

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego

BIBLE PASSAGE: Daniel 3

MAIN POINT: God was with Daniel's friends in the fire.

KEY PASSAGE: Daniel 2:20

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

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SMALL GROUP OPENING

(15–20 MINUTES)

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LARGE GROUP BIBLE STUDY

(10–15 MINUTES)

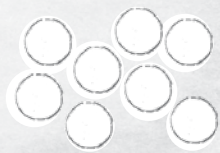
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SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

(20–25 MINUTES)

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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 preschoolers 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 there. 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. He did not love God. One day, King Nebuchadnezzar made a tall statue out of gold.

Then one of the king's officials gave a new rule to all the people. He said, "When you hear the sound of music, fall to your knees and worship this gold statue. Anyone who does not obey this new rule will be thrown into a very hot fire!"

When music played, everyone in Babylon fell to their knees and worshiped the gold statue. Well, almost everyone. **Three men from Judah did not fall to their knees and worship the statue.** They worshiped God, and they knew God did not want them to worship anyone or anything else. These men were Daniel's friends. **Their names were Shadrach** (SHAD rak), **Meshach** (MEE shak), and **Abednego** (uh BED-nih goh).

Some of the people in Babylon went to the king. "These men do not obey you," they said. "They do not bow down to the statue."

The king was angry! He called for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and said, "If you do not fall to your knees and worship the statue, I will throw you into a very hot fire!"

The three friends said, "King, we worship God. He can save us from the fire. But even if He does not save us, we will not worship the gold statue."

Now **the king** was very mad! He told his workers to make the fire even hotter! **The soldiers** in the king's army tied up the three friends and threw them into the fire.

The fire was so hot that the soldiers died when they got close! Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego fell into the fire, all tied up.

All of a sudden, the king stood up and said, “Didn’t we throw three men into the fire?”

“Yes, King,” his helpers said.

“Look!” the king shouted. “I see four men walking around in the fire! They aren’t hurt or tied up! The fourth man looks like an angel!”

The king said, “Shadrach! Meshach! Abednego! Come here!”

The friends came out of the fire. They were not burned. They had not even been hurt at all! God was with them and had saved them from the fire!

The king praised God. He said, “God sent an angel to save these men! They trusted in God, and He saved them!”

So the king made a new rule for all the people. **“Anyone who says anything bad about God will be punished. Only God can save people from death!” Then the king gave Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego important jobs in Babylon.**

Christ Connection: God saved Daniel’s friends from a fire. Jesus came to save us in an even better way. Jesus died so we wouldn’t be punished for our sin. He was punished instead. When we know and love Jesus, Jesus saves us so we can be with God forever.



**WANT TO
DISCOVER
GOD’S WORD?
GET
MORE!**

Invite preschoolers 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.

Small Group OPENING

SESSION TITLE: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego

BIBLE PASSAGE: Daniel 3

MAIN POINT: God was with Daniel's friends in the fire.

KEY PASSAGE: Daniel 2:20

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

Welcome time

- "It Is Well" song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert download
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play the unit theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church's security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

Activity page

- "Find the Differences" activity page, 1 per child
- pencils or crayons

Invite preschoolers to examine the two pictures and circle the four differences they see.

SAY • How many people do you see in the fire in the first picture? How many people do you see in the fire in the second picture? In our Bible story today, we are going to hear how Daniel's friends ended up in the fire and how God kept them safe.

Play hot and cold

Select one child to be the *finder* and another child to be the *hider*. Instruct the *finder* to close his eyes while the *hider* hides a Bible somewhere in the classroom. When the Bible is hidden, invite the *finder* to open his eyes and search for the Bible. Lead the rest of the group in saying "cold" when



- Bible

the *finder* is far from the hidden Bible and “hot” when he is near the hidden Bible. When the *finder* locates the Bible, choose another *finder* and *hider* and play again as time allows.

SAY • We said “hot” when you were near the Bible, but you were not really hot. We were just playing a game. In today’s Bible story, Daniel’s friends Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had to go somewhere that really was very hot. They were not playing a game. They were in danger. Listen to our Bible story to find out where they had to go that was so hot.

Make play dough statues

Guide preschoolers to make statues out of play dough. Explain that statues are usually made to look like a person or animal. Often they are the size of the person or animal in real life or even larger. Ask preschoolers to tell you about their statues.

SAY • Statues can be good just to look at or to remind us of someone or something important. In our Bible story today, King Nebuchadnezzar made a tall statue out of gold. The king’s gold statue was used for something that was not good. In fact, this statue was used for something that was sin. Listen to our Bible story to find out what this gold statue was used for.

- play dough
- play dough tools

Transition to Bible study

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, flip off the lights, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Invite preschoolers to pretend to play a musical instrument as they move to Bible study.

- countdown video (optional)

Large Group LEADER

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Introduce the Bible story

SAY • Who remembers Daniel's friends who joined him in obeying God and not eating the king's food? [*Allow responses.*] In today's Bible story, Daniel's friends had to make another choice whether to obey or disobey.

Watch or tell the Bible story

Place a bookmark at Daniel 3 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

SAY • God has given us a great gift in the Bible. The Bible tells us who God is and what He has done for us.

Today's Bible story is from the Book of Daniel.

Show the Bible story video "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego," or tell the Bible story in your own words using the script provided. Use the bolded version for younger preschoolers.

Talk about the Bible story

SAY • Daniel's friends wanted to obey God no matter what, even if it meant dying. God did not leave them on their own. **God was with Daniel's friends in the fire.** God rescued them from the fire and showed the

- bookmark
- Bible
- "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego" video
- Bible Story Picture Poster

- Main Point Poster
- Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle

king that He alone deserves worship.

