



7

**Worship**
God's presence changes our lives.

**POWER TEXT**

"Then Nebuchadnezzar said, 'Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God' " (Daniel 3:28).

**KEY REFERENCES**

- Daniel 3
- *Prophets and Kings*, chap. 41, pp. 503-513
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 6, pp. 16-19; 33-43
- Student story on page 82 of this guide

**OUR BELIEFS**

- No. 10, The Experience of Salvation
- No. 22, Christian Behavior
- No. 21, Stewardship

**OBJECTIVES**

**The students will:**

- **Know** that circumstances cannot hinder their worship of God.
- **Feel** grateful that God is with them even in difficult and trying times.
- **Respond** by trusting God even when they are not delivered from the "fiery furnace."

# Facing the Fire

POWERPOINT

**We praise God, trusting that He is with us in every situation.**

## The Bible Lesson at a Glance

King Nebuchadnezzar builds an image of gold and sets it in the plain of Dura in Babylon. He calls all his advisors and leaders to come together for the dedication of his image. He decrees that everyone is to bow down and worship the image at the sound of music. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego do not bow down to the image. Nebuchadnezzar asks them if their God can deliver them from the fiery furnace. They answer by saying they believe God will deliver them from the fiery furnace, but their worship is not based on that deliverance. Nothing can make them stop worshiping God.

### *This is a lesson about worship.*

We worship God because we know how much He loves us. God is able to intervene in every situation. Even if He does not perform a miracle to save us from a dangerous situation, He is still with us all the time.

## Teacher Enrichment

"Important are the lessons to be learned from the experience of the Hebrew youth on the plain of Dura. In this our day, many of God's servants, though innocent of wrongdoing, will be given over to suffer humiliation and abuse at the hands of those who, inspired by Satan, are filled with envy and religious bigotry. Especially will the wrath of man be aroused against those who hallow the Sabbath of the fourth commandment; and at last a universal decree will denounce these as deserving of death.

"The season of distress before God's people will call for a faith that will not falter. His children must make it manifest that He is the only object of their worship, and that no consideration, not even that of life itself, can induce them to make the least concession to false worship. To the loyal heart the commands of sinful, finite men will sink into insignificance beside the word of the eternal God. Truth will be obeyed though the result be imprisonment or exile or death" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 512).

*What difference will it make in my life each day when I choose to trust God no matter what?*

# Welcome

Welcome students at the door and direct them to their seats. Ask them how their week has been. Encourage learners to study their Sabbath School lesson regularly, and use several minutes to debrief students on the previous week's lesson.

Ask: **What was the most interesting part of the Bible story? What activity did you find the most helpful? Which activity was the most fun?**

Invite students to share their experiences and/or the handiworks they created for Sabbath School during the week. (The leader should be familiar with the previous lesson to be able to direct the discussion.) This is also a good time to have students recite the power text.

**Have students begin the readiness activity of your choice.** 

# Program notes

| LESSON SECTION | MINUTES | ACTIVITIES | MATERIALS NEEDED |
|---|---|---|---|
| Welcome | Ongoing | Greet students at door.<br>Ask about their week. | |
| 1 Readiness | 10-15 | *A. Musical Chairs* | chairs, music recordings |
| | | *B. Modern Idols* | white/chalkboard, markers/chalk |
| | | *C. Picture Strips* | paper, pencils |
| * Prayer and Praise | 15-20 | See page 77. Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program. | songbooks, world map, pushpins, offering plate/basket |
| 2 Bible Lesson | 15-20 | Introducing the Bible Story | |
| | | Experiencing the Story | Bibles |
| | | Exploring the Bible | Bibles |
| 3 Applying the Lesson | 10-15 | *Hot Seat* | large rocks, firewood, red/yellow cellophane OR red construction paper |
| 4 Sharing the Lesson | 10-15 | *Courage Together* | white/chalkboard, markers/chalk |
| * Closing | | Prayer and Closing Comments<br>Reminder to Parents<br>Coming Up Next Week | |

# 1

## READINESS ACTIVITIES

*Select the activity or activities that are most appropriate for your situation.*

### A

**YOU NEED:**
- ☐ chairs
- ☐ music recordings

### Musical Chairs

Arrange chairs in a line, back to back, with one less chair than the number of students. Play some music while the students walk single file around the chairs. When the music stops, they must sit on a chair. The person without a chair is "out." One chair is removed, and the game played again until the last person not "out" is declared the winner.

