

Kindergarten—Unit 10

Trust and Obey

Old Testament stories of people who trusted God under difficult circumstances form the core of this unit. Students will meet the widow of Zarephath, Daniel, and the famous trio of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, as they discover the importance of following God's directions.

LESSONS

1. A Widow Trusts God
2. Healthy Choices
3. We Worship God and No Other
4. Daniel Obey's God

Unit 10: Trust and Obey

Unit Information

SUMMARY

God often works through people. When God asks us to do difficult things, we need to trust that God will take care of us. Three stories—The Widow of Zarephath, Daniel in the Lions’ Den, and The Fiery Furnace—show children the importance of trusting and obeying God in adverse circumstances.

KEY BIBLE TEXTS

- 1 Kings 17:7-24
- Daniel 1
- Daniel 3
- Daniel 6

BIBLICAL BACKGROUND

The Widow of Zarephath

Elijah, the prophet of God, warned wicked King Ahab that there would be a drought in the land. Following God’s orders, Elijah hid. He drank from a *wadi* and was fed by ravens. When the wadi dried up, Elijah again obeyed God’s orders. This time, he asked the widow in Zarephath to feed him.

The widow was preparing her last bit of food. She told Elijah about her situation. Elijah said, “Do not be afraid” (1 Kings 17:13). He told her that God would provide her household with oil and flour until the drought ended. But she must first give Elijah her last morsels of food.

The widow obeyed Elijah’s commands, just as Elijah had obeyed God. As promised, the widow’s household was supplied with food until the drought ended.

Healthy Choices

The book of Daniel was written for the Jews when they were in the midst of great suffering. This story provided the Jewish nation with assurance that no matter how desperate their lives might become, God was in control.

The first six chapters of Daniel are about a young man who remained loyal to God after being taken captive to Babylon. Several Israelites were chosen to serve in the king’s court. The king chose only the best and brightest of Israel. He wanted handsome young men, without any physical defect, who had an aptitude for learning (Daniel 1:4).

It was an honor to be chosen to serve the king. Yet there were risks involved. Daniel and his three friends were to be assimilated into Babylonian culture by learning the language and participating in their customs. They were likely expected to embrace Babylon’s religious culture as well.

The first test for Daniel and his three companions was the food they would eat. They refused to eat the king’s rich food and wine; instead they asked for vegetables and water (Daniel 1:8-14). The Israelites had strict dietary laws. The king’s food was undoubtedly not kosher. Daniel chose to obey God by following the dietary guidelines. In this story, the outcome of obeying God was that the young Israelites

were even healthier than their counterparts who ate the king's food. God blessed them and gave them knowledge and wisdom.

We Worship God and No Other

Daniel became a top official in the court of King Nebuchadnezzar after interpreting one of the king's visions. His three companions, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were also administrators, but not within the palace. Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream stated that the king would be replaced by someone else. The king soon made a huge golden image of himself. Perhaps he believed his dream would become a reality. King Nebuchadnezzar might have wanted people to remember him long after his kingdom had fallen.

A dedication ceremony was planned for the statue. All officials of the kingdom were invited to attend, including Daniel's three friends. They were commanded to "fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up" (Daniel 3:5b). The consequences of failing to obey the king were made clear. "Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace" (Daniel 3:6).

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did not worship the statue. To do so would break the first commandment, "You shall have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3). Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego chose to obey God instead of the king, in spite of the severe consequences.

They were brought before the king and given a second chance to worship the statue. With firm resolution, the three young men refused and were thrown into the fiery furnace.

The stance of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego was clear. They would serve God regardless of the consequences. They took their covenant relationship seriously. They would not serve the king's gods and worship his idols to avoid persecution, physical pain, and even death (Daniel 3:17-18).

God delivered the three faithful men from death in the furnace. In fact, a fourth, appearing "like a son of the god" (Daniel 3:25b), walked with them in the blaze. As a result of God's intervention, King Nebuchadnezzar decreed that no one should utter any blasphemy against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Their faithfulness "under fire" proved a powerful witness to the king and his court.

Daniel Obeys God

King Darius was ruler of Babylon when Daniel was thrown into the lions' den. As in the story of the fiery furnace, the king signed a decree that people should pray to no one except him. Daniel continued his practice of praying to God, even though he knew the decree had been signed. And, predictably, he was caught.

