

## Lesson Two: Do I Really 'Wanna' Be Guilty? (Middle School)

### Lesson Theme

God is always there for me. He is able to save and rescue me. He gives me the courage to be obedient to Him, no matter what is going on around me.

### Bible Story - Daniel in the Lions' Den

#### Ice Breaker Questions

What did we learn this morning in class? What's been your favorite part of church camp so far?

What's the hardest thing you've ever had to do?

Have you ever had to stand up to someone because of what you believed? In today's lesson, we will learn about three guys who were punished for standing up for what they believed in.

#### *Active Listening Activity - Bible Doodling*

*Give each student a blank sheet of paper and have them doodle what they hear. They can take notes, draw pictures, or a combination of each. Ask students to share what they 'doodled' after every few paragraphs. Look for the natural breaks in the paraphrase below.*

#### *Daniel 3 (Paraphrase)*

King Nebuchadnezzar made a huge statue (90 feet tall) in Babylon and sent for everyone to come to the dedication of the statue. Everyone who came to the dedication heard "You are commanded to fall down and worship the golden image every time you hear music. Anyone who doesn't fall down and worship the golden image will immediately be thrown into a fiery furnace!"

The Chaldeans (or astrologers) were jealous of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, so when the music played, they told the king that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego weren't bowing and worshiping the statue like he commanded. 🕒

King Nebuchadnezzar was furious! He commanded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought before him. When they arrived he asked them, "Is it true that you do not serve my gods or worship the image I set up? When you hear the music, if you fall down and worship the statue, all will be forgiven, but if you do not worship the statue, I will immediately throw you into the fiery furnace! What god that can save you?"

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered the king and said, "We don't have to explain ourselves to you. If this is your rule, our God can save us from the fiery furnace and from your anger O King. But if our God doesn't save us, we will still not serve your gods or worship your statue!"

Then King Nebuchadnezzar was filled with rage against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and he ordered the furnace to be heated to seven times hotter than normal. He ordered some of his strongest men (aka mighty men) to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and to throw them into the fiery furnace. Because the king's order was so urgent and the furnace was overheated, as the mighty men were throwing Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into the furnace, they died from the heat. 🕒

The King was watching all of this and suddenly he jumped up and asked his counselors, "Didn't we throw three men into the fire?" They answered him "Yes, only three" and the King responded, "But I see four men walking around in the fire! They aren't hurt or burned, and the fourth man looks like a son of the gods!"

Then Nebuchadnezzar went to the door of the fiery furnace and said, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, get out of there and come here!" So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out of the fire and all the governors, counselors, and rulers of the land saw that the fire didn't harm them. The hairs on their heads were not singed, their cloaks were not burned, they didn't even smell like smoke! Nebuchadnezzar saw this too and said, "Blessed be the god of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who saved his servants from the fiery furnace! They trusted in Him and chose

the fiery furnace over worshiping any god but their own. Because of this, I make a decree that Any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against their God will be killed and their houses destroyed. There is no other god who is able to rescue the way that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's God does." Then the king promoted them in Babylon. 🕒

## Review Questions

How tall was the golden statue that Nebuchadnezzar built? What is something that you have seen that is as tall as that statue?  
(90 feet tall; that is the equivalent to a nine story building)

What were the people commanded to do when they heard the music?  
(Bow down to the golden statue)

Who told the king that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego didn't bow down?  
Have you ever had someone 'tattle' on you? Why did they do it?  
(The Chaldeans or astrologers)

What was the punishment for not bowing to the statue?  
(They would be thrown into the fiery furnace.)

What did Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego do when the music played?  
Why did they do that? (Nothing—they did not bow! God's law says that we should have no other gods other than the one, true God—Jehovah. They did not want to break God's Law.)

What happened when Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were thrown in?  
(They were unharmed. Another man was seen with them. Etc...)

How many men were in the furnace? Who was the fourth man?  
(4, Jesus or the Angel of the Lord)

Probably none of us have ever been thrown into a fiery furnace, but God still wants to save us today. What does it mean to be saved? (*Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego literally trusted their lives to God when they stood up to the King and would not bow. This is a beautiful picture of salvation because when we trust God with our lives, He saves us just like He saved Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fire. Give a simple explanation of the gospel—Jesus saves us from our sin!*)

## Activities & Games

### Musical Chairs Game (Introductory Activity)

What You Need:

- Chairs (1 less than the number of children)
- Music

How to Play:

- Explain that every time the music starts, the students must walk around the chairs in a circle.
- When the music stops, the students must sit down immediately.
- Remove one (or more) chair and continue as time allows.

