Preschool–Grade 6

The Fiery Furnace

Sunday School Lesson for Kindergarten to 2nd Grade, 45 minutes

Main point: Stand firm for God and worship only Him, even when everyone else bows down. God is with us, even in the fire.
Bible passage: Daniel 3:1–30. Read it before class.
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)*
You need: a Bible, 6 paper flames (cut from red, orange and yellow paper), a marker, tape, crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the 6 paper flames (see part 4). Put a bookmark in your Bible at Daniel 3:17.

1. Opening game: Stand Firm (5 minutes)

Everyone stands. Call out things to do: "Touch your toes!" "Hop on one foot!" "Pat your head!" The kids do each one. But when you call out "Bow down to the gold statue!" everyone stands still and tall, puts their hands on their hips and says, "I worship only God!" Anyone who bows becomes your helper for the next round. Then say: "Today we will hear about three young men who stood tall when everyone else bowed down."

2. Bible story: Three Friends Stand Firm (10 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to Daniel 3, so the kids can see the story comes from God's Word. Tell it in your own words:

Long ago, three young men named **Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego** lived far from home in the land of Babylon. They loved God, and they had important jobs helping to rule the land (Daniel 2:49).

The king of Babylon, **Nebuchadnezzar**, made a huge **image** of gold. An image is a statue that people were told to worship. It was about 90 feet tall, as tall as a very tall tree (Daniel 3:1). The king called all his leaders to come and stand in front of it (3:2–3).

A man called out the king's order in a loud voice. When the people heard the music play, they must fall down and worship the gold image. Anyone who did not fall down would be cast into a burning fiery furnace! A **furnace** is a giant oven with a roaring fire inside (3:4–6). The music played, and all the people fell down and worshiped the gold image (3:7).

But three young men did not bow. Some men told the king that Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego did not serve his gods or worship his gold image (3:8–12).

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The story continues: The king was very angry. He called the three friends and gave them one more chance. If they would not bow down, they would be cast into the fire. And he asked, "who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" (3:13–15).

Read Daniel 3:17–18 from your Bible: "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." Say: "That means, 'Our God is able to save us, and He will. But even if He doesn't, we will still never worship your gods or your gold image.' **Deliver** means rescue."

The king's face changed, and he told his men to make the fire seven times hotter than ever (3:19). The strongest soldiers tied up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego in their clothes and threw them into the middle of the fire (3:20–23).

Then the king was amazed and rose up in haste. He asked his helpers, "Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" They said, "True, O king." The king said, "Lo, I see **four** men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God" (3:24–25). **Bound** means tied up; **loose**, untied; **lo**, look.

The king called to them, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth" (3:26). **Come forth** means come out. And out they came (3:26). Not one hair on their heads was burned, their coats were not changed, and they did not even smell like fire! (3:27). The king said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him" (3:28). **Blessed be** means praise. **Delivered** means rescued. He said, "there is no other God that can deliver after this sort" (3:29). **After this sort** means like this. Then the king gave the three friends even bigger jobs (3:30).

3. Questions to ask (5 minutes)

1. What did the king want everyone to do? *(Fall down and worship the gold image, Daniel 3:5)*
2. What did Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego do? *(They would not bow down, 3:12, 3:18)*
3. How many men did the king see walking in the fire? *(Four, 3:25)*
4. Were the three friends hurt? *(No! Not a hair was burned, 3:27)*
5. What did the king say about God at the end? *(There is no other God that can save like this, 3:29)*

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4. Memory verse: Flame Strips (5 minutes)

Tape the 6 paper flames up in order: *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.* Explain the old words: **thou** and **thee** mean you, **passest** means pass or go, **overflow** means flood over you, **walkest** means walk, **thou shalt not** means you will not, and **kindle upon thee** means catch fire on you. Read the verse together. Then turn one flame over ("put it out") and read it again. Keep putting out one flame each time until the kids can say the verse by themselves.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "God was with Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego in the fire, and God loves you very much too. But everyone has done wrong things. The Bible calls that sin: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God who came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus died for our sins, He was buried, and He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! The Bible tells us how to obey the gospel, the good news about Jesus: '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) To **repent** means we are sorry for our sin and we turn away from it. We are **baptized**, buried all the way under the water, in Jesus' name, so our sins are washed away (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). **Remission** means God takes our sins away. And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, His own Spirit, and we speak in other tongues, words God gives us, just like the believers did in the Bible (Acts 2:4)."
Pray with the kids, 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.
This week: when someone wants you to do something wrong, stand firm like the three friends and say, "I will obey God."

6. Activity (10–15 minutes)

Choose one: the **Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego word search** (vbshq.com/puzzles/fiery-furnace-word-search), crossword (vbshq.com/puzzles/fiery-furnace-crossword), maze (vbshq.com/puzzles/fiery-furnace-maze), the coloring page or craft (vbshq.com/bible-stories/fiery-furnace), or **Come Forth!** Mark a big "furnace" on the floor with tape or chairs. Kids walk slowly around inside it. When you say "Bow down!" everyone freezes, standing tall. When you say "Come forth!" everyone walks out of the furnace to you and cheers, "God was with us!"

7. Prayer

"Dear God, You are the only God, and we will worship only You. Help us stand firm and obey You, even when other people don't. Thank You for being with us in hard times, and thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

Left out on purpose: Daniel 3:22 says the fire was so hot that it killed the soldiers who threw the three friends in. This lesson leaves that out for young children. Read it yourself before class. If a child asks, say simply: "The fire was so hot that the king's men who threw them in did not survive. But God kept His three servants safe."
If a child asks who the fourth man was: tell them what the Bible says. The king said the fourth looked "like the Son of God" (Daniel 3:25), and afterward he said God "hath sent his angel" (3:28). The Bible doesn't tell us more, so we don't add to it. What we know for sure is that God was with them in the fire.

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