

SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABEDNEGO

DANIEL 3



KEY PASSAGE: 1 Corinthians 10:31

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How can we glorify God? We can glorify God by loving Him and obeying Him.

CHRIST CONNECTION: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to bow down to anything but God. When we trust in Jesus and God brings us from death to life, we turn away from worshiping anything else. Jesus is Savior and Lord over our lives.

STORY POINT: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to worship the golden statue, and God rescued them.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

Daniel 3 contains one of the most powerful declarations in the Bible—a declaration so bold that it has inspired believers to stand firm in their faith, regardless of hardships or persecution. But before we get to that declaration, we must understand the situation in which it was given.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego faced a seemingly impossible situation. King Nebuchadnezzar had set up a massive golden statue and invited everyone to join him in commemorating the event by bowing down and worshiping the idol. When the call went out to bow down, everyone obeyed the king’s command except for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. King Nebuchadnezzar was furious. He summoned the men and gave them a second chance to bow to the statue while reminding them that if they refused to bow, he would have them thrown into a fiery furnace where they would surely die.

Given the ultimatum, the three men declared, “If the God we serve exists, then he can rescue us from the furnace of blazing fire, and he can rescue us from the power of you, the king. But even if he does not rescue us, we want you as king to know that we will not serve your gods or worship the gold statue you set up” (Daniel 3:16-18). The boldest part of that statement comes in the second sentence, when they say, “even if he does not.” They stood before this powerful king and declared that they would not bow regardless of what happened to them.

Ultimately, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were thrown into the fiery furnace where a mysterious fourth man walked with them. God rescued them from death, and His name was praised among the people. As we read the story of these three men, we see them refuse the temptation to bow down to anyone or anything other than the one true God. Encourage kids to be ready to stand firm in their faith like these three men and to remember that Jesus has promised to be with those who trust in Him.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10–15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25–30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- "What's Changed?" activity page

Session Starter (Option 2)

- 10–20 plastic cups
- balls, 2 or 3
- music



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- Small Group Timeline and Map Set



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- flat bottom ice cream cones, 1 per kid
- red licorice strips, 1 per kid
- graham crackers, 1 per kid
- frosting, 1 tub per table
- graham cracker teddy bears, 4 per kid
- spoons or plastic knives, 1 per kid
- paper plates, 1 per kid
- paper towels
- Allergy Alert Poster

Journal and Prayer

- Journal Page
- "Stay True" activity page



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- countdown video
- Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

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

Questions from Kids

- "Unit 16, Session 2" Questions from Kids video

Missions Moment

- "Manchester Photos" printable
- tea bags, 1 per kid
- Allergy Alert Poster

Key Passage Activity

- Key Passage Poster
- "For the Glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31)" song
- worship song of your choice (optional)
- index cards, 1 per kid



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

SAY “ Tell me about a time when you heard something unbelievable. Maybe you heard news that was hard to believe, or perhaps you saw something amazing you’ve never seen before. ”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete the “What’s Changed?” activity page.

SAY “ Today, we’ll learn how Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to bow down to a gold statue and were thrown into a fiery furnace. But we’ll also see how something amazing happened! ”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: PROTECTION GEAR



Form kids into groups of three or four and give each group a piece of paper and a pen. Tell groups to assign one kid to be the writer. Explain that you will call out a category, like construction work, and groups will have 15 seconds to write down as many items used for protection as they can think of. Groups may write hard hats, safety goggles, gloves, work boots, ear muffs, coveralls, etc. The group to write the most items for that category earns a point. If groups tie, award each group a point. Other category options include: football, bike riding, horseback riding, firefighters, race car driving. The team with the most points at the end of all the rounds wins.