Application:

- Ask the students if it was hard to stand up as soon as the music started and sit down as soon as it ended.
- Explain that music is a part of today's Bible story.

### Popcorn Toss

What You Need:

- Popcorn

How to Make It:

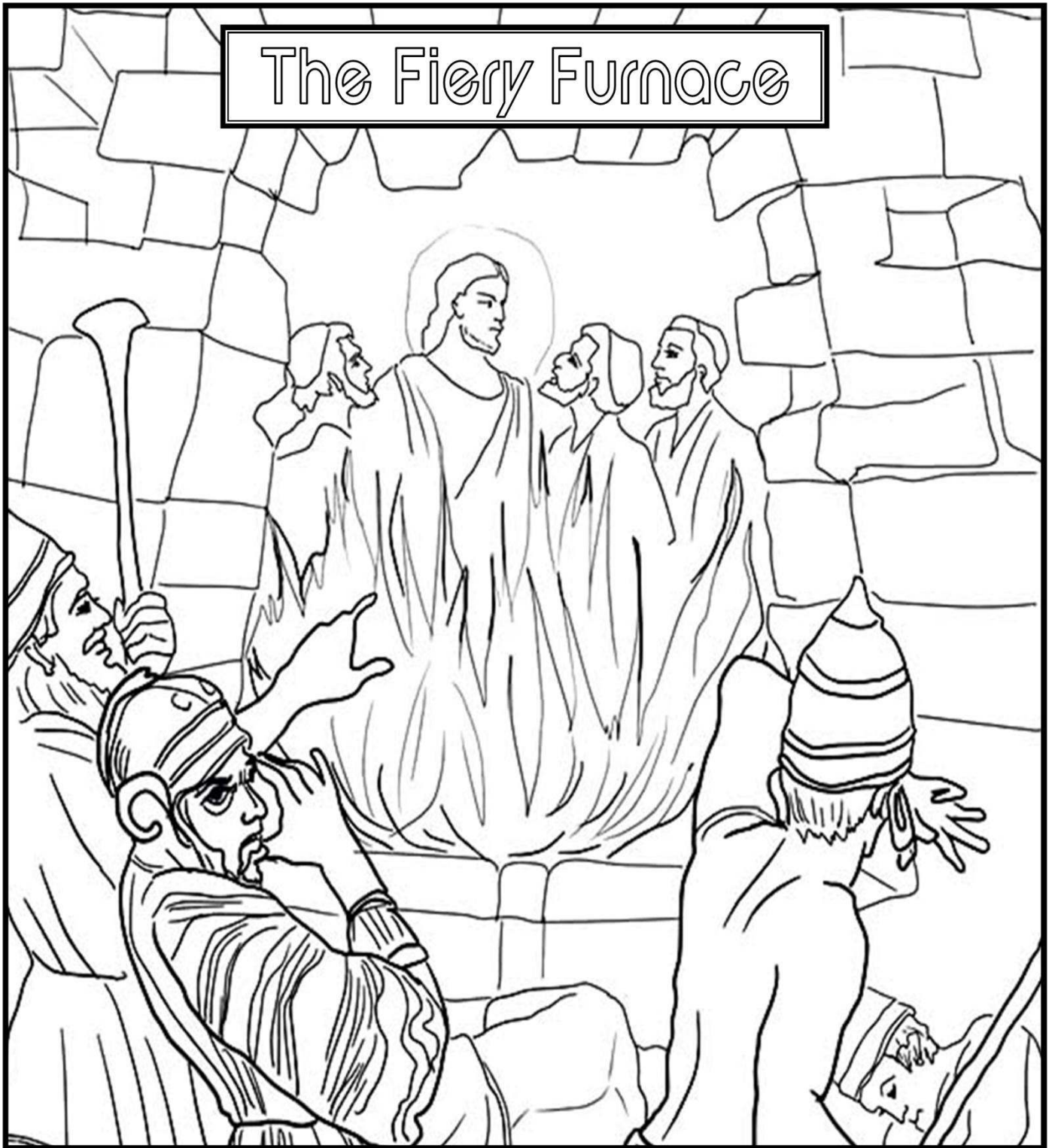
- Have students line up in two lines facing each other, 10 feet apart.
- Instruct the children that on your signal, they will toss the piece of popcorn 10 feet across the aisle to the person directly facing them in the other line.
- Many of the tosses will fall short since the children are so far apart.
- Keep a record of the number of successful throws.
- Now let the other line take one 'small' step forward and give them an opportunity to throw a piece of popcorn to the other line.
- Continue this process—each time moving closer—until the children can simply drop the popcorn into the hands of the other child, resulting in no misses.

