

# The Fiery Furnace

## Teacher's Notes

Like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, the Lord's truth stands firm for what is useful and right in the face of selfish loves. It has power to protect and save us from selfish feelings and thoughts.

Daniel 3 Lesson Plan		Materials Needed
<b>1. Welcome Activity</b> (2-3 minutes)	Truth Makes Minds Strong pp. 1-2	two empty (flimsy) plastic water bottles with lids, pitcher of water
<b>2. Focus on the Word</b> (5-7 minutes)	Read Daniel 3 and discuss p. 2	shortened version of text included on p. 3
<b>3. Learn by Doing</b> Choose 1-2 activities (15-20 minutes)	Walking on Eggshells pp. 4-6	eggs, other supplies vary depending on the experiment chosen
	The Power of Music pp. 7-9	Device to stream online video
<b>4. Closing</b> (2-3 minutes)	Recitation and Closing p. 9	Take Home Cards p. 10

## Welcome Activity:

### Truth Makes Minds Strong

*Supplies needed: 2 empty (flimsy) plastic water bottles with lids, pitcher of water*

Show an empty water bottle. Ask students to predict what will happen if you put the bottle on the table or floor and pound it with your fist. Will the bottle change? Once predictions are made, put the bottle down and pound it. A flimsy bottle should crush easily. Why did the bottle crush so easily?

Now what would happen if the bottle was filled with water and then pounded? Once predictions have been made, fill the second bottle with water and secure

*continued on page 2*

## New Church Concept Babel

People who are interested in external things and not in what is internal wish to be worshipped as a god and to have what is theirs venerated as something Divine, so far as their fear of the common people will let them. From this one may deduce that at heart they refuse to recognize the Divine and are constantly yearning to rise to higher positions, and so far as nothing stands in their way to the highest, and so finally to the throne of God, as is seen from those meant in the Word by Babel, who take all power away from the Lord and ascribe it to themselves.

The king of Babel commanded that he should be worshipped as a god. *Babel* means those who use holy things of the Church so they may be worshipped as gods. See *Arcana Coelestia* 10412

## Truth Makes Minds Strong continued

the lid tightly. Then pound it with your fist. The bottle should stay the same shape. Why? (The water inside the bottle gives it a solid structure so it can withstand the pounding.)

Water corresponds to true ideas from the Word. When we hear the Lord's Word the true ideas enter our minds and make them strong. These ideas give us the strength to withstand attacks from evil spirits—just as the bottle stood strong with the water in it.

### Focus on the Word

**Read:** Daniel 3. A shortened version is included on page 3.

- King Nebuchadnezzar made an image 90' (27m) tall and 9' (2.7m) wide. This pictures the lofty height but shallow depth of making our ideas more important than even the Lord Himself. Which commandment did this action break?** The second commandment, "You shall not make for yourself a carved image...you shall not bow down...nor serve them." **Nebuchadnezzar tried to draw everyone in his kingdom into breaking the commandment by ordering them to bow to his image.**
- What signal did Nebuchadnezzar use for people to worship the image?** All kinds of music. **Music represents our feelings. Feelings can't show what is right or wrong—they show what we love. Nebuchadnezzar used music to persuade people to worship his statue.**
- Why did Daniel's friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego disobey the king?** They stood up for what they believed was right because they had faith that the Lord their God would save them.
- How did Nebuchadnezzar react?** He became angry, ordered the furnace to be heated seven times hotter than usual, tied them up and threw them into the furnace, even sacrificing his own soldiers to do so.
- Compare Nebuchadnezzar's anger with the peace of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego walking in the Lord's way. Can you think of a time when you were very angry? What about a time when you felt a peaceful confidence in the Lord. What were the differences?**
- Nebuchadnezzar saw an angel, looking like the Son of God, walking in the furnace with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. The Lord is especially close to us during times of struggle or temptation. How might you experience His close presence? How might you help a friend feel the Lord's presence during a hard time?**
- How did witnessing this miracle change Nebuchadnezzar?** Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged the Lord for the first time, vowing that all should worship Him. **His gratitude for Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego's deliverance showed how touched he was by their example. How has another person's behavior touched or inspired you?**
- Guardian angels protect all the time. As in the furnace, angels are close when we're struggling with selfishness. And in choosing not to fall to the persuasion that it's okay to break the commandments, we may inspire others to follow the peaceful path, doing what's right, too.**

