



## Bible Story

### Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego Stand True

Daniel 3

## Castle Callout

Armor Up with Truth!

# Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego Stand True

## Daniel 3

### Materials

-  Bibles and/or Bible app for smartphone/tablet
-  Storyteller costume—This could be typical “Renaissance Fest” attire: billowy shirt, puffy hat with feather, etc. (tights optional). Modern attire also may work, especially when paired with a **Knights of North Castle T-Shirt** and **Castle Guide Vest**.
-  Bible—The Storyteller could hold a Bible that looks very old and has fancy lettering. Consider designing a “prop” Bible from cardboard so that it is lighter.
-  Bible-times attire for Musicians 1 and 2 and Leaders 1 and 2—simple tunics or robes
-  Bible-times attire for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—tunics or robes of a different color than the ones for the Musicians and Leaders
-  Bible-times attire for King Nebuchadnezzar—purple or blue robe, crown
-  Kazoo and triangle for Musicians 1 and 2
-  Gold statue
-  Furnace—a large cardboard box with red, yellow, and orange streamers will work nicely
-  Knights of North Castle **Complete Music CD** or MP3 files
-  **Bible Storytelling Props**
-  CD player or device to play downloaded music

### Setting the Scene

-  Designate one wall to be the focal point, serving as the backdrop for the action. The wall can be decorated to give the feel of a palace.
-  The main staging area should be divided into two main areas. Stage Left is for the main action dialogue. Stage Right (far to the side) could be the furnace, taking up as little of the staging area as possible.
-  The Fiery Furnace could be as simple as a large cardboard box painted black. The flames could be made with fans that have red and orange cellophane attached to the grates. When the furnace is “turned up” in the drama, the fans can be turned on.
-  The gold statue is centered against the backdrop.
-  The Storyteller’s area could be to the side, possibly with a small “story throne” for the Storyteller to sit on. Posted nearby, perhaps directly overhead, could be an actual banner with the Banner Verse: “Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power.” Ephesians 6:10
-  Additionally, there could be space on a wall where each session’s Castle Callout is posted as it is revealed. The Castle Callouts would look great on banners that are similar, yet smaller, to the one with the Banner Verse. Add the Castle Callout banner each day so that banners fill up the wall by the end of VBS.
-  For Background Music, play the instrumental version of “Be Strong in the Lord” from the **Complete Music CD**.

# Bible Background

## Daniel 3

### Belt of Truth

The stories we read in the Book of Daniel take place at a time known as the Babylonian Exile. The city of Jerusalem had been conquered. A large number of Jewish people had been taken from their homes and forced to live in a foreign nation, the land of Babylon. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were young Jewish men who were put into the service of King Nebuchadnezzar. Thankfully, they found favor with those in charge. But this quickly changed when Nebuchadnezzar set up an idol and commanded all people to worship it.

The directions were simple: When the people of Babylon heard the sound of special music playing, they were to stop whatever they were doing and bow down to worship Nebuchadnezzar's idol. Failure to follow this command was met with a harsh penalty—being thrown into a fiery furnace. The people followed the command. When the music played, everyone stopped what they were doing and bowed down to the idol. Everyone except for three of the Jewish exiles.

Hoping to tarnish the reputation of the young men in the eyes of the king, some Chaldeans reported that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were not obeying the king's command. The men were questioned, but they did not lie about their disobedience: "We don't need to answer your question. If our God—the one we serve—is able to rescue us from the furnace of flaming fire and from your power, Your Majesty, then let him rescue us. But if he doesn't, know this for certain, Your Majesty: we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you've set up" (Daniel 3:16-18).

The three men were sentenced to death. Perhaps in an effort to prove how serious he really was, Nebuchadnezzar had the furnace heated seven times hotter than normal. Despite the intensity of the heat, the words of the three men held true. The God of Israel was able to rescue them from the flames. Nebuchadnezzar saw for himself a fourth figure in the fire and said, "The fourth one looks like one of the gods" (Daniel 3:25). As a result, Nebuchadnezzar issued a new decree: no one was allowed to disparage the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. The three men were promoted to positions of power.

It is important to note that the Bible does not promise we will always be rescued from harm. What's important is staying faithful to God. It's important to stand for what we know to be true. Even if you do something others don't like, being honest and trusting God is a great idea. The Bible describes truth as a belt. Belts hold things up and keep things secure. God is a faithful rescuer, and the truth holds us up in times of trouble.



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### Teacher Tip

This Bible Background feature is a supplemental aid provided for you, the Storyteller, to give context for each session's story before you teach on it. ***You may share this information with your Knights, if desired, but it is not a recommended portion of the intended lesson.***

### Additional Bible Reading

-  Daniel 1
-  Ephesians 6



## Bible Story

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## Teacher Tip

If time permits, it may be helpful to explain to Knights that the Book of Daniel is part of a collection of books in the Old Testaments sometimes called the “Prophets.” For short, child-friendly explanations of various sections of the Bible, check out the Deep Blue Kids Bible pages iii-ix.