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline or big story circle as you ask the following review questions:

1. What did the king make? (*a tall, gold statue*)
2. What were the people to do when they heard music? (*fall to their knees and worship the statue*)
3. Who did not worship the statue? (*Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego*)
4. How many men did the king see when he looked in the fire? (*four*)
5. What new rule did the king make? (*Anyone who said anything bad about God would be punished.*)

Learn the big picture question

SAY • Who remembers our big picture question? ***How can we obey God? We trust God to help us obey Him.***

Obeying God can be hard, but just like God didn't leave Daniel's friends on their own, God does not leave us on our own either. God gives us help. Jesus died so we wouldn't be punished for our sin. He was punished instead. When we know and love Jesus, Jesus saves us so we can be with God forever.

• Big Picture Question Poster

Practice the key passage

Open your Bible to Daniel 2:20. Read the key passage aloud several times. Sing together the key passage song, "Forever and Ever."

SAY • Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego knew what our key passage says is true. They would not worship the statue. Only the one true God is worthy of worship.

• Key Passage Poster
• "Forever and Ever" song

Transition to small groups

Small Group ACTIVITIES

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• "It Is Well" song
(optional)

Pray to God at the sound of music

Lead preschoolers to walk around the room. When music starts to play, they must stop, fall to their knees, and bow their heads in prayer. Lead preschoolers in a short sentence prayer of worship, such as "God, You are kind to us," "God, thank You for showing us mercy," or "God, thank You for sending Jesus." Stop the music. Direct preschoolers to stand up and walk around the room again. Continue starting and stopping the music and praying as time allows.

SAY • When music played we worshiped the one true God, but everyone in Babylon was supposed to worship the gold statue. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego would not worship the statue, and they ended up in the fire. But **God was with Daniel's friends in the fire.** God saved them. Jesus came to save us in an even better way. Jesus died so we wouldn't be punished for our sin. He was punished instead. When we know and love Jesus, Jesus saves us so we can be with God forever.

Make a life-sized gold statue

Invite a preschooler to strike a pose. Then invite two

• gold tinsel

or three other preschoolers to wrap or hang gold tinsel on the child. When the human gold statue is complete, lead preschoolers to shout, “We worship God!” Allow preschoolers to take turns being and wrapping the statue.

SAY • Our gold statues were silly! Worshiping anything other than God is silly! **God was with Daniel’s friends in the fire**, and the king learned that only God can save people from death. Jesus came to save us in an even better way. Jesus died so we wouldn’t be punished for our sin. He was punished instead. When we know and love Jesus, Jesus saves us so we can be with God forever.

Tip: Supervise children to ensure a child is not wrapped too tightly.

Make a fiery furnace craft

Provide a paper plate cut in half for each preschooler. Lead preschoolers to color their “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego” printables. Guide preschoolers to cut out the figures and glue them onto the paper plate. Invite them to tear small pieces of red, orange, and yellow tissue paper and glue the pieces on the paper plate around the figures. Write the main point on each preschooler’s artwork.

SAY • **God was with Daniel’s friends in the fire.** Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego obeyed God, and He saved them. Jesus came to save us in an even better way. We have disobeyed God, and that is called sin. Jesus died so we wouldn’t be punished for our sin. He was punished instead. When we know and love Jesus, Jesus saves us so we can be with God forever.

- “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego” printable, 1 per child
- scissors
- paper plate
- red, orange, yellow tissue paper
- glue stick
- marker

Practice counting

Write different numbers and draw the corresponding number of dots on separate sheets of paper to make

- counters
- paper
- marker

counting sheets. Be sure to include the numbers 3 and 4. Set out the counting sheets. Provide counters such as counting bears or other manipulatives. Guide preschoolers to practice counting by placing a counter on each dot.

SAY • When the king looked into the fire, he did not see three men. He saw one, two, three, four! **God was with Daniel's friends in the fire.** God saved them. The king praised God. He learned only God can save people from death!

Invite a firefighter to class

• guest

Tip: Ask church staff to identify any paid or volunteer firefighters in your congregation you could invite to class.

Invite a firefighter to visit your class to talk to preschoolers about fire safety. Include time for preschoolers to ask questions. Consider asking the guest to retell the Bible story.

SAY • Fire is very dangerous. What should have happened to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego when they were in the fire? They should have been hurt, but instead God saved them. **God was with Daniel's friends in the fire** and showed everyone He has power over His creation.

We are sinners and we should be separated from God because of our sin, but God sent Jesus to show He has power over sin and death! Jesus died and rose again so we wouldn't be punished for our sin. He was punished instead. When we know and love Jesus, Jesus saves us so we can be with God forever.

Snack

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Guide preschoolers to clean their areas. Take a restroom break and wash hands. Gather preschoolers for snack time. Thank God for the snack.

For snack, place three bear-shaped cookies, a few marshmallows, and a few chocolate chips on a graham cracker. Toast the snack in a toaster oven. When you serve the snack, point out how the marshmallows and chocolate melted but the bears did not. Talk about how **God was with Daniel's friends in the fire**. God saved them and showed everyone that He is the one true God.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert download
- snack food
- paper cups and napkins
- toaster oven (optional)

Transition

When a child finishes her snack, guide her to throw away any trash. She may select a book or puzzle to examine, play quietly with play dough or a favorite toy, or color the Bible story coloring page.

Offer the journal page and invite preschoolers to draw a picture of themselves with Jesus standing beside. Remind each preschooler that just like **God was with Daniel's friends in the fire**, God is with them too. God will help us obey Him even when it is hard. ***How can we obey God? We trust God to help us obey Him.*** Pray for the children.

SAY • God, thank You that You are with us. Help us to obey You even when it is hard or scary. Thank You that Jesus died and rose again so we can be with You forever. Amen.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- books
- puzzles
- play dough
- Journal Page printable, 1 per child
- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers