

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 gold 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 Different?" activity page

Session Starter (Option 2)

- balls (or inflated balloons), 3 per pair
- Allergy Alert Poster



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- Small Group Timeline and Map Set (optional)



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- cup of water
- peeled orange
- unpeeled orange

Activity Choice (Option 2)

- "Fiery Furnace" printable

Reflection and Prayer

- Bible story coloring 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
- pictures of statues (optional)

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)



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 “ Do you prefer hot weather or cold weather? Can you recall a time you were really hot? How did you escape the heat? ”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

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

SAY “ Like you found an object in each row that was different, we’ll see how three men chose to be different by not bowing down to worship an idol. ”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: KEEP STILL



Choose one kid to be It and invite him to stand at the front of the room. Tell It to turn so his back is facing the kids. Lead It to count to 20 while the remaining kids move silently about the room. When It finishes counting, everyone must freeze like a statue. If It spots any movement, those kids are out. Play again, choosing a new kid to be It. Repeat as time allows.

SAY “ When you froze like a statue, you reminded me of how statues are lifeless. They can’t talk, speak, hear, or save. Yet, people in our Bible story today wrongly worshiped statues. Today, we will learn how King Nebuchadnezzar made a gold statue and told everyone to bow down and worship it. However, three men named Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to worship the gold statue. They knew only God deserves to be worshiped. ”

OPTION 2: FIRST TO RESCUE



Form kids into pairs and lead pairs to line up at one end of the room. At the opposite end of the room, place three balls (or inflated balloons) for each pair of kids. On your start, challenge each pair to run to their balls, pick one up, and place it between their backs. With the ball between their backs, each pair must walk to the other end of the room and release the ball.

Then pairs will repeat this process for the other two balls. The first pair to “rescue” all their balls wins. If your group is large, considering forming teams of three pairs of kids. Each pair will retrieve one ball for their team.

SAY “ Great job working together to ‘rescue’ the balls! Today, we will learn that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to worship the gold statue, and God rescued them. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were helpless to save themselves, but God proved He was greater than King Nebuchadnezzar and a fiery furnace. ”

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 today’s story reminds us of God’s amazing power to save. We’ll continue reading the book of Daniel as we learn about three men—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—who remained faithful to worship God. Did you bring your Bible today? If so, will you take it out? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one. Invite kids to turn to Daniel 3.]

Three of Daniel’s friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were also taken to Babylon after Jerusalem was destroyed. 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 being a God who saves. Help us trust You and worship only You.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “ Our big picture question is, **How can we glorify God?** Does anyone remember the answer? [Allow responses.] The answer is, **We can glorify God by loving Him and obeying Him.**

Today, we’ll learn how King Nebuchadnezzar wanted people to worship a gold statue, but Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego chose to worship God alone. By refusing to worship the statue, they showed they loved God and desired to obey Him. God is glorified when we love Him more than anything else. ”

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 Him 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

Use dramatic voice:

Help kids distinguish between King Nebuchadnezzar and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego by altering the tone in your voice as you read spoken words in the story.

Display pictures: Find and display pictures of some famous statues. Explain that statues often are designed to look like certain people or animals. Remind kids that worshiping anything other than God is disobedience because only He is worthy of worship.



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 “ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had been captured and brought to Babylon to serve King Nebuchadnezzar. The king ordered all the people to bow down and worship the golden statue. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego knew worshiping anything other than God was wrong. What did the three men say when King Nebuchadnezzar threatened to throw them into the fire? **[Allow responses.]** Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego placed their faith in God rather than in King Nebuchadnezzar. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego told the king that their God could protect them, but even if He chose not to, they would not bow down. Like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, we are called to place our trust in God, regardless of our circumstances or feelings. God is worthy of our full love and obedience no matter what.

After Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were thrown in the furnace, Nebuchadnezzar saw a fourth man in the fire. How did King Nebuchadnezzar describe the fourth man? **[Allow responses.]** The king saw someone who looked like a son of the gods walking in the fire with the three men! God allowed them to be throw into the fire, but He was protecting them. **SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABEDNEGO REFUSED TO WORSHIP THE GOLD STATUE, AND GOD RESCUED THEM.** Through faith in Jesus, we can trust that God will be with us, and we will be saved from sin and eternal death. ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ While we might not face a fiery furnace, God has made the way to save us from something much greater. We all face the punishment for sin: eternal death. But in His love, God sent Jesus to take our punishment. Because of Jesus’ death and resurrection, those who place their trust in Jesus are rescued from eternal punishment. ”

(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)

Before the session, print the key passage onto a sheet of cardstock. Draw lines across the paper to create a puzzle pattern, making a puzzle piece for each kid. Cut out the pieces. Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud 1 Corinthians 10:31 together.

