



Ten-Minute Family Devotional

week seventy three

Four Men in the Furnace

For this exercise you will need an empty plastic bottle with an opening big enough to fit a penny through. Roll up a small piece of masking tape, sticky side out, and tape a penny to the inside of the lid of the bottle. There needs to be enough tape to hold the penny in place until you shake the bottle, but not so much as to keep it stuck to the lid when you shake the bottle hard. Adjust the size of the tape if needed.

Distribute three pennies to your children. Give one of them the bottle and ask if the bottle is empty. When he has confirmed the bottle is empty, have him drop the three pennies into the bottle, making sure everyone knows exactly how many were dropped in. Carefully place the lid on the bottle and give the bottle a hard shake to dislodge the penny you've hidden in the lid.

Let the children hold the bottle, and remind them how many pennies they put in: three. They will be amazed that there are four, when they only put in three. Don't tell them your secret.

Say, "This week you will learn that Nebuchadnezzar was even more amazed when, after throwing three men into the furnace, he saw four men walking in the fire.

day one

Picture It

Many people visit the Statue of Liberty each year to admire her beauty and think about how she represents freedom and liberty. But what would you do if you were visiting the Statue of

Liberty and the park ranger on duty ordered you to bow down and worship the statue, saying that you would be arrested if you didn't?

As a Christian, you would have a big problem because God tells us in the Bible that we must worship only him. It is fine to admire a great statue, but if we are to obey God's Word we must refuse to worship anything but God.

In today's story, we will see what happened when Nebuchadnezzar commanded everyone to bow down to a statue of himself.



Read Daniel 3:1 – 12.

Think About It Some More

Kind Nebuchadnezzar made a gold statue ninety feet tall (about as tall as two telephone poles standing one on top of the other). Then he commanded everyone to bow down and worship it. The people of Babylon didn't mind obeying because they already worshipped many other gods. But the youngest Israelites Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to bow down because God had said they should worship only him.

Talk About It

Do you know which of the Ten Commandments tells us not to bow down to idols?

The very first commandment tells us that we should not have any other gods besides the Lord, the true God.

What was the punishment the king threatened to give for refusing to bow down to the golden idol?

The king said that anyone who refused to bow down would be thrown into a fiery furnace.

What are the idols that we have today?

An idol is anything we love more than we love God. Parents, draw out your children by discussing some of the idols in your own life first. Possessions, money, and popularity are three things that can easily become more important to us than God. For children, video games, sports teams, a favorite toy, wanting attention from others, or wanting their own way can all steal affections away from God.

Pray About It

Ask God to help you love him more than you love the things of the world.

day two

Remember It

What do you remember about yesterday's story? What do you think is going to happen today?



Read Daniel 3:13 – 18.

Think About It Some More

It is easy to say that you believe in something, but it is a lot harder to trust your whole life to it. For instance, you might say you believe that a parachute can save your life if you jump out of an airplane with one, but only if you decide to skydive wearing one would you really be trusting that parachute to save you.

That's what Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego did with the fiery furnace. They trusted God with their lives. They believed God could save them; but even if God did not, they were not going to bow down to the golden statue. In that case, they were willing to die and go to heaven. That is really trusting God!

Talk About It

What was the only way the king said Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego could escape the fiery furnace?

They had to bow down and worship the image he made.

How do we know Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego trusted God?

They refused to bow down to the king's statue, even when he threatened to throw them into the fire.

What did Nebuchadnezzar forget about the God of the people of Judah?

After Daniel interpreted his dream, King Nebuchadnezzar said that Daniel's God was the "God of gods and Lord of kings" (Daniel 2:47). But now it seemed that Nebuchadnezzar has forgotten the power of Daniel's God.

Pray About It

Thank God for his power, which is able to deliver us from all harm.

day three

Connect It To Jesus

Can anyone guess how our story is about Jesus or points forward to him?



Read Daniel 3:19 – 27.

Think About It Some More

When King Nebuchadnezzar ordered the three men thrown into the fire, he expected them to burn up instantly. But instead of burning up, they started walking around! Then God came down and walked right along with them as a fourth man in the fire.

What a wonderful picture of how God reaches out to help us. We are all sinners who deserve the fires of hell as our punishment, but God came down to rescue us. By going into the fire and saving Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, God was showing us that even though we are sinners, he will not allow us to die in the flames if we trust in him.

We are not facing Nebuchadnezzar's anger, but we are all facing God the Father's anger for the bad things we have done in our lives. But if we trust in God's plan through Jesus, we will be saved from God's punishment and will live forever in heaven with him.

Talk About It

How many men did the king have thrown into the fire?

The king had three men thrown into the fire.

How many men did the king see walking around in the fire?

The king saw four men walking around in the fire.

Who was the fourth man?

God came down as a man into the fire to be with the other three.

Pray About It

Praise God for saving Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and praise him for the people in your family whom he has saved from their sins.

day four

Remember It

What has God been teaching you this week through our Bible story?



Read Daniel 3:28 – 30.

Think About It Some More

King Nebuchadnezzar was amazed by what he saw in the fiery furnace. When Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out of the fire unharmed, the king knew that their God had protected them.

A few moments earlier, Nebuchadnezzar had demanded that everyone in his kingdom bow down to the statue he had made. But after seeing the power of God to save, Nebuchadnezzar issued a proclamation to honor the God of Judah.

The faith of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego didn't just save them from death; it opened the way for all the Jews to worship God freely!

Talk About It

How did God work the events of this story for the good of all his people?

The king was so impressed that he issued a decree protecting all of God's people in Babylon.

What did the king think about God after the three men came out of the fire unharmed?

The king said there is no other God that could do what Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's God did.

How does this story encourage your faith?

Parents, draw out your children to help them to see that we can have the same response as the king—that there is no other God like our God.

Pray about It

Praise God for the way he came down to be with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fire.

day five

Discover It

Today we look at a passage from a psalm or one of the prophets to see what we can learn from it about Jesus.



Read Isaiah 12:3 – 6.

Think About It Some More

Last week we learned that the first two verses of Isaiah 12 are about Jesus and how he took God's anger so we could be saved. The part we read today tells us what we are supposed to do after God saves us.

First, we are to give thanks. Then, we should tell others about Jesus so the whole world can know. And finally, we should shout and sing for joy because of the Holy One of Israel, which is just another name for Jesus.

Talk About It

What does Isaiah say we should do?

Parents, if your children are younger, reread the passage and have them raise their hands when they hear something we are supposed to do, like give thanks, sing, and shout.

What did Jesus do that should make us want to give thanks, sing, and shout?

Jesus died on the cross for our sins to take out punishment away.

Why does God want us to tell people all over the earth about Jesus?

God wants us to tell everyone so they can believe in Jesus too.

Pray About It

Thank the Lord for dying on the cross. Sing a song of praise to God, and offer up a family shout—have all your children shout out “Praise the Lord!” together.