# The Fiery Furnace

<sup>1</sup>King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, sixty cubits high and six cubits wide, and set it up on the plain of Dura in Babylon. <sup>2</sup>He then summoned the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials to come to the dedication of the image. <sup>3</sup>So the officials assembled before the image.

<sup>4</sup>Then the herald proclaimed, “Nations and peoples of every language, <sup>5</sup>as soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. <sup>6</sup>Whoever does not fall down and worship will be thrown into a blazing furnace.” <sup>7</sup>Therefore, as soon as they heard the music, all peoples fell down and worshiped the image.

<sup>8</sup>At this time some astrologers came forward <sup>9</sup>and said, “May the king live forever! <sup>10</sup>Your Majesty has decreed that everyone who hears the sound of all kinds of music must fall down and worship the image of gold. <sup>12</sup>But there are some—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—who neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up.”

<sup>13</sup>Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. So these men were brought. <sup>14</sup>Nebuchadnezzar said, “Is it true that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up? <sup>15</sup>Now when you hear the sound of all kinds of music, if you fall down and worship the image I made, good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown into a blazing furnace. Then what god will rescue you?”

<sup>16</sup>Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied, “King Nebuchadnezzar, if we are thrown into the furnace, <sup>17</sup>the God we serve will deliver us from Your Majesty’s hand. <sup>18</sup>But even if He does not, we want you to know that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold.”

<sup>19</sup>Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious and his attitude toward them changed. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual and <sup>20</sup>commanded his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace. <sup>21</sup>So these men, wearing their clothes, were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace. <sup>22</sup>The king’s command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the fire killed the soldiers who took them up, <sup>23</sup>and these three men fell into the furnace.

<sup>24</sup>Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked, “Weren’t three men tied up and thrown into the fire?” They replied, “Certainly, Your Majesty.” <sup>25</sup>He said, “Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like the Son of God.”

<sup>26</sup>Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the furnace and shouted, “Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!” So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire, <sup>27</sup>and the advisers crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.

<sup>28</sup>Then Nebuchadnezzar said, “Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent His angel and rescued His servants! They trusted in Him and defied the king’s command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God. <sup>29</sup>Therefore I decree that people who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble, for no other god can save in this way.” <sup>30</sup>Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

(Daniel 3:1-30 adapted from the NIV)

## Walking on Eggshells

### Materials Needed

copies of *The Lord's Protection* p. 6 for each student; supplies for one of the *Eggshell Experiments* p. 5

### Prepare in Advance

Choose an experiment from p. 5. Gather or purchase supplies. Read over *The Lord's Protection* p. 6.

### New Church Concept The Lord's Protection

People who are strong in truths are kept safe from harm wherever they go, even if they are surrounded by hell. See *Arcana Coelestia* 6769

All people are under the protection of the Lord so far as they abstain from doing evil, but in the measure that they do not abstain, so far do they remove themselves from the protection of the Lord. *Apocalypse Explained* 643.2

When the Lord is with someone He leads them and makes provision so that all that happens, whether sad or joyful may bring them what is good. *Arcana Coelestia* 6303

The protective design of eggshells keeps the embryos inside them safe until they are ready to hatch. The Lord protects human life in a similar way, guarding people's spiritual freedom every second of their lives to eternity. The angel appearing in the fiery furnace gives us a picture of this amazing protection.



In this activity students will explore how strong eggshells are—and by analogy, how strongly the Lord protects our spirits. Two choices are offered for experimenting with eggs. An explanation as to why eggshells are so strong is provided below. Follow up with a discussion on the Lord's protection.

