The Fiery Furnace *Bible lesson*



BIG IDEA

God is with me, even when things are hard.

MEMORY VERSE · DANIEL 3:25 BSB

“I see four men, unbound and unharmed, walking around in the fire.”

LESSON AT A GLANCE

0–6	**Welcome** · Stand tall freeze	
6–10	**Hook** · More than a mitt	
10–20	**The Story** · The Story	●
20–30	**Talk** · Talk	●
30–35	**Memory Verse** · Memory Verse	●
35–40	**Sing** · Sing	
40–50	**Activity** · Into the furnace review	
50–55	**Respond** · Stand tall card	
55–60	**Pray & Send Home** · Pray & Send Home	●

● Core step. Teach just these for the 30-minute version.

Leader prep

Bible background

Years before this story, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon conquered Jerusalem and carried off young men from God's people to serve in his palace (Daniel 1:1–7). Among them were Daniel and three friends, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, who were given Babylonian names: Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Far from home, they kept loving and obeying God, and the king put them in charge of the province of Babylon (2:49).

Nebuchadnezzar set up a gold statue about ninety feet tall and ordered everyone to fall down and worship it when the music played, or be thrown into the blazing fiery furnace (3:1–6). God's law said, "You shall have no other gods before Me" and not to bow down to idols (Exodus 20:3–5), so the three friends stood. When the king gave them one more chance, they answered that God was able to save them, "But even if He does not," they would still not bow (3:16–18). The furnace was heated seven times hotter, so hot that the flames killed the soldiers who threw them in (3:19–23).

Then the king jumped up: he saw four men, unbound and unharmed, walking around in the fire, and the fourth looked like "a son of the gods" (3:24–25). The three came out with not a hair singed and no smell of smoke (3:26–27). Nebuchadnezzar praised their God, "who has sent His angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him," and promoted them (3:28–30). The point is not that the friends were strong, but that God was with them in the fire.

Where is Jesus in this story?

God didn't keep His friends out of the fire. He came into it with them. That is what God did for us in Jesus. Jesus is Immanuel, which means "God with us" (Matthew 1:23). He came into our hard, hurting world and went all the way through death for us, then came out alive, so nothing can separate us from Him. Jesus promises, "surely I am with you always" (Matthew 28:20), in every hard place, even when He doesn't take the hard thing away.

Supplies

- An oven mitt
- Music to play and pause (a phone is fine)
- Orange paper flames (about 20) and masking tape
  Prep: Cut the paper flames and tape a large square "furnace" on the floor before class.
- Printed story cards, verse poster, coloring pages and parent pages
  Prep: Print from the Classroom resources section.
- A screen for the story video (optional)

Questions kids might ask

"Why didn't God just keep them out of the fire?"

The Bible doesn't tell us all of God's reasons. What it shows us is that God was with them in the fire, and that the whole kingdom saw how great He is. Sometimes God takes the hard thing away, and sometimes He stays with us right in the middle of it.

"Does God always rescue people who trust Him?"

Not always in the way we hope, and the three friends knew that: “But even if He does not,” they said (3:18). Trusting God doesn’t mean nothing bad will happen. Many people who love God have been hurt or have died, and that was never because they didn’t trust enough. God is still with them, and because of Jesus, they will live with Him forever.

“Who was the fourth man in the fire?”

The king said he looked like “a son of the gods,” and then said God “sent His angel.” Some Christians believe it was the Son of God Himself, before He was born as baby Jesus; others say it was an angel God sent. The Bible doesn’t say for sure. Either way, God was with them in the fire.

“What happened to the soldiers who threw them in?”

The Bible says the fire was so hot that the flames killed them (3:22). It shows how real the danger was. With little ones, you don’t need to bring it up; keep the focus on God being with His friends.

If a child shares something serious

When kids share what scares or worries them, some may mention something serious, like someone hurting them or a big fear at home. Listen, thank them for telling you, and don’t promise to keep it secret. Tell your ministry leader the same day and follow your church’s child-safety policy. Some kids in the room may have lost someone, or have someone sick at home. Watch for kids who go quiet or upset, sit with them, and let their parent know after class. Never promise that sick people always get better; say that Jesus is with us when people are sick, and one day He will make everything well, forever.

