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THE FIERY FURNACE

Trusting God in Difficult Times

YEAR 2 – KINGDOM LIFE

UNIT 7: KINGDOM FAITH

1 | Teacher's Notes

Scripture Daniel 3; John 16:33

Objectives To explain that

- Today's story is about Kingdom Faith. To have faith is to trust and obey Jesus, even when bad things happen.
- The Babylonians worshipped false gods (idols), but Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were faithful to the true God of Israel.
- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to bow down to worship the gold statue even when they knew they would be thrown into the fiery furnace.
- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego trusted that God was powerful enough to save them, but they stayed faithful to God even when they faced death.
- God doesn't always save us from difficulty. But God has promised that he will always be with us, both in good times and hard times, and he has given us the hope of eternal life with him.
- When others want us to disobey God's commands, we should ask God to help us stay faithful.

Memory Verse Jesus says, "In this world you will have trouble. But be encouraged! I have won the battle over the world." (John 16:33 – NIRV)

ACNA Catechism Connections Today's story of The Fiery Furnace is connected to the following Catechism questions:

Q61 How do Jesus' sufferings help you? Jesus has experienced our sufferings, understands our sorrows, and is able to sympathize with our weakness. Therefore, I

should bear my sufferings with perseverance and hope, for my Savior is with me in them, and through them I will come to know him more fully.

Q203 What is temptation? Temptation is any enticement to turn from faith in God and to violate his commandments.

Q205 What help do you seek from God in the face of temptation? I ask God to increase my faith to trust him, enliven my conscience to fear him, soften my heart to love him, and strengthen my will to obey him, that I may resist evil and stand in the face of temptation.

Q206 Does God lead you into temptation? No. God never tempts anyone, nor is he the cause of any sin; but he does allow me to be tested so that I may grow in faith and obedience.

Q207 What are ways to guard against temptation? As I abide in Christ, I can guard against temptation by praying for protection and strength, confessing my sins, recalling God's Word, avoiding tempting situations, and seeking the support of fellow Christians.

Q208 How can the Church help you to resist temptation? In the fellowship of Christ's Body, I can find companionship when I am lonely or vulnerable, support to resist ungodly influence, wisdom to guard me from folly, exhortation to grow in holiness, and discipline to correct me when I fall into error.

Q243 How should you pray in times of suffering? I should pray trusting in the sufficiency of God's grace and in joyful assurance that "suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame."

Q306 Does earthly authority have limits? Yes. All authority comes from God, the King of kings, who expects me to love, honor, and obey him above all earthly authorities whenever they command me to sin.

**Suggested
Materials,
Props, and
Costumes****Big story props:**

- Large Bible
- Kingdom Life storyboard (see photo)

Lesson Props: (see Props Document for instructions on how to make these)

- Stations for the play:
 1. Wall where the image of the gold statue will hang.
 2. Red, orange, and yellow fabric or plastic tablecloths placed together on the floor to symbolize the fiery furnace.
 3. Chair for King Nebuchadnezzar to sit in.
- Signs to hang around the necks of actors stating who their character is
- Large statue cut out of gold plastic tablecloth to hang on wall.
- 3 pieces of rope for tying up hands
- Storyboard symbol: "Stay faithful" (3 men refusing to worship statue)
- Large version of the storyboard picture to use as a teaching aid.
- Cue cards are encouraged if a child reads the part.

Costumes: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, two soldiers, King Nebuchadnezzar, a heavenly being dressed in white

Memory Verse: Jesus says, "In this world you will have trouble. But be encouraged! I have won the battle over the world." (John 16:33 – NIRV)

(Found on the last page of this lesson plan) Print out and place in large Bible.