1. Do an eggshell experiment.
2. Engage students in a discussion about the Lord's protection.

### Discussion

Provide students with copies of *The Lord's Protection* (p. 6) and read it together. Decide whether the following statements are true or false. Circle your answers and discuss.

1. Intending and acting well toward others protects us from evil. T F
2. People who avoid evil are protected by the Lord. T F
3. The Lord protects us through the true ideas we know. T F
4. The Lord protects evil as well as good people. T F
5. People who do evil remove themselves from the Lord's protection. T F
6. The Lord does not stop all bad things from happening to us. T F

Shell size and thickness are the most important factors in determining the strength of a shell. Chicken eggs have a compressive strength of about 100lb. The curved shape of a shell lets any force that is put on it to be spread vertically and horizontally throughout the shell. Egg shells are like a 360 degree arched bridge—they are very stable and support a lot of weight. Architects have long recognized the beauty and strength of arches for bridges and domes.

# Eggshell Experiments

## Experiment 1: Standing on Eggshells

Can a person literally stand *on eggs*? Follow these directions carefully to find out! You will need:

- 2 dozen medium or large raw eggs in two one-dozen cartons
  - a large plastic garbage bag to cover the floor
  - three sturdy chairs
1. Put a large plastic garbage bag on the floor. Place two full open cartons of eggs on top of the bag.
  2. Inspect the eggs and make sure none are cracked.
  3. If the egg cartons have cardboard pieces that tower over the eggs, cut them down so they are no taller than the eggs.
  4. Make sure all eggs have their pointy end facing UP, and their broader end facing DOWN.
  5. Have a student take off their shoes and socks.
  6. Place one chair so that it faces the eggs. Seat the student on the chair so they can dangle their feet down and place them gently on the eggs. (*Important Note:* There is a limit to the strength of eggs. Two dozen eggs should be able to support about 132lb (60kg) of weight evenly distributed over them.)
  7. *Optional:* Place a chair where the student can hold the back for support, on either side of the eggs.
  8. Invite the student to stand up slowly, spreading their weight evenly over all the eggs. (Give assistance, if needed.) If all goes well, the student should be able to stand on the eggs without any breaking.
  9. When the student is ready to sit down again, he or she should do so gently, and then lift one foot at a time off the eggs.

## Experiment 2: How Much Weight Can Eggs Withstand?

How much weight can eggs withstand before breaking? Do this experiment to find out. You will need:

- three or four (or more) raw eggs with no cracks
  - 6-8 washers, or smallish plastic lids to put underneath and on top of each egg so they can sit upright
  - large plastic garbage bag to protect the table or floor
  - flat objects to gently place on top of the eggs, such as pieces of wood, magazines, books, a plastic tub with water in it, etc.
1. Place a large garbage bag on the table or floor where you plan to do your experiment.
  2. Place washers (or lids) as corners of a triangle or square that is slightly smaller than the objects you plan to put on the eggs.
  3. Place the eggs on the washers so they stand upright, and place an additional washer on top of each egg to provide a slightly more level surface. Make sure the pointy end of the egg is up.
  4. Experiment with how much weight can be put on eggs without breaking. Start by placing a rigid object directly on top of the eggs—e.g. a cutting board, hard-cover book, etc. Continue to add magazines, books, or water in a plastic tub, observing the eggs' ability to withstand the weight. (The eggs will crack eventually—so be careful what you use.)

# The Lord's Protection

The Lord protects and guides us because He loves every person. He does this through angels who are with a person at all times. *Arcana Coelestia* 5992 describes how these angels work:

- They notice the direction in which a person's delights turn, and modify and bend them.
- They act gently.
- When evil spirits infuse evils and falsities, they instill truths and goods.
- They moderate affections.
- They notice any new influences on a person.
- They call forth the forms of good and truth with a person and set them opposite the evils and falsities.
- The person is therefore in the middle and is free to choose.

“Watching over a person” means dealing with the things that affect their mind and heart. It does not mean preventing bad things from happening, or making good things happen. This may seem less complete than the protection most people would like, but it gives the greatest benefit in the long run, and leaves the person in freedom.

Here are additional readings describing how the Lord protects people.

