

The Golden Statue

Overview

Materials You'll Need

- children's plastic hangers (one per student)
- mobile patterns
- string or yarn
- scissors
- hole punch
- markers or crayons



Scriptures

Dan 3

Bible Truth Objective(s)

God wants us to worship Him and not any other person or thing

Behavioral Objective(s)

To make good choices that show we worship no one else but God

Memory Verse

"Because He is your Lord, worship Him." (Ps 45:11)



Bible Knowledge

King Nebuchadnezzar

Nebuchadnezzar was one of the greatest kings of Babylon (602-562 BC). In addition to his many military conquests, he was also noteworthy for building the city of Babylon. One of the wonders of the ancient world (the Hanging Gardens of Babylon) was housed in the palace Nebuchadnezzar built.

People of ancient times had no problem at all with worshipping their own gods and the gods of their conquerors. They could not see the fault in worshipping more gods to be on the safe side. However, when King Nebuchadnezzar set up his colossal statue in Daniel chapter 3 and demanded that everyone worship it, it may have been more of a political act than a religious one.

The gold ninety by nine foot statue stood in the Plain of Dura, about six miles southeast of the city of Babylon. The purpose of the music was not to produce a pleasing sound, but rather to serve as a signal that it was time to worship the image.

Daniel's Friends

Shadrach (Hananiah, meaning "The Lord shows

grace"), Meshach (Mishael, meaning "Who is what God is?"), and Abednego (Azariah, meaning "The Lord helps") were Daniel's friends. They were deported to Babylon to be educated so they could serve the king. Men jealous of the three young Jewish officials reported them to the king for not worshipping the image.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego maintained their devotion to God by obeying the first of the Ten Commandments. The king was so furious that he commanded the furnace to be heated as hot as possible. Then they were tied up and thrown into the fire. The furnace was probably a lime kiln built against a hillside, with an opening at the bottom and an inclined walkway to another opening at the top. The men who threw the three friends in died from the intense heat.

King Nebuchadnezzar saw not three, but four men in the fire. Furthermore, they were not bound, but walked freely through the furnace. He called the three men out and examined them; far from being burned, their robes were not scorched, and they did not even bear the faintest scent of smoke. Upon seeing God's protection, Nebuchadnezzar praised God. Being a polytheist, it would not have been difficult for him to accept another god.



Understanding Your Students

Children might find it hard to relate this story to their own lives, so it will be useful to provide current day situations to teach them how we should stand up for God. Here are several child-related scenarios to discuss:

*At school, you and many of your classmates receive an invitation to attend your friend's birthday party. You really want to go because it's going to be held at "Celebration Station," which is a fun place with pizza, video games, go-carts, rides, and more. Many of your other friends will be there too. However, you notice that the date of the party lands on a Saturday afternoon, the Sabbath. You know that the Sabbath is God's day of rest and your day to go to church to wor-

ship Him. But you really don't want to miss the party. What will you do?

*In your school lunchroom, you sit with the same group of children each day. Before you eat your lunch, you pray to thank God for the food He has provided for you. When you have finished praying, you realize that some of the kids in your lunch group have been giggling at you. Your feelings are hurt, and you're beginning to think about skipping the lunch prayers because you don't want them to make fun of you. What will you do?

These are real situations the students may face. It's important to have them express their feelings so that we will clearly understand the questions or opinions they have. From their statements, we will know whether we should reinforce what they feel, or possibly guide them to a better understanding of standing up for our Lord.



Vocabulary

Statue

a person or thing that is made from stone or wood

Idol

something people worship; something people think is more important than God

Worship

to show God we love Him by going to church, reading the Bible, singing hymns, praying to Him, and following His commands



Before You Teach

We know very well the first Commandment of God: we shall have no other gods before God Himself. Deuteronomy 4:23-24 says, "Take heed to yourselves, lest you forget the covenant of the Lord your God which He made with you, and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of anything which the Lord your God has forbidden you. For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God."

God gave us the command to worship Him alone because He is a jealous God. When we think about being jealous, it conjures up negative images. We might think of a husband who doesn't like his wife talking to other men for a long time, or a friend who is very possessive of her relationships. But God's jealousy is not like our human emotion. He does not become jealous out of selfish needs. He is a jealous

God because only God is perfectly righteous and holy. He has the right to be angry and jealous when we do not remain faithful to Him.

