



## STORY 44

# The Fiery Furnace

## DANIEL 3

### BEFORE THE LESSON

- *Read Daniel 3.*
- *Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is, what he has done, and how they should respond to him.*
- *Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.*

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### THE BIG PICTURE

*Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}*

God's people knew how they were supposed to honor God in Jerusalem with the temple nearby. But that was before the Babylonians came to Jerusalem, destroyed the temple, broke down the city walls, killed lots of people, and took the rest to live in Babylon. Far from home, their new king was the powerful Nebuchadnezzar. He had a long, hard-to-pronounce name, but that was the least of their problems. The Jews had to figure out how to honor God under a king who did not know God. Sometimes that was easy. They could receive a new name. Daniel's new Babylonian name was Belteshazzar. (Imagine how long it took him to spell that at the top of his homework!) They could learn a new language (Babylonian). They could respect those in authority over them and obey the rules. They could work hard at their jobs. They could even pray to the Lord, as Daniel did three

1  
Read

2  
Teach

times a day. But sometimes their faith was tested. Today's story is the record of one of the biggest tests God's people faced in exile. Would they put God first? Would they obey and serve God even if it meant death? Let's find out.

## TELL THE STORY

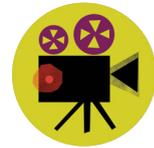
Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}



Read the  
Bible passage  
together



Read from  
*The Biggest Story  
Bible Storybook*



Play *The  
Biggest Story*  
video

## TEACH THE STORY

Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}

**Big Truth**  
God's people  
should put  
God first no  
matter what.

Do you remember the Ten Commandments? How about the first two—"You shall have no other gods before me" (Ex. 20:3) and "You shall not make for yourself a carved image . . . [and] bow down" before that image (Ex. 20:4–5)? Nebuchadnezzar didn't know these commandments. Or if he did, he didn't obey them. One day, he made a tall golden statue, and he commanded everyone to "fall down and worship the golden image" (Dan. 3:5) whenever the loud music played. Even worse, he decreed that "whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace" (3:6). When the horns blew, "all the peoples, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the golden image" (3:7). Well, not all. There were three Hebrew men who chose to obey God instead of the king. Their names were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They told Nebuchadnezzar, "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up" (3:17–18). What faith! What courage!

Nebuchadnezzar was not pleased. He was furious! He was so mad he heated the already hot furnace seven times hotter. Then he tied those three men up and tossed them in. Within a second, they burned up like a piece of paper in a roaring campfire. Actually, that's what everyone *expected* would happen. But it's

not what happened at all. Surprisingly, the three men who chose to obey didn't burn up at all! The king couldn't believe it. He also couldn't believe that he saw another man, whom he thought was an angel. The king shouted, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here!" (3:26). They walked out. Not a hair on their heads was burnt by the fire, and their clothes didn't even smell like smoke. The king had a huge change of heart. He went from being furious to praising God. He said, "There is no other god who is able to rescue in this way" (3:29). How true!

## GOSPEL CONNECTION

*Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.*  
{5 minutes}

When King Nebuchadnezzar looked into the fiery furnace, he expected to see Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego burned to death. Instead, to his surprise, they were alive! They were "walking in the midst of the fire" and were "not hurt" (3:25). That is not all that made his jaw drop. He saw a fourth person, whom he took to be an angel, or some sort of divine being. "The fourth is like a son of the gods," he said (3:25). He acknowledged that God "sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him" (3:28).

It's clear that God sent the angel to deliver them from the furnace; God also sent us someone to deliver us—Jesus. These three men faced punishment because they followed God over the Babylonian king. By saving them, God showed to all that he is good to those who obey him. Our situation is different—we face punishment because in our sin we followed ourselves as kings over God. But God, in his great grace, still sent Jesus to deliver us! By saving us, God shows to all that he is *really* good to those who obey him, for now every person who follows Jesus will be rescued forever from death and the punishment we deserve. What a wonderful God and a wonderful Savior!

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## DISCUSS THE STORY

*Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}*

- 1. QUESTION:** What are some ways it can be hard to obey God when no one around you believes in God? Where were Daniel and his three friends living in our story? How do you think they knew how to live for God when those around them did not?

3

Engage

**TAKEAWAY:** God's people must learn to live for God even when those around them don't.

2. **QUESTION:** What do the first two commandments tell us about God? What was the rule Nebuchadnezzar made that all people had to obey? What did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego decide to do?

**TAKEAWAY:** Put God first no matter what.

3. **QUESTION:** What was the punishment the men faced for obeying God's command and disobeying Nebuchadnezzar's command? In the New Testament, what similar test did Jesus face for obeying God? How could Jesus have avoided his death on the cross?

