



FAITHFULNESS IN A FOREIGN LAND

God's Incredible Plan • U8#4 1st-3rd Grade • Mar. 1, 2026

Concept

God is always faithful.

Goal

Students will learn that God is trustworthy and we can be faithful to him.

Passage

Daniel 1-4

Key Verse: "The God we serve is able to save us... and He will rescue us from your hand, O King." Daniel 3:17

Planning Ahead

Lesson Supplies	Craft Supplies
<p>Activity Stations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>"Where You Are," CD by Rich Mullins (on YouTube too)</i>• <i>CD player</i> <p>Introduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>World map</i> <p>Learning Activity #1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Paper flames from Activity Station</i> <p>Optional Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>3 sets of 8 laminated pieces of statue from Daniel 2</i>	<p>Activity Stations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Words to "Where you are" by Rich Mullins, 1 copy/student• Key verse, 1 verse/student• Black construction paper, 1/student• Glue sticks• Orange construction paper cut into thirds, 1 section/student• Red construction paper cut into thirds, 1 section/student• Yellow cellophane cut into thirds, 1 section/student• Jumbo craft sticks, 1½/student• Scissors• <i>Tape</i>

*TEACHERS PLEASE NOTE

For clarity, the italicized areas in the Planning Ahead section indicate supplies that are in—and should be returned to—your classroom SHARED SUPPLY bag.

Background Information/Teacher Helps

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The great revival of King Josiah's time unfortunately died with him. There were still believers in Judah, but Josiah's sons brought idol worship back into the land. Just as God had warned and promised, that was the beginning of the end for the Southern kingdom. First Egypt, then a hot-tempered king of the insignificant kingdom called Babylon over-ran Judah and captured Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, on the way to establishing a vast empire, stole treasures from the Temple and took hostage 70 teenagers from the most important families of Jerusalem to try to make sure Judah wouldn't give him any trouble. The king planned to assimilate those 70 youths, making them into Babylonians on the inside even if they looked like Hebrews on the outside. The plan was that those seventy would lead the rest of the people away from God to the Babylonian worldview. However, four of the seventy stood firm for God, even though it could have cost them their lives. Among those hostages were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishaël and Azariah.

"The book of Daniel has a high and lofty view of the sovereignty of God. The theme is: There is a God in heaven. The book repeats that He is the great God, He is the God of gods, the king of heaven. When we understand that prevailing theme, we are able to understand how God may use some people for his purposes, even when they are not His own children."¹

God used Nebuchadnezzar to discipline His children by taking them into exile. The people of Judah were forced to leave everything and live as strangers in a foreign land, far from the Temple and their homes. To make evident to the others that only their own stubborn faithlessness could cause them to be far from God, Daniel and his friends were sent first.

God was always faithful to Daniel and his friends. Daniel is one of the few men in the Bible about whom we have no record of failure or wrongdoing. Even his enemies couldn't find anything against him! Daniel was faithful to God.

In this lesson we will explore God's faithfulness to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishaël and Azariah and their faithfulness to Him.

¹ David Jeremiah, *The Handwriting on the Wall*, 1992, Word Publishing, p. 20.

Set Up

Incorporation Lg. Group

Introduction Lg. Group

Order the game pieces consecutively from head to feet for each team for the optional activity.

Activity Station

- **Craft – Fiery Flames**
 - **Instructions:** Cut flames out of the top of the red and orange construction paper and yellow cellophane strips. Turn the black construction paper in horizontal/landscape position. Glue the key verse to the top of section 1 of the black construction paper. Fold up the bottom third of the black construction paper to make section 2. Fold that third in half to make section 3. Section 2 will be the base of the finished craft. Glue the flames on the inside of section 3 overlapping the three colors. Break craft sticks in half and decorate the rounded tops as three Bible men. Tape the 3 Bible men to section 1 just above the fold.
- **Music – “Where You Are”**
 - **Instructions:** Play the tape of the song as the students work in the Activity Stations. Give each student a copy of the words to take home.
- **Mission Prayer**
 - **Instructions:** Talk about and pray for Oasis Giving campaign.

