

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

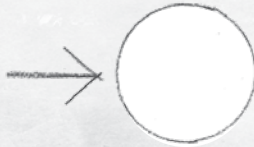
BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How can we obey God? We trust God to give us strength to obey Him.

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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 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. 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
ADVENTURE!**

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.

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.

KEY PASSAGE: Daniel 2:20-21

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

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. As kids arrive, ask them if they know anyone who has rescued another person or if they have ever been rescued.

SAY • Today we will be learning about three men who disobeyed a king and were punished harshly for it. However, there's more to the story. You'll have to wait till later to see what we learn!

Activity page (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete the “Color the Flames” activity page. Ask them to color each section based on the number. (1- Red, 2- Orange, 3- Yellow, 4- Black)

SAY • Three men named Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to bow down to a statue, and the king threatened to throw them into a fire if they would not. We will learn about what happened to them soon.

• “Color the Flames”
activity page, 1 per kid
• pencils or markers

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Furnace fort

Build a blanket fort by draping thick blankets over a table. Use a hair dryer to blow hot air into the fort, trapping the heat inside. Allow the kids to take turns crawling through the fort one at a time. When they exit, ask them how they felt inside the warm fort.

- table
- thick blankets
- hair dryer (adult use only)

SAY • Today we will learn about a group of young men who refused to worship a statue. They knew that only God deserves our worship, but the king was furious with them and threw them into a furnace, a place where very hot fires burn. What do you think happened next? We'll find out in large group time.

OPTION 2: Fire safety

Take some time to discuss your fire safety plan with your kids. Talk about where they would exit, how they would walk, what the alarm sounds like, and so forth. Explain why it is important to have a fire safety plan. Remind them that a fire is unlikely, but fire can be dangerous if you are not prepared for it. Practice a fire drill with your class and take them outside. Then return to the classroom and ask about any rules they have at home that might help prevent fires.

SAY • People can use fire for many purposes, like cooking, making tools, lighting up the darkness, or staying warm. However, fire can be very dangerous too. In our story, we will learn about three men who faced a very dangerous fire that burned extremely hot. Do you think God could save them from a fire?



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

• binder labeled

Employee Handbook

[Large Group Leader enters wearing an apron and chef's hat, carrying a binder that says Employee Handbook.]

LEADER • Hello again, friends! I found this in the back office. It's Papa Roni's old employee handbook. You'll never believe some of the silly rules he came up with. Get a load of this:

[As though reading from the handbook.] "No employee or customer shall be permitted to refrain from dancing upon the playing of Papa Roni's favorite songs. Employees shall strictly enforce aforementioned rule among customers by refusing to serve customers who avoid dancing."

Ay-yi-yi! I like to dance as much as the next guy, but you can't force employees and customers to dance if they don't want to! No wonder Papa Roni had to sell this place.

This makes me think of a Bible story though. King

Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon had a strict rule about music too. Let's go to the timeline so I can show you what I mean.

Giant timeline (1 minute)

LEADER • Let's see. Last week we learned about Daniel and his friends who refused to eat the king's food. They obeyed God even when no one around them did! This week, we will learn about another time the king commanded Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to disobey God.

• Giant Timeline

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • Remember our big picture question: *How can we obey God? We trust God to give us strength to obey Him.* As we hear this Bible story, let's be sure to pay attention to ways we can know that is true.

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."

LEADER • Wow! As you can see, the king's rule about music wasn't just silly, it was sinful! Nebuchadnezzar tried to force people to worship a large golden statue he built. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego knew God's law though. God had commanded His people to have no other gods and not to make any idols! It would be pretty difficult to disobey the king after he threatened to throw you into the fire, but Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego knew that obeying God was more important than protecting themselves from

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

fire. They also knew the answer to our big picture question. ***How can we obey God? We trust God to give us strength to obey Him.***

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did not know for sure that God was going to save them from the fire, but they knew that God *could* save them. They also knew that God would give them strength to obey Him no matter what Nebuchadnezzar said or did. God didn't have to rescue the three friends, and God could have rescued them in other ways. But God allowed the king to throw them into the fire. Thankfully, they weren't alone. **God was with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fire.** God rescued them to show the king of Babylon that God is in control of all things.

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. Because we disobey, or sin, 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 • Everyone has times when we feel afraid or alone. Think about some different ways you might deal with feeling afraid or alone; then watch this!

- “Unit 16, Session 2” discussion starter video

Show the “Unit 16, Session 2” discussion starter video.

Discuss with the kids what would give them the most comfort. Ask them if they know what Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego found comfort in. How do they know that?

LEADER • 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 to us give us hope and courage to trust and obey Him.

Sing (4 minutes)

LEADER • I’m glad I don’t have a king threatening to throw me into a fire if I don’t worship a statue. But the truth is, we face pressure to disobey God every day. Let’s take some time to praise Him for all the ways He helps us obey when we face temptation.