In the Old Testament, we see time and again how the Israelites disobeyed God. Instead of trusting in Him, they turned to idols and their own ways, thus arousing His righteous anger. The Israelites experienced God's wrath when He allowed Babylon to conquer and destroy Jerusalem. Although we know God is a loving and merciful God, there is no room for sin in His kingdom. If we do not heed His warnings and words, the consequences can be very severe.

Today, even if we have sinned, God gives us many opportunities to change because He is patient with us. However, we cannot continue to take God's grace and mercy for granted. We must recognize that God alone is our Lord, our Father. We need to remember to fear the Lord and live our lives so that in all things we do, we are glorifying His name. Let us pray for God's continued guidance and strength.



Bible Story

Daniel and His Friends Stick Together

Last week, we learned about four very special people. Does anyone remember who they were? They were Daniel and his three friends. And what made them so special? They refused to eat the king's food because it was offered to idols. This must have been very hard for Daniel and his friends since almost everyone else was eating the king's food. Can anyone remember what Daniel and his friends ate instead? They ate just vegetables and drank water! How many of you think you would be happy just eating vegetables and drinking water? Eating would not be as much fun without some of the foods and drinks we love, right? But the friends knew they had to follow God's commands, and they decided to stick to their plan together. And because they listened to God, in the end, the king chose Daniel and his friends to be his helpers in the palace.

It's very important to have friends, isn't it? Can everyone think of one reason why it's so wonderful to have friends? (Give students time to respond.) It's fun to play with them. They can also make you feel better when you are sad, and they can laugh with you when something funny happens. This week, we're going to keep learning about Daniel's friends. Their names are a little hard to learn, but we can all learn them together. Their names were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (write their names on the board). Can we all say these names together? (Practice saying the names with the students.)

The King Makes a New Statue

After Daniel and his friends were chosen to help the king, the king decided to do something special for himself. He made a giant golden statue. Now this was not just a little statue. It was humongous. Can you guess how large it was? The Bible says it was about ninety feet tall. Imagine a grown-up lying on the ground. Well, now imagine fifteen grown-ups lying on the ground, all lined up, head to toe. That's how tall this statue was. That was pretty tall. Why do you think the king wanted to build it?

The king wanted everyone to worship the statue. He even made a new law: whenever a person heard some special music being played, the person

had to bow down and worship the golden statue. Everyone in the land had to do this or else he would be punished. Can anyone guess what the punishment was? It was a very painful punishment. Whoever did not worship the statue would be thrown into a fiery furnace, which is a big, hot oven. There is no way that anyone would be able to live after being thrown into that hot place.

Daniel's Friends Do Not Worship the Statue

When the people of the land heard the new law, they knew they had to obey. No one wanted to die in the fiery furnace. So whenever the people heard the horns, flutes, harps, pipes, and other instruments playing the special music, what do you think the people did? Yes, they bowed down to worship the golden statue.

But there were three people who did not want to bow down and worship the statue. Can anyone guess who these three people were? Yes, they were Daniel's friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Even though they heard about the law, and the special music, they did not bow down and worship the statue. Why is that? They knew they should only worship the one true God and not some giant golden statue. So whenever the music played and everyone else bowed down to the statue, these three friends did not. They wanted to be strong for God and not worship anyone or anything else. In the beginning, no one noticed that the three friends did not bow down whenever the music played. There were just too many people in the land. But after some time, some of the king's helpers began to notice that these three men did not bow down to the statue.

They hurried to the king, and said, "O, King, you made a new law that everyone needs to bow down and worship the idol when they hear the music. If they do not, they will be thrown into the fiery furnace. There are three men who do not obey your law. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego do not bow down and worship the golden statue."

Daniel's Friends Stand up for God

Once the king heard that these three men were not following his law, he was very angry. He asked that the three friends be brought to him. So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were brought before the king.

The king said, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, I will give you one more chance. When you hear the music, you must bow down and worship my golden statue. If you don't, you will be thrown into the fiery furnace right away."

The three friends could tell that the king was very angry, but they also knew what they were going to do.

The three friends said to the king, "We will not worship your statue because our God is powerful enough to protect us from the fire. Even if God does not save us, we want everyone to know that we will not worship this golden statue."

Their answer made the king even angrier. The king ordered the furnace to be made seven times hotter than usual. He also ordered some of his strongest soldiers to tie up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and throw them into the fiery furnace.

God Protects Daniel's Friends

After the friends were thrown into the fire, the king expected to see them get burned by the fire. But instead, he was surprised by what he saw.