***Debriefing***

Ask: **What was on your mind when the music stopped? What does it feel like to be left out? Sometimes we are in situations in which our following God singles us out. How do you feel in those times?** Say: **Let's say our power text together:**

***"Then Nebuchadnezzar said, 'Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God' " (Daniel 3:28).***

Say: **We can trust that if we ever feel left out in some way, God is always with us. Our power point reminds us that**

***We praise God, trusting that He is with us in every situation.***

### B

**YOU NEED:**
- ☐ white/chalkboard
- ☐ markers/chalk

### Modern Idols

Say: **Christians don't worship actual physical idols. But are there other kinds of idols that we might worship? Let's take a look at what some of these idols may be.** Brainstorm with the students various activities or things that absorb their time and distract them from living a purposeful life in service to God and others. List these on the board.

**Debriefing**

Ask: **How can you judge whether something is an "idol" for you? (It steals my time from serving God and others and from pursuing meaningful personal goals.) What helps you choose to do what is right?** (God gives me wisdom and discernment to make good choices if I ask of Him in prayer. I can choose to take a stand for Him and for the right.)

Say: **Daily we are assaulted with choices. Some involve choosing to worship God.** Ask: **How do you feel when you are faced with a choice that involves honoring or not honoring God? What promise do we have in those circumstances?** Say: **Let's say our power text together:**

***"Then Nebuchadnezzar said, 'Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God' " (Daniel 3:28).***

**We can take comfort in the fact that God will be with us.**

***We praise God, trusting that He is with us in every situation.***

# Prayer and Praise

C

YOU NEED:
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pencils

## Picture Strips

Ask the students to draw a strip of pictures of a modern-day situation in which the main character chooses to obey and worship God even when it would be easier to not follow God's plan. When finished, tape the papers to the wall and give time for the students to read them.

***Debriefing***

Ask: **What do these situations have in common? Think of how God has delivered those who trusted in Him from some of the most dangerous, life-threatening situations.**

Say: **Let's say our power text together:**

***"Then Nebuchadnezzar said, 'Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God' " (Daniel 3:28).***

**In most places it's rare that we're faced with a life or death decision to either obey God or man. But we are often faced with small, daily decisions that can make a difference. We can remember that God is with us in every situation, and have peace about it.**

**Our power point reminds us that**

***We praise God, trusting that He is with us in every situation.***

**Accommodations for students with special needs**

Allow students who experience difficulty with this activity to work with a partner who could assist them.

## Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). If they have given you permission, share one or two special items from students' Bible study during the week. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special, warm greeting to all visitors.

## Suggested Songs

"God Is So Good" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 33)
"Wonderful Lord" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 47)
"His Sheep Am I" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 84)
"Lean on Him" (*Praise Time*, no. 58)

## Mission

YOU NEED:
- ☐ world map
- ☐ pushpins

Use *Adventist Mission for Youth and Adults* (go to www.juniorpowerpoints.org and click on MISSION) or another mission report available to you. For the mission story, have a map of the world where the students can identify the location of the mission story and compare it to where they are. You could use pushpins to mark where the mission story takes place.

