

date: 3/5/17

Bible Passage: Daniel 3:1–30
(Fiery Furnace)

God Protects

REMEMBER VERSE

**The LORD your God is with you, the
Mighty Warrior who saves.**

Zephaniah 3:17a

Inspire

Shares personal stories from fellow ministry leaders about how God has worked in their lives

The book of Psalms is filled with poem after poem ... song after song offering up praises to almighty God for His deliverance and protection. “Now this I know: The LORD gives victory to his anointed. He answers him from his heavenly sanctuary with the victorious power of his right hand” (Psalm 20:6). I better understand the depth and power of this psalm after a time of intense pain and darkness in my own life. About five years ago, my mom lost her life to cancer after battling for eight months. She was my confidant, counselor, comforter, and coach. My family and friends were near, yet even in their deepest love, how could they change what was? I prayed. I cried and begged God to be with me. I knew He was with me, but I needed to feel Him near in the midst of pain, loneliness, and grief. I had to choose to lean into what I knew was true. I called on God to be who I knew He was, and God revealed Himself to me in powerful ways.

The Psalms collect our praises for how God has protected and redeemed His people. He guards and defends those He loves—those He created. We are protected from the ill and earned fate that would be reality for all of humanity if not for the divine intervention of our Creator. In the darkest times of our lives, He is present with us. Even in ways we cannot see—He is our covering. Our God protects.

The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I called to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I have been saved from my enemies. (Psalm 18:2–3)

Cristi Thomas
Tru Team

Equip

Offers perspective and context to the lesson's Bible passage

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem and overtook the city (Daniel 1:1). He took items from the temple of God, people from the royal family, and the nobility of Judah with him back to Babylon. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were among those who were taken away from their home and birthright.

Upon arriving in this pagan land, each was renamed. Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were renamed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They were to be educated in the Babylonian language, literature, and the ways of the empire in order that they might serve within the court of the king. Regardless of the food they ate, what their names were, or the pagan practices of this new society in which they were forced to be members, these young men wouldn't be stripped of their knowledge of God and the truth of who He is. These young men knew from birth the calling on their lives to be and live as God's people. Knowing God was primary to their entire lives. Every decision, every practice was based on their knowledge and relationship with God. Regardless of the consequences, these young men refused to turn from what they knew was true and the God they worshipped.

Support

Provides reflection and assessment through encouragement, prayer, and time in God's Word

Read the account of Daniel 3:1–30. Looking back, when was a time you saw and felt God's protection over you and your life? What did He reveal about Himself to you in that time? Did He reveal something you hadn't heard from others or in Scripture? How do you know God now as a result?

God is constantly revealing Himself to us in many ways. He shows Himself to us in ways we would never expect, and sometimes rather unconventionally—all because He wants us to know Him.

May your heart be blessed by knowing your God has been your protection in the past, and He will continue to protect you in the future. He protects in ways you are not even aware of. You can trust Him and worship Him, no matter what.

EXPLORE:: 10 min.


Small Group Leaders

Children engage in fun, creative activities designed to pique their curiosity about the day's portion of The Big God Story.

How High Can You Build?

King Nebuchadnezzar built a statue and tried to force people to worship it. Today, children will engage in building and modeling anything they would like out of various materials—just for fun!

SUPPLIES (per small group)

- Building items: building blocks
- Play dough and/or modeling clay 

SET UP

Consider setting up two or three centers for children to build with a variety of materials. Clear space on the floor and place the building materials in small piles based on groupings (blocks with blocks, boxes with boxes). Children may mix items as they build—however, some children may need more order in their environment before they can engage. Separating materials into groups allows the needs of all to be met. Take play dough and clay out of the containers and place them on the tables for children. Consider having one table for play dough and one for clay to allow freedom in the exploration of both media.

RELATE

Encourage children to join you at a table or on the floor. Begin to build and create your own structure. Invite children to join you. As they do, engage them in conversation. **What does the material feel like? What can you do with these blocks? I wonder what would happen if ...** Encourage kids to be creative with their exploration and building process. While they're exploring the various media, ask children questions about their designs and structures.