Last week we learned that King Josiah followed God with all of his heart and helped the people of Judah to turn to the one true God. But after he died, his sons foolishly started worshipping idols again. God warned them but they wouldn't listen.

Consequently, Egypt attacked and captured Jerusalem. (Show Egypt and Jerusalem on map.) Then the king of Babylon attacked and conquered Judah from the north. (Show Babylon on map.) The Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar, took 70 teenagers from all of the important families in Jerusalem. He thought that if he had them as hostages, the people of Judah wouldn't fight back. He also thought if he could get the 70 teenagers to think like the Babylonians, to worship him and his gods, the rest of the Israelites would follow them. The idea was to get the Israelites to forget about the one true God.

When the young men were taken to Babylon, King Nebuchadnezzar told his chief official, Ashpenaz, to teach them the language and wisdom of Babylon. At the end of 3 years he would test them; the best ones would become officials in his kingdom. The first thing Ashpenaz did was to give all the young men Babylonian names to try to make them think of themselves as Babylonian instead of Hebrew.

Introduction Continued

Lesson Lg. Group

He hoped that they would forget about Judah and their God. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were 4 of the young men. He renamed Daniel, Belteshazzar. Hananiah became Shadrach. Mishael became Meshach. And Azariah was renamed Abednego. Have any of you ever heard of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego? These 4 young men determined to stay faithful to God even when their faith in God could have resulted in death. Our key verse today is, "The God we serve is able to save us... and He will rescue us from your hand, O King" (Daniel 3:17). Daniel and his friends knew that God is always faithful and God proved His faithfulness as He protected and provided for them. We'll learn about 3 tests that proved their faithfulness to God.

Test #1

Daniel 1 verses 8 - 21. The first test of their faithfulness to God was when they were given meat from the king's table and told to eat it. The king's food was first offered to idols and some of the meat was even from animals that God had told the Hebrews not to eat. The problem was that the boys knew they shouldn't eat the meat, but the king killed those who did not obey him. What should they do?

What would you do? Daniel and his friends didn't want to break God's Law. Rather than complain, refuse to eat or disrespect the King, they came up with a plan. They asked Ashpenaz for permission to eat only vegetables and drink water instead of the king's food. But Ashpenaz was afraid of the king because he didn't want to be killed! He was afraid that these guys would get weak and look bad if they only ate vegetables. So Daniel said, "Just give us vegetables and water for the next 10 days and compare how we look to how the others look. If we look as good as the others the king won't be angry and you'll know it's all right for us to eat what God says is right." It was a wise answer so Ashpenaz agreed because God had given him a heart of love for Daniel and his friends.

Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego continued to study in the king's school. God gave them wisdom and the ability to learn many things. And He gave Daniel a special ability to understand visions and dreams. After 3 years King Nebuchadnezzar tested them and found that they were the best of all the young men who had been trained. So the king made them his special servants. And whenever he asked them about something important he found that they gave better answers than all of his other wise men and counselors.

Test #2

Chapter 2 of Daniel tells us about the second test. One night the king had a dream that frightened him. He demanded that his wise men tell him what the dream was and what it meant. But no one could. The king was furious.

Lesson Continued

What good were his wise men and magicians if they couldn't tell him his dream? He ordered all the wise men and magicians in his kingdom be put to death. When the commander of the king's guard went to kill Daniel, Meshach, Abendego and Shadrach, Daniel asked him why the king was going to kill them. Daniel went at once to see the king while Meshach, Abendego and Shadrach prayed to God, asking Him to tell Daniel the dream and its meaning. That night God told Daniel the dream and its meaning in a vision.

God gave King Nebuchadnezzar this dream about the future and He gave Daniel the explanation. What do you think the king did when he found out what his dream meant? (Allow to answer.) Let's read Daniel 2:46-49. King Nebuchadnezzar bowed down to Daniel and told him that his God was truly the best of all gods and one who could reveal mysteries. Then he made Daniel the chief ruler over all of Babylon. And when Daniel asked him, the king made Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego rulers under Daniel. Once again God was faithful and they weren't killed. The key verse is, "The God we serve is able to save us... and He will rescue us from your hand, O King" (Daniel 3:17).