The king was distressed when he heard that Daniel had been caught praying to God. The king's advisors insisted that Daniel pay the penalty—being thrown into the lions' den. The king tried to find a way to save Daniel, but was unsuccessful. After all, he had written the decree! He hoped that Daniel's God would save him.

The morning after Daniel was thrown to the lions, the king hurried to see if Daniel's God had saved him. God had sent an angel to shut the lions' mouths so Daniel would not be hurt. He was blameless before God and before the king. The resulting edict to the people was strong: "I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom, people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel. For he is the living God and he endures forever" (Daniel 6:26). Once again, the God of the Israelites was heralded as the only deity worthy of recognition. This was a strong message of hope to the Israelites, who were surrounded by people who worshipped many gods.

ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS

- God helps us when we try to follow God’s way.
- We can help others experience God’s love.
- God is glorified when we obey.

WORSHIP / BIBLE MEMORY

Make a display with a candle, containers of flour and oil, some vegetables, a golden trophy and a toy lion. These objects represent the four stories the children will hear in this unit. Draw their attention to the display and open your worship time with this call to worship: “Open our eyes and ears to hear your message today.”

1. Bible memory. Use the song “Obey My Voice” (#163, *Hymnal: A Worship Book*) to teach Jeremiah 7:23. Sing the song several times before each lesson. Invite children to try to sing it alone to the rest of the class.

2. Sing other songs from *Jubilee Songbook*:

—Daniel in the Lions’ Den, page 18

—Kum Ba Yah, page 31

—You Are with Me All the Time, page 61

3. Use these prayers for the different lessons:

The Widow of Zarephath

Thank you for giving us food to eat and share. Help us to remember to share our food and to trust that we will have enough. Help us to remember that there are people in the world who don’t have enough to eat and to give what we can.

Healthy Choices

Sometimes we don’t make good choices, God. Sometimes the things we do hurt our bodies and our minds. Help us to treat our bodies like temples and make healthy choices.

The Fiery Furnace

You are the only God we worship. Help us to remember that we need to obey you, even if it means disagreeing with people who make laws and decisions.

Daniel and the Lions

We can worship you without being afraid, but there are places in this world where it is dangerous to worship you. Help us to be courageous and follow you even when we could be hurt.

ASSESSING TEACHING / LEARNING

Application of the key concepts can best be observed in student responses during discussion times. When students are working on projects, talk to them individually. Ask open-ended questions or discuss the stories with each child. This will help you discover what they have gleaned from participation in this unit.

MEMORY PASSAGES

This unit offers the following verses for students to memorize: Jeremiah 7:23 and the bonus verse, Ephesians 6:1-3. You will find them in large format on pages 284-285, to copy as take-home sheets for students.



Obey me, and
I will be your God
and you will be my people.

Walk in all the ways
I command you, that
it may go well with you.

Jeremiah 7:23



Children, obey
your parents in the Lord,
for this is right. “Honor your
father and mother”—which
is the first commandment
with a promise—“that it
may go well with you
and that you may enjoy long
life on the earth.”

Ephesians 6:1-3

Trust and Obey

LESSON 1: A WIDOW TRUSTS GOD

Objective

Children will understand that God keeps promises.

Key Concepts

- God promised to provide for the widow and her son!
- The widow trusted and obeyed God.
- The widow shared with Elijah.
- God keeps promises.

Text: 1 Kings 17:7-16

Estimated Lesson Time: 30-40 minutes

Materials

- *Jubilee Songbook*
- Treats for lesson introduction
- Props for Bible story: brown story cloth, story figures for Elijah and widow, small sticks, small bowl of flour, small jar of oil
- Simple snack to share with another class (pretzels, crackers, etc.)
- Large bowl, pancake mix, oil, electric skillet(s), extension cords, whisk, spatula
- Pancake syrup, paper plates, napkins, forks
- Paper, crayons/markers
- *Owl Moon* by Jane Yolen (Philomel, 1987)
- For Extend the Lesson, option two: wheat berries, coffee grinder or blender (*optional*)
- For Extend the Lesson, option three: pictures of land and people during a famine
- For Extend the Lesson, option four: modeling clay

Teacher Preparation

- Practice telling the Bible story with story figures and props.
- If planning the mill option for Extend the Lesson, option two, arrange for that visit.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

1. Worship and Bible memory. See Unit Information, page 283.

2. Obedience and rewards. Call one child forward and give him/her a special treat, such as a fancy pencil, a piece of candy, or small toy. Celebrate the gift with the child, but encourage him/her to give the treat to another. Say, “Trust me—you will be rewarded.” After the child has given away the treat, reward him/her with a double treat (two pieces of candy or two stickers, etc).