#### Application:

- Tell the students that the popcorn in this activity represents our relationship with God.
- Explain that our relationship with God is like what just happened—the further away from each other, the harder it was to catch the popcorn. The further we are from God, the harder it is to have a relationship with Him.
- On the other hand, the closer we are to God, the easier it will be to have a strong relationship with Him.
- So how do we get close to God?
  - Trust in Him as our Savior
  - Read our Bible and pray every day
  - Go to church and learn more about Him
- Remind the students that God loves us and always knows what we are going through. He has the power to rescue us from any situation.

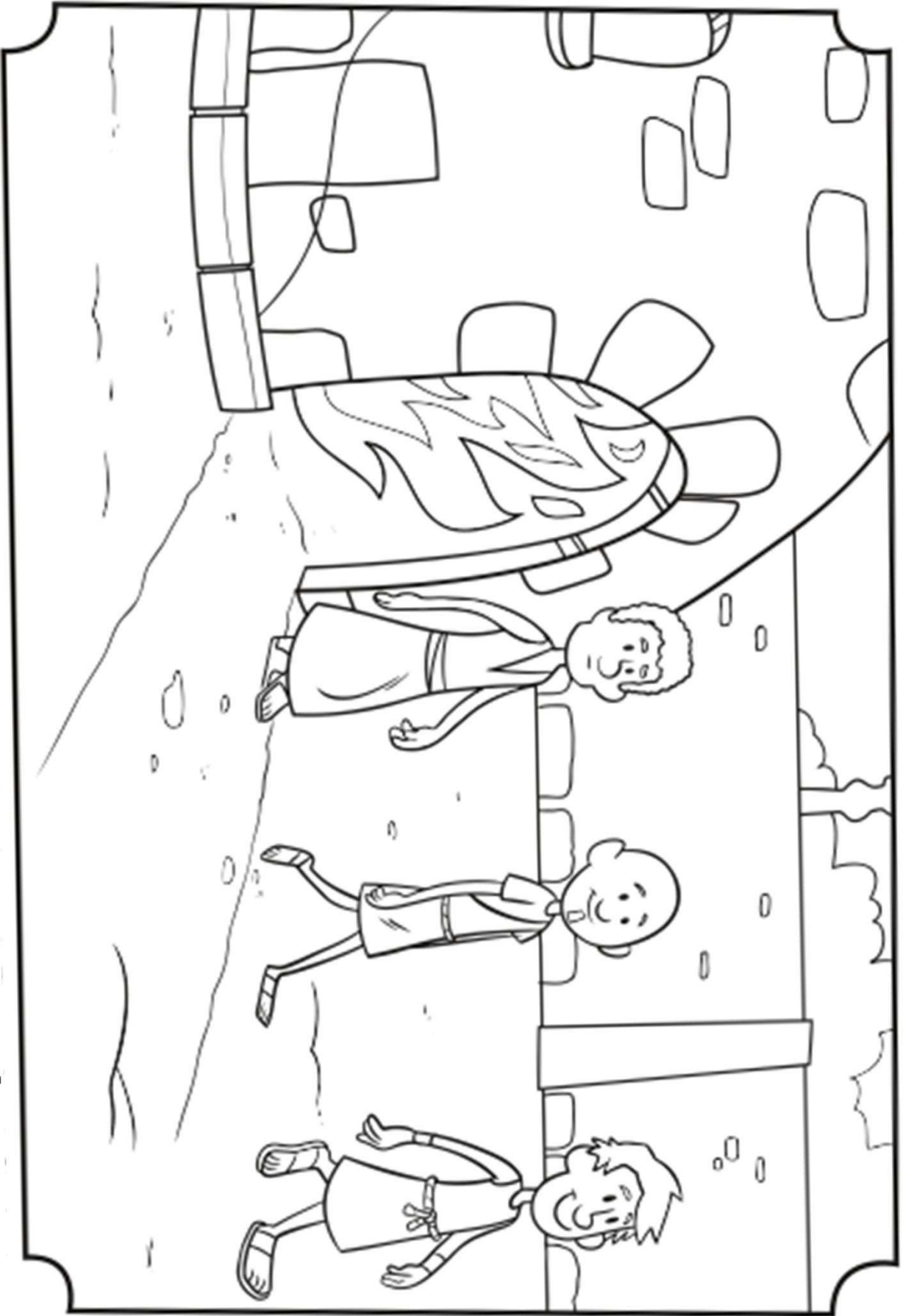
#### Activity Sheets/Coloring Pages

- 2.1 – “The Fiery Furnace” Coloring Page
- 2.2 – “Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego” Coloring Page
- 2.3 – “CH@T” Prayer Bookmarks
- 2.4 – “Standing Together”
- 2.5 – “Q & A”



**"O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your power, Your Majesty. But even if he doesn't, we want to make it clear to you, Your Majesty, that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up."**

# Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego





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# STANDING together

Living courageously is hard, and we aren't meant to do it alone. Standing without fear is easier when we have someone to stand with us. One of the best ways to foster this type of community is to seek out a mentor.

