



UNIT 16 | SESSION 1 | NOVEMBER 30- DECEMBER 1, 2019

4th-5th Lesson

The Fiery Furnace

Bible Passage: Daniel 3

Story Point: God delivered Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the king.

Key Passage: “Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in everything; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.

Big Picture Question: Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and know He hears us.

**KID CONNECT:
10 MINUTES**

**LARGE GROUP:
30 MINUTES**

**SMALL GROUP:
20 MINUTES**

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Daniel and his three friends faced a test of their faith. King Nebuchadnezzar’s law gave them a choice: worship a statue (against God’s law) or face death by fiery furnace (Dan. 3:6).

Three men from Judah—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 Chaldeans 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, but he cannot save himself!” (Mark 15:31). Jesus was physically able to save Himself, but He chose to do His Father’s will, and His love for people kept Him there. Jesus chose not to save Himself so that He could save others.

KID CONNECT

WELCOME TIME

(VIDEO: INTRO MUSIC)

Play intro music and greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Ask kids to think about a time when they had to make a quick decision. Invite the kids to share about that time and why they made their decision.

LARGE GROUP

COUNTDOWN

(VIDEO: COUNTDOWN)

Show the countdown video as you transition to Large Group. Set it to end as the session begins.

LARGE GROUP GAME

(CG: GAME TIME SLIDE, SFX: GAME INTRO MUSIC, PROGRAM: 1 HOOF, 2 HOOF, NONE)

1 HOOF, 2 HOOF, NONE

(no supplies needed)

SAY • It’s game time again! And Christmas is quickly approaching so we thought we’d play a Christmas themed game! This one is called 1 Hoof, 2 Hoof, None. Everybody stand up! The game is simple; when I say go you are going to either put one hoof up in the air (one arm), two hooves up in the air (two arms) or none (no arms up). Then, we are going to click the randomizer and the game will randomly decide which one wins that round. If you chose the correct one, you’re still in and can play round 2! If not, you’re out and have to sit down. We will play this over and over until there’s one winner. Ready? Dust off those hooves and let’s play!

NOTE: When you get down to roughly 6-8 kids left, have them come up on the stage or stand in the staging area facing the audience to add drama to the game (and help prevent cheating). Also, if you get down to 2-3 kids, have them each pick a different option so there is a guaranteed winner.

WORSHIP

(VIDEO: ALIVE, VIDEO: NOEL)

SAY • Let’s worship God!

INTRODUCE THE SESSION

(VIDEO: FURY 325 ROLLERCOASTER DROP)

(no supplies needed)

Show the Fury 325 Rollercoaster Drop Video.

SAY • Oh hey, everyone! My name is [*your name*]. Did you know that you guys aren't the only ones in a small group? Nope! I'm in one too. And I am so excited because tomorrow my small group is going to Carowinds - the super fun theme park on the border of North Carolina and South Carolina! My favorite ride is the Fury 325. It's the world's tallest and fastest giga coaster! It takes over a minute just to ride up the hill before the first big drop. But rather than me talking about it, how about I show it to you? Watch this!

I can't wait!! You know, just thinking about how tall the Fury 325 is reminds me of a Bible story about something else that was super tall. Not a roller coaster though. Those didn't exist in Bible times. This is a story about a giant statue. So let's do it.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION

(CG: BIG PICTURE QUESTION)

SAY • But first, one thing we can do to help us stay on track while we hear our Bible story is to use a big picture question. During the next few weeks we'll answer this question: *Why do we pray?* Have you ever thought about that? Prayer is super important! As you listen to the story try to think of the answer to this question: *Why do we pray?*

GIANT TIMELINE

(CG: GIANT TIMELINE)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY • God's people, the nation of Israel, refused to obey God. As punishment for their disobedience, God allowed them to be conquered by Babylon. God loved and cared for His people, and even during their time in captivity, He was still with them.

Today's story is from the Book of Daniel. Daniel was a man from Judah taken to Babylon when God sent His people into captivity. Our story today is about three of Daniel's friends who were also from Judah. Check it out.

WATCH OR TELL THE BIBLE STORY

(VIDEO: THE FIERY FURNACE, CG: STORY POINT, CG: QUESTION 1, CG: QUESTION 2)

(Bible)

Show the Bible story video "The Fiery Furnace."

SAY • What a story! Why do you think King Nebuchadnezzar built a gold statue? (*He was prideful and wanted his people to know he ruled over them. He thought he was more powerful than*

God; Dan. 3:15.) When these three men refused to bow down to the statue, did they believe God would save them? [Allow for responses.]

The men chose to trust that God’s plan was the best for them, even if they had to face something terrifying.

One of the most incredible parts of this story is when King Nebuchadnezzar looked into the fiery furnace after the three men were thrown in and saw four men walking around! Researchers believe the fourth man was an angel or even God the Son!

QUESTION 1: What does this story teach us about God?

SAY • Remind kids that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego chose to trust that God’s plan was the best for them, even if they had to face something very scary. Like these men, we pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.

