



LESSON PLAN

Scripture Texts:

Daniel 3:1-28

Acts 5:27-29

Session Theme:

Resistance

a. Welcome to Class

Teachers should arrive in the classroom well in advance of class. Welcome students as they enter, and inquire about their week. Pass out name tags and record attendance on a classroom chart.

b. Icebreaker: Resistance

Invite a teen or adult to the opening of class. Explain that he or she is there to challenge volunteers to an arm wrestling contest. If no one volunteers, you (the teacher) can try it. After a few minutes of arm wrestling, thank the volunteer and let him or her leave, then ask kids what made the arm wrestling hard or easy.

In arm wrestling, we push against someone else and refuse to give in (at least as long as our strength holds out!). This “not giving in” is called “resistance.” In today’s story, three men had to practice resistance, but with something much harder than arm wrestling. They had to resist a bad ruling and face punishment for that. What happened? Let’s begin our story and find out!

c. Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, sometimes we feel pressured to go along with things we know to be wrong. Give us the strength to resist this temptation and to stand up for you in faith. We ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

d. SEED Video or Song (Optional)

The teacher may introduce the lesson by playing the video clip from the SEED website. This time may also include an opening song or two, using a commercial Sunday School music CD.

Song suggestions for this lesson:

- “Give Me That Old Time Religion” (hymn)
- “How Firm a Foundation” (hymn)

e. Brief Bible Background

Read together the introduction to the lessons for the day, and briefly summarize the context and setting:

- Today’s Lesson is from the Old Testament
- Scripture Section: Exile

God’s people were attacked and conquered in the north by the Assyrian Empire, then later in the south by the Babylonian Empire. Many of the people were carried away in exile, far from home.

f. Communicate the Bible Story

Always keep in mind that the main purpose of Sunday School is to put people in contact with Bible stories. Use a version that is appropriate to the age level.

Upper Elementary: Read the Bible Story and Rhyme

Youth/Adults: Read the Scripture text from the Bible

For Upper and Lower Elementary, use the Storyteller questions to help the students think about the events of the story.

g. Complete the Worksheet(s)

Continue with the handout sheets appropriate to the age level of the students in class:

Upper Elementary: Worksheet and Drama

Youth: Bible Study (Maps, Timelines, Questions)

Adult: Bible Study Sheet (Introduction and Discussion)

h. Craft and Activity Time

If there is time after covering the Bible story, the class may move to craft and activity time, described on the following page. (Do not let the activity time supersede the actual time spent on the Scripture lesson.)

i. Summarize and Review

Before ending class, briefly summarize the day’s lesson one last time. If you have not already done so, introduce the Theme Word for the week, providing the definition, and asking how the lesson connects to that theme.

Youth/Adult: Discuss “Reflection for the Week Ahead”

j. Closing Prayer

Close the session in prayer before dismissal:

Upper Elementary: Practice a prayer from memory (e.g., the Lord’s Prayer, Luther’s Morning Prayer, etc.)

Youth/Adult: Use the ADTRC Prayer format



Bible Study Leader's Guide

The following is a discussion and answer guide for the Youth and Adult Bible Study sheets. For all leaders, it can serve to provide some background on the Bible lesson.

Discuss: Daniel 3:1-30

1. What did King Nebuchadnezzar expect people to do when the musical instruments were played? Why do you think he made such an order? What would happen to people if they refused?

As soon as they heard the various musical instruments, King Nebuchadnezzar's subjects were supposed to fall down and worship a golden image. Those who disobeyed would be thrown into a fiery furnace. The type of furnace in this story was used to work and shape metal, as well as to smelt metals from raw ore.

2. Who were the three men who resisted the king's order? Why would they do this?

Most people worshiped the idol in order to protect their own safety. But three Jewish men refused to do this, because they were loyal to the one true God. Their names in Persian were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. (According to Daniel 1:19, their actual Hebrew names were Hananiah, Mishaël, and Azariah.)

3. Why do you think some of the Chaldeans (Babylonian officials) accused them to begin with? What motives could they have had?

In the Bible, the word "Chaldeans" can refer to Babylonians in general, but in this case, it refers more specifically to the educated scholars of Babylon. These correspond to the Magi (wise men) of the east, mentioned in the New Testament.

These local-born students and scholars were jealous of the three "foreigners" Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego for showing them up. To have these "conquered Jews" surpass them in skill and knowledge was an affront to the Chaldeans' pride and superiority.

4. How did the king react to the stand taken by these three men? What did he do?

He became very angry and ordered the furnace be heated seven times hotter than usual. Then he told his soldiers to tie up the three men who had resisted and throw them into the furnace. (The furnace becoming hotter is an image that also physically represents how the king's anger became hotter!)

5. Reread what the three men answered in verses 17-18. How was this response both an expression of trust in God as well as a statement of submission to God's will?