He quickly asked the people next to him, "Didn't we throw three men into the furnace? I see four men. And they are not tied up. They are walking around. And one of those men looks like he is

the Son of God."

When the king saw that God was protecting these three friends, he knew that their God was the real one.

He went near the furnace and shouted out, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, come out! I know now that you worship the true God!"

Once the three friends came out, everyone was even more surprised. Not only were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's clothes not burned, they did not even smell like smoke! Then the king understood what a mighty God these three friends worshiped.

He said, "Praise God! He has saved Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fire."

The king even made a new law. This new law said that no one could ever say anything bad against God because only He could keep Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego safe in the fiery furnace.

We Need to Worship God

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego stood up for God. That means even though it was hard because they might die, they still remained faithful. They knew that it was more important to worship God. And in the end, God saved them. Today, we also have to worship God, no matter what.



Check For Understanding

1. **What did the king make?** (A gigantic golden statue.)
2. **What law did the king make?** (Everyone must bow down and worship the statue whenever the music played.)
3. **What were the names of Daniel's friends?** (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.)
4. **Did they obey the king's law?** (No.)
5. **What happened to them?** (They were thrown into the fiery furnace.)
6. **Did they get burned?** (No.)
7. **Why not?** (God protected them because

they worshiped God instead of the golden statue.)

8. **There are many different ways to worship God. What are they?** (We can pray to Him, sing about Him, give offerings to Him, learn about Him in church, etc.)
9. **There are some things that can keep us from worshiping God. What are they?** (We might want to stay at home and watch cartoons, go out somewhere to have fun on the Sabbath, etc.)
10. **How can we stand up for God today?** (Allow students to share. Talk about specific situations, like the ones presented in the Understanding Your Students section.)



Life Application Story

Mighty Man

Mrs. Marsh came home one day from the store with a present for John. She knew that he had wanted it for months, and she was excited to surprise him. Holding the box behind her back, Mrs. Marsh walked up the stairs and went into John's room.

"John," Mrs. Marsh said, "look what I found at the store."

Mrs. Marsh put a shiny plastic box with a new action hero inside. John's eyes grew bigger as he realized what his mom had just given him.

"Mighty Man!" John shouted.

Mighty Man was John's favorite superhero, and every time John went to the toy store, he spent at least ten minutes looking at it. He did not think that he would ever get this toy; now that it was his, he couldn't wait to play with it.

"Oh, thank you, Mom!" John exclaimed as he gave her a big hug.

"You're welcome, but don't play it for too long," Mrs. Marsh said. "We are going to church tonight."

"Okay, Mom."

John decided that the first time he played with Mighty Man, everything had to be perfect. He took out all of his soldiers and put them around his room. He put some on the bed, he stood some on the table, he placed many on the floor in combat position, and he even stationed some on the arm of his chair! When John looked around, there were enough soldiers to create three small armies! Mighty Man, John decided, was going to be the leader of all his soldiers! For the next hour, John made Mighty Man whiz through the air, crawl through the jungle of his blankets, climb the wall of his dresser, and perform all sorts of amazing acts. But the bad guys Mighty Man was fighting were powerful too. Mighty Man had only destroyed one of the evil men. There were still three that Mighty Man had to defeat, and he had to do this before it was too late.

Suddenly, a knock on the door surprised John.

"John, it's almost time to go," Mrs. Marsh said.

"Oh, Mom, do we have to go now?" John

asked. "I'm not done playing yet. Mighty Man still needs to defeat three evil enemies."

"I know it's a lot of fun playing with Mighty Man, but we have to spend time with God," Mrs. Marsh said.

"Can we stay at home tonight?" John asked. "Just tonight, please?"

"I don't know if I should have bought you Mighty Man, John. The reason your father and I decided to get you Mighty Man is because we thought that you'd be able to tell when it was time to play and when it wasn't. Right now, it is church time but you want to turn it into playing time," Mrs. Marsh said.

"It's just so exciting to get a new toy," John explained.

"I understand that, John, but you're old enough to tell what is more important—God or Mighty Man. That's a choice that you have to make," Mrs. Marsh replied.

John looked sadly at Mighty Man.

"I guess God is more important than Mighty Man," John said softly.

"God is certainly mightier than Mighty Man. Even though Mighty Man is fun to play with, it is a toy. The God we worship is real and living," Mrs. Marsh added.

