Preschool–Grade 6

The Fiery Furnace

Sunday School Lesson for Preteens (Ages 11–12), 45–60 minutes

Main point: Decide now to worship only God, whatever it costs, and trust Him even when you don't know how things will turn out. He is able to deliver, and He is with us in the fire.
Bible passage: Daniel 3:1–30. Students read Daniel 3:13–18 and 3:19–28 out loud themselves.
Memory verse: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." *Isaiah 43:2 (KJV)* and Daniel 3:17–18 (KJV), which students read out loud in part 2.
You need: a Bible for each student, paper or a notebook and a pen for each student, a whiteboard and a marker, and one take-home sheet for each student.
Before class: read Daniel 1:1–7, 2:49 and Daniel 3. Write both memory verses on the board. Decide who reads which verses, or go around the room a few verses each.

1. Opening game: Count the Cost (5–10 minutes)

Read each situation. Students hold up one to five fingers for how much it would cost them to stay faithful to God (1 = easy, 5 = it would really cost me). 1) Everyone at a sleepover is watching something you know you shouldn't watch. 2) Your team wants you to play on Sunday morning instead of going to church. 3) A group chat is making fun of a kid, and everyone expects you to add something. 4) A teacher asks the class who believes in God, and no one raises a hand. Ask: *What makes the cost feel higher?* Say: "Three young men once faced the highest cost there is, and they had already decided."

2. Bible story: Students Read It (15 minutes)

Tell the beginning in your own words: Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had taken young men from Judah to Babylon (Daniel 1:1–6). Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah were given the names Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego (1:7), and the king set them over the affairs of the province of Babylon (2:49). Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, threescore (60) cubits high, about 90 feet, and gathered all his officials to its dedication (3:1–3). A herald announced: when the music plays, fall down and worship the golden image, or be cast that same hour into a burning fiery furnace (3:4–6). Everyone bowed (3:7). Certain Chaldeans accused the three Jews who did not (3:8–12).

Read out loud: Daniel 3:13–18. Old words in this passage:

- **rage and fury** (3:13): furious anger; **Is it true** (3:14): "Did you really do this on purpose?"
- **if ye be ready** (3:15): if you will now agree; **well**: then good, no punishment
- **we are not careful to answer thee** (3:16): we don't need to worry about how to answer you
- **deliver** (3:17): rescue; **thine hand**: your power; **be it known unto thee** (3:18): let it be clear to you

Free to print & copy for church, classroom & home · Please don't resell or re-post

Read out loud: Daniel 3:19–28. Old words in this passage:

- **the form of his visage was changed** (3:19): his face changed with anger; **wont**: used to, usually
- **hosen** (3:21): leg coverings; **garments**: clothes
- **slew** (3:22): killed. The flame was so hot that it killed the soldiers who carried the friends to the furnace. Read it plainly; the Bible doesn't ask us to dwell on it.
- **astonied** (3:24): astonished; **in haste**: quickly
- **loose** (3:25): untied; **no hurt**: not harmed
- **come forth, and come hither** (3:26): come out, and come here
- **singed** (3:27): burned even a little
- **changed the king's word** (3:28): refused the king's order; **yielded their bodies**: were willing to give up their lives

Finish the story: The king made a decree, with a harsh punishment, that no people, nation or language could speak against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, "because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort" (3:29). Then he promoted them in the province of Babylon (3:30).

About the fourth man: stay with what the text says. The king saw four men walking loose in the fire and said "the form of the fourth is like the Son of God" (3:25). Afterward he said God "hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants" (3:28). The Bible doesn't tell us more, so we don't add to it. What the passage makes plain: God was with them in the fire.

3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. The friends answered right away: "we are not careful to answer thee" (3:16). They didn't need time to think. When do you think they made that decision? What decisions can you make now, before the pressure comes?
2. "Our God... is able to deliver us... But if not" (3:17–18). Is it harder to obey God when you know He will rescue you, or when you aren't sure? Why?
3. The friends obeyed the king in their work (2:49) but refused to worship his image (3:18). Where is the line between respecting people in charge and obeying God first?
4. God didn't keep the friends out of the furnace. He was with them in it (3:25). What difference does that make when you go through something hard?
5. They went in bound and were seen walking loose (3:23, 3:25). What might that picture say about what God can do in a hard time?
6. The king ended up saying, "there is no other God that can deliver after this sort" (3:29). How can your faithfulness point other people to God?

Free to print & copy for church, classroom & home · Please don't resell or re-post

4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words in Isaiah 43:2: **thou** and **thee** mean you, **passest** means pass through, **overflow** means flood over, **walkest** means walk, **shalt not** means will not, and **kindle upon thee** means catch fire on you. Isaiah 43:2 is God's promise to His people to be with them in deep water and in fire. Daniel 3:17–18 is the friends' answer to the king.
Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say Isaiah 43:2 this week; keep working on Daniel 3:17–18 next week too.

5. What this means for us (5–10 minutes)

Say: "God delivered the three friends from the fire, and He delivers us from sin. God loves you, and 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, God who came as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:3–4, KJV). We obey the gospel the way Peter preached it: 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) We **repent**, turning from sin, and our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are buried with Jesus by baptism in His name, all the way under the water. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we rise to walk in newness of life, a brand-new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the Holy Ghost, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance, which means as He gives the words (Acts 2:4). Jesus called this being born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5)."
Pray with the students, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

Free to print & copy for church, classroom & home · Please don't resell or re-post

6. Activity: Journal (10 minutes)

Each student writes privately. No one has to share. Write these three prompts on the board:

1. Where is the "everyone bows down" moment in my life, the place where it's hardest to be different?
2. What do I want to decide now, before the pressure comes, like the friends who were "not careful to answer"?
3. Write a short prayer telling God you trust Him "even if not," and asking Him for courage to stand firm. If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

This week: write down one decision you've made to stand firm for God, and put it somewhere you'll see it every day.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, there is no other God like You, and You are able to deliver. We decide today to worship only You. Give us courage to stand firm when everyone else goes along, respect for the people over us, and trust in You even when we don't know how things will turn out. Thank You for being with us in the fire, and for loving us and making a way to save us through Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a student asks whether God always rescues people who obey Him: God is always with us, but He doesn't always take hard things away right away. The friends knew that, which is why they said "but if not" (Daniel 3:18). Hebrews 11:34 remembers people of faith who "quenched the violence of fire."

Free to print & copy for church, classroom & home · Please don't resell or re-post