They said: "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king" (trusting in the power of God). "But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up." (acknowledging God is in control).

6. Why do you think the fate of the executioners was specifically mentioned in verse 22?

The Bible says that when Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were even brought near to the furnace, the guards bringing them were consumed by the heat of the fire. This detail emphasizes how deadly the furnace really was.

7. When the king looked into the furnace, what did he see? What was happening here?

The king wanted to see what happened to the three men he sentenced to death. But when he looked into the furnace, not only were the three men alive, but they were no longer tied up and were walking about freely! Even more surprising was the fact that they were walking around with a fourth man. This fourth person was an angel (in his words, a "son of the gods"), sent by God to protect God's servants. (Some scholars suggest that this fourth man was the literal Son of God, the incarnate Jesus himself.)

8. As a matter of faith, have you ever had to resist something that you knew was wrong, even when everyone else seemed to be doing it? When? What gave you the strength to resist?

Answers will vary. When we stand alone and do the right thing, we may suffer for it, like the three men in today's story. But in the end, we will be able to walk with our heads held high, knowing it is more important to be faithful to God.

9. Read Acts 5:27-29. What were Peter and John commanded to do? What reason did they offer for why they would not do what they were told?

Under normal circumstances, we are encouraged as Christians to "be subject to the governing authorities..." (Romans 13:1). The exception is when those authorities command us to go against God. When the religious authorities forbade Peter and John from teaching and preaching in Jesus' name, they stood their ground and did not give in to threats. They said, "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:27).

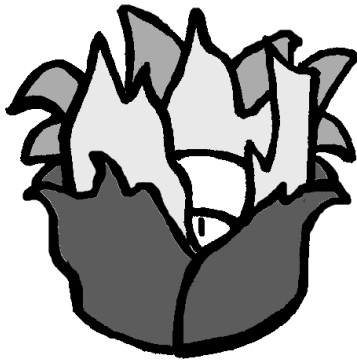
Classroom Craft and Activity Page

Listed below are in-class activities and craft projects related to the theme for the day. Choose one of the following based on the age and capabilities of the students. (Never let the activity or craft time take precedence over the biblical story.)

Activity 1: Glowing Fire Craft

Materials Needed:

- Red, orange and yellow tissue paper
- Battery operated tea light candles (available online and at many large craft shops or department stores)
- Glue
- Scissors
- Black markers



Instructions:

Give each person an electric tea light candle, scissors, glue, and pieces of red, orange, and yellow tissue paper. Invite them to follow these directions:

- Cut three strips of tissue paper, one in each color. Each strip should be long enough to go around the candle's base, and at least twice as tall as the candle. (Some strips can be taller than others, if desired.)
- Taking the strips one at a time and holding them horizontally, cut flame shapes along the top edge of the strip. Each strip can be slightly different. (For example, the flames on the red strip might be shorter and go deeper down than those on the orange strip, etc.)
- Put some glue along the bottom straight edge of one of the strips, and wrap it snugly around the base of the tea light candle. Repeat with each of the other strips, one over the other. Shape or fold the tops of the strips so they look more like flames.
- If desired, kids can use a black marker and write, "God is in control" or some similar statement in small letters around the base of the candle when the glue has dried.

Have kids flip the switches on their candles to turn them on; then, bring the finished crafts to a table at the front of the room. Shut off the lights, and look at the flickering "firelight." Talk about how big the fire in today's story would have been compared to this sight.

Activity 2: Hot Coals Game

Materials Needed:

- Large area to play a game
- Paper and pencil

Instructions:

This activity is based on the game "Ampe" which is commonly played in Ghana and other African countries.

Choose one child to be the "leader." All other children will line up, single file, to challenge the leader to a jumping contest. If playing competitively, the teacher can keep track of points with a paper and pencil (or using a white board).

To play, the "leader" and the first person in line (the "challenger") will stand facing each other.

- When you say, "Hot coals!" both players jump up and clap at the same time, landing with one foot forward.
- If the leader and the challenger land with the same foot forward (mirroring each other), the leader wins the round and gets a point.
- If the leader and challenger land with opposite feet forward, the challenger wins the round and gets a point.
- If the leader has won the round, he or she will remain leader and the challenger will go to the back of the line. The leader plays a round with the next person in line.
- If the challenger has won the round, he or she will become the leader and the original leader will go to the back of the line. The new leader plays a round with the next person in line.
- Continue until everyone has had a couple of turns.

An alternate way to play is to have all kids pair up. Pairs can play against each other, keeping track of points until a certain number of points determines a winner!

While we pretended to jump up from "hot coals" in our game, in today's Bible story, the three faithful men were able to walk in a fiery furnace without needing to jump up or getting burned. How? It was a miracle of God!