DISCOVER::: 25 min.

Host/Worship Leader/Storyteller

Children participate in discovering God's Word through Bible verse memorization, interactive storytelling techniques, and worship as response.

Ponder Point**God Protects****Chloe's Rules**

Host/Worship Leader

SUPPLIES

- [Chloe's Rules videos](#)

Mail Time

Host/Worship Leader

SUPPLIES

- [Remember Verse image](#)
- [Remember Verse cards \(see Resources\)](#)
- [Mail Time envelope art \(see Resources\)](#)

PREPARE AHEAD

Print or copy the Mail Time envelope art and attach to a large envelope. Print or copy one Remember Verse card and put it inside the envelope.

RELATE

Tech: Cue the Mail Time intro clip and image. Choose one volunteer to hide the mail and another to find the mail. Have

the “Seeker” close her eyes while the “Hider” finds a good place to hide the Remember Verse. Once the mail has been hidden, the Seeker will begin to look for the mail while the children give clues to its whereabouts by calling out “hot” and “cold.”

Once the Seeker finds the mail, the Host invites her to pull out the enclosed Remember Verse. Next, the Host should find the Remember Verse in his Bible and read the words aloud. Talk about the meaning of the verse while interacting with the children.

Lead the children in reciting the Remember Verse several times together using a variety of engaging methods. Hand motions, different voices, various speeds, and character integration are all great ways to help commit the Scripture to memory. For longer verses, approach the verse one section at a time, increasing what the children repeat back each week.

REMEMBER VERSE

**The LORD your God is with you, the
Mighty Warrior who saves.**

Zephaniah 3:17a

REMEMBER VERSE DEFINITIONS

Mighty Warrior: A name for God that means He is powerful in battle.

REMEMBER VERSE MOTIONS

The LORD your God: Make “L” with right index finger and thumb. Move the “L” from right shoulder to left hip.

is with you: Put both hands in front of body and pull close to chest.

the Mighty Warrior: Make fists and flex to show muscles.

who saves: Make fists and fold arms across chest, then open arms.

Wardrobe of Wonder

Storyteller/Host/Worship Leader

SUPPLIES

- **What’sIt: Fire** (see optional image in Resources)
- Wardrobe of Wonder
- Small stools or chairs (2)

What’sIt: Fire

When we know God and trust in Him, He is our protector. God was in the fire with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Because of His protection, the flames didn’t touch the young men. God is always good. He protects us every day, sometimes in ways we don’t even see or know about.

RELATE

Tech: Cue the *Wardrobe of Wonder intro clip and image*. Invite a child volunteer to “spy” on the What’sIt by peeking into the wardrobe. Each time the wardrobe door opens, cue the *Wardrobe of Wonder sound effect*. Have him whisper the identity of the What’sIt in your ear to ensure he knows what it is.

Invite your assistant to sit on the stools with you. Then lead the group in asking the assistant yes-or-no questions about the What'sIt. Once the children have guessed correctly, ask your assistant to retrieve the What'sIt from the wardrobe and bring it to you. Thank your volunteer and encourage him to sit with his small group.

ASK

Fire?! Why do you think there's fire in the wardrobe today? Interact with responses. **What could this have to do with The Big God Story? Where else in The Big God Story have we seen fire? Well, we're going to have a chance to find out more about the fire in the wardrobe, because ... friends, do you know what time it is?**

The Big God Story

Daniel 3:1–30

God Protects

Storytelling Technique: Sound Effects

SUPPLIES

- [The Big God Story intro clip and image \(see Resources\)](#)
- [What'sIt: Fire \(see optional image in Resources\)](#)
- [Sound effects: King, Fire, Fanfare, Celebration \(see Resources\)](#)

RELATE

Tech: Cue The Big God Story intro clip and image. **Hello, everyone! It's so good to be here with you. Before we learn some amazing things about God, we need to pray and ask God to teach us.** Lead children in a Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds.

