inspect it.]* Yep. Just as I suspected.

## Giant timeline (1 minute)

Point out previous stories on the giant timeline and show kids where today's Bible story, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego," falls on the timeline.

• Giant Timeline or  
Big Story Circle

**LEADER** • Our Bible story today comes from the Book of Daniel, which is in the Old Testament. Interestingly enough, we will be hearing a story about another fire. But the outcome for the characters in today's story is happily ... [*look at bandages on hands*] ... different than mine.

## Big picture question (1 minute)

**LEADER** • As you hear the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, I want you to listen to see what rules the king wanted them to follow. Imagine what you would do if the king asked *you* to follow the same rules. I also want us to be thinking about our big picture question: ***How can we obey God?*** Also, listen to see how Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego trusted and obeyed God.

## Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Daniel 3. Tell the Bible story in your own words, or show the Bible story video "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego."

• Bibles  
• "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego" video  
• Big Picture Question Poster  
• Bible Story Picture Poster

**LEADER** • Wow! How incredible was that story? I am impressed how God protected Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. The fire in my oven wasn't hot enough to kill me—obviously—but it was hot enough to do damage. I imagine that if I was in Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's shoes, I'd be pretty scared. I would have to keep our big picture



question in mind: ***How can we obey God?*** [*Allow kids to respond.*] Right! ***We trust God to give us strength to obey Him.***

All the people in today's Bible story had a choice to make. They had to choose to obey the king and worship his statue or to obey God and worship Him alone. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego chose to worship the one true God, even though they knew they could be killed for disobeying the king.

God could have changed the king's mind, but He didn't. He allowed the king to punish Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. But God gave them strength to trust and obey Him, even in a scary situation. **God was with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fire.**

God still gives people strength to trust and obey Him. Just like God had a plan to save Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, He has a plan to save us. Though we disobey, God sent His Son, Jesus, to earth. Jesus perfectly obeyed God. Jesus never sinned, but He died the death we deserve. Jesus rose from the dead, and those who trust in Him receive God's forgiveness and blessing.

### **The Gospel: God's Plan for Me (optional)**

Use Scripture and the guide provided with this session to explain to boys and girls how to become a Christian. Assign individuals to meet with kids who have more questions.

Encourage boys and girls to ask their parents, small group leaders, or other Christian adults any questions they may have about becoming a Christian.

Tip: Provide *I'm a Christian Now* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

## Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together Daniel 2:20-21.

- Key Passage Poster
- “Name of God” song

**LEADER** • Our key passage tells us to praise and bless the name of God forever because God is wise and powerful. Thinking about today’s Bible story and about what you know about Jesus, who can name some ways God shows His power?

Allow kids to respond. Then lead boys and girls to sing “Name of God.”

## Discussion starter video (4 minutes)

**LEADER** • Do you think Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego felt afraid when they were thrown into the furnace? What do you do when you feel alone or afraid? Check out this video.

- “Unit 16, Session 2” discussion starter video

Show the “Unit 16, Session 2” discussion starter video. Guide kids to discuss what would comfort Nigel more—playing video games or reading the Bible?

**LEADER** • How can the Bible be a comfort to us when we feel alone or afraid? What does the Bible say about God and His promises to us? (*He is with us, Matt. 28:20; He will never leave us, Heb. 13:5*)

We can be faithful to serve God no matter what it costs us. We can trust Him to be with us in all circumstances. His promises give us hope and courage to trust and obey Him.

## Sing (4 minutes)

**LEADER** • Our great big God is worthy of all honor and praise, in good times and in ... [*look at bandages*] ... not-so-good times. He is all-wise and all-powerful,

- “It Is Well” song

and He can use all things for our good and His glory.

Let's praise God for the way He protected Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; for the way their story encourages us to trust and obey Him; and for the many ways He takes care of us every day!

Sing together "It Is Well."

### **Pray (2 minutes)**

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to small groups.

**LEADER** • God, thank You for being completely in control of every situation—even situations we don't understand and situations that scare us. Please give us strength to trust and obey You and You alone.

Give us faith to trust and follow Jesus as our Savior and our Rescuer from sin. We pray these things in Jesus' mighty name. Amen.