# Story Starter

Good day, Knights of North Castle! Welcome to the Bible Storytelling Station or, as I like to call it, Story Hall!

Each day we will ride out on a quest in search of the King’s Armor. But I don’t think this armor is made out of bronze or iron. Nay! (Or “no,” for common folk.) I believe this armor is made from something much stronger.

A quest like this requires preparation. And I can think of no better way to start our quest than with the word of the Lord—our Banner Verse for the week.

Our Banner Verse comes from Ephesians, chapter six, verse ten.

Hear ye these words from Ephesians. That means listen up, young Knights.

**Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power.**

**Repeat after me. Be strong in the Lord.**

*(Have the students echo the words.)*

**And in the strength of his power.**

*(Have the students echo the words.)*

**Excellent! Now let’s say it all together!**

*(Invite the students to repeat the Banner Verse with you.)*

**Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power.**

**Huzzah! That’s knight speak for “cool” or “very good.”**

Our tale from the King’s Book is from the part we call the Old Testament. It comes from the Book of Daniel. As we continue our quest, we will experience stories from both the Old and New Testaments. This story takes place in the land of Babylon. Three men of faith angered King Nebuchadnezzar and encountered something even hotter than a dragon’s breath!

**Hark!** (That means “to pay close attention.”) The King’s musicians arrive anon. (That means “soon” or “now.”)

# Bible Story Option 1

## Drama

### Cast

- ☒ Musician 1—fun-loving, clueless
- ☒ Musician 2—fun-loving, clueless
- ☒ Leader 1—jealous, tattletale
- ☒ Leader 2—jealous, tattletale
- ☒ King Nebuchadnezzar—regal; stickler for the rules, but with a kind heart
- ☒ Shadrach—faithful
- ☒ Meshach—faithful
- ☒ Abednego—faithful, doesn't like always being listed last
- ☒ Storyteller

### Materials

- ☒ Storyteller costume
- ☒ Bible-times attire for Musicians 1 and 2 and for Leaders 1 and 2—simple tunics or robes
- ☒ Bible-times attire for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—tunics or robes of a different color than the ones for the Musicians and Leaders
- ☒ Bible-times attire for King Nebuchadnezzar—purple or blue robe and a crown
- ☒ Kazoo and triangle for Musicians 1 and 2
- ☒ Gold statue
- ☒ Furnace

*(Cast enters)*

Musician 1 *(plays fanfare on kazoo)*: **Leaders of Babylon, gather around! King Nap-in-the-Desert...**

Musician 2 *(correcting)*: **Nebuchadnezzar.**

Musician 1 *(continues)*: **King Nebuchadnezzar has a special announcement.**

King Nebuchadnezzar: **I have summoned you all here today because I have something very important to show you.** *(pulls sheet off the idol)* **Behold this beautiful, magnificent, awe-inspiring statue I had made.** *(Leaders 1 and 2 applaud.)* **Thank you. I am rather proud of it. But there's more. Tell 'em, Musicians.**

Musician 1: **King Pelican Feather...**

Musician 2 *(correcting)*: **Nebuchadnezzar.**

Musician 1 *(continues)*: **King Nebuchadnezzar has issued a decree that whenever you hear the special, fancy-schmancy music played like this—** *(Musician 1 plays a ridiculous fanfare on the kazoo, followed by Musician 2 playing a single beat on the triangle.)* **—you are to bow before this gold statue. Anyone who refuses to bow will be thrown into a fiery furnace.**



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For a smaller drama troupe, Musician 2 can be played by the Storyteller. Leaders 1 and 2 can be combined into one role.



King Nebuchadnezzar: **Let's see just how obedient these people are. Musicians, play the fancy-schmancy music.** (*Musician 1 plays a longer, more ridiculous fanfare on the kazoo, followed by Musician 2 playing a single beat on the triangle. Leaders 1 and 2 bow down. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego remain standing.*)

Leader 1 (*peeking*): **Your Highness, look! Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego aren't bowing low.**

Shadrach: **How would you know, unless you weren't bowing low?**

Leader 2: **Never mind that! Your Highness, they're disobeying you!**

King Nebuchadnezzar: **Is this true?**

Musician 1: **Yes, King Under-the-Weather.**

Musician 2 (*correcting*): **Nebuchadnezzar.**

Musician 1 (*continues*): **King Nebuchadnezzar, they didn't bow at all.**

King Nebuchadnezzar: **Not even when they heard the fancy-schmancy music?**

Leader 1: **Not even then.**

Leader 2 (*kissing up*): **They're not obedient to you like we are, Your Highness.**