Long ago, three young men named Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego lived in the kingdom of Babylon and worked for King Nebuchadnezzar. *Tech: Cue King sound effect.* **Even though Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego worked for the king (Tech: Cue King sound effect), they always served God first. King Nebuchadnezzar did not serve God. In fact, Nebuchadnezzar built a *giant* statue of gold. And every time his musicians played a special song (Tech: Cue Fanfare sound effect), *everyone* in Babylon had to worship the giant statue. If anyone didn't worship the statue, they would be thrown into a really, really hot, fiery furnace! Tech: Cue Fire sound effect. A furnace is kind of like a really big and super-hot oven.**

Well, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego knew that there's no one else like God, and there's no one else worthy to be worshipped. So, when the music played (Tech: Cue Fanfare sound effect), they refused to bow down and worship the king's statue. Do you think the king was happy about this? Children respond. No! He was angry! He had the young men brought to him. He told them if they didn't worship the golden statue, he would throw them into the fiery furnace. Tech: Cue Fire sound effect. But Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego looked at the king and said, "The God we serve is able to deliver us from [the fire], and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand" (Daniel 3:17). They trusted God. They knew God protects, and they chose to worship Him no matter what!

Do you think this made the king happy? No! Not one bit. He got even angrier! In fact, he got so mad that he had the fiery furnace made one, two, three, four, five, six, seven times hotter than it was before! Then, he had Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego tied up and carried to the furnace. When they got there, the king's men threw the three men into the fire. That furnace was so hot that even the soldiers who threw the men into the fire were killed! But God protects!

So after they were thrown into the really, really, really, hot fiery furnace (*Tech: Cue Fire sound effect*), King Nebuchadnezzar saw something amazing. He looked into the furnace and saw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego walking around in the fire! Can you believe it? They weren't tied up anymore. God protected them! In fact, when the king looked into the furnace, he counted—one (pause), two (pause), three (pause), *wait!* Suddenly the king saw four men instead of three! God was with them protecting them in the fire!

The king saw this and was amazed. He immediately called the young men to come out of the fire. Out came Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego! When the young men walked out of the furnace, the king and everyone there gathered around them. Do you think they had burns? Children respond. **No!** Do you think they even smelled like fire or smoke? Children respond. **No!** God had totally protected them.

God showed Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, King Nebuchadnezzar—and everyone who saw what had happened in the furnace—that our God protects! All the people who saw what happened knew that these young men worshipped the one true God. That's something to celebrate! *Tech: Cue Celebration sound effect.*

What did we find in the Wardrobe of Wonder today? Children answer. **That's right, our What'sIt was Fire. God was in the fire with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They knew God and trusted Him to take care of them, no matter what! When we know God and trust in Him, He is our protector. And He protects us in ways we don't even see or know about.**

RESPOND::: 20 min.

Wonder Questions

Small Group Enhancements, coloring pages, and discussion questions help your group go deeper into today's portion of The Big God Story.

SUPPLIES (per small group)

- [Wonder Questions coloring pages \(see Resources\)](#)
- [TruWonder Small Group Enhancements timeline and images \(see Resources\)](#)
- Crayons

RELATE

In today's part of The Big God Story, we heard how Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to worship anything or anyone but God. Even though the king threatened to throw them into a hot, fiery furnace, they knew their God was able to protect them.

I wonder ... Why did God protect Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego?

I wonder ... How does God protect me?

I wonder ... How can I worship God for His protection?

BLESS::: 5 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children receive a blessing from their leaders and sometimes one another. A blessing may be a prayer of commission, a portion of Scripture, or words to encourage and guide.

RELATE

Gather children around you in a circle. As you bless children individually, encourage each one to hold out her hands, palms up as if cupping water. This posture represents the child's willingness to receive from God.

Now I know the Lord protects (child's name). **He answers** (his/her) **prayers with His mighty power** (paraphrase of Psalm 20:6).

Now bless children as a group:

May you remember that God is with you always and protects you, even in the things you cannot see.

Send home Remember Verse cards and the HomeFront Weekly with your kids.