## Offering

YOU NEED:
- ☐ offering plate/basket

Say: **Idol worship was very popular among the heathens during Bible times. But even the Israelites, God's chosen people, at times fell into the unfaithful practice of idol worship. It's easy for us to think that this was only a problem for them. "After all," we tell ourselves, "we know better. We would never worship idols." But do you know what? An idol can be anything that we place on a higher level of importance than our relationship with God. Think about it. Do you have idols in your life? Let's vow to make God first in our lives as we bring our offerings to Him.**

## Prayer

Say: **How many have ever had an experience in which you felt God did not hear your prayer? When we pray, God has three possible answers with which He can reply: yes, no, or wait. God always hears us, but He doesn't always answer us in the way we think He should. Today our lesson is focused on three young men who recognized that God doesn't always say yes to our requests. They knew their God could save them. But even if God chose not to save them, they decided to still be faithful. These young men understood that they could trust God to do the best thing for them. Let's keep that thought in mind as we pray this morning.** Designate a volunteer to pray. Close with a prayer for the students' joys and sorrows, for the birthday and other special event celebrants, as well as for the visitors.

2

BIBLE LESSON

## Introducing the Bible Story

Say: **Have you ever felt pressured into doing something you did not want to do? Perhaps no one physically forced you to do it, but the expectations, teasing, threats of others made you feel that you had no choice.** Say: **Tell me about it.** Allow time for volunteers to respond. **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego felt that way at the plain of Dura, but they resisted because they knew that there was Someone who was stronger. Let's repeat our power point together.**

***We praise God, trusting that He is with us in every situation.***

## Experiencing the Story

Ask volunteers to take turns reading portions of Daniel 3 until you have read the entire chapter aloud. While the volunteers are reading, ask other volunteers to mime the story, assigning the following parts: Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, the king, king's advisors, other worshipers, soldiers.

When the presentation is finished, ask: **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, how did you feel standing there all alone? King, how did you feel having three people defy you like that? What did you do after the three refused to obey you? What happened to them? What did you see in the fire, King? Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, how did it feel walking around in the fire? Whom were you talking to? What happened to you after you were taken out? How did your life turn out?**

***Alternate Activity***

Ask three or four fathers/men to come and tell the story from the perspective of the Hebrew young men and the king. You might even have only two men—one to tell the story from the perspective of the Hebrews and one to take the king's perspective.

When the "telling" is complete, the students can interview the king and the young Hebrews.

Say: **Let's repeat our power point together.**

***We praise God, trusting that He is with us in every situation.***

# 3

## APPLYING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles

### Exploring the Bible

Divide the students into four groups, each with an adult facilitator, and each group taking a text. Say: **Let's look at other cases in the Bible where people were faced with a choice of worshiping idols and what the consequences were when they gave in and when they resisted.**

1. Exodus 32 (the golden calf)
2. Judges 6:25-32 (Gideon destroying the altar of Baal)
3. 1 Kings 18:16-39 (Elijah and the prophets of Baal)
4. Joshua 7 (Achan)

Let each group share what they found.

***Debriefing***

Ask: **What would have been the consequences if the idol worshipers you discovered had worshiped only God instead? Do you think if one person makes the choice to worship only God, that their influence is strong enough to influence others? What could we learn from the story of the hebrew boys and the fiery furnace?** Say: **Our power text offers us the answer. Let's say it together:**

***"Then Nebuchadnezzar said, 'Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God' " (Daniel 3:28).***

**Let's remember that**

***We praise God, trusting that He is with us in every situation.***

YOU NEED:
- ☐ large rocks
- ☐ firewood
- ☐ red/yellow cellophane OR
- ☐ red construction paper

### *Hot Seat*

Build a "firepit" in the center of the room. Use large rocks, firewood, red/yellow cellophane or red construction paper. Leave room in the middle of the "fire" for someone to stand.

Say: **Sometimes in our lives we know that doing the right thing can be scary and uncomfortable. Choosing to trust God even when things are difficult is never the easiest thing to do. Think of a time when you had to choose between what was easy and what was right. If you would like to share that decision with us, come and stand in the middle of the "fire" and tell us about it.**

Be prepared to start this activity by standing in the fire yourself and recounting a time when you had to trust God with a very difficult decision. Don't be afraid to share if you chose the "wrong" thing. You can share what you learned about God that way as well.