King Nebuchadnezzar: **Ooh! That burns my britches! Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, don't you realize that if you fail to bow before my statue, you will be thrown into a fiery furnace? Then what god will rescue you from my power?**

Shadrach (*calmly defiant*): **We don't need to answer that question.**

Meshach (*calmly defiant*): **If the God we serve is able to rescue us from the fiery furnace, then let our God do it.**

Abednego (*calmly defiant*): **But even if our God doesn't, know this for certain: we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue.**

Musician 1 (*shocked*): **Oh no, you didn't.**

King Nebuchadnezzar: **That does it! You had your chance. (to Leader 1) Turn the furnace up.**

Leader 1 (*going over to the furnace*): **How high, Your Highness? Twice the normal heat? Three times?**

King Nebuchadnezzar: **No! Make it seven times hotter!**

Leaders 1 and 2, Musicians 1 and 2: **Seven times!**

Leader 1: **Now, that's hot!** (*turns the dial on the furnace*)

King Nebuchadnezzar (*to Leader 2*): **And you take Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and march them right into the furnace.** (*Leader 2 leads them over to the furnace.*)

Abednego: **Wait!**

King Nebuchadnezzar: **Having a change of heart?**

Abednego: **No, it's just that...well, it's always Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego this, and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that. Why am I always mentioned last? I mean, that's not even alphabetical order.**

King Nebuchadnezzar (*exasperated*): **Fine. Take Abednego, Meshach, and Shadrach and throw them into the fiery furnace! (to Abednego) Happy now?**

Abednego: **Yes and no.**

*(Leader 2 forces Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into the fiery furnace and steps away.)*

King Nebuchadnezzar: **Now, let this be a lesson to anyone who would dare to... (looking into furnace, surprised) Didn't we throw three people into the fiery furnace?**

Leader 1: **Yes, Your Highness.**

King Nebuchadnezzar: **Look! I see four, just walking around the furnace like it's a day at the beach. And the fourth looks like one of the gods. Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego...**

Abednego (*disappointed*): **Aw, man.**

King Nebuchadnezzar: **Come out of that furnace right now! Are you okay?**

*(Leaders 1 and 2 and Musicians 1 and 2 gather around and look amazed.)*

Shadrach: **Yes, Your Highness.**

Meshach: **Never felt better.**

Leader 2: **They don't even smell like the fire. You know how when you're toasting marshmallows for s'mores and...**

Leader 1: **S'mores haven't been invented yet.**

Leader 2: **Oh.**

King Nebuchadnezzar: **May the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be praised! Their God sent a messenger to rescue them. They stood true for their God, even if it meant risking their own lives. No more bowing to statues. From now on, everyone will treat their God with respect.**

Musician 1: **Your Highness, can we still play the fancy-schmancy music?**

Musician 2: **Pleeeeeease? We practiced it a LOT.**

King Nebuchadnezzar (*sighing*): **Sure.**

Musicians 1 and 2: **Yay!** *(Musician 1 plays an even longer, ridiculous fanfare on the kazoo, followed by Musician 2 playing a single beat on the triangle.)*



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## Teacher Tip

### Pronunciation

Shadrach (SHAD-rak)

Meshach (MEE-shak)

Abednego (uh-BED-ni-goh)

Some Knights may not know what the word “woe” means. Though a dictionary definition is helpful, a simple definition might be “sadness.”

### Option for Older Knights

You may have noticed that this option is written in a sort of rhyme. Use **Bible Storytelling Props**, a smart device camera and guide students in creating their own rap video of this story. Maybe you have a Knight who can “beat box,” or just download a free app that helps you create beats.

# Bible Story Option 2

## Single Storyteller

Today’s Bible story is about three men of faith who knew the truth about God’s power and love. These three men were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. I need your help telling their story.

I will tell part of the story. Then, when I signal, you will chant, “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.” And there are simple motions, which I will show you, that you must do as you chant the names.

These men had strong hearts, strong minds, and a strong faith.

