

LESSON 10

THE FIERY FURNACE

BEFORE YOU TEACH

Golden Idols

Babylon's religious culture encouraged the worship of idols. The idols were carved images of their gods or their conquerors. Nebuchadnezzar hoped to demonstrate his power and greatness with a large golden statue that was ninety feet tall and nine feet wide. It stood on the plain of Dura, approximately twelve miles southeast of the city of Babylon. The golden calf molded by Aaron while the Israelites were in the wilderness (Ex 32:2-4) and the two golden calves set up by King Jeroboam in the northern kingdom of Israel (1 Kgs 12:28-29) are other examples of how common idol worship was in Israel.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego found themselves in a difficult situation: to obey the king and live or to be faithful to God and die. If they decided to obey the king, they would have to disobey God's commandment. They could have pleaded to God for forgiveness explaining the extreme circumstance that caused them to disobey Him. They could have made excuses by saying that dying in the fiery furnace was a very painful way to die, or that by living, they could serve God further in Babylon. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego decided to stand firm, maintain their faith, and disobey the king rather than God. God saw their faith and rescued them from death.

In American society, Christians do not have to worry about idol worship, but there are still situations that will test your students' faith. For example, they may feel ashamed to pray in front of their friends before eating lunch. They are afraid of being different, so they would either skip the prayer or say it so fast that it has no meaning.

Sometimes, being a Christian means being different from others. It can be painful and uncomfortable, but it is the right thing to do. The Bible tells us that the world is in darkness and that we are the light of the world. When the light shines, it stands out and reveals that it is different from the darkness. Just the same, if we are true Christians, we must shine God's light and reveal to the world that we are different. The students must understand that they must not compromise their faith. Just as the Lord blessed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego by rescuing them, the Lord will also bless your students if they have the courage to display their faith. If your students develop this boldness for God at a young age, they will have a firm and well-rooted faith in their journey to the heavenly kingdom.

BIBLE TEXT

Daniel 3

BIBLE TRUTH

God, the only true God, is almighty.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. To be ready to take a stand for God, no matter what.
2. To choose to be faithful to God, no matter what.

MEMORY VERSE

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might."

(Ephesians 6:10)

PRAYER

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we pray. Lord, we thank You for guiding us into Your Holy Sabbath to worship and praise You. You are the Creator of all things, the only true God and Savior. We worship You alone. Help us to remove the idols from our hearts. Teach us to put You first in our lives. Give us the strength and power to do what is right even though it may be difficult. We praise and thank You, Lord Jesus. Hallelujah! Amen.

VOCABULARY

fiery furnace: a structure, usually box-like, that generates heat

REVIEW

Last week's lesson focused on four God-fearing youths, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, and how they remained faithful to God despite being alone in a foreign country. After the Babylonians conquered Judah, they took these four youths to Babylon to King Nebuchadnezzar. By the king's command, the eunuchs trained them for three years so they could serve the king and Babylon. They were educated with the best education Babylon could offer. In addition, they were given the best food, the royal food that the king was to eat. Why did Daniel and his three friends refuse to eat the king's food? (Yes, because it had been offered to idols and consisted of food that was considered unclean.) What did Daniel and his three friends eat instead? They spoke to the chief eunuch and asked him to give them vegetables and water for ten days. At first, the eunuch refused, but then he agreed to their ten-day trial. How did Daniel and his three friends look after the ten days? They appeared healthier than the youths that ate the royal food. At the end of their education, the king found that Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego were more knowledgeable than all the others in his kingdom. The king requested that they begin serving in his court. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego demonstrated that God blesses those who remain faithful to Him, even when they are far from home.

Today, we are going to learn about another trial that Daniel's three friends faced.

BIBLE STORY

The Golden Image

King Nebuchadnezzar thought that he was a great king. To demonstrate his greatness, he built an enormous golden statue, a new god, for his people to worship. The statue was nine feet wide and ninety feet tall, as tall as a six-story building, and covered with gold. The statue was so big that no one could miss it. King Nebuchadnezzar commanded that when the people heard the sound of the horn, flute, and many other kinds of instruments, they would have to bow down to the idol. The king also warned everyone by saying that whoever did not fall down and worship the statue would be cast into the fiery furnace and burned to death.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego Do Not Obey

What do you think the people did when they heard the instruments playing? Yes, they all bowed down to the statue. Why? No one dared to disobey the king because they were afraid of being thrown into the fiery furnace. Everyone bowed down to the statue. Everyone, that is, except Daniel and his three friends. They knew that there was only one God and that He was in heaven. The image that King Nebuchadnezzar constructed was an idol and not a god. Therefore, they refused to bow and worship the image of gold.