Teach it

SAY read aloud DO leader action KIDS SAY call and response

1 Welcome 6 min

Full lesson

Stand tall freeze

DO Play music while kids walk around the room. When it stops, call “Sit!” or “Stand tall!” Kids who do the wrong one sit out for a round. Finish with everyone standing tall.

SAY When the music stopped, you had to choose what to do. In today’s story, three friends heard the music, and everyone around them did one thing. They did something different.

2 Hook 4 min

Full lesson

More than a mitt

DO Show an oven mitt. Ask a volunteer what it does and how hot an oven gets (about 350–450°F).

SAY An oven mitt keeps the heat away from your hand for a few seconds. Today's story has a furnace heated seven times hotter than usual. Listen for what kept three friends safe, and notice: God didn't keep them out of the fire. He was with them in it.

3 The Story 10 min

Core

DO Play The Fiery Furnace video (4 min), or read it aloud with the story cards.

SAY Listen for what the three friends said when the king gave them one more chance.

DO After the video, have kids open their Bibles to Daniel 3:16–18 and 3:24–27. Ask a confident reader to read it aloud.

SAY They didn't know how it would turn out. They knew God could save them, but even if He didn't, they would stay loyal to Him. And God was with them in the fire.

KIDS SAY **I see four men walking around in the fire!**

4 Talk 10 min

Core

Why were Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego living in Babylon at all?
Listen for: Babylon's army had conquered their land and taken them far from home. They kept loving God anyway.

Why was bowing to the statue wrong, if it was "just" bowing?
Listen for: Bowing meant worshiping it like a god. God's first rule is to have no other gods before Him.

What did the friends mean by "But even if He does not"?
Listen for: They knew God could save them, but they would stay loyal to Him even if He didn't. Their loyalty didn't depend on getting rescued.

Did God keep them safe because they trusted Him enough?
Listen for: God kept them safe because He chose to. Sometimes people who love God get hurt, get sick or even die, and that is never because they didn't trust enough. God is with us either way.

When is it hard to do the right thing when everyone around you is doing something else?
Listen for: Answers vary: not joining in unkind jokes, telling the truth, saying no when friends do something wrong.

OLDER KIDS God didn't take the friends out of the fire; He came into it with them. How is that like what Jesus did when He came to our world and went to the cross? Read Matthew 1:23: what does "Immanuel" mean?

5 Memory Verse 5 min

Core

DO Write the verse on a whiteboard or hold up the poster. Teach the motions.

> **"I see four men, unbound and unharmed, walking around in the fire."**
> Daniel 3:25 · BSB

MOTIONS

- **I see four men,** Shade your eyes like you're looking, then hold up four fingers.
- **unbound and unharmed,** Cross your wrists, then pull them apart (the ropes are gone!), then pat your arms: not hurt.
- **walking around in the fire.** Walk two fingers across your palm, then wiggle all your fingers up like flames.

PRACTICE IT THREE WAYS

1. Say it with motions.
2. Disappearing words: erase or cover one word at a time until kids say it from memory.
3. Say it fast, then slow, then in a whisper.

6 Sing 5 min

Full lesson

> The Little Lantern song for this story is coming soon. For now, sing a favorite worship song about God being with us when things are hard.

7 Activity 10 min

Full lesson

Into the furnace review

DO Two teams. For each right answer, a team member tapes a paper flame onto the floor furnace. When all the questions are done, count the flames, then everyone steps into the furnace and shouts the verse together.

What was the king's name?
Listen for: Nebuchadnezzar.

What were the friends' Hebrew names before they got Babylonian ones?
Listen for: Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

How much hotter did the king heat the furnace?
Listen for: Seven times hotter.

How many men did the king see in the fire?
Listen for: Four.

What did the friends smell like when they came out?
Listen for: Nothing. There was no smell of fire on them.

> Prefer a quieter room? Hand out the mini-book or a coloring page instead.

8 Respond 5 min

Full lesson

Stand tall card

DO Kids write: "One hard place I'll be this week is ____. God is with me there, so I can ____."

OLDER KIDS Older kids: Write one way you might stand alone for what's right this week, and one person you could stand with.

9 Pray & Send Home 5 min

Core

DO Pair kids up. Each one shares one hard thing coming up this week, and their partner prays: “God, be with ___ in it, and help them stay loyal to you.”

SAY Close: God, you were with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the fire, and you are with us. Help us love you most, even when it’s hard, and help us trust you whatever happens. Amen.

DO Hand out parent pages.