**For Shadrach, put your hands over your heart.** (*Show the motion.*)

**For Meshach, point your finger to your brain.** (*Show the motion.*)

**For Abednego, make praying hands in front of your chest.** (*Show the motion.*)

**Great! Okay, listen and watch carefully for your part in the story. I can’t do it with out you.**

**Once there was a king named Nebuchadnezzar,  
Who ruled in Babylon so long ago.  
And in that land, there were three faithful people—** (*signal*)

**Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.**

**The King made a towering gold statue  
And ordered everyone to bow down low.  
But three men wouldn’t bow to worship idols—** (*signal*)

**Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.**

**When the King found out about their actions,  
He ordered them again, but they said, “No.”  
And so he made it known they must be punished—** (*signal*)

**Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.**

**He had them thrown into a fiery furnace  
And turned the flames as high as they would go.  
How dare they disobey what he had ordered!** (*signal*)

**Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.**

**Though the flames were fierce inside that furnace,  
The men were filled with faith instead of woe.  
A messenger from God was right there with them—** (*signal*)

**Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.**

**The king was so amazed he freed them promptly.  
Their trust in God had made his own heart grow.  
He ordered everyone to respect the God of—** (*signal*)

**Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.**

**Three men knew the truth of God’s great power.  
Three men had their faith and let it show.  
Even now they are a great example—** (*signal*)

**Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.**

# Life Application

Knights, the story we just experienced is about one of God's great truths. So let's play a True/False game. I'll say something about the story. You have to tell me if it's true or false.

Here we go.

King Nebuchadnezzar had a large gold statue made to honor himself.  
*(Allow Knights to respond, "True.")*

He gave a command that whenever the special music was played, everyone had to dance the cha-cha.  
*(Allow Knights to respond, "False.")*

Right. Everyone was to bow down.

But three of God's people wouldn't bow down. Their names were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.  
*(Allow Knights to respond, "True.")*

King Nebuchadnezzar was mad that they wouldn't bow down, so he had them thrown into a tub of cold spaghetti.  
*(Allow Knights to respond, "False.")*

Right. They were thrown into a fiery furnace.

But they didn't burn up, because God sent a messenger to be there with them.  
*(Allow Knights to respond, "True.")*

Well done, Knights!

Even though all the other people bowed to the gold statue, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego stayed true to their faith. We learn in school and at church about the importance of not giving in to negative peer pressure. But are there ever times when not giving in could put us in harm's way? It certainly seemed to put Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in a tough spot.

Think of a time when you were in a group of people who were doing or saying things that didn't feel right or felt bad. Did you feel pressure to act and talk the way they did so that you wouldn't be left out?

The Bible doesn't promise that if we follow God's way, nothing bad will ever happen. But hear ye this: The Bible does promise, over and over again, that God is with us—no matter what. God's love never leaves our side. That is a simple, beautiful truth we can all believe in!

Let us rise and join in our **Castle Callout for today: Armor Up with Truth!** *(Lead the students in chanting the Castle Callout.)*

Once again, like true noble Knights! *(Lead the students in chanting the Castle Callout.)*

Huzzah! And remember, Knights, that means "very good!"



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## Teacher Tip

For larger groups, one test church coached Knights to give the "thumbs up" sign for true and the "thumbs down" sign for false.

## Scripture Treasure Lanyards

Take time to hand out the Scripture Treasure Lanyards and shield stickers with this session's Castle Callout when you've completed the "Life Application" discussion.



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# Active Learning

## Positive Peer Pressure

We learned that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego remained true to God and did not give in to negative peer pressure—not to mention pressure from those in charge—by refusing to bow to the gold statue. But can there be positive forms of peer pressure—like being a positive influence?

Here's a fun game to play.

Select one student to be "it" and step outside the Storyteller space/room. *(If safety concerns won't allow for this, simply have this student stand in a corner, facing away from the room until instructed to turn back around.)*

Select another student to be the "Positive Influence." This student sits in place and pantomimes actions that are positive, kind, good, or affirming.

Examples:

- Writing a thank-you note
- Rocking a baby
- Petting a dog or cat
- Praying
- Giving a friendly wave
- Folding laundry (or another household chore)

The other students must copy the motions made by the "Positive Influence."

Now, here's the catch that makes this a game—whenever you give the direction, the student who is "it" comes back into the room (or turns around) and looks carefully, trying to guess which student is the "Positive Influence."

Encourage the "Positive Influence" to change actions as often as possible without getting caught. The action should be switched only when "it" is looking somewhere else.

Encourage the other students not to stare directly at the "Positive Influence." Otherwise, it will be obvious.

"It" gets three guesses.

Allow as many students to be "it" or the "Positive Influence" as time allows.

# Closing Prayer

Dear Knights of North Castle, before I bid thee farewell, let us join together in prayer.

Invite the students to stand and march in place as they echo each line of this prayer, to the cadence of “Sound Off” or “The Duckworth Chant.”

**God is caring, God is kind.**

God is caring, God is kind.

**Giving love and peace of mind.**

Giving love and peace of mind.

**We can follow God's own way,**

We can follow God's own way,

**By sharing, caring every day,**

By sharing, caring every day.

**Sound off.**

Amen.

**Sound off.**

Amen.

**Bring it on down.**

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen!



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## Teacher Tip

Explain to the Knights that they will say “Amen” after you say “Sound off” and “Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen!” after you say “Bring it on down.”