Nebuchadnezzar Is Furious

When some Babylonians saw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego's disobedience, they reported it to the king.

They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O great king, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego will not worship your statue. When the music played, they did not bow down like you had commanded."

When the king heard this, he became furious. How dare they disobey his commands! He demanded the three of them to be brought before him.

"Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego," said the king angrily, "I heard that you did not worship the golden statue I made. I will play the music again and you will fall down and worship the image. If you don't follow my orders, you will be thrown immediately into a burning, fiery furnace!"

How do you think Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego responded to the king? If you were Daniel's three friends, how would you have answered the king? [Allow students to respond.] Let's turn to Daniel 3:16-18 to find out. [Have the students read it aloud.]

"O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."

Were Daniel's three friends afraid of the king or of being thrown into the furnace? No. They were very courageous and stood up for what they believed in. They believed that God would deliver them from the fiery

furnace. But even if God didn't help them, they still refused to bow down to the golden image because they knew that it was not a god.

Suddenly, the look on the king's face changed. He was even more furious! He wanted to give them a chance to change their minds, but they defied his orders right in front of him! He told his servants to make the furnace seven times hotter than normal. When the king saw that the fire was extremely hot, he commanded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego be thrown into the furnace. The king's strongest servants took Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego and threw them into the fire. The furnace was so hot that the flames of fire immediately killed the men who were taking Daniel's three friends down to the furnace. Daniel's three friends then fell into the fiery furnace.

What do you think happened? Thumbs down if you think that they died in the furnace. Thumbs up if you think that they were still alive.

When the three friends fell into the furnace, the king saw an astonishing thing. He could not believe his eyes.

The king asked his officials, "Didn't we throw in three people who were tied up?"

His officials replied, "You are right, king."

"Look!" he exclaimed. "I see four men walking around loose in the fire and the fourth person looks like an Angel."

The king walked to the furnace and shouted, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, servants of the

Most High God, come out here right away!"

Daniel's friends came out of the fire but the fourth person was gone. The king couldn't believe his eyes! All the king's officials and counselors gathered around the three men, looking at them and studying them. They were totally amazed that the fire had not harmed them. Have you ever been to a barbecue? What happens when you put the sausage, chicken, or burgers on the grill and the fire is very strong? Yes, the fire chars the meat and the meat becomes black and smoky. For Daniel's three friends, the king discovered that not only were they unharmed by the fire, but also their clothes had not been damaged. Moreover, not one strand of hair on their heads had been burned and they did not smell of smoke.

King Nebuchadnezzar Praises God

King Nebuchadnezzar realized the mightiness of God after witnessing this event.

He said in a loud voice, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who sent an Angel to save His servants. They disobeyed my command and were even willing to give up their lives rather than worship any god except their own God." Nebuchadnezzar was so impressed that he made a new law: whoever spoke against God would be severely punished. He also recognized that there was no other God who could deliver like their God. After this, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego were freed and promoted, and they became important officials in Babylon.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

Multiple Choice/True or False/Questions to Think About

- The king commanded that whoever did not fall down and worship the image would be thrown into the _____.
 - Fiery volcano
 - Hot oven
 - Fiery furnace
- King Nebuchadnezzar ordered his servants to heat the furnace how many times hotter?
 - Five
 - Seven
 - Six
- When the people heard the music and instruments playing, they were to _____.
 - Fall down and worship the statue
 - Sing and dance around the statue
 - Fall down and worship King Nebuchadnezzar
- Even though Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego were not killed, their clothes and hair were burned. False.
- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego did not die in the fire because God saved them. True.
- After this, King Nebuchadnezzar realized that the God whom Daniel's three friends worshipped was the true, almighty God. True.
- Why was King Nebuchadnezzar so shocked when he looked into the furnace? He had thrown in 3 men, who had been tied up, but now there were 4 free men walking around.
- Do you think Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego were brave? Why or why not? Yes, they were not afraid of the king or of death.