"So I guess it makes sense to spend time with the "Mightiest Man" tonight. Do you get it, Mom?"

"That would make sense, John," Mrs. Marsh responded with a laugh.

"Okay, Mom," John said as he put down his toy. "I know Mighty Man is just a toy. I'm ready to stop playing tonight. Let's go to church."

And that was exactly what they did.

Questions to Think About

1. **Why didn't John want to go to church?** (He wanted to stay home and play with his new toy.)
2. **When we think something is more important than Jesus Christ, what are we doing?** (Some suggestions: It is like worshiping an idol because we think that thing is more important. Some examples: going to a party on Saturday during the day, playing games instead of worshipping God, etc.)
3. **Why do we worship God?** (Allow students to answer.)



Activity 1

David Does Many Things

Read the sentences. Circle the right picture that finishes each sentence.

1. King Nebuchadnezzar made a golden STATUE or FLOWER.
2. King Nebuchadnezzar wanted the people to BOW DOWN or HUG the statue.
3. Daniel's THREE or ONE friends did not worship the statue.
4. King Nebuchadnezzar was HAPPY or ANGRY because Daniel's friends did not bow down to the statue.
5. Daniel's friends were thrown into the fiery POOL or FURNACE.
6. Who else was in the fiery furnace with the friends? (a LION or an ANGEL)



Activity 2

What Will You Choose?

Look at the pictures. Color in the pictures you will choose to do.

1. Will you go to a party on Saturday afternoon or will you go to church?
2. Will you eat without praying or will you say grace before your meals?
3. Will you pray before you go to sleep or will you just sleep because you are too tired?



Activity 3

I Will Obey Mobile

Materials:

1. children's plastic hangers (one per student)
2. mobile patterns
3. string or yarn
4. scissors
5. hole punch
6. markers or crayons

Directions:

1. Provide a copy of the mobile patterns to each student. Have them color the pictures.

2. Ask the students to cut out each pattern carefully, being sure to leave the words attached to the animal.
3. Help the students punch a hole near the top of each pattern.
4. Tie a string or piece of yarn (three to four inches long) to the hole on each pattern. Then tie the ends to a hanger to create a mobile.
5. Discuss the words on the mobile (obey, listen, and love) and how they encourage us to obey God and His commands.
6. Once the students have completed the activity, encourage them to bring their mobile home and hang it somewhere to remind them of the importance of obedience.

Activity 7:1

Daniel's Friends and the Fiery Furnace

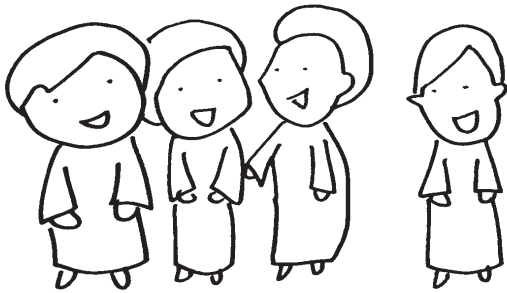
Read the sentences. Circle the right picture that finishes each sentence.



1. King Nebuchadnezzar made a golden _____.



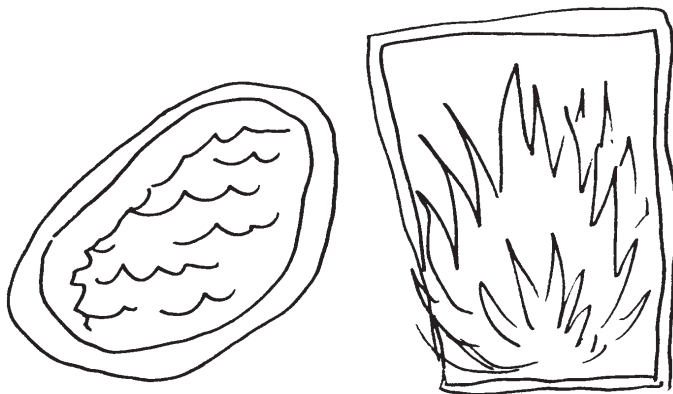
2. King Nebuchadnezzar wanted the people to _____ to the statue.