Now call another child forward. Ask, “If I give you a treat and ask you to give it away, what do you think will happen?” (*Hopefully the child will assume the same treatment.*) Repeat the giving exercise or simply say, “You trust that I will keep my promise to you. I have kept my promises in the past, and you know that when I ask you to do something you should trust and listen to me.”

Explain that the story they will hear today is about a woman who was very

poor. This widow had almost nothing to eat, but when Elijah asked her to share her food, as God wanted her to, she listened. In this story, she was rewarded with a miracle. She knew that if she obeyed, God would keep his promise.

LESSON STEPS

1. Tell the story of the widow who trusted God, using story figures. You will need a brown story cloth, figures for Elijah and the widow, a few small sticks, a small bowl of flour, and small jar of oil. Scatter the sticks around the cloth.

The land was hot and dry. No rain had fallen for many, many days. The rivers dried up, and plants did not grow. Many people were hungry. One poor widow (*point to widow*) in the town of Zarephath was very sad. She knew she was preparing the last bit of food for her and her son to eat. Slowly she walked along, gathering sticks to make a fire. (*Move widow around cloth, gathering sticks.*) Soon she would mix and bake their last meal—a small loaf of bread. There would be no fruit, no vegetables, and certainly no meat. Just bread.

“Hello!” Someone spoke to her! (*Move Elijah close to widow.*) The man’s name was Elijah, but she did not know him. He was not from her town. She didn’t know that Elijah was God’s prophet. God had told Elijah to go to Zarephath to live. God had already chosen this poor widow to provide food for Elijah.

“Would you please bring me some water to drink? I’m very thirsty,” said Elijah.

The well is nearby, the widow thought. *I can do that for this stranger.* (*Move widow away from Elijah.*) As she left to get the water, Elijah called to her again. “And would you please bring me a piece of bread?”

(*Touch widow as she speaks.*) “Oh no! No, sir! Honestly, I don’t have any bread! The only food I have is a handful of flour in a jar and a little bit of oil in a jug. I was just getting ready to bake it for my son and me. Then, since we have nothing more to eat, we will starve to death. Please don’t ask me to give it to you.”

(*Touch Elijah as he speaks.*) “Don’t be afraid. Go home and do just what you planned,” said the prophet Elijah. “Only, first make a small bread biscuit and bring it for me to eat. Then make something for you and your son. God knows what you need, and God will provide it for you. The Lord our God says that your flour and oil will not get used up until there is rain to grow more food.”

(*Move widow to bowl of flour and jar of oil.*) The woman obeyed Elijah and made the bread as he had told her. And after that, just as God had promised, for many, many days there was always enough flour and oil to make food for the woman and her son and Elijah.

2. Wonder about the story, using the following statements:

- I wonder how Elijah felt when he asked the woman to give him her last bit of food.
- I wonder why the woman trusted God to provide food for her.
- I wonder how it feels to be hungry and not know where to get food.
- I wonder what God will tell me to do and whether I can trust him enough to obey.

Pray, “Dear God, we want to trust you and obey you like the widow did. Amen.”

3. Share a snack and reward. Tell the children that today they will give their daily snack to another class. Add, “I promise that if you listen and do what is asked and give them your snack, I will reward you.”

Take whatever you had planned as a snack for the day (*something simple!*) to another class. When you return, prepare a snack of pancakes with syrup for the class. If you can, put the pancake mix in an old-looking container and the oil in a jug (*to simulate the flour and oil of the widow of Zarephath*).

Stir the pancake mix, oil, and water as the children watch. If possible, invite a parent or other adult to fry the pancakes for you while you move into the next activity. If that isn't possible, send the children to their seats with paper and crayons or markers and ask them to draw Elijah, the widow, and her son eating together. Continue with free drawing until all the pancakes are fried and ready to eat. (*Serve everyone at once or those waiting will be too distracted to do anything else!*) When you are finished, wash hands.

