

SHADRACH, MESHACH AND ABEDNEGO DO NOT BOW

Scripture:
Daniel 2-3

Materials Needed:
Invitations
candy or m&m's
music

Memory Verse: *Daniel 3:17-18* *If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it...but even if he does not, we want you to know O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.*

Objectives: As a result of this lesson, I want my student

To Know: Although Nebuchadnezzar issued a decree to worship his golden idol or be burned alive, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego resolutely held fast to God and did not bow at the sound of the music when everyone else did. God was with them in the furnace and saved them, so that Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged that HE was God Most High.

To Realize: Regardless of the pressures to give in to what everyone else around them is doing, one must resolutely hold fast to God and rely on His presence to see them through, knowing that He will honor His name.

To Respond: by not bowing to ungodly practices even when everyone else around them is, knowing God will honor His Name.

Approach:

Hold up an invitation envelope and ask: "How many of you like to be invited to a friend's birthday party?" How might someone feel if they were the only ones NOT invited to the birthday party? It feels really good to be INCLUDED in fun or important events!

Outline of Passage:

Scripture:
Dan 3:1-6

I. Nebuchadnezzar Issues His Decree

- A. The invitation is sent
1. Satraps
 2. Prefects
 3. Governors
 4. Counselors
 5. Treasurers
 6. Judges
 7. Magistrates
 8. ALL of the rulers of the provinces

Lesson Development:

Nebuchadnezzar had conquered a lot of countries already and do you know what he did? He put the BEST people from those countries in charge of things. Last week we saw how Daniel and his friends were put into some of those very important leadership positions. Nebuchadnezzar wanted to be VERY SURE that those people who were now working for him were

- B. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are invited.
(Note: Daniel is not mentioned and we can surmise that he either was excused on business, was sick, or chose not to attend)

- B. The command is given
1. Peoples, nations, men of every language
 2. When you hear the sound of horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, pipes and all kinds of music
 3. YOU ARE TO FALL DOWN AND WORSHIP

- II. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego Won't Bow to the Idol
- A. In front of the other people.

going to be VERY LOYAL and do what he said. So he sent out an invitation to ALL those VERY IMPORTANT people in his country...all the leaders. If you were not an important person you did not receive an invitation. How would you feel if you got one of those special invitations? How do you think SMA felt? It was an invitation to a BIG dedication party!
But they read further on the invitation and it said (read your invitation) "Dedication of Golden Idol made by King Nebuchadnezzar." They had to go...and so they went.
(Imagine with your students what it would be like to gather in such a big place with so many other people who were all leaders and important!) This was a BIG DEAL.

So first we had the INVITATION to this big event...and what did the important people have to do? Come. Now with everyone there and gathered, the COMMAND was given. There was a big band playing music.

Have a student read v. 4

Are SMA loyal to King Nebuchadnezzar? So should they do what he commanded? Why not? (ask them to tell you the first TWO commandments.)

SMA wanted to be loyal workers but when Nebuchadnezzar was demanding that they say HIS god was the greatest god—that just wasn't true and God had said they were not to bow down.
How do you think they were feeling at that moment when the band music started playing?

Scripture
Dan. 3:7-12

Scripture
Dan. 3:13-27

- B. In front of the king
 - a. Certain Chaldeans came and brought accusations against them
 - b. "Certain Jews you have appointed"
 - c. They have disregarded YOU, they do not serve your gods, they don't worship the golden image you have set up

III. God Is With Them in the Fire

A. Is it true?
He gives them a chance to change their minds! He tells them what will happen. And then he asks them an important question in verse 15.

- B. What do they say?
 - 1. They said the truth: God could deliver them.

What would the other important people think of them? That's not what THEY were thinking about! What were they thinking? What would GOD think of them?

Everyone around them starting going down to the ground.

And there they were...still standing. I bet they were glad they had each other!

They passed the test and didn't bow! Oh no! look in verse 8!
Now we have a second test...

They did not like the Jews, and they might have been jealous of the high position they had been given.