**TAKEAWAY:** Like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, Jesus faced death for obeying God.

4. **QUESTION:** When God rescued Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, did they still die from the flames? How was Jesus's rescue different? What does it mean for you and me that God rescued Jesus by raising him from the dead?

**TAKEAWAY:** When God rescued Jesus by raising him from the dead, he also rescued all that follow Jesus.

**Memory Verse**  
You shall not  
make for yourself  
a carved image,  
or any likeness of  
anything that is in  
heaven above, or  
that is in the earth  
beneath, or that  
is in the water  
under the earth.

EXODUS 20:4

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## ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from [TheBiggestStory.com](http://TheBiggestStory.com), or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

### Option 1: Movement Freeze

*Supply List: music*

*Before Class: Gather supplies.*

Gather children in an open area. Call out an action (jumping, running in place, hopping, twirling, etc.). Have all children move in that way while the music plays. When the music stops, children must freeze. The last child the leader sees moving must sit down. The leader calls out another action then starts

the music. Play continues until one child is left. Remind children that King Nebuchadnezzar decreed that when people heard the music, they must stop what they were doing and bow to him. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did not follow this command because they knew they should only worship the one true God.

### **Option 2: Lean on Me Relay**

*Supply List: chair or cone (one per team)*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Place chairs/cones on one side of the classroom.*

Divide the children into two teams and have them line up opposite the chairs/cones. Within each team, have children pair up and sit back-to-back in line. The first pair on each team must lock arms and stand up together without using their hands to push them up. Once they are standing, they need to walk to the other end of the room with their arms still hooked, around the chair/cone, and back to their starting line. The next pair on their team then continues in the same manner. The first team to have all pairs complete the relay is the winning team. Tell the children that we should stand up and do what is right, even when it is difficult, knowing God is with us to strengthen us.

**3rd–5th**

### **Option 1: Fiery Furnace Dodgeball**

*Supply List: masking tape, dodgeballs, two coins*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Using masking tape, mark off a small section on each side of the classroom to represent a fiery furnace.*

Divide children into two teams. Each team is assigned one side of the playing area. One person from each team is the “Protector” and is given a coin. He stands in his team’s “fiery furnace.” Place the balls in a line down the center of the room and have each team line up on opposite walls. On “Go” have each team begin play by picking up the balls and throwing them at the opposing team. If someone is hit by a ball, that person must go to her team’s fiery furnace. If someone catches a ball, the person who threw it must go to her team’s fiery furnace. When there are three people in a team’s fiery furnace, the Protector can ask the three people to choose heads or tails. The Protector then flips the coin. Whoever guessed the correct side is back in the game. The Protector can

flip the coin every time there are three new people in the fiery furnace. The winning team is the team that has the most people in play at the end of 5 to 10 minutes. Explain that the Lord was with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and protected them in the fiery furnace.

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## **CRAFTS**

*Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}*

**K–2nd**

### **Option 1: God Is with Us Clock**

*Supply List: cardstock, paper plates, crayons, markers, scissors, brass fasteners*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Print clock hands on cardstock (one set of clock hands per child). Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a paper plate, clock hands, and a brass fastener. Place markers, crayons, and scissors on each table. Have children write the words “God is with us all the time” on the front of the plate. Have children cut out the clock hands and help them fasten them to the center of the plate using the brass fastener. Then have children write the numbers one through twelve around the outside of the clock and decorate using the provided supplies.

## Option 2: Paper Bag Fiery Furnace Craft

*Supply List: paper, paper bags, glue sticks, red/orange/yellow tissue paper, crayons, scissors, newspaper*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Find and print a picture of the four men that were in the fiery furnace (one per child). Open paper bags and cut a “window” in one of the sides of the bag. Cut 1-inch squares of colored tissue paper. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a paper bag and a paper with the four men pictured. Set crayons, scissors, glue sticks, and tissue paper on each table. Have the children color the picture with crayons and cut it out. Help them glue the picture to the inside of the paper bag so the men can be clearly seen through the “window.” Then have them glue tissue paper squares onto the paper bag to surround the window. Have children open the bag and fill the base with crumpled-up newspaper so that the fiery furnace stands upright. Remind children that God rescued Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fiery furnace.

3rd–5th

## Option 1: Paper Plate Fiery Furnace Scene

*Supply List: paper plates, markers, colored pencils, glue sticks, scissors, red/orange/yellow tissue paper*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut colored tissue paper into 1-inch squares. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a paper plate. Set colored pencils, markers, and tissue paper on each table. Have children draw four people in the center of the paper plate to represent the four men in the furnace. Then have them glue the tissue paper squares around the four men to represent the fiery furnace. Remind children that God rescued Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fiery furnace.

## Option 2: Paper Bag Fiery Furnace Craft

*See Above*



Visit [TheBiggestStory.com](https://TheBiggestStory.com) for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.