

The Fiery Furnace

Scripture Reference: [Daniel 3](#)



Suggested Emphasis: Do the right thing even if everyone around you does not.



Background
Study



Story
Introduction



Telling
the Story



Review
Questions



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Activities



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Story Overview:

King Nebuchadnezzar ordered a huge golden statue to be built. All of the people were ordered to bow down to this idol or be thrown into a blazing furnace. The king heard that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to bow. They had been educated in the king's palace and now they served as government officials. They told the king that they only worshipped the true God and they would not bow down. They were thrown into the furnace but did not die. When they walked safely out of the furnace, the king promoted these Jewish men to even higher positions.

Background Study:

Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were among the young men who served the king as officials. Daniel became a ruler of high position (Daniel 2:48). The other three also had positions of authority (2:49; 3:12). It seems that Daniel was in one place and the other three in another. Daniel is not part of today's story.

King Nebuchadnezzar set up a huge golden statue and ordered his people to worship it. Large statues of this kind were probably not made of solid gold but were plated with gold. The image probably represented the god Nabu, whose name was associated with Nebuchadnezzar's name. The penalty for disobedience was death in a blazing furnace.

Soon it was reported that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were not worshipping as the king commanded. We can assume that Daniel, wherever he was, also chose not to worship the statue. Perhaps his action did not come to the king's attention (3:1-13). Nebuchadnezzar did not want the three young men to die.

The three Jews did not question whom they should obey - God or the king. They were quite sure God could save them. But even if God did not save them, these young men would not worship the idol. God's will be done.

Nebuchadnezzar had tried to be lenient, to give these men another chance. Now he was even angrier than before. The furnace was heated seven times hotter than usual. The furnace was probably a kiln used for baking bricks. A kiln would have had an open top and an open door at the side through which the king could see the men. Bellows probably controlled the heat of the fire. It was so hot that it killed those who threw the three men in.

The three were unhurt, they were free from their bonds, and they had a companion in the fire. God did not leave his faithful servants alone in their time of need. Although Nebuchadnezzar thought the fourth man was a son of one of the gods, he was actually

sent from the only true God. Perhaps it was an angel or perhaps it was God himself.

When the men came out unscorched, and without even a smell of smoke on their clothes, Nebuchadnezzar's look must have changed from fury to awe. The king praised God because He was able to save these servants who trusted Him so fully that they refused to obey the king's command. They risked death rather than worship any god except their own God.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were glad that they had obeyed God even when everyone else was not.



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Way to Introduce the Story:

Bring items or pictures to class today for this activity. Place groups of items (or pictures of items) on the table. All the items should have something in common except for one. Examples might be knife, fork, spoon and pencil. Which is the odd one out? Do several groups of these. In today's story we will learn about three men who were the odd ones out. Everyone else did something wrong but they chose to obey God.

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The Story:

The four young Jewish men who worshipped God were made leaders in the country of Babylon. Daniel served near the palace. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego served

together near Babylon. Today's story is about Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

King Nebuchadnezzar was ruler of all Babylon. Everyone had to do what he said. If he made a rule then everyone had to obey it. He did not obey God. He worshipped idols. He had his servants make a large golden idol. It was almost 30 metres high and 3 metres wide. He gathered all of the officials of the court together and also a band. King Nebuchadnezzar made a law for all of the people. "Whenever you hear the music playing you must all bow down and worship the idol. If anyone does not bow down then they will be put to death by being thrown into a furnace of fire."

Later, when the music began playing all of the people bowed down. All except for three people - Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. They did not bow down to an idol like everyone else. They knew that God only wanted them to worship him. God's law said that they were to never bow down to idols. They knew that they would get in trouble with the king and that everyone might laugh but they still chose to obey God.

Some astrologers in the king's court noticed that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego did not bow down to the idol. They went and told the king that someone had dared to disobey the King's law.

King Nebuchadnezzar was very angry. How dare any one in his kingdom not worship his gods! He called the three young men before him. "Why will you not bow down before the idol as I commanded? If you do not bow down to my idol immediately then I will have you thrown into a blazing furnace of fire," the king said angrily to Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

"We don't have to explain to you," they answered, "we will never bow down to anyone but the Lord God. He is the only true God. If you throw us into the fiery furnace then our God will save us. Even if he let us die we would still love him and not worship your false gods."

The King was furious! He told some of his strongest soldiers to tie Shadrach, Meshach

and Abednego up and throw them into the fire. He ordered the fiery furnace to be made seven times hotter than normal. The fire was so hot that the soldiers died when they threw the men into the furnace.

Then an amazing thing happened! King Nebuchadnezzar looked into the fire and saw four men inside the furnace. Even though the fire in the furnace was burning and it was hot, the men were just walking around inside. The king leapt up in amazement and said, "Weren't there three men thrown in the fire?"

"Yes, O king, there were only three men," answered the advisors. No one knew why the men were alive and no one knew how there could be four men.

The fourth man looked different. King Nebuchadnezzar wrongly thought that he was a god. Maybe the man was an angel or maybe it was the presence of the true Lord God.

"Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, come out of the furnace!" yelled the king. The three men walked out of the fire. They were unhurt and their clothes were not burned. Everyone noticed that the men didn't even smell like smoke! It was a miracle!

King Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego! No other god can save men in this way."

The King ordered that no one in the kingdom ever say anything bad about the Lord God. Then he gave Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego even better jobs in the Kingdom of Babylon.

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Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using a variety of methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection, student interaction and/or emotion.

[Click here for visual aids and story-telling methods.](#)

[Click here to download these illustrations and slideshow.](#) Be selective. Each teacher is unique so only use the illustrations that best relate to the way YOU are telling the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasise in this lesson.

Review Questions:

1. What gold thing did King Nebuchadnezzar build? An idol
2. What was the king's law? When the music played then everyone had to bend down and worship the idol
3. Who were the only ones who refused to bow down to the idol? Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego
4. How did the king punish them? Had them thrown into a fiery furnace
5. How many men were walking around inside the furnace? Four
6. After the men came out not even smelling like smoke, what did the king order? No one was allowed to ever say anything bad about the Lord God.

Song Suggestions:

- Three Young Men Lived Very Long Ago
- [This Little Light of Mine](#)
- [I'm in the Lord's Army Song](#) I'm in the Lord's Army
- Refer to the [Song Page](#) on this website for more options.

Learning Activities and Crafts:

[\(How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation\)](#)

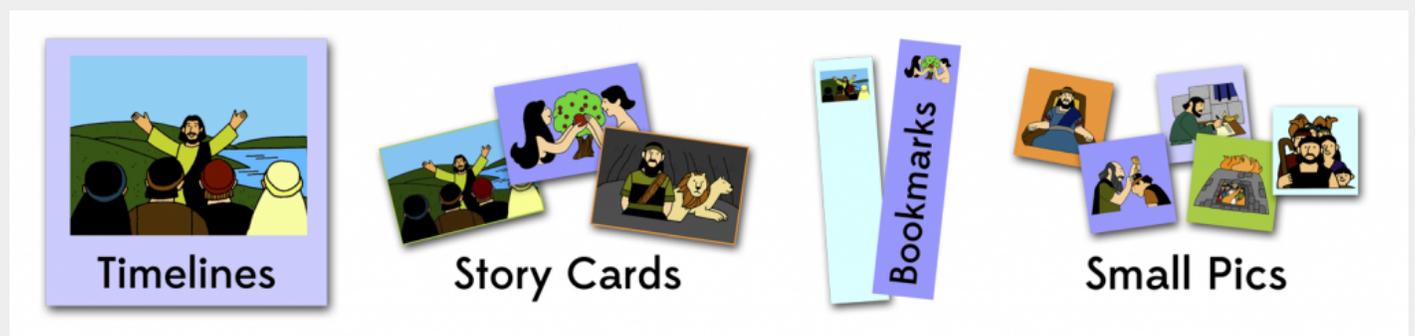
Activities:

- King Nebuchadnezzar ordered the people to bow down and worship a gold statue. Display a number of items, one at a time, and compare it to God. Guide the children in considering how “things” are inanimate, can’t help us, can’t hear, man-made, etc. We can only pray to and worship the true God. Choose items that are age appropriate and common to the children. For example display toys for younger children but for older children you might display a phone, video game, sport equipment, etc.

Crafts:

- This is a great story to tell around a campfire or in front of a fire in a fireplace.
- Act out situations where a child might be the only one who obeys God (Example: All your friends want to watch a bad video with lots of swearing)
- Find Babylon on a map of the times. What modern-day countries are where Babylon was?
- Use salt dough to make a furnace. [Try this salt dough recipe from learning4kids.net](http://learning4kids.net)
- Draw four figures on a clay pot or jar and place a small candle inside to form a furnace.
- Help the children draw four stick figures in the middle of a paper. Then glue strips of red, yellow and orange paper over the figures to show four men in the furnace.

Check the [Teaching Ideas](#) page on this website for ideas that are adaptable to any lesson.



[Click here for “Fiery Furnace” printables to print on A4 size paper](#)

[Click here for "Fiery Furnace" printables \(Letter size-USA\)](#)

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Other Online Resources:

- [Colouring page and puzzle worksheets \(Calvary Curriculum\)](#)
- [Colouring page of entering furnace at http://www.christiananswers.net/](http://www.christiananswers.net/)
- [Colouring page of inside the furnace at http://www.christiananswers.net/](http://www.christiananswers.net/)
- [Craft: A simple paper plate idea at ididityoudoit.blogspot.com](http://ididityoudoit.blogspot.com)
- [Various Daniel worksheets. http://gonnafly.squidoo.com/](http://gonnafly.squidoo.com/). Scroll down to the Daniel worksheets.
- [Online activities and games at http://gardenofpraise.com/](http://gardenofpraise.com/)
- [Icebreaker game: The rules are a little complicated but this could be a fun activity for a large group of older kids. Find at: http://www.creativeyouthideas.com/](http://www.creativeyouthideas.com/)

<https://www.pinterest.com/marynnz/book-of-daniel/>

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