After a few students have shared, remind the class that no matter what is happening, we can trust that God is always with us.

**Let's repeat our power point together.**

***We praise God, trusting that He is with us in every situation.***

# 4

## SHARING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- ☐ white/chalkboard
- ☐ markers/chalk

### *Courage Together*

Invite students to tell about their experiences if they made the intentional effort to positively influence someone during the past week. Ask: **How many of you reached out to someone by offering good advice or by being a positive influence? What was your experience?**

Ask: **How do you think the Hebrew boys gained the courage to do what they did? How much do you think it helped that they had each other? How much do your friendships help you to be strong and courageous? How do you challenge your friends to trust Jesus?**

Say: **In groups of three or four, I would like you to think of a way that you could encourage your friends by sharing with them what you learned from this week's lesson and power point. See how creative you can be.**

When students have had time to come up with creative suggestions, have each group share their ideas with the rest. Ask each student to choose one of the ideas that has been suggested and plan to put it into practice.

**Let's say once again our power point together**

***We praise God, trusting that He is with us in every situation.***

# Closing

### Closing

Say: **Dear God, we may not have to face a fiery furnace, but sometimes the taunts of friends or family can seem just as bad. We want to trust You to help us. We know that You have promised to be with us in every situation. Thank You. Amen.**

### Prayer and comments:

Pray that God will reveal His love to each of your students this week, and that they will share that love by loving their neighbor-in-need.

### Reminder to parents:

Say: **Check out the student Bible study guide to find Parents' Pages for your use in family worship, or however you wish to use them to spiritually guide your children. You may listen to the podcast of the lesson online at www.juniorpowerpoints.org/podcast.php?channel=1.**

### Coming up next week:

Say: **Nebuchadnezzar finds the one true God! When we allow God in our life, His presence changes us.**

## Notes

# Student lesson

## Facing the Fire

*Have you ever felt pressured into doing something that you did not want to do? Then you will understand how Daniel's three friends felt when the king and all the leaders bowed down to a golden image and they refused.*

Daniel caught King Nebuchadnezzar's attention soon after he arrived in Babylon. Within a year the king had a dream about a strange image, and he desperately wanted someone to interpret it for him. Daniel asked God for help, and was able to explain to Nebuchadnezzar the image, the prophecy it represented, and the kingdoms that would follow Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonian Empire. Daniel was rewarded with a high position. He asked that his three friends, now known by their Babylonian names of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, be given important government jobs.

Nebuchadnezzar recognized the power of Daniel's God after the dream was interpreted. But as time went on he became unwilling to accept the prophecy that his kingdom would not last forever. All he could remember from Daniel's interpretation were the words "You are the head of gold." He decided to create an image like the one he had seen in his dream, but make it of solid gold to represent an eternal, indestructible kingdom.

The Babylonians were enthusiastic idol worshipers. They had created splendid statues of their various gods. But never had they seen an image like this one. As tall as a nine-story building and made of solid gold, the statue on the plain outside of the city was a sight to behold. The dedication ceremony for the image was meant to be an act of worship and a pledge of allegiance to Babylon. All the government officials were expected to attend.

No doubt Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego knew what was coming. The construction of the image must have taken quite some time. They were important government officials. They knew they would be expected to attend the dedication ceremony and worship the statue. They must have had plenty of time to think about the consequences of not obeying an order from the king.

They went to the ceremony as commanded, but when the order came to bow down and worship the statue at the sound of the music, they stood tall and firm. They would bow down and worship only the God of heaven.

The rapid rise of these captives to high positions had created jealousy in more than a few of the Babylonians. They now ran to Nebuchadnezzar with the news that three of the Jews refused to serve his gods or worship his image. The king was furious. He called for the three, offered them another chance, and threatened them with the fiery furnace if they disobeyed again.

