TRACK TWO

Kids Ministry

A complete 45-60 minute lesson for elementary classes (about grades K-5), with notes for preschool and a take-home page for parents.

THE BIG IDEA

God is with me, so I can stand for Him, even when it's hard.

LESSON PLAN

	45 MIN	60 MIN
Welcome and opening game	8	10
Bible story (told or film)	10	12
Object lesson	5	6
Craft	10	15
Small groups	7	10
Memory verse	3	4
Prayer and goodbye	2	3

THE STORY IN PLAIN WORDS

God's people had been carried far from home to the city of Babylon. Three young men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, served King Nebuchadnezzar well, but they worshiped only God. The king set up a gold statue about as tall as a nine-story building and ordered everyone to bow down to it. The three friends would not. They were thrown into a blazing furnace, and the king saw *four* people walking in the fire. God was with them, and they came out unhurt.

READ BEFORE CLASS

Daniel 3, the whole chapter. Read verses 16-18 and 25-28 twice. If you will show the film, watch it all the way through first.

What Kids May Ask

"Did the soldiers die?" Yes. The fire killed the men who threw the friends in (3:22). Say it once, calmly, without detail: *The fire was very dangerous, and that shows how amazing God's protection was.* With preschoolers, leave it out.

"Who was the fourth man?" The king said he looked "like a son of the gods" (3:25), and later said God "sent his angel" (3:28). Christians understand him as an angel or as God's Son appearing before He was born as a baby. For kids: *Someone from God was right there. God was with them in the fire.*

"Will God always keep me from getting hurt?" Don't promise that hard things won't happen. Say: *God doesn't always stop hard things, but He is always with us* (Matthew 28:20). **Add a safety rule:** a real fire means get out and tell a grown-up.

"Is bowing bad?" Not always. In many families and cultures, bowing is a way to show respect to a person. But God's law says not to bow down to images to worship or serve them (Exodus 20:4-5), and that is what the king commanded.

Kids from other backgrounds. Keep the focus on loving and trusting God, not on who is "bad." Standing for God means saying no to what is wrong, kindly.

Telling the Story

YOU'LL NEED a gold-colored towel or a yellow paper tower for the statue, a paper crown, and something to play music on. *SAY lines are a dramatized paraphrase for children; READ lines quote the WEB.*

DO Put on the crown and stand tall, feet on the floor, beside the "statue."

SAY I am King Nebuchadnezzar, the most powerful king in the world! I built this giant gold statue. When the music plays, everybody must bow down and worship it, or into the fire you go!

DO Play a few seconds of music. Three volunteers stay standing while everyone else crouches low.

SAY The gathered crowd bowed low. But three young men stood tall: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They served in the king's government and did good work for him, but they would worship only God.

READ Daniel 3:17-18 from your Bible, slowly. Then ask: *What did they say God was able to do? What did they say they would do, even if God didn't rescue them?*

SAY The king was so angry that his face changed. He had the furnace made seven times hotter. Soldiers tied up the three friends and threw them in.

SAY *(Pause. Hold up four fingers.)* Then the king jumped up. "Look, I see four men loose, walking in the middle of the fire, and they are unharmed." (3:25) When the friends came out, not one hair was burned, and they didn't even smell like smoke! The king said their God was the God who rescues.

ASK Who was with the friends in the fire? Who is with *you* when you're scared?

USING THE FILM INSTEAD. Grades 3-5: show 1:05 to 7:27, the whole story. Grades K-2: show 5:28 to 7:27 ("The Fourth Man" and "Out of the Fire"). Times are from the video's YouTube chapters. Preview first: the narration between 4:45 and 5:28 says the fire killed the soldiers.

Opening Game: The King Says

Play it like *Simon Says*. A leader wears the crown and gives commands: *The king says hop on one foot. The king says touch your nose.* Every so often, the king gives a wrong command: *The king says tell a lie!* or *The king says bow down to my statue!* When that happens, everyone stands tall, crosses their arms, and says **"We won't!"** Nobody sits out. If someone follows a wrong command, pause and briefly explain why it was wrong, then keep playing.

Wrap up: *Today we'll meet three friends who obeyed the king in lots of things, but when he told them to do something wrong, they stood tall.*

Object Lesson: Four in the Fire

YOU'LL NEED a shoebox turned on its side, red, orange, and yellow tissue paper, a flashlight, and four clothespins or paper figures (make one of them gold).