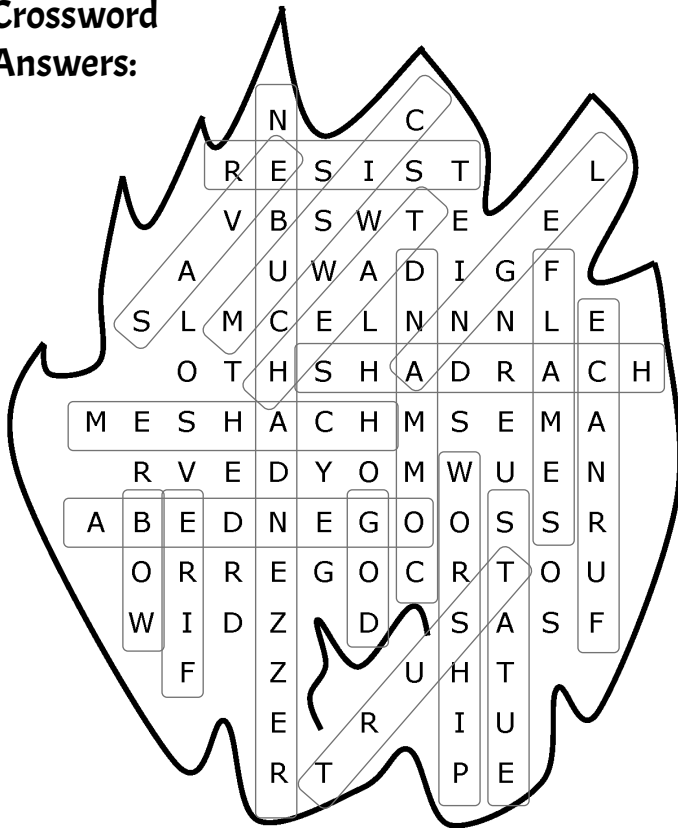


Worksheet Answer Key

Below are the answers to the children's worksheet for this week's lesson:

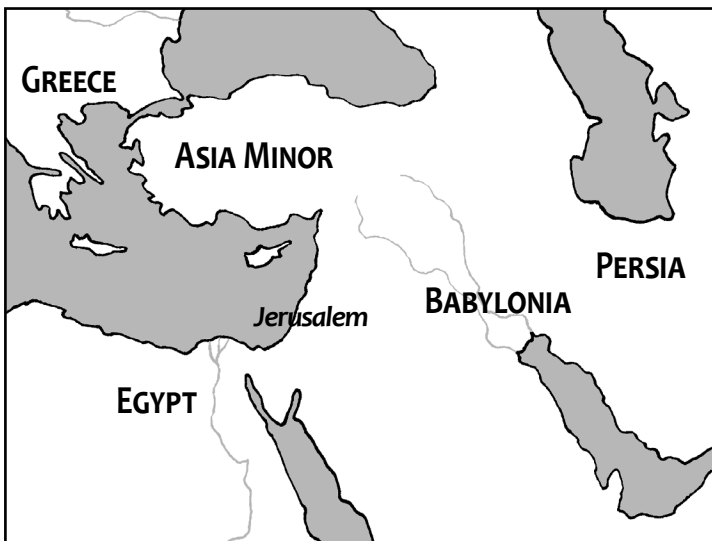
Crossword

Answers:



Daniel 3:18: "We will not serve your gods."

Biblical Map - Important Regions:



Vocabulary Word for the Week:

Teachers may want to introduce the theme word for the week to help expand students' biblical vocabulary:

Resistance

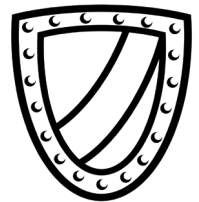
When we refuse to give in;
when we stand up against what is wrong

*The three men in today's story would
not do what they knew was wrong.
This is called "resistance."*

Reflection for the Week Ahead

Can you imagine being shoved into a place that was on fire knowing there was no way out? That would be terrifying! The three men in our story this week had that experience.

The amazing part was not only that they trusted in the Lord to save them if it was his will, but they also trusted that God would be with them, even if the worst happened and they were to die. They knew God would never abandon them!



Talk about a time in your life when you knew God was with you and protected you, even though circumstances you were in were dangerous or seemed hopeless. How did God stay with you? How did he deliver you from the situation?

God doesn't always make earthly things better; invoking God's action in a way we want things to go is not magic. But we trust that no matter what we face, we do not need to fear, because God is with us. Our future is in God's hands.

Talk together about how that is a wrong assumption about God. What is our final destiny with God?

The Practice of Prayer

Write a prayer praising God for saving Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fiery furnace. Ask God to always be with you in difficult and life-threatening times. Give thanks to God for the resurrection of Jesus which grants us eternal life no matter what we have to go through in this life.

Practice using the ADTRC Prayer Form: Address, Description, Thanks, Request, Conclusion.