4. Gather again to talk about obeying and rewards. The story of the widow implies that every time we obey we receive an obvious reward. Explain to the children that sometimes when we obey, we don't realize what reward we are receiving. We might have to wait a long time to understand why obeying God is a good thing. We have to trust that God knows what is best for us and that God's rules are best.

Introduce the book, *Owl Moon*, by telling the children that the girl in the book needs hope and to follow her father's one rule, to be quiet on her search. If she follows that rule, she might be rewarded by seeing an owl. "Sometimes there isn't an owl, but sometimes there is." When you finish the book, close with a prayer, such as: "God, you know what is best for us and for the world. Help us to trust you and always obey your rules, even if we don't know what will happen. Amen."

EXTEND THE LESSON

(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 30-40 minutes.)

- **Trust and obey parents.** Discuss how parents have rules for children to follow. Sometimes children don't understand those rules and don't want to follow them. Emphasize that their parents love them and know what is best for them. If they trust their parents to make rules that will help them grow, children should obey their parents' rules. Discuss certain rules that address bedtimes, sharing, safety concerns, etc., and see if children can identify what the rewards of following those rules might be.
- **Visit a mill or grind wheat.** To help children understand the cooking processes of ancient times, visit a mill where various grains are ground into flour or grind your own flour using wheat and a coffee grinder or blender.
- **Learn about famine.** The widow of Zarephath lived during a time of famine. Show your class pictures of hungry people during a famine and dry, cracked land where no rain has fallen. It's hard for us to understand how it might feel to be hungry with no food. Try to imagine how much trust in God it would take to give your last food to a stranger.
- **Sculpt your own vessels** out of clay to make a bowl or jar like the widow might have used for storing flour and oil.

Trust and Obey

LESSON 2: HEALTHY CHOICES

Objective

Children will understand that God wants us to make healthy choices. They will be able to name several healthy habits.

Key Concepts

- God’s rules are good for us.
- God took care of Daniel and his friends.
- Daniel followed God’s rules and became stronger than most young men.
- God can do great things.
- It is important to take care of our bodies, our minds, and our spirits.

Text: Daniel 1

Estimated Lesson Time: 30-40 minutes

Materials

- *Jubilee Songbook*
- Several print ads for junk food
- For telling Bible story: story cloth and figures for Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, king, chief official
- List of healthy and unhealthy habits (p. 292)
- Large cutout poster of a person, tape or glue
- Vegetable snack (carrot and celery sticks, sugar peas, cherry tomatoes, etc.)
- *Growing Vegetable Soup* by Lois Ehlert
- For Extend the Lesson, option one: magazines with pictures of food, scissors, glue
- For Extend the Lesson, option two: tomatoes, cucumbers or mushrooms, carrot and celery sticks, broccoli or cauliflower, raisins or peanuts, paper plates
- For Extend the Lesson, option three: vegetable seeds, potting soil, plastic cups

Teacher Preparation

- Practice telling the Bible story with props.
- Copy the list of healthy and unhealthy habits and cut them apart.
- Draw a simple shape of a person on large paper or poster board and cut it out.
- Prepare the vegetable snack

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

1. Worship and Bible memory. See Unit Information, page 283.

2. Look at ads. Show children several print ads for junk food, one at a time. For each one, ask, “What does this company want us to buy when we look at this ad? What did they put in the picture to make us want to buy this kind of food? Why do they want us to buy it? Is it healthy for us?” Ask children if they have ever bought (or begged for) a kind of food because they saw an ad for it. Explain that the story they will hear today is about a young man who was offered food that wasn’t healthy. He chose not to eat the king’s unhealthy food and to eat healthy food instead.

LESSON STEPS

1. Tell the story of Daniel and his healthy choices. You will need a story cloth, “junk” food, vegetables, and story figures for King Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and the chief official.