3. Daniel's _____ friends did not worship the statue.



4. King Nebuchadnezzar was _____ because Daniel's friends did not bow down to the statue.



5. Daniel's friends were thrown into the fiery _____.



6. Who else was in the fiery furnace with the friends?

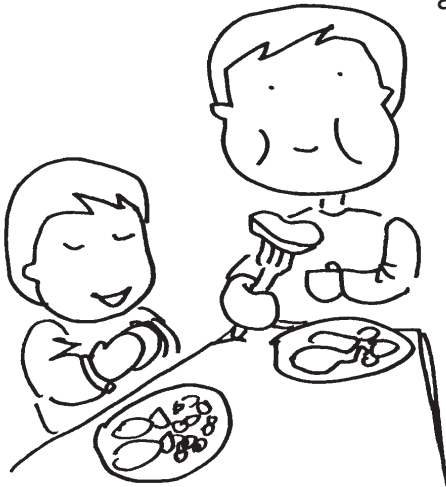
Activity 7:2

What Will You Choose?

Look at the pictures. Color in the pictures you will choose to do.



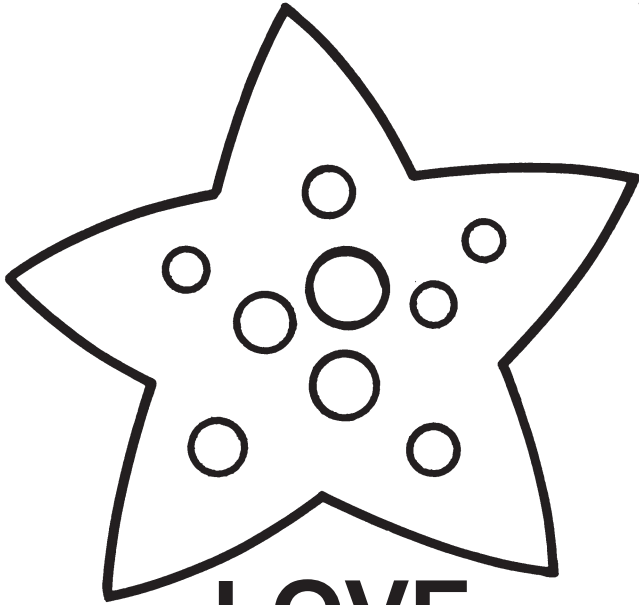
1. Will you go to a party on Saturday afternoon or will you go to church?



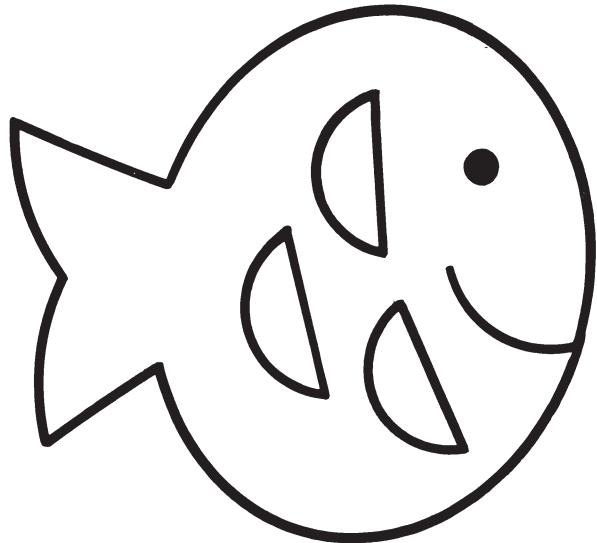
2. Will you eat without praying or will you say grace before your meals?



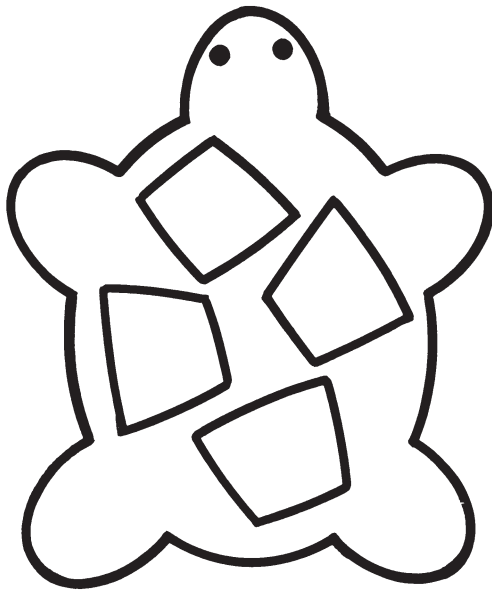
3. Will you pray before you go to sleep or will you just sleep because you are too tired?



LOVE



OBEY



LISTEN