- “It Is Well” song

Sing together “It Is Well.”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to small groups.

LEADER • God, You are completely in control of every situation—even situations we don't understand and situations that scare us. Thank You for giving Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego the strength to obey You even in the face of a scary death. Help us love and trust You for strength to obey in our lives too. Thank You for sending Jesus who also obeyed despite facing death. Thank You that He obeyed perfectly and died in our place. 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
- red, orange, and yellow tissue paper scraps
- marker or pen
- hair dryer (adult use only)

Write each word of the key passage on separate scraps of red, orange, and yellow tissue paper. Use a hair dryer on a cool setting to scatter the bits around the room. Invite the children to gather the pieces and return with them to arrange them in the correct order.

SAY • God is in control of all things. Nothing can surprise God, and nothing can stop Him. He was powerful enough to save Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and He was powerful enough to raise Jesus from the grave on the third day. God rescued Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fire, and He rescues us from sin through Jesus.

Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Main Point Poster
- dry erase board or chalkboard
- dry erase markers or chalk

Form two teams of kids. Invite the teams to sit in circles on the floor and open their Bibles to Daniel 3. Go back and forth asking questions of each team. Teams will work together to look up answers in their Bibles. Every time a team misses a question, they get a tally mark. Use a dry erase board or chalkboard to track tally marks. At the end of the game, the team with the fewest tally marks wins.

Questions:

1. What did the king want the people to do when they heard the music? (*bow down and worship the statue, Dan. 3:5-6*)
2. Why was Nebuchadnezzar angry? (*Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to bow down to the statue; Dan. 3:12-13*)
3. What did the king plan to do? (*throw them into the furnace, Dan. 3:15*)
4. Who did the king think could save them? (*no one, Dan. 3:15*)
5. Did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego know that God would save them? (*no, Dan. 3:18*)
6. What did the king see? (*four men in the fire instead of three, Dan. 3:25*)
7. What happened after God saved Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? (*The king declared no one could say anything bad about the one true God, Dan. 3:29*)

SAY • Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego knew only God deserves worship. They refused to worship the gold statue the king built, even though they would be thrown into the fire. They were willing to go to the furnace even though they did not know if God would save them.

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.

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

- black construction paper
- scissors
- red, orange, and yellow tissue paper
- waxed paper
- glue
- light source (optional)

Activity choice (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Flame glass windows

Before class, cut four small figures out of black construction paper for each kid. Allow kids to rip red, orange, and yellow tissue paper into small bits. Then, give each kid two sheets of waxed paper, each about the size of a standard sheet of paper. Help the kids spread a thin layer of glue over one sheet of waxed paper. The kids will position their four figures and bits of fire-colored tissue paper around their glue-covered waxed paper. The kids will position their four figures and bits of fire-colored tissue paper around their glue-covered waxed paper, leaving a 1-inch border around all four edges. Help the kids place their second sheet of waxed paper onto their first, sticking it together around the edge. When held up to a light source, these crafts will take on a fiery glow.

SAY • Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego faced death to obey God. **God was with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fire.** Jesus gave up His life to obey God, and as a result, we can be sure that God will save us when we trust in Jesus. We will still face hard times in the world, but we can face suffering—and even death—without fear because we know that when we die, we will be with God forever!

OPTION 2: Statue dance

Select one kid to be *It*. She will control when the music stops. All other kids will stand in a circle and dance as the music plays. When the music stops, each kid must strike a statue pose and remain motionless until the music comes back on. Kids caught moving while the music is off must sit out until the next game. The last kid remaining wins!

SAY • King Nebuchadnezzar ordered everyone to worship his statue when the music played. Shadrach,

LOW PREP

- "It Is Well" song (optional)
- "Name of God" song (optional)

Meshach, and Abednego refused to worship his statue, so he tried to have them burned up. The king thought no one could save them, but **God was with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fire**. In a similar way, after Jesus died on the cross, God raised Jesus on the third day and showed His power to save us from sin.

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute each child's journal. Ask the kids to write about or draw pictures of things they may sometimes worship instead of God. Ask them to think about what it means to worship God alone and what that might look like in their lives.

SAY • Many things in the world distract us from worshiping God. When something new or beautiful comes along, it can seem like the most important thing, but nothing can replace God. Thankfully, because Jesus died on the cross for sin, we can turn away from our sin and worship God alone. God will forgive us when we ask Him to, and He will make us part of His family.

Make sure each child secures this week's sheet in the journal, and then collect them. Keep the journals in the classroom so they will be available every week or as often as you wish to use them.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page provided with this session. Pray, asking God to give your class strength to obey God and worship Him only. Thank Jesus for rescuing us.

- pencils and crayons
- Journal Page
- Bible Story Coloring 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.