SAY “ Some activities or jobs can be dangerous and require certain protective gear. Today, we will learn how three men needed to be protected from a fiery furnace. No protective gear would have been able to save them. We’ll see how only God was able to provide the protection they needed. ”

OPTION 2: STAND TALL

Choose two or three kids and give them each a ball. Provide the remaining kids with a set of 10–20 plastic cups. Instruct the kids with the cups to create a tower or pyramid using the cups. Direct the kids with the balls to stand about 8–10 feet away from the tower. Challenge kids to guard their tower as the other kids try to knock it over by throwing the balls. Explain that kids can only throw the balls when music is played. When the music stops, kids must stop throwing balls, and the other group of kids can rebuild their tower as quickly as they can. Play as time allows or until the tower is completely knocked over.

SAY “ Was it challenging to keep your tower standing tall while the music played? Today, we will see how three men named Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego remained standing tall in their faith, even when faced with scary consequences for disobeying the king. We’ll learn how **SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABEDNEGO REFUSED TO WORSHIP THE GOLD STATUE, AND GOD RESCUED THEM.** ”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “ Hi, kids! My name is [your name], and I’m excited to share our Bible story with you. Today, we’ll continue to read from the Old Testament book of Daniel. Did you bring your Bible today? If so, will you hold it up? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one. Invite kids to turn to Daniel 3.]

When Daniel was taken to Babylon, three other young men were taken with him. Their names were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Today, we’ll see how King Nebuchadnezzar threw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into a fiery furnace because they would not bow down to a gold statue. Through our story, we’ll learn how **SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABEDNEGO REFUSED TO WORSHIP THE GOLD STATUE, AND GOD RESCUED THEM.** [Display the Story Point Poster.] Let’s pray and prepare our hearts to hear God’s Word: ‘God, thank You for rescuing those who trust in You. Help us turn away from sin and trust in You. Amen.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “ Last week, we learned our new big picture question: **How can we glorify God?** Do you remember the answer? [Allow responses.] The answer is, **We can glorify God by loving Him and obeying Him.**

Today, we will see how Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego showed they loved God and were willing to risk their own lives to obey Him. Instead of bowing down to a statue, they chose to worship the one true God. Even in the face of death, these young men continued to glorify God. Likewise, we can refuse to worship the things of this world and remember that only God is to be worshiped. When we show our love for God through our obedience, we glorify Him. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “ God allowed the Babylonians to destroy the Kingdom of Judah and take many people captive to Babylon. Daniel, along with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were taken to Babylon and chosen to serve King Nebuchadnezzar. Last week, we learned that Daniel obeyed God by refusing to eat the king’s food, and God blessed Daniel with wisdom. Today, we will learn how Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to worship a gold statue made by Nebuchadnezzar. ”



LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Daniel 3. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABEDNEGO

“When King Nebuchadnezzar defeated God’s people, he brought back young men from Judah to be his servants. **Daniel, Shadrach (SHAD rak), Meshach (MEE shak), and Abednego (uh BED-nih goh) were some of the young men who were captured and brought to Babylon.**

One day, **King Nebuchadnezzar set up a large gold statue and invited everyone to a special dedication ceremony. A messenger of the king proclaimed, “People of every nation and language, you are commanded: whenever you hear music, you are to fall facedown and worship this gold statue that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. Whoever does not fall down and worship the statue will immediately be thrown into a furnace of blazing fire.”**

When the music played, everyone fell down and worshiped. Everyone, that is, **except for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They knew they were commanded by God to worship Him alone.**

Some of the people of Babylon knew that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did not worship the golden statue. They told King Nebuchadnezzar, and he became very angry. He gave orders to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to him.

When Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came before the king, the king said, “If you do not obey my command when the music plays, I will immediately throw you into a furnace of blazing fire. What god can rescue you from that?” Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied, “King Nebuchadnezzar, the God we serve can rescue us from the furnace of blazing fire and from your power. But even if he does not rescue us, we want you to know that we will not serve your gods or worship the gold statue you set up.”

Nebuchadnezzar was filled with rage. He made the furnace seven times hotter than usual and had Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego tied up and thrown in the furnace. The flames were so hot, the men who carried Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego up to the furnace died from the heat.