MEMORY VERSE PRACTICE

Please reinforce the memory verse every week.
You can practice the memory verse with your students anytime during class.

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.” (Ephesians 6:10)

SPIRITUAL TEACHING & LIFE APPLICATION

1. Be ready to take a stand for God, no matter what.

They did it again! Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego determined once again to take a stand for God. Last week, we learned that they refused to eat the king’s food. Why? [Let students answer.] Because the food had been offered to idols! The three friends knew that it would not please God if they ate anything that had been used to honor idols. This week, the king became even more demanding! What did he ask all his people to do? [Let students answer.] He wanted all of them to bow down to the gold image he had made. When others found out that the three friends didn’t bow down, they immediately reported to the king. Yet, the three friends still wouldn’t bow to the gold image. The king even threatened to kill them, but they courageously took their stand—they obeyed God’s commandment! They wouldn’t let anything get in the way of their faith.

Likewise, we shouldn’t listen to someone who wants us to do something that is wrong in God’s eyes. Can you think of any examples of when you had been told to do something that would displease God? [Let students share.] Students, do not allow yourselves to walk away from the truth! Every time you make a decision to do something wrong in God’s eyes, you are taking a step away from God and His truth. The more of these decisions you make, the more steps you will take away from God, until He’s completely out of sight! Can you imagine your life without God? Sometimes, making a decision to do what is right in God’s eyes may cause you to lose something, but what’s sadder and scarier than losing God in your life? Therefore, let us learn from Daniel’s three friends—be ready to take a stand for God, no matter what! Let me share a few scenarios with you for discussion.

Tim, your classmate, is visually impaired, and he uses a white cane in school. One day, your friend William comes to you and says, “You know what I did with Steve and Jacob today? We kept making fun of Tim and his eyes. He got so angry and wanted to hit us with his cane, but of course he couldn’t! It was so funny to see him. You have no idea how mad he was! You should join us next time. It was really fun. We plan to do it again tomorrow! What do you think? If you still want to be friends with me, you have to come!”

Discussion Questions

1. **How would you answer William?** Answers may vary.
2. **How do you think God wants you to answer William?** God wants us to love others. It’s not right in God’s eyes to bully the handicapped, such as Tim. Therefore, God wants you to tell William that you will not join him in making fun of Tim.
3. **Why do you think it may be difficult to say the answer that God desires to hear?** William said that if you still want to be friends with him, you have to go. In other words, you may lose a friend if you don’t go. But, obeying God’s word is most important, so stand strong in your faith! It’s not worth it to displease God because of a friend like William.

Kelly has invited you to her house after school to play with her. She has just gotten an iPad from her parents, and she can’t wait to download some new games with you. However, you have to go home right after school this entire week since your mom needs help cleaning the house for your cousin’s family that is coming to visit in a few days. Because of this, you explain to Kelly that you can’t go to her place, even though you really want to! Kelly says to you, “Well, why don’t you tell your mom that you’re coming to my house for our science project? Instead of just meeting once for the project, we can tell your mom that we need to meet twice. My parents won’t be home until later today, so they will have no way to find out that we’re playing on my iPad instead of working on our science project!”

Discussion Questions

- 1. How would you answer Kelly?** Answers may vary.
- 2. How do you think God wants you to answer Kelly?** The Bible clearly teaches us to obey our parents and be honest. If you lie to your mom as Kelly suggested, God would be very disappointed. To do what is right in God's eyes, you should tell Kelly that you will go to her house on another day when you have time and when your mom has been properly informed.
- 3. Why do you think it may be difficult to say the answer that God desires to hear?** You really want to play with Kelly on her iPad. You don't know how long it will be before your mom actually agrees to let you go to Kelly's house. But, as always, obeying God's word is the right thing to do!

You have been saving up for your favorite video game. You haven't bought any snacks from school for the past few weeks because you're trying to save up so you can get the video game sooner. You figure that if you do this for another three weeks, you will have enough money. You wish you could get it sooner. After school, Peter comes to you and says, "I know you really want that new video game and that you're saving up for it. I think I can help you... I can help you make some money! As you know, I hate math. The homework Mrs. Anderson gave us today looks so difficult! I really don't want to do it. So, if you want to help me finish it, I will give you \$20. That way, I won't have to do it tonight, and you can buy your video game sooner! It won't even take you that long... All you have to do is copy your answers onto my homework! What do you say?"