Tuck tissue-paper "flames" inside the shoebox. Shine the flashlight through it from behind so it glows. Stand three figures inside. Ask: *How many friends were thrown in?* Then quietly slide in the gold figure. Ask: *How many did the king see?*

Say: *God didn't keep them out of the fire. He met them in the fire. When you are scared or sad, you are not alone. God is with you.*
Do not use real flames or candles.

Craft: My Four-in-the-Fire Plate

Kids tear flame shapes and glue them around the plate. Then they glue on four "people" and color one of them gold or white. Across the top, a leader or older child writes **God is with me**. Older kids can add Jesus' promise on the back: "I am with you always..." (Matthew 28:20).

SUPPLIES (PER CHILD)

- A paper plate
- Red, orange, and yellow paper scraps or tissue squares
- A glue stick
- Crayons or markers
- Four craft sticks or paper strips for the people

Small Groups

GRADES K-2

1. What part of the story did you like best? Why?
2. How do you think the three friends felt when everyone else bowed down?
3. What do you think the king thought when he saw four people in the fire?
4. Tell about a time you felt scared. How does it help to know God is with you?

GRADES 3-5

1. Why wouldn't the three friends bow? (Read Exodus 20:3.)
2. They said God was able to save them, "But if not..." What does that show about how much they trusted Him?
3. When do kids your age feel pushed to go along with the crowd?
4. How can you stand for God and still be kind and respectful?

Memory Verse Practice

MEMORY VERSE

"...our God whom we serve is able to deliver us..."

DANIEL 3:17, WEB

Stand-Up Verse: each child stands on their word and sits down after it. Then say it faster, then whisper it, then shout it. Grades 3-5 can add all of 3:17-18.

Prayer

Invite kids to pray "popcorn" style. Anyone who wants to finishes this sentence out loud: *God, help me stand for You when...* Then close: *God, You are the only true God. Thank You for being with us when we're scared. Help us stand for You and be kind. In Jesus' name, amen.*

CLASSROOM TIPS

- **Attention signal:** say "Stand tall!" and everyone freezes, straight and quiet. Practice it once.
- **Give wiggly kids a job:** holding the crown or the flashlight.
- If a child is upset about the fire, talk quietly and tell their parent at pickup. No real flames, candles, or lighters, ever.
- **Safeguarding.** If a child or teen tells you about abuse, neglect, self-harm, harmful drinking or drug use at home, or anything else that makes you worried for their safety: stay calm, listen, and thank them for telling you. Don't promise to keep it secret, don't question them for details or investigate, and don't confront anyone involved. Write down what they said as soon as you can, and report it the same day to your church's designated safeguarding lead, following your church's safeguarding policy and any mandatory-reporting law that applies to you. If anyone is in immediate danger, stay with them and call emergency services. Telling a church safeguarding lead does not replace any report the law requires you to make directly to child-protection authorities or police.

FOR PRESCHOOL (AGES 3-5)

- Plan for 20-25 minutes: story, game, a pre-cut craft, and prayer.
- Tell the story with four figures and leave out the soldiers.
- Keep questions to pointing and yes-or-no: *Show me how many people were in the fire.*
- Repeat a simple phrase together, such as *God is with me.* (That is a summary, not a verse.)

TAKE-HOME PAGE · FOR PARENTS

Today in Kids Ministry

The Fiery Furnace

DANIEL 3

WHAT WE LEARNED

Three young men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, would not bow down to a king's gold statue, even when he threatened them with a fiery furnace. God was with them in the fire, and they came out unharmed. **Big idea:** *God is with me, so I can stand for Him, even when it's hard.*

TALK ON THE WAY HOME

1. What do you remember most about the story?
2. How do you think the three friends felt when they kept standing?
3. When is it hard for you to do the right thing?

MEMORY VERSE

"...our God whom we serve is able to deliver us..."

DANIEL 3:17, WEB

TRY THIS AT HOME

At dinner, play "Stand Tall." Someone names a real choice from the week, such as *telling the truth when a lie would be easier.* Everyone stands up and says, *I will stand!*

Watch the film together

Scan, or visit youtu.be/tZgN1kBJ1FU. Free on YouTube, about 9 minutes. Parents, please preview it first: the narration says the soldiers died in the fire (no graphic violence is shown).

GO DEEPER AS A FAMILY

The **Family Study** track of the full companion guide has the story in simple words, questions for ages 4-7, 8-12, and teens, a family activity, and a prayer.

PRAY TOGETHER

God, thank You that You are always with us. Help our family stand for You, kindly and bravely. In Jesus' name, amen.

KIDS: DRAW THE FOUR PEOPLE WALKING IN THE FIRE

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