

### LESSON 3

## THE FIERY FURNACE

### LESSON AT A GLANCE

**WONDER TRUTH:** God Is with Us in Hard 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 will never leave us. —from Hebrews 13:5b

### CURIOSITY

### BELIEF

### FAITH

- Puppet Intro and Curiosity Questions
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation
- Worship: My Help, Praise
- God's Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- Prayer and Blessing





**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 Hard 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 that God 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 into a 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.



LESSON 3 **EARLY CHILDHOOD**

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

**LESSON AT A GLANCE**

**WONDER TRUTH:** God Is with Us in Hard Things

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**Welcome**

**Slide: Series Welcome Loop**

**As kids arrive...**

Walk around the room and welcome as many kids as possible by showing excitement that they have joined you. Give high-fives, fist bumps, encourage them to sit on the floor in their spots, and ask questions about their week.

**Video: Countdown**

Welcome kids to worship time. Introduce yourself by name.

**Puppet Intro and Curiosity Questions**

Introduce the kids to Tac, the curious cat.

**Leader:** It's time to check in with our friend, Tac. Can you welcome Tac?

**Tac the Cat:** Hi, friends! It is so good to be back and talking about God with you!

**Leader:** How have you been, Tac?

**Tac the Cat:** Well, to be honest, I'm a little sad.

**Leader:** Oh no! Why are you sad?

**Tac the Cat:** I'm sad because some older cats I play with in my neighborhood were making fun of me. I was playing outside when one of the older cats asked me if I was going to the neighborhood cheese party. I told him no because I was going to go to church to learn about Jesus. Then all the other cats started to make fun of me for wanting to go to church instead of the cheese party.

**Leader:** Oh, Tac, I'm sorry that the cats made you sad. But we're sure glad you came to church today! Your story actually reminds me of people in the Bible who stood up for God and obeyed Him even when those around them didn't.

**Tac the Cat:** Oh really? I wonder what happened to the people who obeyed God.

**Leader:** That's a great thing to be curious about. In our story today, we'll learn what happened to them and about the amazing way that God helped them.

**Tac the Cat:** I can't wait. It sounds like a great story. I'm so glad I'm at church today. I love hearing stories of the amazing things God does.

**Leader:** Thanks for joining us today, Tac. See you later!

**Tac the Cat:** Bye!

**Leader Tip:** Young kids may have a difficult time understanding and communicating things they've experienced that are hard. You can offer suggestions and ideas and affirm any answers they give.

**"Have you ever been curious about something? Let's take a moment and think: what do you think happened to the people who obeyed God? Allow the kids to respond. What is something that is hard in your life right now? Allow the kids to respond. We all see and hear things that make us curious. Did you ever stop to think about how God is with us when things are hard?"**

### **SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH**

Today's Wonder Truth is **GOD IS WITH US IN HARD THINGS**. Today we'll discover God is with us in hard things!"

## **Prayer of Invitation**

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use your own words: Here is an example: **God, thank You for all the good things in our lives. We know that sometimes hard things happen. Holy Spirit, help us see You in those times and to hear from You in our story today. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

## **Declaring God's Wonder**

### **SLIDE: DECLARATION**

Encourage the kids to say the statements and do the motions with you.

**Thank You, God, that You made me!** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Make prayer hands, then point up to God and to yourself.

**And I am Your kid!** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands on your hips.

**Jesus loves me so much;** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Spread your arms out wide to your side one at a time, then pull them in for a hug around your chest.

**His love for me is big.** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your arms up high and wide above your head.

**The Holy Spirit leads me,** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Bring your arms down from the sky, making a path in front of you.

**And I can follow You.** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

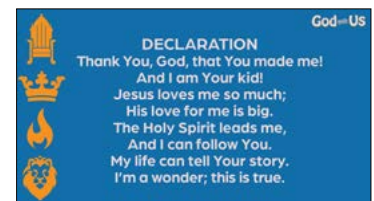
March in place like you're following the leader.

**My life can tell Your story.** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your hands in front of you like an open book.

**I'm a wonder; this is true.** (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands up, shaking your fingers, celebrating ("praise hands").



## Worship

"Today we'll learn about how God is with us in hard things. Let's sing about God being with us!"

**WORSHIP VIDEOS: My Help, Praise**

## God's Big Story

**SUPPLIES:** Bible

Hold up a Bible and show the kids. Tell them today's story comes from the book of Daniel in the Bible. Open a Bible and show them where the story is found.

### Bible Time Rhyme

Say the Bible time rhyme (with motions) each week before the Bible story to remind kids that what they're about to hear is part of God's big story.