Test #3

After many years passed the king forgot about Daniel's wonderful and faithful God. Turn to Daniel 3 and follow along as I read verses 1, 4-6.

Transition

The drama team is going to do a skit now about the third test that Daniel and his friends experienced. We need help from all of you. Let's get together with the other classes for the skit.

Learning Activity#1 Lg. Group

Drama

Instructions: The students will play the following parts in the skit: Half of you will be Musicians and Flames; the other half will be Soldiers. Give the following instructions to your group:

Musicians: The king of Babylon had all kinds of musicians who played many different instruments. Each of you should choose an instrument to pretend to play and make the sound that instrument makes when I wave my arms like a conductor. (Demonstrate.) Stop when I quit. (Practice.) Good! Be ready to "play your instrument."

Flames: (Each student picks up the fiery flames made in the Activity Station.) You get to be a blazing furnace! You'll sit in a circle near the drama team. The soldiers will be on one side of you and the musicians on the other side. When you hear the words "fire," "blazing," or "furnace," wave your flames. (Demonstrate.) And when you hear the king say to make the furnace hotter, hold them higher and wave them faster. (Demonstrate and practice.) Okay?

Learning Activity#1 Continued

Transition

Learning Activity#2 Lg. Group

Skit – "The Peer Pressure Cooker" presented by Drama Team and students

Instructions: All flames get into a circle over here to be the furnace.

Soldiers sit on this side of the flames and musicians sit anywhere.

Let's go back to our classrooms and find out what we can learn from Daniel and his friends.

Good News

"Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Their God has sent his angel and saved his servants from the fire! These three men trusted their God and refused to obey my command. They were willing to die rather than serve or worship any god other than their own." What an incredible experience! They were saved from a fire that would have killed anyone. God's faithfulness to them turned the king's heart back to God. The king then said all nations and people should worship the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. So these three boys were responsible for making God known to the whole world! Result = God's faithfulness turned the king's heart and the world back to God.

God never stopped being faithful to Daniel and his friends, and He is the same today. When we decide to follow God we also experience God's faithfulness and we can be included in His plan to let others know about His faithfulness. The Bible says that when we choose to ask for Jesus' death to pay for our sins, God is faithful to make us His child. How do you become His child? (Allow the students to explain the gospel.)

Transition

Learning Activity#3 Sm. Groups

Let's get into our small groups to talk more about God's faithfulness to Daniel and his friends.

Small Groups

When the boys refused to bow down to worship the statue Nebuchadnezzar was enraged and said, "... if you do not worship it, you will immediately be thrown into the blazing furnace. What god will be able to save you from my power then?" What was their response? ("If you have us thrown into the furnace the God we serve is able to rescue us! But even if He chooses not to, we want you to know, O King, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.")

- Can you imagine how difficult the decision must have been for them and how terrified they must have been of that hot fire? What would you be thinking if you were in that situation?
- How would you decide what to do? Would that be a hard decision for you? I'm sure I would want to think this through pretty carefully. Surely God wouldn't let Neb. put me in that hot furnace! But what if he did?!

Learning Activity #3 Continued

- Why do you think those boys were able to refuse to bow down to the statue even though they knew it could be the end of their lives?
- Have any of you made a decision to trust God even though you were afraid? What happened? (Teachers, share an age-appropriate example from your own life.)
- In what ways have you experienced God's faithfulness to you?

The more we choose to believe Him the more we experience His incredible faithfulness. And we, too, can really know His faithfulness like Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Let's pray and thank God for His faithfulness.

Optional Activity

Game – Play Neb's Dream

Instructions: Read Daniel 2:31-35 to describe each piece of the statue. Divide the class into 3 teams. Each team will run a relay race to put together the picture of the statue. Place the stack of the pieces at the beginning of each line. Each player will hop on one foot to the designated spot on the floor, lay their piece down, then switch feet and hop back to tag the next teammate. Continue until all pieces are correctly placed on the floor. The team who correctly finishes their statue first wins.