What a day! It was bad enough that King Nebuchadnezzar had stolen some precious things from God’s temple in Jerusalem, and then captured some of God’s people and taken them to his faraway land to live. But today some of the king’s officials had gone into the homes of God’s people and taken many of the smartest, most talented, and handsome young men to the king’s palace. They would have to live there! A young man named Daniel was one of them. (*Move Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego close to king and chief official.*)

Daniel looked around him. He saw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. (*Touch Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.*) He hoped they could be his friends in this huge, new place. But someone was talking to them. Daniel must listen.

“You are to study much and learn a lot.” The chief official was speaking. (*Touch chief official.*) “I will teach you to read and write our language. I will train you well in all our ways. You will eat the same food the king eats and drink the same wines that the king drinks. It is my job to take excellent care of you. You will be trained to be the best servants of the king. Now, let’s go eat.”

Oh, no! thought Daniel as he saw the huge table full of fancy foods. (*Touch junk food.*) “This is not the kind of food that will make me strong and healthy. I won’t be able to think clearly and stay physically fit if I eat this. If I want to take care of my body to be the best person I can for my God, I cannot eat it! What shall I do?”

“Sir,” Daniel spoke politely to his palace master. “I cannot eat this food.”

“What? But you must! It is my job to make sure you get enough to eat and drink. If you look weak or sick, I’ll get in trouble. The king may even chop off my head!”

“Don’t worry,” said Daniel. “Please, let us try a new diet for just ten days. Give us only vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then you can decide wisely if you will require us to eat the rich foods and wines of the king.”

The palace master decided to try Daniel’s idea. He gave Daniel and his friends only vegetables to eat and water to drink. (*Put vegetables in front of young men.*) At the end of ten days, Daniel and his three friends were strong and healthy! So, they were allowed to keep eating the good vegetables that would help their bodies and minds be strong.

Three years later, the king wanted to see all the young men that had been trained to work for him. (*Move four young men in front of king.*) Can you guess who were the smartest and healthiest of all the young men in the kingdom? Daniel and his friends Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego!

2. Wonder about the story, using the following statements:

- I wonder who taught Daniel God’s rules about food.
- I wonder how Daniel got the courage to refuse to eat the king’s food.
- I wonder what healthy choices I can make.

Pray, “God, we want to follow your rules like Daniel did. Help us to choose healthy things. Amen.”

3. We are temples. Explain that our bodies are like temples where God’s Holy

Spirit lives. Read 1 Corinthians 6:19: “. . . Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God . . .” Temples are special and we need to care for them. Describe several of your own habits, including some that are healthy and some that are not. Tell how you are working to practice healthier habits.

4. Healthy habits. Read the habits you copied and cut apart ahead of time and have the class decide whether each one is a healthy habit or an unhealthy habit. If the children decide that a habit is healthy, glue or tape it to the large cutout person. Bad habits can be thrown in the trash.

5. Provide a healthy vegetable snack for the children, such as carrot sticks, celery sticks, sugar pea pods, cucumber slices, mushrooms, cherry tomatoes, broccoli, etc. Ask children to talk about their favorite vegetables. Explain that vegetables provide fiber to keep our intestines healthy and vitamins to keep us healthy all over. Even though he lived long ago, Daniel knew that vegetables were much healthier for him than the king’s rich food and wine. As the children munch on their vegetables, read *Growing Vegetable Soup* by Lois Ehlert.

6. Healthy exercise. Conclude the lesson with a time of physical exercise. Play a game of beach ball volleyball, jog around the playground, jump rope, or simply provide free playtime. When you gather again, remind the children that God wants us to keep our bodies healthy. Say, “When we’re tempted by junk food and sitting in front of a screen, we need to remember God’s rules!”

EXTEND THE LESSON

(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 30-40 minutes.)

- **Make magazine collages** featuring healthy food and junk food. Women’s magazines are a great source for food pictures.
- **Make “vegetable people.”** Provide materials for each child to each create a “vegetable person.” On a paper plate, use a tomato slice for the body, a cucumber slice or mushroom for the head, carrot and celery sticks for arms and legs, broccoli or cauliflower for hair. Add raisins or peanuts for eyes and buttons.
- **Plant vegetable seeds**, such as broccoli or tomatoes, in plastic cups. Keep track of how many days it takes for the seeds to sprout. Have children share about their gardening experiences.

