



LESSON 3

THE FIERY FURNACE

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Is with Us in Difficult Things

SCRIPTURE: Daniel 3

GOD'S BIG STORY: Three young Jewish men refuse to worship a gold statue, so they are thrown into a blazing furnace—an experience they survive with God's help.

WORD OF WONDER: God has said, "I will never leave you. I will never desert you." —Hebrews 13:5b

CURIOSITY

BELIEF

FAITH

- Welcome Question: What's something others might find hard, but you could teach them to do? Teach someone now!
- Curiosity Questions
- Discussion Questions for Younger and Older Kids
- Small Group Prayer Time
- Word of Wonder: Hebrews 13:5b
- Word of Wonder Activity
- LARGE GROUP
- Responding in Worship: A Position of Praise



God With Us Elementary Spotify playlist

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Is with Us in Difficult Things

SCRIPTURE: Daniel 3

WORD OF WONDER: Hebrews 13:5b

Have you ever seen a runner in a distance race who is calmly and confidently running near the middle of the pack until the final two laps when she suddenly pushes to the front and crosses the finish line first? It takes quiet confidence in your training to choose not to panic and push but to know that the work has been done. Then, when you trust in your race plan, the results will follow.

Read Daniel 3. I picture Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego with that same quiet confidence. They knew that to panic and bow to a statue would not be right before God. They knew who would hold the victory in the end. So, they stayed the course. They responded to the king that their God would deliver them. “But even if he does not” (Daniel 3:18, NIV), they would not bow down.

They were so confident God was with them—in the trial, and in the fire—that they were willing to stake their lives on it.

Do you have the quiet confidence in God that He is with you in difficult things? God didn’t stop the men from being thrown in the furnace; instead, He joined them in it. They may have felt the heat, but with their eyes fixed on God, they knew He was with them and would not let them perish.

—**Courtney Wilson**

Children’s Pastor

Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were born in Judah with the Hebrew names of Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. They were exiled to Babylon after Jerusalem was conquered. Along with Daniel, they were trained for three years to serve in the king's court.

WHAT?

King Nebuchadnezzar builds a gold statue and decrees that when musicians play special music, everyone has to stop and bow to the statue. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, now young officials in the king's court, refuse. So, the king throws them in blazing furnace. However, they survive with God's help

WHERE?

Babylon was the capital city of the Babylonian empire, a port city on the Euphrates River that grew to be one of the most populated cities in Mesopotamia. It is the site of the Hanging Gardens, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, in modern-day Iraq.

WHEN?

In 605 BC, after the Egyptians were unable to stop Nebuchadnezzar, the regions of Syria, Palestine, and Judah fell under Babylonian control. At this point, Daniel and his friends were taken as captives to Babylon. In 587, Judah rebelled but lost. Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

In the blazing furnace story, God reveals His character as our Savior. This character is most fully revealed in Jesus, who saves us from our sin and invites us to live with God forever.

Small Group

Spark curiosity, encourage exploration, and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Is with Us in Difficult Things

SCRIPTURE: Daniel 3

WORD OF WONDER: Hebrews 13:5b

Pre-Service Connection (15–20 min)

RESOURCES: [Coloring Page](#), whiteboard, poster paper, or butcher paper, writing utensils
Small group leaders should be seated in place in their small groups 20 minutes prior to service time. Have play stations with various board games, activities, or use games from the extra Games & Activities Guide to keep children occupied and engaged WITH you. This time is important to build relationships, welcome new kids, and keep structure in the room - you should be an active participant with them!

Learn the kids names, and make sure they all know yours too!

Warmly welcome new friends, and introduce them to your group.

Allow quieter kids who don't engage with the board games to color. Involve them in the curiosity questions.

As kids arrive..

Invite them to write/draw the answer to the Welcome Question: on the designated board: **“What’s something others might find hard, but you could teach them to do? Teach someone now!”** Set out sheets of paper and colored pencils.

While kids are playing in their opening activity groups..