QUESTION 2: How did King Nebuchadnezzar respond after he saw four men in the furnace?

SAY • King Nebuchadnezzar was so astonished by what he saw that he recognized the power of the “Most High God.”

CHRIST CONNECTION

Note: You may use this opportunity to use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

SAY • 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 life forever with God.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION

(CG: BIG PICTURE QUESTION)

SAY • Do you remember our big picture question? *Why do we pray?* Well, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego knew the answer to this question. They prayed and *we pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.*

KEY PASSAGE

(CG: KEY PASSAGE)

(Bible)

Show the key passage slide. Open Bible and lead the kids to read together 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.

SAY • “Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in everything; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.

Our key passage comes from 1 Thessalonians in the New Testament, which is the second half of the Bible. God wants us to remember to rejoice, pray, and give thanks to Him no matter what our circumstances.

PRAY AND DISMISS TO SMALL GROUPS

SMALL GROUP

Bible Passage: Daniel 3

Story Point: God delivered Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the king.

Key Passage: “Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in everything; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.

Big Picture Question: Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and know He hears us.

DISCUSSION

(Bibles – 3-4 per group)

SAY • Like Nebuchadnezzar praised God when he recognized God’s power, we should live a life of praise and thanksgiving to God for sending His Son, Jesus, to rescue us from our sins.

- Is it ever OK to cheat on a test to get a good grade?
- Have you ever chosen to do the right thing even though it meant facing difficult consequences?

Distribute Bibles. Guide kids to open their Bibles to Daniel 3. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Daniel 3:17-18. Emphasize that even though the friends knew they would face death if they disobeyed the king, they chose to obey God.

Remind kids that God is our Rescuer. He rescues us from sin through Jesus—the only One who can save us. Choose another volunteer to read aloud Daniel 3:17-18 again. Then lead the group to discuss the following questions.

1. Do you think it was easy for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to decide to disobey the king? Why?

Help kids realize that it would have been hard to be the only ones disobeying the king, but these men decided to follow God, even if it cost them their lives. Emphasize that the friends knew the trials they went through on earth were only temporary and that one day God would reward them for their faithfulness. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read James 1:12.)

2. How can this story be an encouragement when we feel like we are the only ones

obeying God?

Point out that God was with the men when they chose to obey Him instead of the king. Lead kids to connect that through the Holy Spirit, God is also with us. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 1 Cor. 16:13.)

3. What are some ways you can choose to obey God in your life?

Give kids time to discuss. Explain that after Jesus' death and resurrection, His followers continued telling others about Jesus. They were put on trial. Like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, Jesus' followers chose to obey God rather than people. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Acts 5:29.)

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY

(Key passage poster – 1 per group)

Read the key passage aloud several times to the kids so that they are familiar with it. Then, say the verse aloud to them, but make a mistake. When a kid hears the mistake, they call out “Gotcha” and get one point. If your kids don’t catch the error, the Small Group Leader gets a point.

SAY • Are there ever times it’s hard to praise God? Are there times that you don’t feel thankful to Him? Our key passage teaches us that no matter what is going on in our lives we can still give thanks to God. He is good all the time! We may be confused by something difficult like how to deal with a bully at school, or being kind to your siblings, but we can trust that God has a plan for even the hard times!

IMPOSSIBLE WALL

(1 poster board – per group, 2-3 sticky notes – per kid, markers, crayons, pencils)

Explain that walls often represent barriers or obstacles, but today we will use the idea of a wall as a reminder of how God is able to overcome any obstacle or barrier.

Distribute 2-3 sticky notes to each kid. The poster board represents a wall. Direct kids to write prayer requests and needs they or their friends and family members currently have that seem impossible on the sticky notes.

Example prayer requests: Pray for a friend that doesn’t believe in Jesus to become a Christian. Pray for God to help them in school. Pray for someone they know who is sick. Pray for their personal doubts about God. Pray for their parents. Pray that God would help them with a bully at school.

Encourage kids to draw pictures next to their need that remind them of how God can help them. Then have the kids place their notes on the poster board.

SAY • Thank you for sharing these needs with our group today. This poster board represents a

wall of our needs that sometimes seem impossible to overcome. Sometimes things happen in our lives that are very hard to go through. But we learned today that nothing is too hard for God. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego trusted God when they faced punishment from the king. Their punishment in the fiery furnace was a big obstacle! BUT, God delivered Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the king. God is all-powerful. When we need help, we can pray to Him. *Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.* This week, pray about the things you wrote on our wall. God hears your prayers, and He does everything for His glory and your good. Let's pray together right now for these needs.

REFLECTION AND PRAYER

(Journal Page - 1 per kid, pencils)

Ask the kids the following questions:

What does this story teach me about God?

What does this story teach me about myself?

Who can I tell about this story?

If time allows, have kids complete the Journal Page provided with this session.

CONNECT WITH PARENTS/INFLUENCERS

(Activity Page - 1 per kid)

Send home the Activity Page and encourage kids to complete it with their family.