Healthy and Unhealthy Habits

Eating candy for breakfast

Watching TV all day

Riding bike with a helmet

Eating lots of fruits and vegetables

Staying up very late

Drinking lots of water

Sharing a cup with a sick friend

Playing soccer with your neighbors

Getting vaccinations at the doctor

Drinking soda every day

Trust and Obey

LESSON 3: WE WORSHIP GOD AND NO OTHER

Objective

Children will be able to retell the story of the trust and obedience of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Key Concepts

- Obeying God is the most important thing of all.
- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did not worship anyone but God.
- God took care of the three young men.

Text: Daniel 3

Estimated Lesson Time: 30-40 minutes

Materials

- *Jubilee Songbook*
- Simple musical instruments
- Construction paper (including red, yellow, and orange)
- Scissors, glue, markers, stapler, tape, small plastic bags or book pockets (*optional*)
- Large paper, cardboard, or bulletin board space for story map
- Martyr story (*optional*)
- For Extend the Lesson, option one: measuring tape
- For Extend the Lesson, option three: cardboard tubes; tape; red, yellow, or orange cellophane
- For Extend the Lesson option four: puppets, box with back cut out

Teacher Preparation

- Practice telling the Bible story with props.
- If using Extend the Lesson, option three, cut cellophane to fit ends of tubes.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

1. Worship and Bible memory. See Unit Information, page 283.

2. Share a story Begin by saying, “What if I asked you to _____,” giving students a command that they should obviously not obey. For example, ask them to write on the walls or to run into the street by the school. When they resist (*and hopefully they will*), say, “But I’m your teacher. Don’t you have to do everything I tell you to do?” Discuss the children’s feelings and thoughts when asked to do something they know they should not do. Then say, “Today you will hear a story about three young men who decided to obey God, rather than a king.”

LESSON STEPS

1. Tell the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace, acting it out with the children. Designate an area for the furnace. Choose five students to be the young men, the angel, the king, and the statue. Choose several others to play instruments. The rest of the children can be the Babylonian people. You serve as narrator.

Long ago, there lived a king with a long name. The king's name was Nebuchadnezzar. He took his soldiers to fight against the Hebrew people. After the fighting, the king took some of the Hebrew people back to his country called Babylon. In those days, people captured in war became the king's servants.

The king loved to be in charge. He wanted everyone to obey him. To make sure everyone knew he was boss, the king made a huge, golden statue. Then he gathered all the people together for a dedication service. (*People gather in front of statue. Statue can stand on a chair.*) The king's messenger told the people, "When you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, you need to fall down and worship the golden statue. Whoever does not fall down and worship will be thrown into a fiery furnace." (*Musicians play instruments.*) When they heard the music, all the people bowed down to the statue. (*Babylonians bow.*) All bowed down *except* three Hebrew men who were servants of the king. Their names were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

These young men knew the king would be angry if they didn't do what they were told, but they said, "We can't pray to the king's statue. It can't hear what we say. But *our* God can hear us when we pray."

When the king heard that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego would not bow down to his statue, he was very angry. He called them to stand before him. (*Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego stand in front of king.*) He asked them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden statue that I have set up? If you won't bow down to the statue when you hear the music, I will put you into a fiery furnace. It will be very hot and you will die. Your God can't save you then."

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego still would not bow down to the king's statue. (*Men shake their heads.*) The king ordered, "Heat the furnace seven times hotter. Tie their feet and hands. Throw them into the fire!" (*Several people take Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into area designated as furnace. As they walk around, angel joins them.*)

But the king got a big surprise. When he looked into the furnace, he saw *four* people walking around in the fire. He turned to the people. "Didn't I throw *three* men into the fire? And weren't they tied up?"

"Yes," the people answered.

"But I see *four* men walking around, and they are not hurt. The fourth one looks like an angel!"

Then the king went to the furnace and told Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to come out. They walked out of the furnace. Their clothes weren't even burnt. The king said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Now I know that your God is stronger than my statue. You were ready to die rather than worship my statue, and your God has saved you."

2. Wonder about the story, using the following statements:

- I wonder why it was important to the king that people bowed down to a thing and not to himself.
- I wonder what Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego and the angel said to each other in the furnace.
- I wonder if I could be brave like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Pray, "God, help us to be brave and always follow you. Amen."