Pose the following “I’m curious” questions. Say “I’m curious...” before each question and give kids a chance to think about and answer each one. After each question, consider having kids share their ideas with a neighbor before you call on one or two of them to share with the group.

- **If you had to choose between doing 100 pushups or peeling 100 onions, which difficult thing would you choose, and why?**
- **If you had to do something super difficult like fight off a grizzly bear, who would you want with you? Why that person?**

****NEW!! Large Group leaders will now lead an opening game or activity 10 minutes before service begins. It is very important that you are with your groups and ready to participate with them!**

Small Group Begins

After the Opening Activity, Large Group Leader will begin small group time by reading the Welcome Question aloud and inviting everyone to open their Bibles and begin.

Small Group Discussion: Younger Kids 5–8 min

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid), [Laugh and Grow Bible](#) (optional), [Bible Story Picture \(1/SG\)](#)

Model for kids how to use their Bibles' table of contents to locate the book of Daniel. Explain that the book is named after a Jewish man named Daniel who was exiled—or made to live far away from home—in Babylon. As Daniel obeys God, he (and his three friends) see God work in amazing ways!

Read Daniel 3:14, 16–30. aloud. **For K-1st, consider reading pages 206-211 from the [Laugh and Grow Bible](#). Then discuss the following:

- **Something terrible happened to God's people. What was it? Who did it?**
- **Why did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego end up working for the king?**
- **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego said "yes" to God and "no" to the king. Why was that a good choice?**
- **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego trusted God, and it showed. In what ways does your trust in God show?**
- **What part of today's story did you find amazing?**
- **If you ask God to get you out of a difficult situation and He doesn't do it, does that mean God has forgotten about you? How does this story about our three friends help answer that question?**

"Real life means you'll have some hard times. Everyone has them. But here's great news: God is with you during those times. He doesn't forget about us. Instead, He sticks with us even when life is hard. Let's thank God for that and let Him know we want to stick with Him too."

Prayer Time: Younger Kids

Invite kids to pray for people they know who are facing hard things. Explain that you'll start to pray aloud and then pause. During your pause, kids can call out the names of family and friends having a tough time. Let kids know when you're about to finish praying so they can finish calling out names. Then thank God for sticking with you when times are difficult.

Leader Tip: Some kids in your group might have experienced (or be experiencing) trauma that makes it difficult for them to trust others and God. They might seem distracted and struggle to engage in the lesson. Simply be present with them. Extend grace. And let them know you are glad they are there. If they are ready to share with you, listen well and assure them they are not alone. If you suspect a child is being abused or neglected, share your concerns with your ministry leader immediately.

Small Group Discussion: Older Kids 8–12 min

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid),

Model for kids how to use their Bibles' table of contents to locate the book of Daniel. Explain that the book is named after a Jewish man named Daniel who was exiled—or made to live far away from home—in Babylon. As Daniel obeys God, he (and his three friends) see God work in amazing ways!

Turn to Page 3 of this guide and help kids understand the context of this passage. Ask two kid volunteers to read Daniel 3:14, 16–30 aloud. Then, discuss the following:

- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego wouldn't bow down to the king's statue. Why wouldn't they obey the king's orders?
- How do you explain that fourth person in the furnace? Who do you think it was? Make your case!
- More than one difficult situation pops up in this story. What are some of them?
- The king respected Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego for showing their trust in God. How do you show your trust in God when you're facing difficult thing ?
- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego knew God would be with them, though God might not save their earthly lives. What does that tell you about God being with us in difficult times?
- How do you feel about that?

"There's no shortage of difficult times in our lives and the lives of our family and friends. Sickness, lost jobs, hard tests, people who bully—it can feel like we've been tossed in a furnace. But we're not alone; God is with us when we feel scared or overwhelmed. Let's thank God for standing with us and let Him know we want to stand with Him too."