Begin to think and pray about an older individual that you trust and respect who could serve as a mentor to you. Ask God to guide you in this process.

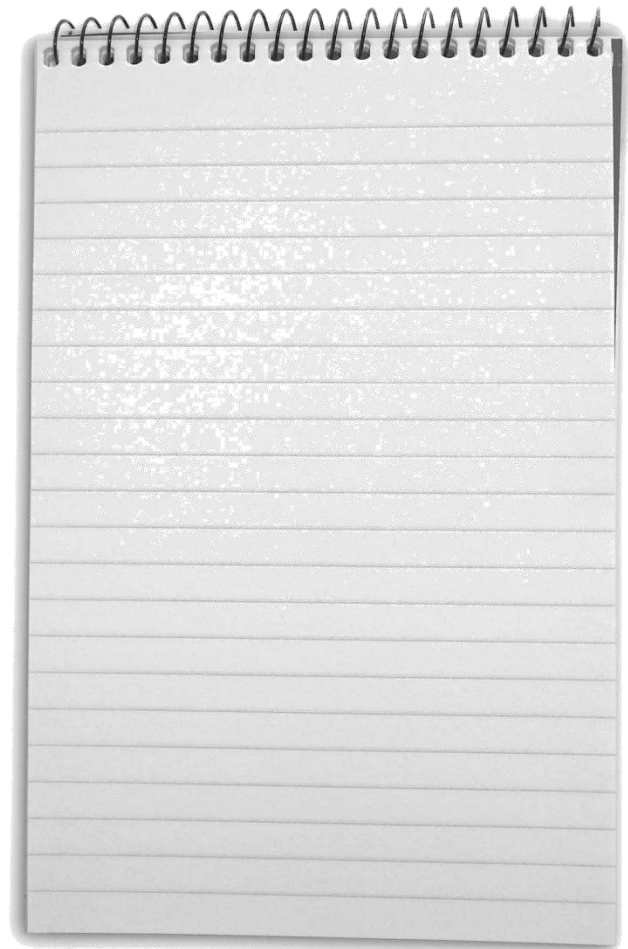
Outline how you think you could benefit from a relationship like this. Ask the individual to meet with you so you can explain why you would like them to mentor you and how you would like to grow in your walk with Christ.

This may not be an easy conversation to have. It will require courage and vulnerability on your part.

Ask the person if they would be willing to walk with you as you seek Christ and learn to stand courageously for what you believe. If the person agrees, set up a meeting plan and dive into what God has for you.

## Who might be a good mentor for you?

In the space below, write out a prayer, asking God to guide you through this process. List any possible mentors at the bottom.

A spiral-bound notebook with lined pages, intended for writing a prayer and listing mentors.





## Despite how distant or disconnected you feel, God hasn't gone anywhere.

**Q. I feel far from God right now. I pray and hear nothing. How do I know he's listening? Or even there? I'm afraid I'm missing his answers or that he's not hearing me.**

**Answer** You're not alone. Almost every Christian feels this way sometimes. Read Psalm 22:1-2. King David, who certainly knew God, wrote: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?... I cry out by day, but you do not answer" (NIV). We often feel God is distant or

disconnected. Even Jesus felt this way—and quoted this Psalm—when he was on the cross.

But despite how you feel, God hasn't gone anywhere. He created you, and he loves you so much that he made arrangements for you to live with him forever (Romans 8:32). Since God is so deeply committed to you, he's not going to walk away from you. In fact, he's watching over you. Right here. Right now. You may not see him or hear him, but you're on his mind, and he loves you. Keep your eyes open, and watch for God's presence in your life. You may not see him all the time, but like the wind, you can see the effect he has. Maybe you see him in how he provides. Or comforts. Or the people he sends into your life.

God wants you to keep looking for him by praying, reading his Word and living out your faith. "Come and pray to me, and I will listen to you," God says. "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:12-13, NIV).

*Written by Marshall Shelley*