

LESSON 73

Four Men in the Furnace

DANIEL 3



BIBLE TRUTH

OUR GOD IS ABLE TO DELIVER US

LESSON SNAPSHOT

- 1. OPENING REVIEW** **5 MIN**
 Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.
- 2. BIBLE STORY** **10 MIN**
 Read Daniel 3 from the Scriptures or read story 73, "Four Men in the Furnace," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.
- 3. OBJECT LESSON 1** **10 MIN**
Only Higher
SUPPLIES:
- ✓ four rocks painted gold
 - ✓ eighteen-inch-high stand for one of the rocks (This could be a length of board that will stand up or a small cardboard box.)
- 4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION** **10 MIN**
- 5. OBJECT LESSON 2** **10 MIN**
Trust the Teacher
SUPPLIES:
- ✓ large clear glass bowl filled with water
 - ✓ washcloth
 - ✓ one dozen eggs in an egg carton—six hard-boiled on one side and six raw on the other side
 - ✓ tarp (Place the six raw eggs in the front row.)
- 6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY** **5 MIN**
- 7. ACTIVITY TIME** **10 MIN**
Coloring Activity
SUPPLIES:
- ✓ coloring page 73—one copy for each child
- 8. CLOSING PRAYER** **5 MIN**
- 9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON** **10 MIN**
Who Is the Fourth Man?

TOTAL 75 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

Nebuchadnezzar demands that all his subjects worship his gold statue—King Nebuchadnezzar builds a gold statue ninety feet tall and commands everyone to worship it. The people of Babylon don't mind this because they already worship many gods. But for the faithful Jews who live in captivity in Babylon, worshipping another god would mean breaking the first of the Ten Commandments.

Today, there is no king requiring us to bow down to an idol, but there are many things that we can easily be tempted to love too much. No matter who you are or where or when you live, there is always a temptation to worship something other than God.

Through faith, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refuse to worship—Daniel's three friends are brought before Nebuchadnezzar, and he threatens to burn them alive if they do not bow down to the statue. Their refusal is one of the most powerful statements of faith in the whole Bible. They declare that they will trust God no matter what happens, even if they are thrown into the furnace. They know that God is able to save them from the fire, and they want to be saved from the fire, but they leave the result up to God. They do not demand anything from God. They simply trust him to do what is best. They know that the most important thing is to be obedient to God by not bowing down to the statue.

God delivers his servants—Nebuchadnezzar is amazed by what he sees in the fiery furnace. When Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego emerge unharmed, he knows that they serve the one true God. A few moments earlier, Nebuchadnezzar had been demanding that everyone in his kingdom bow down to the statue he had made. But after one glimpse of the power of God, he issues a proclamation forbidding anyone to say anything bad about God. The faith of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego didn't just save them from death; it allowed all the Jews who had been taken captive to Babylon to worship God freely!

WHERE IS JESUS?

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Read Hebrews 11:34.

In the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, there is an obvious answer to "Where is Jesus?" The Son of God was with them in the fire as the fourth person. Just as God was willing to come down to earth to save them from the fire, so Jesus was willing to come down to earth as a man to save us from our sins. God delivers these men from the flames so that not even their clothing is singed!

Though not mentioned by name in Hebrews 11:34, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego certainly "quenched the power of fire." These three men are a part of the "great cloud of witnesses" that the book of Hebrews says should motivate us to look to Jesus (Hebrews 12:1-2).

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Daniel 3 from the Scriptures or read story 73, "Four Men in the Furnace," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN

Only Higher

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ four rocks painted gold
- ✓ eighteen-inch-high stand for one of the rocks (This could be a length of board that will stand up or a small cardboard box.)

This exercise is designed to help the children see that Nebuchadnezzar’s response to God’s preserving the three men in the flames was a good response but not the best response. You see, Nebuchadnezzar called their God the Most High God but did not remove his own idols. In other words, God was the most high among other gods but not the only God.