### **Dismiss to small groups**

## The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



**God rules.** Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



**We sinned.** Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



**God provided.** Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



**Jesus gives.** Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



**We respond.** Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus.

# Small Group LEADER

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## Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- strips of paper, 4 per kid
- pencils
- tape or stapler

Display the key passage poster. Give each kid four strips of paper, and invite kids to copy sections of the passage onto the strips of paper. Then kids can arrange the strips in order, use tape or a stapler to form links, and attach the strips together in a key passage chain.

Encourage kids to take home their chains and work on memorizing the key passage this week.

**SAY** • Last week, I challenged you to look at your “rainbow key passage” every day to try to learn these verses.

Can anyone recite part of the verse from memory?

Allow a few volunteers to recite as much of the key passage as they are able.

## Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Main Point Poster

Provide Bibles and guide kids to locate Daniel 3. Remind them that the Book of Daniel is in the Old Testament.

Challenge a volunteer to identify which division of the Bible the Book of Daniel is in. (*Major Prophets*)

**SAY** • Today we heard a true story about how God gave His people the strength to obey Him and about how He protected them from a dangerous fire. Let’s all stand


up and find a partner. When I ask a question, turn to your partner and tell him or her the answer. After each question and answer, switch and find a new partner. When I ask the big picture question—***How can we obey God?***—I want everyone to shout out the answer together.

Ask the following review questions. Give kids time to share their answers with their partners:

1. What command did the king give to everyone?  
*(At the sound of the music, people were supposed to fall down and worship the golden statue; Dan. 3:4-5)*
2. What was the penalty for people who did not follow the king's rule? *(They would be thrown into the fiery furnace; Dan. 3:6,11,15)*
3. How many people did the king throw into the furnace? *(three: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; Dan. 3:20,24)*
4. How many people did the king see in the furnace? *(four, Dan. 3:24-25)*
5. Who was able to save Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fiery furnace? *(the one true God, the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; Dan. 3:17,28)*
6. ***How can we obey God? We trust God to give us strength to obey Him.***

**SAY** • Good job sharing your answers! **God was with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fire.** We can trust that God is always with us too. He may not answer our prayers like we expect, but we can trust that everything He does is for our good and His glory.

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.



LOW PREP

- construction paper
- tape

## Activity choice (10 minutes)

### OPTION 1: Lava hop!

Before small group, scatter pieces of construction paper around the room. Tape them to the floor in positions that will require kids to think of strategic ways to hop from one piece to another.

Challenge kids to hop from one side of the room to the other without touching the floor. Explain that the floor is hot—like lava! If someone steps on the floor, he must move to the back of the line to try again.

If your group is large, prepare two paths and form two teams. Challenge teams to compete to see who can move across the room faster.

**SAY** • In this game, you were able to make a plan for how you could cross the lava and not get burned. In the Bible story, however, surviving the fire was impossible—apart from a miracle!

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego trusted God to do what was best; God was their only hope. **God was with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fire.** Today, our only hope for rescue from sin comes from God. Only God the Father has the power to rescue and save us through His Son, Jesus.

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

### OPTION 2: Fiery handprints

Guide kids to use markers to write the key passage or main point on a heavyweight piece of paper:

- **God was with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fire.**
- ***How can we obey God? We trust God to give us strength to obey Him.***

Kids may then use foam brushes to paint their hands with

- white heavyweight paper
- markers
- paper plates
- foam brushes
- red, orange, and yellow washable paint
- wet wipes (for cleanup)

red, orange, and yellow paint. Demonstrate how to press a painted hand onto the heavyweight paper to make a handprint flame.

**SAY** • In today's Bible story, the king gave people a choice—worship the statue or be thrown into a fiery furnace. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego knew that obeying God and worshiping Him alone was the right choice. God gave them strength to obey Him. Hang your fiery handprints somewhere in your house to remind you and your family to trust God and obey Him in every circumstance.

## Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Encourage kids to think about the following questions and write their thoughts on their journal pages:

1. Would you obey God if it meant losing your friends?
2. Would you obey God if it meant losing your family?
3. Would you obey God if it meant losing your life?

**SAY** • **God was with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fire.** They refused to worship anyone except the one true God. Let's pray.

Lead kids in a short prayer, praising Him for His power and asking Him for the strength to obey Him with both our thoughts and actions.

As time allows, lead kids to complete "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego" on the activity page. For each picture, kids should write a short description of what happened in today's Bible story. Encourage them to share the story with a friend or family member this week.

- pencils
- Journal Page
- "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego" activity page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.