3. Make a story map of the Bible story. Provide red, yellow, and orange construction paper. Instruct children to trace around their hands and cut them out. These will be the flames of the fire. Using additional colors of construction paper, ask one child to make the statue of Nebechudnezzar, and five children to make figures of the king, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and the angel. Several others can make the walls and roof of the furnace. *(Make sure it's big enough for all the flames and the men!)*

As children complete the furnace walls and flames, staple, tape, or glue them to a large piece of paper or cardboard, or to a bulletin board. Beside the furnace, fasten the statue. Do not fasten the five figures. Staple or tape narrow strips of construction paper, small plastic bags or library book pockets in the furnace and beside the statue to hold the figures as the children retell the story. Keep figures in a box below the furnace. If you like, have a child retell the story for the class when everything is completed.

4. Learn about martyrs. Gather children together and talk about the courage of these three young men. They didn't know that an angel would protect them from the fire. They were ready to die for their faith. Explain that people who are persecuted for their faith and make the hard choice these young men made don't always live. Sometimes they die for their faith. These people are called *martyrs*. If you consider it appropriate, share a martyr story.

EXTEND THE LESSON

(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 30-40 minutes.)

- **How big was the golden statue?** Take students outside and measure a distance 90 feet x 9 feet. Have them imagine that 90 foot distance standing up. How would it feel to look up at a statue that large? What if they were asked to bow down before it? How would they feel if everyone else bowed down and they didn't, because they knew it was wrong?
- **Discuss the pledge of allegiance and the national anthem.** In some schools, children and teachers say this pledge to our nation every morning. How would it feel to be the only one who doesn't pledge allegiance to our country?
- **View a "fiery furnace."** Tape red, orange, or yellow cellophane on the end of a cardboard tube. Look through the other end as if looking into a fiery furnace.
- **Reenact the story** using puppets and a box furnace.

Trust and Obey

LESSON 4: DANIEL OBEYS GOD

Objective

Children will understand that God wants us to remain faithful, even in the threat of danger.

Key Concepts

- Daniel refused to pray to anyone but God.
- God took care of Daniel.

Text: Daniel 6:1-28

Estimated Lesson Time: 30-40 minutes

Materials

- *Jubilee Songbook*
- Sets of items that are identical, except for one (pencils, spoons, etc.)
- Props for telling the story: story cloth, several toy lions, story figures for Daniel, king, and several advisors
- Picture of Peter Paul Ruben painting, “Daniel in the Lion’s Den” (*download or find in art book*)
- Heavy white paper or poster board, markers or crayons, scissors
- Plastic bags to store puzzles, one per child
- *The Story of Ruby Bridges* by Robert Coles (Scholastic, 2004)
- For Extend the Lesson, option two: yellow construction paper, paper plates, safety scissors, glue
- For Extend the Lesson, option four: chart paper, marker

Teacher Preparation

- Practice telling the Bible story with props.
- Label plastic puzzle bags with children’s names.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

1. Worship and Bible memory. See Unit Information, page 283.

2. Which one is different? Show children several sets of items such as buttons, pencils, spoons, etc. Each set should have one item that is different from the others. Have the children identify which one is different. Was it easy to tell? Explain that today they will hear a story about a man who was different from the people around him. Because he was different, he faced great danger.

LESSON STEPS

1. Tell the story of Daniel in the lions’ den. You will need a story cloth, several toy lions, and story figures to represent Daniel, the king, and several advisors.

Daniel liked to be with his friends. (*Touch Daniel figure.*) Three times each day, he had a special meeting with his wisest, kindest, most respected friend.

That friend was God. Daniel went to an upstairs room by the window, got down on his knees, and talked with God. Then he obeyed what God told him to do.

God helped Daniel in his work for King Darius. (*Touch king figure.*) The king was pleased with Daniel and gave him special jobs and rewards. But some of the king's advisors weren't happy with Daniel—not because he was unkind or did wrong things, but because they were jealous. (*Touch advisors.*)

Hatred for Daniel started to grow in their hearts. They tried to find mistakes Daniel made, so they could tell the king. They couldn't find any, because Daniel lived a clean, honest life, as God told him to do. The more they watched Daniel, the more the king's advisors hated him.