Set the golden rocks up on a table in front of the class. Explain to the class that Nebuchadnezzar was a polytheist; he believed in many gods. He demanded that the people worship a god he created among their other gods. Read to them the story of how he made a ninety-foot-tall god. Place one of the gods (rocks) on the stand higher than the rest. Ask the class how many gods they see. The proper response is four. Ask them which god looks the most powerful. (They should answer the one on the stand.)

Then ask the class the following questions:

- **What did Nebuchadnezzar learn about the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego?**
(Nebuchadnezzar learned that their God was more powerful than any god he knew.)

- **What mistake did Nebuchadnezzar make even though he worshiped the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego?**
(Nebuchadnezzar declared that the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego was the Most High God but he did not recognize that their God was the only God. Nebuchadnezzar and his people continued in their idolatry. See Daniel 4:8–9.)

TEACHING/DISCUSSION **10 MIN**

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

OBJECT LESSON 2 **10 MIN**

Trust the Teacher

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ large clear glass bowl filled with water
- ✓ washcloth
- ✓ one dozen eggs in an egg carton—six hard-boiled on one side and six raw on the other side
- ✓ tarp (Place the six raw eggs in the front row.)

This exercise is meant to demonstrate trust. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego trusted God even though they did not know if God would deliver them from the flames.

Ask the class for an egg tester. Tell them that you want them to allow you to break an egg on their head. (Pick out a raw egg from the carton to show them as you speak but let it slip out of your hands to break on the floor. Apologize and commence cleaning the egg up. This will fool them into thinking all the eggs are raw.) Tell them that they should not get too messy but if there is an accident you have some water and a cloth with which to wash up.

Ask for volunteers to raise their hands. Before choosing volunteers, ask some of those who are not volunteering why not (afraid to get egg in their hair) and some with hands raised why they are willing (they believe you can do it without getting egg in their hair). Ask those who trust your ability: what if I get egg in your hair though? The object here is to outline their trust of you.

Pick a volunteer and have them sit before the class. Take a hard-boiled egg and crack it several times on the crown of their head. Peel the shell away and take a bite of the egg, thanking them for their assistance.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- **What gave you the confidence to volunteer?**
(We didn't believe you would get any egg on us, etc.)
- **Did you trust me?**
(Yes, we trusted you that you would not get us all messed up with egg.)
- **How could you trust me?**
(We could trust you because we know how you have dealt with us in the past, and you have never hurt us before. Explain to the class how our past faithfulness frames the way people think of us.)
- **How is this exercise like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego trusting God enough to go into the fiery furnace?**
(They didn't know what would happen in that furnace just like you didn't know what would happen if I cracked an egg on your head, but you trusted that I had a plan that was for your

good just like those three men trusted that God had a plan that was for their good. Regardless of the outcome, they knew they could not bow down to a false god.)

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY **5 MIN**

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME **10 MIN**

Coloring Activity

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page 73—one copy for each child

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

- **What do you notice about the men in the fire?**
(They are not being harmed by the flames. Also, there are four men in the fire but only three were thrown in.)
- **Who was the fourth person inside the furnace?**
(an angel of the Lord, Jesus)
- **What did the king and his officials notice about the three men after they came out of the furnace?**
(Not a single hair was burned nor did they even smell like smoke.)
- **What happened to the king's attitude after he saw the three men were not harmed?**
(The king praised the Lord and admitted, "there is no other god who is able to rescue in this way" [Daniel 3:29].)

CLOSING PRAYER **5 MIN**

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day's scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON **10 MIN**

Who Is the Fourth Man?

Choose volunteers to play the following parts: King Nebuchadnezzar; the guards; and Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego.

Read through the story and use Scripture to narrate the drama. When you get to the part about the fourth man, look confused and ask the children to tell you where the fourth man came from. Play dumb and say, “It’s impossible for three men to turn into four!”

Use the “Where Is Jesus?” section of this lesson to help teach the children who the fourth man was.

LESSON 73 - FOUR MEN IN THE FURNACE