If they were afraid, their words didn't show it. "King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand" (Daniel 3:16, 17).

These young men were confident in what their God could do for them. But that was not the reason they refused to worship an idol. They went on: "But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up" (verse 18).

Daniel and these three friends had already shown their allegiance to God by refusing to eat the king's food. They did not allow circumstances to dictate their behavior. They had vowed to worship God. They knew that God *could* save them. But whether or not He *would* did not matter.

So into the flames they went, and God *did* deliver them. However, many people have not been delivered from their own personal fiery furnaces.

Do we worship God because of what He can do for us? No. We worship God because of what He has *already* done for us. Our worship is in response to His saving grace, and nothing can change that. No circumstances on earth can shake our devotion to our Savior, and His peaceful presence with us.

**KEY REFERENCES**

- Daniel 3
- *Prophets and Kings*, chap. 41, pp. 503-513
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 6, pp. 16-19; 33-43
- Our Beliefs nos. 10, 22, 21

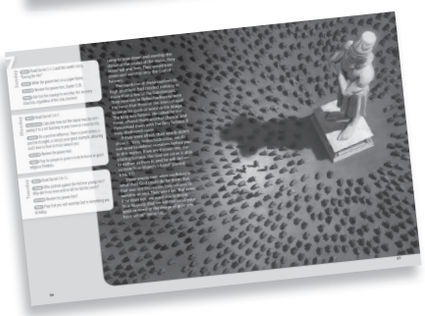
**POWER TEXT**

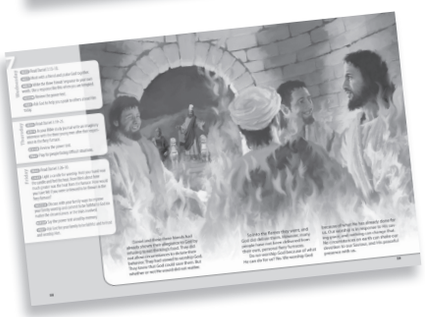
"Then Nebuchadnezzar said, 'Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God' " (Daniel 3:28).

**POWER POINT**

We praise God, trusting that He is with us in every situation.





## Sabbath

DO Do this week's activity on page 60.

## Sunday

READ Read Daniel 3:1-3 and this week's story, "Facing the Fire."

MAKE Write the power text on a paper flame.

REVIEW Review the power text, Daniel 3:28.

PRAY Ask God for courage to worship Him in every situation, regardless of the risks involved.

## Monday

READ Read Daniel 3:4–7.

DISCOVER Discover how tall the statue was by comparing it to a tall building in your town or a nearby city.

SHARE Be a positive influence. Share some good advice, a positive thought, or simply your good example, allowing God's love to flow to those around you.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Pray for people in government to honor or grant religious freedom.

## Tuesday

READ Read Daniel 3:8-12.

THINK Who plotted against the Hebrew young men? Why did those men seek to kill the faithful youth?

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Pray that you will worship God in everything you do today.

## Wednesday

READ Read Daniel 3:13–18.

MEET Meet with a friend and praise God together.

WRITE Write the three friends' response in your own words. Use a response like this when you are tempted.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to help you speak to others about Him today.

## Thursday

READ Read Daniel 3:19–25.

WRITE In your Bible study journal, write an imaginary interview with the three young men after their experience in the fiery furnace.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Pray for people facing difficult situations.

## Friday

READ Read Daniel 3:26–30.

LIGHT Light a candle for worship. Hold your hand near the candle and feel the heat. Now think about how much greater was the heat from the furnace. How would you have felt if you were sentenced to be thrown into the fiery furnace?

DISCUSS Discuss with your family ways to improve your family worship and commit to be faithful to God no matter the circumstances or the trials involved.

REPEAT Say the power text aloud by memory.

PRAY Ask God for your family to be faithful and to trust and worship Him.