2 | Lesson Outline:

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| Welcome | As the children arrive ensure each one is personally welcomed and everyone knows each other's name. |
| Greeting & Collect for Purity | Light the candles Say the Greeting and Collect for Purity (<i>see Resource Section</i>) |
| Prayer of Confession | Say the Prayer of Confession (<i>see Resource Section</i>) Extinguish the candles |
| Music | My God is so big, so strong and so mighty Our God is a Great Big God Trust and Obey (Worshiphousekids.com) <i>Please check internet for lyrics and music.</i> |
| Review of foundations | Choose from the following as appropriate: The Lord's Prayer, The Apostles Creed, The Ten Commandments or The Greatest Commandment. <i>For more information on how to teach these, see Resource Section</i> |
| Reading | Memory verse (Printed out and placed in large Bible – invite older child to read) |
| Story Board Review | Ask review questions relating to props from previous lessons on story board. <i>Story board review is found in Section 4</i> |
| Props/Costumes | Take a few moments to arrange the narrator and actors. (Props should already be set up prior to the start of the class.) Big story props: Large Bible, Kingdom Life storyboard |
| Bible Story | <i>Proceed with story and questions found in Section 4.</i> |
| Related activities | <i>After the story, proceed with related activities found in Section 5.</i> |
| Preparation for Communion & leaving class | Gather the children together for the Preparation for Communion prayer before exiting the classroom. <i>See Resource Section.</i> |

3 | Storyboard Progression



This is how the storyboard should look at the **start** of the lesson



This is how the Kingdom Faith section should look at the **end** of the lesson. Leave the storyboard like this for next week.

4 | Story and Questions

SETUP: *Have the stations for the play set up (see props section). Set up the Kingdom Life storyboard in a separate area. Start the lesson by the storyboard.*

BIBLE: *Hold up the Bible and say: 'Today's story is from the Bible, and it is about Kingdom Faith. To have faith is to trust and obey Jesus.'*

STORYBOARD REVIEW:

TEACHER: Last lesson we heard the story of how Jesus calmed the storm. *(Point to symbol of wave on storyboard.)* Through that story we learned that Jesus is in control no matter what happens. When we go through storms and hard times, we do not have to be afraid, but we can have peace in our hearts because we know that Jesus is with us. He is Almighty, he is in control. *(Point to Almighty symbol.)*

STORY:

TEACHER: Today we are going to hear another story about trusting God in hard times. This story takes place in the Old Testament, when the Israelites had been taken away, out of their Promised Land to a place called Babylon.

(Show the large version of the storyboard symbol.) The very powerful king of Babylon, King Nebuchadnezzar, built a large golden statue of himself and wanted everyone to worship it. There were three faithful young Israelite men who would not bow down to the golden statue because they worshipped the One True God. The King saw that they were not bowing down, and he had them thrown into a fiery furnace to die. These three young men knew that God was able to rescue them, but even if God chose **not** to rescue them, they would **not** bow down and worship the statue. They trusted God.

We are going to act out this story now and I need seven volunteers for the play. We will need the three Israelites: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. We will need King Nebuchadnezzar and we will need two of the king's soldiers. We also need a heavenly being dressed in white.

ACTION: *Move the children to where the stations for the play are set up. Ask for 7 volunteers for the play. Hang signs around their necks and don simple costumes.*

TEACHER: The people of Israel had been taken away from their Promised Land, to a land called Babylon. In Babylon, the Israelites had to serve King Nebuchadnezzar.

ACTION: *The king sits on a chair. Have the three men stand a distance away from the king.*

TEACHER: The Babylonians worshipped false gods, but these three Israelites, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were faithful to the true God of Israel, and they worshipped him only.

One day, King Nebuchadnezzar built a huge gold statue for all the people in Babylon to worship. *(Hang the picture of the statue up on the board or wall.)*

TEACHER: The people had to bow down and worship the statue every time they heard music played. If they refused to bow, they would be thrown into a blazing furnace *(point to furnace)* where they would burn up instantly!

But Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego did **not** bow down to the statue. They worshipped the One True God.

ACTION: *The three men shake their heads and remain standing.*

TEACHER: King Nebuchadnezzar heard about this, and it made him very angry. Soldiers went to get the three men and brought them before the king.

ACTION: *The two soldiers bring the three men before the king.*

TEACHER: The king asked them:

KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR: "Is it true that you did not worship my gold statue? If you refuse, you will be thrown into the blazing furnace!"

TEACHER: But Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were not afraid. They said, "You can throw us into the blazing furnace, but the God we serve is able to save us and bring us out of it alive. But even if God doesn't save us, we will still not worship the gold statue."

Then the king was very angry. He ordered his soldiers to tie up the three men and throw them into the blazing furnace.

ACTION: *Soldiers loosely tie up the men's hands and push them into the fire.*

TEACHER: When King Nebuchadnezzar looked into the fire, he leapt to his feet because of what he saw.