Prayer Time: Older Kids

Invite kids to pair up and pray for their partners and for people they know who are facing difficult things. Encourage kids to thank God for His faithfulness to stick with us through good times and bad, through what's fun and what's hard. Wrap up by asking God to bless your kids when they face hard times and to give each of you a heart ready to stand with God.

Leader Tip: Some kids in your group might have experienced (or be experiencing) trauma that makes it difficult for them to trust others and God. They might seem distracted and struggle to engage in the lesson. Simply be present with them. Extend grace. And let them know you are glad they are there. If they are ready to share with you, listen well and assure them they are not alone. If you suspect a child is being abused or neglected, share your concerns with your ministry leader immediately.

WORD OF WONDER

God has said, "I will never leave you.
I will never desert you."

—Hebrews 13:5b (NIRV)

Word of Wonder

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid); **Word of Wonder Poster (1/ SG)**

"Our Word of Wonder in the God with Us series is a wonderful word indeed! In Hebrews 13:5, we see how God is with us even when we face difficult things. Let's read the Word of Wonder together and let it sink into our hearts and minds!"

Invite kids to open their Bibles and read through the verse aloud with you several times. Remind kids this is a solemn and deep promise made by God, so they're to use their deepest voices as they read together.

Gather kids to talk about these questions:

- **The Bible tells us God is faithful. How is God faithful in never leaving us?**
- **The Bible tells us God is loving. How is God loving in never deserting (or abandoning) us?**

Leader Tip: Kids might need a little help with the words *faithful* and *love*. Here are definitions you can share with them: *Faithful* means God always does what He says He will do. He is trustworthy. *Love* is not just a feeling, but selfless actions that put others before ourselves.

Word of Wonder Activity

SUPPLIES: construction paper (14 sheets of one color per group), marker (prep only)

Ahead of time, write the Word of Wonder on construction paper, with one word (or the reference) in large letters on each sheet. (Each small group will need its own verse set, and each set should be on a different color paper.) Fold each paper, and hide the sheets throughout the room, making sure they aren't too hard for kids to find.

Explain that each group has 14 sheets of paper in a certain color hidden around the room, and on each of those sheets is a word from the Word of Wonder. Invite kids to work together to find all 14 of their group's papers and to put them in verse order. Consider making it a race to see which small group completes the challenge first!

Leader Tip: For Younger Kids. Help younger kids read the words on their sheets of paper and put them in order.

Head to Large Group!

When you return from LG, continue with these activities until parents arrive.

Responding in Worship: A Position of Praise

RESOURCES: [God with Us Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

Gather kids together. Ask kids to spread out throughout your room so nobody will distract anyone else.

"Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego found themselves walking around inside a large oven—one heated so intensely that just standing near it was enough to kill. But God was with them and, as they walked, we can imagine that they may have been worshipping!

God was with them—and God is with you too. He's here in all His power like He was with our furnace friends. God was faithful to them, and He's faithful to you.

Let's respond like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego responded: by worshipping God. Explain that you'll play a song—"Faithful and True"—and you're inviting them to listen to the song and respond with a worshipful stance. That is, if they feel like bowing, they can bow. If they feel like raising their hands, or moving with the music, or simply sitting quietly, they can. It's completely up to them how they use their bodies to worship God during the next several minutes.

With your mind and heart on God, let your body reflect your response to God. When the music ends, I'll wrap up with a brief prayer.

Play "Faithful and True" from the [God with Us Elementary Spotify playlist](#). Then pray, using the following words or your own:

God, it must have been amazing for our friends to see You in action. To know that You were there, and that You were keeping them safe in a difficult time. We know You're with us too, even though we don't see You. Help us feel Your presence when we face difficult things. Help us trust and worship You even when times are hard. We love You, God. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Make It Inclusive!

Some kids, such as those with ADHD, may find it difficult to remain still. They aren't being disrespectful when they move during worship times—it's how God wired them. If they are told to stay still, they won't be able to worship freely, if at all; all their focus would be on not moving. This activity is perfect for these kids as it lets them choose whether to move, and how.