Suddenly, King Nebuchadnezzar jumped up, surprised. “Didn’t we throw three bound men into the fire? Then **why do I see four men, not tied up, walking around in the fire unharmed? The fourth man looks like a son of the gods!**”

He called Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego servants of the Most High God and

STORYTELLING TIPS

Active listening: Tell kids to listen for the word “music.” When they hear the word, kids should stand up for a few seconds. Remind kids that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to bow to the idol when the music played.

Use dramatic voice: Help kids distinguish between King Nebuchadnezzar and the three men by altering the tone of your voice.



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

told them **to come out. Not a hair of their heads was burned, and there was no smell of fire on them.**

Nebuchadnezzar exclaimed, “Praise to the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego! He sent his angel and rescued his servants. I issue a new decree: anyone who says anything bad about their God will be punished, for there is no other god who can save like theirs.”

Christ Connection: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to bow down to anything but God. When we trust in Jesus and God brings us from death to life, we turn away from worshiping anything else. Jesus is Savior and Lord over our lives. ”

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ King Nebuchadnezzar built a huge golden statue and ordered everyone to bow down and worship it when they heard music play. He warned that anyone who refused would be thrown into a fiery furnace! But Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego loved God and refused to worship the statue, even though it meant they would be thrown into the fiery furnace. Why did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refuse to bow to the statue? **[Allow responses.]** Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego loved God and desired to obey Him. They knew God is the only true God, worthy of all worship.

When King Nebuchadnezzar heard they wouldn't bow, he was furious! He gave them one last chance to worship the statue before being thrown in the furnace, but they still refused to bow down. What did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego say about God? Look at Daniel 3:17-18. **[Ask a volunteer to read Daniel 3:17-18 aloud.]** They told the king that God was powerful enough to rescue them—but even if He didn't, they would never follow the king's orders to bow down to the idol. The men chose to trust that God's plan was best for them, even if it meant facing something scary. Like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, **we can glorify God by loving Him and obeying Him.**

When the men were thrown into the fiery furnace, something amazing happened! What did King Nebuchadnezzar see? Look at Daniel 3:24-25. **[Ask a volunteer to read Daniel 3:24-25 aloud.]** The king saw four men walking in the fire, and the fourth one looked like a son of the gods. Many Bible scholars believe the fourth man was God the Son—Jesus. God allowed the three friends to be thrown into the fire, but He was protecting them. **SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABEDNEGO REFUSED TO WORSHIP THE GOLD STATUE, AND GOD RESCUED THEM.** ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ God saved Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from any harm that would come to them in the fire. We might not be facing death from a fire like they did, but the Bible tells us that we deserve death for our sin. The men had faith that God could save them. When we place our faith in Jesus, we are saved from the punishment our sin deserves. Have you put your faith in God to save you? ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)



4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 16, Session 2” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. Where do we go if we do not believe in God when we die?
2. Have you trusted in Jesus? Will you be with God in heaven?

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Display an Allergy Alert Poster and the “Manchester Photos” printable. Tell kids that Manchester, England, is a large city with many museums, parks, and a well-known soccer team. Discuss how many people in England enjoy drinking tea and often have afternoon tea, where they eat scones, sandwiches, or other snacks. Distribute a tea bag to each kid, allowing him or her to smell the tea.

SAY ““ When Dan and Tara Byrd moved to Manchester, England, they learned how to drive on the left side of the road, how to use a different kind of electrical plug, and how the English have traditions like afternoon tea. But the Byrds also learned that Manchester has many people who do not know Jesus. The Byrds desire to find ways to share the gospel with the people of Manchester so they can know the one true God and His Son, Jesus. The Byrds are partnering with churches in England so they can help them start new churches. As more churches begin in different areas, more people in Manchester can have greater opportunities to hear the gospel. ””

Pray for the work of Dan and Tara Byrd and the churches in England as they start new churches. Pray many people in Manchester will hear the gospel and trust in Jesus.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud 1 Corinthians 10:31 together.

SAY ““ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego glorified God by refusing to bow down to the statue. We can glorify God in everything we do! ””

Distribute an index card and a Bible to each kid. Lead kids to find the key passage in their Bible and write the verse on their card. Encourage kids to use their card to help them memorize the key passage.