SAY “ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego glorified God through their obedience to worship only Him. Our key passage reminds us that we are also called to glorify God in all that we do. ”

Distribute a puzzle piece to each kid. Encourage the kids to work as a team to put the key passage puzzle together. Once the puzzle is complete, check it over and invite kids to recite the key passage aloud.

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 “ God, thank You for showing Your great power to save through the lives of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. As we seek to worship You alone, give us the courage to obey Your Word in all circumstances. 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 nation of Babylon was known for worshiping many different gods. Remind kids that the gold statue was another idol created by human hands and lifeless.

Consider pointing out the nation of Babylon (E11) on the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Daniel 3:16-18 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verses aloud.

SAY “ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego faced the punishment of death, yet they still refused to worship anyone or anything but God alone. Can you think of anything in your life that you might place above your worship of God? [Allow kids time to think.]

Remember that an idol is anything in our lives that we place above God. Take some time this week to think about how you spend your time and what receives your attention. Ask God to help you recognize anything you may be loving or following over Him. Like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, we are called to love God and obey Him no matter what. ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “ Why do you think God allowed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to be thrown in the fiery furnace? ”

Guide kids to see how God used this scary situation to strengthen the men’s faith in Him and to show Nebuchadnezzar that God is mighty to save His people. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego went through the fire for God to be glorified. Remind kids that like God was with the men in the fire, God is with those who trust in Jesus no matter what they face. God always acts for the good of His people.

SAY “ Nebuchadnezzar said that ‘no other god can save like’ the three men’s God. Why is God alone able to save? ”

Discuss how the Babylonians worshiped false gods, or idols, but they couldn’t speak, hear, or save. Only God had the power to keep the men safe in the fiery furnace. Share how God alone has the power to save people from sin and death.

SAY “ Why is obeying God more important than following what others may be doing? ”

Share how obeying God is not always easy, and it may cost us, but God is worthy of our obedience. God only asks us to do what is for our good. Even when others may invite us to go against God, we can stand firm in knowing following God will always lead us to what is best. Following God means that no matter what happens, we have the hope of life with Him.



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: PROTECTED



Invite the kids to gather around a table while you set out a cup of water. Hold up a peeled orange and an unpeeled orange. Allow kids to examine the difference between the two. Place the peeled orange in the water and encourage kids to examine what happens. Then invite kids to consider how the peeled orange sank. Remove the peeled orange and place the other orange in the water. As the orange floats, discuss how the peel gives the orange buoyancy (allows it to float). Prompt kids to think about how God “covered” Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, protecting them from the fiery flames.

SAY “ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego bravely obeyed God’s commands, even if it meant they would die. But God protected them and revealed that He is the God who saves! God doesn’t promise that Christians will be protected from every hardship, but He does promise to protect them from the punishment sin deserves. When we place our faith in Jesus, we are covered in Jesus’ righteousness, and God saves us from sin and death. ”

OPTION 2: FIERY FURNACE CRAFT

Provide each kid with a “Fiery Furnace” printable and markers. Invite kids to color the images. Then distribute scissors and glue to kids. Direct kids to cut out the two flames and glue them to the appropriate spot on the picture of the men in the furnace. Once complete, kids will be able to “open” the flames to reveal the men in the furnace. Invite kids to take home their craft and use it to help share how **SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABEDNEGO REFUSED TO WORSHIP THE GOLD STATUE, AND GOD RESCUED THEM.**

SAY “ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego trusted God no matter what. They knew God was powerful enough to save them, but even if He didn’t, they would never bow down to Nebuchadnezzar’s statue. We can trust God no matter what circumstance we face. God is worthy of our obedience, and through our obedience, we glorify Him. ”

2 REFLECTION AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper and pencil to each kid. Ask kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Who can I tell about this story?

Be sure to send the sheets home with the kids along with the activity pages so parents can continue to discuss the Bible story with their kids. If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page. Pray for your group.