Discussion Questions

- 1. How would you answer Peter?** Answers may vary.
- 2. How do you think God wants you to answer Peter?** God wants you to be honest and tell Peter that he should be responsible for his own homework. Peter was not being honest when he asked you to do his homework for him. Furthermore, if you help him, that will make you dishonest. He will also never learn what he's supposed to learn from school. God doesn't want you to lie or make Peter fall behind in math. You can offer to help him with his homework, but you cannot accept his offer and do it for him.
- 3. Why do you think it may be difficult to say the answer that God desires to hear?** You are so desperate for the video game! \$20 sounds very tempting. All you have to do is copy your answers onto Peter's homework, and then you will get your video game sooner! However, being honest and obeying God's word are far more important than anything else. We shouldn't forget that because of our worldly desires!

Let's turn to 1 Corinthians 16:13. Please read aloud with me. "Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong." When we face situations where standing for God seems difficult, do not be afraid to say what God wants us to say. Be brave, and be strong! Our faith should always come first. God will not let other people harm us if we choose to go against them for God. He will protect us, guide us, and give us wisdom so that we know that we are doing right in God's eyes!

2. Choose to be faithful to God, no matter what.

Daniel's three friends set a very good example for us today. The challenge they faced was far more difficult than what we may face today, but they chose to be faithful to God! Their faith in God remained so strong to the point that they were not afraid to die. The king did not throw them into the fiery furnace right away when they were brought to him. Rather, he ordered them one more time to bow down to the gold image he had made. What did the king say? [Let students answer.] He said, "I will play the music again, and you will fall down and worship the image. If you don't follow my orders, you will be thrown immediately into a burning fiery furnace!" Right there! The three friends had a chance to change their minds and save their own lives. They could have followed the king's orders and compromised their faith. All they had to do was bow down to his idol! But they didn't. They were determined to worship the one true God—the same God that we worship today! Students, this is called FAITHFULNESS! No matter how many times people ask you to do something that is wrong in God's eyes; no matter how many times they tell you the many benefits you get from doing it; and no matter how intimidating these people are, we need to be faithful like Daniel's three friends! We must never compromise. Remember what happened to them after they were thrown into the fiery furnace? They came out completely fine. They were still alive! No burn marks were found on them, and they didn't smell like they had just come out of a fiery furnace. That's the result of being faithful to God! When we choose to be faithful to God in times of danger, God's power will come to us! You may feel intimidation, pressure, or temptation, but if you make up your mind to be faithful to God, you can be unshakable like Daniel's three friends. God will reach out His hands to help you. Let me share a testimony with you.

Sam's dad is not a believer in Christ. He's always been an obstacle when Sam tries to observe the Sabbath, because he doesn't like Sam and his mom going to church every Saturday. He thinks that Sam and his mom are spending too much time at church. Since he doesn't believe that God exists, he always tells Sam and his mom that they are wasting time every Saturday. He tries everything to stop them from going to church and stirs up arguments from time to time. Almost every day this month, Sam's dad has been telling Sam not to go to church. He thinks that Sam should be staying home to study for his upcoming exam. While Sam knows that it is important to study for this exam, he knows that keeping the Sabbath is one of God's commandments and that God will be very disappointed if he chooses to study for his exam over worshipping Him. One night, Sam's dad says to Sam, "You shouldn't go to church this Saturday. I know you and Mom always go no matter what I say, but this Saturday, you must stay home to study for your exam. Mom and I will be very worried if your grades don't improve this year. You should know better. If your grades remain the same, I'm going not going to let you take any more swimming and basketball lessons. I know you love sports, but it's more important for you to improve your grades right now. Going to church is a waste of time."