ACTION: *The king leaps to his feet. The child dressed in white enters the fire and ropes fall off the men. All four walk around in the fire.*

TEACHER: There were not three men in the fire, but four! The three men were no longer tied up, but all walking around! And the fourth man in the furnace looked like a son of the gods.

Christians have always believed that it was God the Son himself who appeared in this fire. However, this happened a long time before he came to earth as the baby Jesus born in Bethlehem!

The king walked up to the furnace and shouted to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to come out.

ACTION: *The king walks up to the furnace. The three men come out of the fire and the fourth person disappears out the back of the fire and sits down with the other children.*

TEACHER: King Nebuchadnezzar could not believe his eyes! The three Israelites had not been burned by the fire at all. They didn't even smell like smoke!

KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR: "May the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be praised! He has sent his angel and saved his servants."

TEACHER: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego faced a very difficult situation (*point to three Israelites*), but they stayed faithful to God, even when they weren't sure if God would save them from the furnace (*point to furnace*).

Sometimes life is hard, and there are important choices to make. Sometimes we experience trouble because God doesn't always save us from difficulty.

Jesus talks about that in our memory verse:

Jesus says: "In this world you will have trouble." But Jesus also says: "Be encouraged! I have won the battle over the world." Jesus won the battle over sin and evil on the cross, and he has promised that he will always be with us, both in good and hard times. He has also promised that we will live with him forever, so we can even face death without fear, just like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did.

Let's go and sit down by our storyboard.

ACTION: *Sit down by the storyboard with the children*

TEACHER: (*Point to large storyboard picture.*) In our country, nobody gets thrown into a fiery furnace because they are faithful to God; however, staying faithful to

God can make us unpopular. People might want us to do things that go against God's commandments to love him and love others.

Your friends might want you to join them in being mean to or bully someone. They may want you to lie, steal, or hurt others. What should we do if our friends want us to do these things? *(Choose to obey God instead of your friends.)*

When we are faced with situations like that, we have to make a decision, just like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. We need to make the decision to stay faithful to God even when it makes us unpopular. In those situations, we can pray and ask God to be with us and help us be faithful to him and remember the wonderful forever kingdom Jesus has prepared for those who love and follow him.

(Hold up storyboard symbol.) Here is a picture of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refusing to bow down to the golden statue even when everyone else did. Let's put this picture on our storyboard to remind us that Jesus calls us to stay faithful to him and he is with us always. *(Put symbol down on storyboard as shown.)*

Life Application Prayer:

TEACHER: Lord Jesus, you are the Almighty God and you have promised that you will **always** be with us both in good times and in hard times. Help us to trust you and be strong when things are hard. Help us to stay faithful to you always. Thank you that you won the battle over sin and death, and we can enjoy your love and life forever! Amen.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS:

- **What does this story tell us about God?** (He is always with us in good times and hard times. He wants us to be faithful to him.)
- **What was the difficult situation that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego faced in this story?** (They were asked to bow down to worship the gold statue, or else they would be thrown into the fiery furnace.)
- **What did the three men choose to do in this difficult situation?** (They refused to bow down to the statue. They chose to be faithful to the One True God and worship him only.)
- **What did they say to King Nebuchadnezzar?** (The God we serve is able to save us and bring us out of it alive. But even if God doesn't save us, we still will not worship the gold statue.)
- **What happened when they were thrown into the furnace?** (God saved them. A heavenly being, was walking in the furnace with them. Christians have always believed that it was God the Son himself who appeared in this fire, a long time before he was born as Jesus!)
- **Were they hurt in the furnace?** (No. God saved them. They didn't even smell like smoke afterwards.)
- **Does God always save us from hard times?** (No, but he promises to always be with us. We can also be full of hope, because we will live forever with Jesus.)
- **What should we do when others want us to disobey God's commandments?** (We should remember that God is with us and ask him to help us stay faithful to him even when it makes us unpopular.)

5 | Response Activities

Kingdom News handout and colouring supplement

- Have the children complete the activities in the Kingdom News handout and colouring supplement.

Optional activities

- Different learning stations, such as: a book table, modelling clay, colouring papers

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have trouble.
But be encouraged!
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over the world."

(John 16:33)