



K-Ist Lesson

Review

Bring three marshmallows on skewers. One should be white, another toasted golden brown (may be toasted in an oven/broiler), and the third should be black (overdone).

Optional: Before class, stack up several sticks to look like a campfire, add tissue paper for flames. Lay the skewered marshmallows around the “fire” as if toasting them.

Introduction

Refer to the Exodus to Malachi Timeline. We have learned how the nations of Israel and Judah were punished because they continued to disobey God. Enemies came and took the people away from their homes as captives.

Refer to Lesson 107 Theme Poster. In our last lesson, we learned about four young men who were taken to a different country called Babylon. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were chosen to be servants to King Nebuchadnezzar. He wanted them to forget about their home and about God, so he gave them Babylonian names: Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

These young men would not eat the food from the king’s table because they wanted to be obedient to God. But after a test, they were allowed to eat only vegetables and drink water. God rewarded their obedience by giving them great knowledge, skill, and wisdom. Daniel was also given the special gift of understanding dreams. All four men became important servants of King Nebuchadnezzar. We’ll learn more about them today.

- ? To start our lesson, I have a question for you. How many of you have ever toasted marshmallows over a campfire? Show of hands. Show each marshmallow. Discuss which kind students like. Discuss how fire/heat was used for each one (white, golden, and black).

- ? What happens when something is burned by fire? Show black marshmallow. It turns black; turns to ashes; gets ruined.

Fire is powerful, so it must be used safely or it can burn and ruin things and hurt people badly. But God gave us fire as a useful tool. People have used fire for cooking and for lighting in their homes. They’ve also used it for heat. In our lesson today, King Nebuchadnezzar used fire to scare people into doing something wrong! Let’s find out what happened.

The Fiery Furnace

Daniel 3:1 & 6

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. We’ll read from the book of Daniel in the Old Testament. Read Daniel 3:1.

- ? What did King Nebuchadnezzar make? An image of gold.

Show the Lesson Flip Chart. This image, or statue, of gold was about 90 feet tall and 9 feet wide. That’s really tall! It may have been a statue of King Nebuchadnezzar himself. He was a proud king who ruled over a huge kingdom, so he might have made this statue to show off his greatness and power.

King Nebuchadnezzar gave a command that whenever special music was played, everyone must bow down to worship this huge idol. But what would happen if someone didn’t obey this command? Let’s find out. Read Daniel 3:6.

- ? If anyone did not worship the statue, they would be cast into a what? A burning fiery furnace.

That sounds terrible! We just talked about fire and what it can do. The people were afraid to be killed in a furnace, so they obeyed and worshipped the statue—but not Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They wanted to obey God and worship only him.

Now, there were some Babylonians who were jealous of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and wanted to get rid of them. They went to the king and told him that the three friends would not bow to his statue, which made the king very angry.

“I will give you one more chance,” the king told them. “But if you will not bow to the statue, I will throw you into a furnace with burning fire!”

If the men obeyed the king and worshipped the idol, they would be disobeying God. But if they obeyed God and did not worship the statue, they would be thrown into a hot, fiery furnace.

What should they do: obey the king or obey God? Allow discussion.

These brave men answered the king and said, “O king, we know our God can save us. We will not bow to your statue.”

The king was so mad, he shouted, “Guards! Make the furnace seven times hotter. Then tie up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and throw them in!”

Daniel 3:22–23

Oh no! Listen to what happened. Read verses 22–23.

- ? This furnace was super hot! What happened to the guards who took the men up to the furnace? They were killed by the fire.
- ? What happened to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? They fell into the burning fiery furnace.

Refer to the Lesson Flip Chart. As King Nebuchadnezzar looked into the furnace, he saw something very surprising: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were walking around in there. They weren’t tied up any more—and they weren’t being hurt by the fire! Then the king noticed there was another man in there with them.

The Bible doesn’t say exactly who this man was. He might have been the Son of God, Jesus. Or he could have been an angel. Whoever it was, God had sent him to protect the three friends from the blazing fire.

Refer to the marshmallows from the Introduction. Now, we know that when something gets too close to a fire, it will get burned like this black marshmallow. And after we’ve sat near a campfire, our clothes will smell smoky. But when the king called the men to come out of the furnace, they weren’t hurt at all! And none of their clothes were burned—they didn’t even smell like smoke! This was a miracle that only God could do.

King Nebuchadnezzar was amazed. He could see that God was very powerful. Still, he had a lot to learn about how great God really is.

The Humbling of King Nebuchadnezzar

One night sometime later, Nebuchadnezzar told Daniel about a strange dream that worried him. “In my dream,” he said, “I saw an enormous tree that reached up to heaven. It had beautiful leaves and so much fruit, all the living creatures could eat from it. Animals rested in its shade, and birds lived in its branches.”

- ? Does this sound like a scary dream so far? No.

“But then,” the king continued, “an angel came and said, ‘Chop it down! The tree stump that’s left will live in the grass with the animals and have the mind of a beast for seven years.’”

The king wanted to know what the dream meant, and God allowed Daniel to explain: The tree stood for King Nebuchadnezzar. The birds and animals living under the tree were the many people in his kingdom. Chopping the tree down meant that Nebuchadnezzar’s kingdom would be taken away from him. And instead of staying in his palace, the king would live in the fields like a beast!

This would be Nebuchadnezzar’s punishment for his sinful pride. He thought he was so great, but he needed to understand that God was greater—over everything and everyone, including him.

Daniel 4:30

One year later, King Nebuchadnezzar looked out over the wonderful temples, gardens, walls, and other beautiful buildings of his great city. Let’s find out what he was thinking from Daniel 4:30. Read the verse.

- ? The king said he had built Babylon by whose mighty power? His own (my) mighty power.
- ? He said he built the city for whose majesty? His (my) majesty.

Nebuchadnezzar was still full of pride. Suddenly, he heard a voice from heaven saying, “Nebuchadnezzar, your kingdom has been taken away. You will live like an animal until you know that God is the ruler over all things.”

Refer to the Lesson Flip Chart. Immediately, Nebuchadnezzar’s dream came true. He couldn’t think like a man anymore, so he went away and lived like an animal in the fields. His hair and nails grew long, and he probably looked wild and scary!

For seven years, Nebuchadnezzar lived with the animals and ate grass like an ox! When he finally lifted his eyes up to God, his mind came back to him, and he praised God. Nebuchadnezzar finally understood that only God is sovereign—he is in complete control of everything. Then God gave the kingdom back to Nebuchadnezzar.

Refer to the Lesson Flip Chart. God showed his great power and glory when he saved Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fiery furnace. But Nebuchadnezzar was still very proud and wanted the credit for all he had done. It took a horrible punishment to make him understand that God is in control over everything and everyone.

**God is
in control**
over everything
and everyone!

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