That night, after Sam's dad left the room, Sam was troubled and distressed. He was afraid that he wouldn't be allowed to take more swimming and basketball lessons. He felt extremely pressured. But then, Sam remembered the story of Daniel and his three friends... He knew that, at that point, the most important thing was to be faithful to God. So, he knelt down to pray; he prayed for God to give him strength and wisdom to solve the problem he faced. The next day, Sam mustered up courage and went to talk to his father. He said, "Dad, I've been studying all day for my exam today. I understand that you and Mom are worried about my grades, and I really don't want to disappoint you! I promise I'll do my best to prepare for the exam. And, as you said, if my grades don't improve, I'm willing to stop my swimming and basketball lessons and focus more on my academics during the next term. But, one thing that I cannot compromise is my faith. I have made a decision to follow God, and it is the most important and serious decision I have made in my life. It is very important for me to be responsible for my faith. Dad, can you please let me go to church on Saturdays?" Sam's dad was very touched. Time had gone by so fast that he didn't realize how mature and respectful Sam had become. In the end, Sam's dad stopped hindering him and his mom from going to church anymore. Even though he hadn't yet had a chance to experience God himself, he knew that Sam was not wasting time at church. Moreover, by the grace of God, Sam did very well on his exam. He studied very hard while still being faithful to God by attending every Sabbath. Even to this day, Sam is still praying very hard for his dad so that one day he can come to church with him!

Students, choosing to be faithful in every situation is not easy. But God's blessings are great when we have faith in Him. God is sovereign; He is above those who are above us. Whether we are facing a king or just a friend, God has power and control over everything. Do not let anyone or anything frighten you. Be faithful to God, and He will not fail you!