They noticed that three times each day Daniel talked with God. So they went to King Darius (*move advisors next to king*) and said, "Your Majesty, all of us agree that you should make a law that everyone must pray only to you for the next 30 days. If anyone disobeys this law, he must be thrown into the lions' den." The king agreed to do what they suggested.

Daniel heard about the new law, but God was his best friend and Daniel wanted to talk with God. So, Daniel went upstairs by the window, where he and God spent time together. He prayed to God, just as he always had. The advisors were watching. How happy they were to see Daniel disobeying the king's new law!

They went to King Darius. "Didn't you make a law that says everyone must pray only to you for the next 30 days?" they asked. "Doesn't the law say that anyone who disobeys will be thrown to the lions?"

"Yes, that's the law," the king agreed.

"Daniel refuses to obey your new law! He still prays to his God three times every day!"

King Darius was upset! He knew Daniel was a good man. All day he tried to think of a way he could save Daniel. That evening, when the men returned, all he could say was, "Daniel, may your God rescue you." Then they threw Daniel to the lions. (*Put Daniel in middle of lions.*)

Early the next morning, King Darius ran to the lions' den. (*Move king to lions.*) "Daniel!" he shouted. "Did your God save you from the lions?"

"Yes!" Daniel answered. "God sent an angel to keep the lions from eating me!"

The king was so happy to hear Daniel's voice! He immediately gave orders for Daniel to be taken from the lions' den. (*Take Daniel away from lions.*)

King Darius was glad that Daniel obeyed God. He made a new law that everyone should worship Daniel's God who was alive, powerful, and able to work miracles.

2. Wonder about the story, using the following statements:

- I wonder what Daniel prayed about in his talks with God.
- I wonder how the angel closed the lions' mouths.
- I wonder if I could be as brave as Daniel.

Pray, "God, thank you for saving Daniel from the lions. We want to pray only to you, too. Amen."

3. Time to imagine. Discuss how each person in the story might have felt. Lead children in the following exercise:

Imagine you are the king. How did you feel when your advisors wanted everyone to pray to you? How did you feel when Daniel, who you like, was caught disobeying the rule?

Now imagine you are the advisors. How did you feel, knowing the king liked Daniel more than you? How did you feel when the king liked your idea of having everyone worship him? How did you feel when Daniel was saved from the lions, and the king became angry with you?

Now you are Daniel. How did you feel when you heard the new law commanding everyone to pray to the king? How did you feel going into the lions' den? How did you feel when the lions stopped howling and started playing instead? How did you feel when the king came to check on you and you were still alive?

Now pretend you are the lions. How did you feel, not having any food for a whole day? How did you feel when suddenly you weren't hungry and didn't want to eat the man in your cage?

4. Illustrate the story. Ask children to close their eyes and imagine what the lions' den looked like, then imagine the lions and Daniel. Have them open their eyes again and look at the Rubens painting of Daniel in the lions' den. Say, "This is what one artist thought Daniel might have looked like in the lions den. How is it different from what you imagined?"

Give each child a piece of paper and provide markers or crayons. Have them illustrate the story, encouraging them to fill the whole page. When they finish, have them draw several intersecting lines on the back to create puzzle pieces (*model for them*). Make sure the pieces aren't too small. Cut pictures into puzzle pieces and store them in individual plastic bags, labeled with children's names.

5. Read a story. Close with the book, *The Story of Ruby Bridges*. In this true story, Ruby has to face an angry crowd of protesters every day on her way to school. She faces them with courage, just as Daniel faced the lions. Encourage the children to be courageous when they need to do the right thing.

EXTEND THE LESSON

(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 30-40 minutes.)

- **Learn the song, "Daniel in the Lions' Den,"** page 18 in *Jubilee Songbook*. Send a copy of the words home with children.
- **Make lion faces** with paper plates. Cut small ($\frac{1}{2}$ " x 4") pieces of yellow construction paper to curl with the edge of scissors (*show children how*) for the mane. If you like, staple on a paper band for children to wear the faces on their heads, as hats.
- **Pray for brave Christians.** Talk about places in the world where it is dangerous to pray to our God. Have a time of prayer for Christians who live in countries where they might be thrown in jail for telling others about Christ.
- **Review all the stories of this unit.** Make a chart comparing the four stories: who was in the stories, what God asked them to do, what they did, and what was the outcome.