Lead kids to sing “For the Glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY ““ Father, thank You for being the God who saves. Thank You for sending Jesus to die in our place so we can be saved from sin and death by believing in You and repenting of our sins. Amen. ””





LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to Daniel 3. Explain that the book of Daniel is found in the Major Prophets division of the Old Testament, along with Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, and Ezekiel.

Consider pointing out the nation of Babylon (E11) on the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Daniel 3:28 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verse aloud.

SAY “ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego trusted God and obeyed Him, even when it was dangerous. They knew obeying and honoring God was more important than following what everyone else was doing. God protected them, and because of their faith, King Nebuchadnezzar saw the power of God! When we live in ways that show we love God and demonstrate obedience, we can point others to God and His power to save. ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “ Why do you think Nebuchadnezzar built a gold statue? ”

Discuss how Nebuchadnezzar was prideful, and he wanted people to worship him. By commanding people to bow down to the statue, he demonstrated that he wanted to be in control. Remind kids that only God is worthy of worship. Idolatry is a sin. Discuss ways we might be tempted to bow down to modern-day idols (put other things or people before God). (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Lev. 26:1.)

SAY “ Why does God allow His people to face scary, challenging, and uncertain times? ”

Remind kids that God does everything for His glory and our good. Explain how we might not always understand why we face a difficult circumstance, but we can trust God is in control and working for the good of those who love Him. Share how sometimes He uses challenging times to help us remember to trust Him, depend on Him, and point others to Him. When people see Christians faithful to worship God in difficulty, it is a powerful witness to God's goodness and grace. Remind kids that God allowed Jesus to die on the cross for our sins. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Gen. 50:20.)

SAY “ Why is obeying God always best? ”

Tell kids that obeying God is always best because God knows what is best for us, even when we might not understand it. Share how following God may not always be easy, but we can trust He will lead us to life. Jesus always obeyed God because He trusted God's plan. We can trust God's plan for our lives, knowing that He gave Jesus to save us, and in Jesus we have everything we need. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 8:31-32.)





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: TURN AWAY



Lead kids to spread about the room and face you. Tell kids that you will call out a name. If the name is a name for God or Jesus, they should stand and face you. If the name is not a name for God or Jesus, they should turn away from you. Call out names mixing names for God or Jesus (King of kings, Lord or lords, Son of God, Heavenly Father, etc.) with names of popular actors or athletes. Play as time allows.

SAY “ You turned away when a name was called out that wasn’t a name for God. God calls us to turn away from idols. Today, we saw how **SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABEDNEGO REFUSED TO WORSHIP THE GOLD STATUE, AND GOD RESCUED THEM.** Instead of obeying the king, they chose to obey God and turn away from idolatry. Anything we exalt above God’s rightful place of worship is an idol. But we can turn away and choose to follow Jesus. Jesus changes our hearts so we can obey and love God. ”

OPTION 2: FIERY FURNACE



Lead kids in creating an edible “fiery furnace.” Provide each kid with the food supplies, a spoon or a plastic knife, and a paper plate. Lead kids to remove a square-sized piece of the cone’s edge to create a “door.” The cone will represent the “furnace.” Apply frosting to the graham cracker. Then use the eraser end of a pencil to gently poke holes through the bottom of the ice cream cone. Stick the red licorice through the holes to create the “fire.” Place the frosted graham cracker on the plate. At one end of the graham cracker, place the cone (bottom side up). Stick the teddy bear graham crackers in the frosting, standing up. Invite kids to take their edible furnaces home or allow them to eat them.

SAY “ **SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABEDNEGO REFUSED TO BOW, AND GOD RESCUED THEM.** When we trust in Jesus and God brings us from death to life, we turn away from worshiping anything else. Jesus is Savior and Lord over our lives. ”

2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God’s glory and my good?
- Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray, praising God for His power to save and rescue us from sin and death. As time allows, lead kids to complete “Stay True” on the activity page.