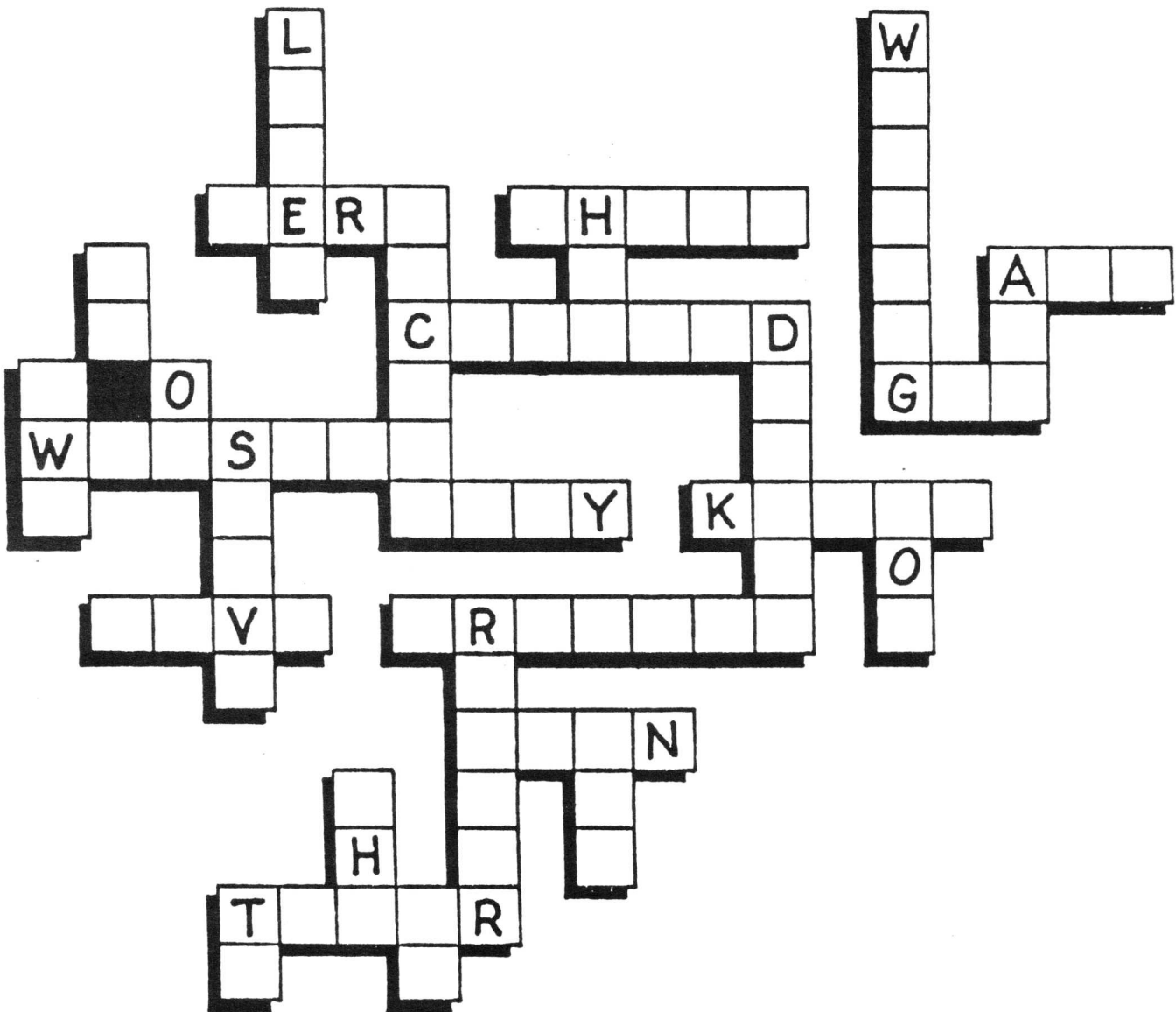
ACTIVITIES

1 How Strong Is Your Faith?

Objective: To remind the students to have a steadfast faith in God by learning a Bible verse.

Instructions: Read the Bible verse carefully. What do you think this verse means? Now try to fit each word of the verse into the puzzle. Each word may only be used once. Some letters are in place to help you get started. Can you memorize the verse as you are completing the puzzle?

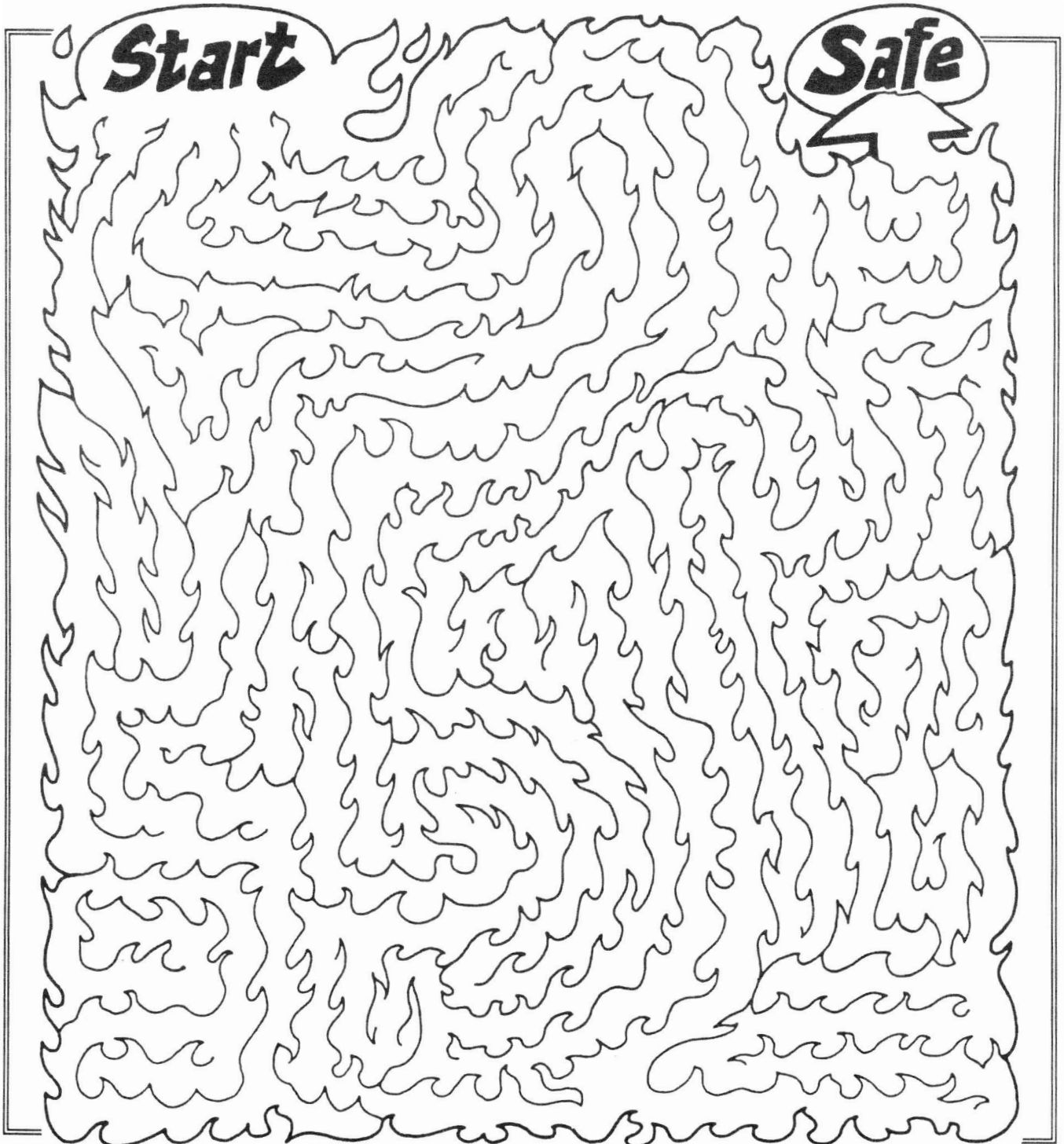
**"They trusted in him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God."
(Daniel 3:28 NIV)**