But what do they tell Nebuchadnezzar?

Have a student read vs. 12

They made it sound like SMA were not loyal to King Nebuchadnezzar himself. What did Nebuchadnezzar do?

How DARE they not do what he commanded!! He was going to teach them a lesson! So now they aren't in front of the people...they are brought in front of the King himself!

What was the question Nebuchadnezzar asked them?
"WHAT GOD is there who can deliver you out of MY hand?!"

Nebuchadnezzar thought that his gods were the greatest and that they had made him the greatest over every other god. He was making everyone worship him and his gods.

What was the answer to Neb's question? What god was there who could deliver them? Only the TRUE God!

2. But they would not bow even it He chose not to deliver them.

Read VERSE 17 and 18.

C. They heat the fire 7x and the soldiers die

This enrages Nebuchadnezzar!

D. Nebuchadnezzar sees 4 men in the fire

What was God going to do?

1. loosed, walking, without harm

Nebuchadnezzar had thrown out a challenge and said no god could deliver SMA out of his hands! Well...

2. one "like the son of a god."

God was going to show him he was wrong!

3. He calls them out of the fire

Read vs. 24

4. Everyone observes the fire had NO EFFECT on bodies, hair, clothing, or smell!

Imagine with your students what it would have been like for them to come out...touch your face/skin...your clothes, smell your clothes.

Who had delivered them?! God had Why?

Who saw what had happened? Vs.

27...all those people who had bowed were watching!

Scripture
Dan 3:28-30

IV. Nebuchadnezzar Acknowledges Their GOD as the Most High God

And Nebuchadnezzar had seen it all before his very eyes.

Read vs. 28

A. "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

B. He delivered HIS SERVANTS who put their TRUST in HIM.

C. They worshipped no god but their GOD.

D. The king caused them to prosper.

Conclusion:

How were SMA able to stay standing and not bow down to the king's idol, even though they wanted to be good workers for the king? (They knew God's laws and that they had to obey God above all.)

Play the Stand Up Game.

SHADRACH, MESHACH AND ABEDNEGO DO NOT BOW HELPS FOR THE TEACHER

Personal Application Questions:

1. What world philosophy/god is surrounding you in your culture? (Western or secular culture bows to science and nature; Eastern culture to gods.)
2. How can you be loyal to a government that enforces ungodliness without bowing to its gods or participating?
3. How does the fear of man keep you from standing for God when it will make you stand out from everyone else?
4. How does having other believers help you stand for God?

Application Questions to think through for your Students:

1. What might it feel like when there is great pressure to conform to what everyone else around them is doing that is against what God says in His Word?
2. How can having one or two other believers who are also standing in obedience to God make a difference or be a help?
3. When does a believer have to draw the line between being loyal to the manmade laws and being loyal to God's laws?

Memory Verse:

Daniel 3:17-18 *If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it...but even if he does not, we want you to know O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.*

Post-Lesson Activity:

Play *The Stand Up Game*. The purpose of this game is to simulate what it feels like to stand alone. (Note: do **not** have your students bow in the play acting!) Have a sign that says "SMA". The one that is given that sign is the one designated to remain standing.

Play as many rounds as there are students so that everyone has a chance to be the one holding the SMA sign and left standing.

Have everyone stand. Tell them they are going to learn how to be like SMA and what it might have felt like for them to be the only ones standing. Start playing the music and when you stop it, everyone must sit down...except for the one person who is holding the SMA sign. Reward everyone who sat down with a piece of candy or m&m's. Of course...the one left standing doesn't get the "reward" for conforming. The person holding the sign chooses the next person to hold the SMA sign and the music starts again.

After everyone has had a turn...ask what it felt like to see everyone else getting the reward of a piece of candy for sitting. There is always a "reward" for conforming. How hard is it to keep standing when you don't get what everyone else is getting? What temptation is it to want the piece of candy?

If you have time, play again with 3 people standing when the music stops. Ask how it makes a difference to have others standing with you.