**I open my Bible and what do I see?** (*Hold your hands together, then open your palms, as if opening a book.*)

**God's big story, waiting for me!** (*Point to yourself.*)

**"Let's watch part of God's big story, which comes from the book of Daniel in the Bible."**

Read the God's Big Story Script provided or read Daniel 3:14, 16–30 from the Bible.

## GOD'S BIG STORY SCRIPT

**SUPPLIES:** Bible; red, orange, and yellow streamers or tissue paper; chairs or boxes; scissors (prep only); tape (prep only); large plastic hoop (optional)

Before the kids arrive, designate a space in the room to be a "fiery furnace." Use chairs or stack boxes to create an entrance and exit to the furnace. Cut off pieces of streamers or cut the tissue paper into strips. Tape the streamers or tissue paper around the chairs or boxes. The furnace area should be large enough for four kids to walk around inside of it. If you don't have space in your room to create a furnace, you can use a large, plastic hoop and tape the streamers or tissue paper to it. The kids can stand inside the hoop for the "furnace."

**"There was a king in Babylon named Nebuchadnezzar** (Neh-buh-kuh-NEZ-er). **Nebuchadnezzar made the Jews, God's people, come to his land, and he chose a few of the Jews who were the best and smartest to serve him. Three of those men were Shadrach** (SHAD-rack), **Meshach** (MEE-shack), **and Abednego** (Uh-BED-neh-go). Ask for three volunteers to pretend to be Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego for the story.

**King Nebuchadnezzar made a giant gold statue. He told everyone in the land, including these three Jewish men, to worship the new statue by bowing down when they heard special music play.**

**Anyone who did not bow to the statue would be thrown into a blazing-hot furnace.** Point to the fiery furnace you created in your room. **That seems a little scary. Can you show me your scared face?**

Allow everyone to make a scared face, including the three volunteer actors.

**Not long after the king made that rule, everyone heard the special music. It was time to worship the gold statue! Everyone started bowing down and worshipping the statue. Everyone, that is, except for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.** Encourage the three kids to shake their heads. **These three men loved God. They did not bow down to the statue because God had told His people never to worship anyone or anything besides God.**

**People saw that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did not bow down to worship the statue. The king found out, and he was mad! He asked the men, "Is what I heard about you true? Don't you serve my gods? Don't you worship the gold statue I set up?" (Daniel 3:14). He reminded them that if they did not bow down, they would be thrown into a blazing-hot furnace.** Point to the fire furnace you created.

**Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were brave. "We might be thrown into the blazing furnace," they told the king. "But God can bring us out of it alive. But even if we knew that our God wouldn't save us, we still wouldn't worship the statue!"** Invite the three kids to shake their heads again.

**The king was very mad. He told his strongest soldiers to tie up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and heat up the furnace even more.** Ask for two volunteers to be soldiers to put Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into the "furnace." **Then the king's soldiers threw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into the furnace. It was so hot that the fire killed the soldiers who were throwing them into the furnace!** Have the soldier volunteers fall down once they put the three into the furnace. Encourage the three in the furnace to walk around inside of it.

Ask for one more volunteer to walk into the furnace with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego **When King Nebuchadnezzar looked into the furnace, he was surprised! He did not see three men in the fire. He saw four! "Didn't we tie up three men?" he asked. "Didn't we throw three men into the fire?" (Daniel 3:24). Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were walking around in the fire, and the fire wasn't hurting them.** Have the four kids walk around the furnace if room permits.

**King Nebuchadnezzar knew that someone more powerful than himself was with the young men. He shouted for them to come out of the furnace. He said, "You who serve the Most High God, come here!" (Daniel 3:26).**

Have the kids playing Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego come out of the furnace and the fourth volunteer return to his seat. **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out of the furnace. Not a hair on their heads was burned. They didn't even smell like smoke! The king knew that these young men were special for trusting their God. They were even willing to get thrown into a furnace instead of worshipping anything but God! Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego experienced that God is with us in hard things."**

## Connecting the Wonder Truth

Ask the following question to kids to help them connect the Wonder Truth to God's big story:

### SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

"Our Wonder Truth today is **GOD IS WITH US IN HARD THINGS**. Where did you see our Wonder Truth in the story? Allow kids to answer freely.

**When Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were thrown into the fiery furnace, God showed them (and everyone watching!) that He is the God who saves. Many years later, Jesus died on the cross to save us from our sins—the wrong things we do. He is truly the God who saves!"**

## Prayer and Blessing

After the kids finish the activity, pray with them, thanking God for being with them in hard things.

**God, thank You for being with us in hard things. When we are sad, hurting, or lonely, help us to remember You are with us and You love us. Give us strength and courage to trust You no matter what. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands were open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

**Blessing:** May the Lord show Himself to you this week if you go through anything that is hard. May you always remember that God is with you.