2

Can You Stand the Heat?

Find your way out of this maze of flames!



HOMWORK ANSWER KEY

1. C
2. B
3. C
4. False; they would never worship the idols or false gods.
5. True
6. True
7. They were brave, because they were not afraid of the king or of death.
8. They fully recognized that God was the one true God.
9. Answers may vary.
10. "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might."

ACTIVITIES ANSWER KEY

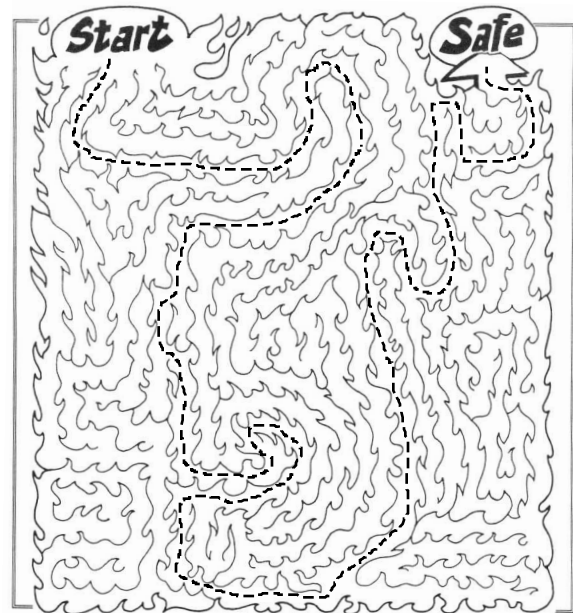
Activity 1

How Strong Is Your Faith?



Activity 2

Can You Stand the Heat?



E1 Year 2 Book 3 Lesson 10—The Fiery Furnace

Homework Assignment

Name: _____ Parent signature: _____ Date: _____

Bible Truth: God, the only true God, is almighty.

Lesson Objectives: 1. To instill in students the importance of pleasing God rather than man.
2. To stand strong in our faith at all times.

Bible Reading: Please put a check mark in the space when you complete the reading each day.

Prayer: Please put a check mark in the space provided on the days you prayed to God.

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Bible Reading							
Prayer							

Memory Verse

Please write down this week's memory verse.

(Ephesians 6:10)

What I Learned from the Bible This Week

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Homework Assignment

Understanding What You Have Learned

Multiple Choice

- _____: The king commanded that whoever did not fall down and worship the golden statue would be thrown into the _____.
 - Fiery volcano
 - Hot oven
 - Fiery furnace
- _____: We should love and follow God _____.
 - Only when He gives us blessings
 - In good as well as bad times
 - Only when we feel like it
- _____: King Nebuchadnezzar was so shocked to see that _____.
 - Daniel's three friends had all died
 - Daniel's three friends were praying inside the furnace
 - Instead of three persons, there were four persons walking around inside the furnace

True or False

- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego had decided that if God did not save them from the fiery furnace, they would worship the golden statue. _____
- When Daniel's three friends came out of the fiery furnace, they were totally unharmed. Their clothes and hair were not burnt, and they did not smell of smoke. _____
- After this, King Nebuchadnezzar recognized that the God whom Daniel's three friends worshipped was the true, almighty God. _____

Short Answer

- Do you think Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego were brave? Why or why not?

- Why did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego refuse to bow down to worship the golden statue?

- If you were one of Daniel's three friends, how would you answer King Nebuchadnezzar?

10. In the picture below, find the hidden words and arrange them in order.