When the Lord is with someone He leads them and makes provision so that all that happens, whether sad or joyful may bring them what is good. *Arcana Coelestia* 6303

Good and its affection does not protect itself; but it is defended by truth and its understanding. *Apocalypse Explained* 1121

People who are strong in truths are kept safe from harm wherever they go, even if they are surrounded by hell. See *Arcana Coelestia* 6769

The Lord protects His own by means of Divine truth, for He surrounds them with a sphere of light. See *Apocalypse Explained* 395.2

Those in innocence are the safest of all. Everyone in heaven is kept safe by the Lord through states of innocence. See *Arcana Coelestia* 3519.4,5

Every person and every spirit is under the Lord's protection, the evil equally as the good. No evil can happen to a person who is under the Lord's protection, for it is the Lord's will that no one should perish or be punished. People are under the protection of the Lord so far as they abstain from doing evil, but in the measure that they do not abstain, so far do they remove themselves from the protection of the Lord. And in the measure that they thus remove themselves, so far they are hurt by evil spirits from hell. *Apocalypse Explained* 643.2

When, therefore, evil is done from an evil heart, because it thereby discards all protection from the Lord, infernal spirits rush upon the one who does the evil and inflict punishment. *Heaven and Hell* 550

## The Power of Music

From ancient times music has been part of ceremonies and worship. King Nebuchadnezzar used music to call people to bow down to his image. Today, as well as being part of most religious services, music is used to set the tone and pace of footsteps in stores, for advertising, movies, video



games, etc. Explore music's power over the affections by watching the same video footage set to different kinds of music and discussing music's power to move us.

1. Show *The Power of Music* video at [www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/video-power-of-music](http://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/video-power-of-music). Then discuss what you saw and heard.
2. Did the video soundtrack affect your response during the video? If so, how?
3. In what ways would the video have been different without music?
4. How has music been used in movies you've seen?
5. What kinds of music do you like, and why do you like them?
6. Read *The Power of Music* (p. 8) and continue the discussion.
7. What has the *most* power to persuade you of something—a picture, spoken words, or music?
8. What do you remember best—things you see, or sounds you hear?
9. Compare watching a video with the sound off with watching it with the sound on. How important is sound?
10. Why might people say "silence is golden"? What does silence allow for?
11. Have you noticed how you walk when music is playing, for example in a store? Is it easier to walk in step with the music, or to go at your own speed? Have you deliberately tried to walk at a different pace? What happened?
12. What is the difference between a thought and a feeling? Can a person separate their thoughts from their feelings?
13. Which is easier—stopping selfish *thoughts* or stopping selfish *feelings*? Why?
14. What is the first step we can take to become a heavenly person? Not *doing* something wrong, or not *feeling* the pressure to do what is wrong? (Hint: Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego did not *do* what they knew to be wrong.)
15. How might your feelings try to persuade you to do something that you know is wrong?

### Materials Needed

device to show video at [www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/video-power-of-music](http://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/video-power-of-music), copies of *The Power of Music* p. 8

### Prepare in Advance

Watch the video and download it if necessary. Print copies of *The Power of Music* p. 8.

### New Church Concept Music

Songs in heaven are nothing but affections in audible form, that is, affections expressed in modulated sounds, for just as thoughts are expressed by speaking, so are affections by singing. *Conjugal Love* 55

### New Church Concept Temptation

No one overcomes temptation unless he is steadfast in the spiritual affection of truth, even to the end of his life in the world; then the work is finished. See *Apocalypse Explained* 128

# The Power of Music

In former times musical instruments were used for worshipping God. Wind instruments expressed affections for good, and stringed instruments affections for truth. Sounds in the natural world correspond to realities in the spiritual world. Harmonious sounds correspond to states of joy and gladness in the spiritual world, and states of joy and gladness there spring from affections, which in that world are affections for what is good and true. From this one may now recognize that musical instruments correspond to delights and pleasures belonging to spiritual and celestial affections. See *Arcana Coelestia* 8337.2.

Music has great power. Filmmakers capitalize on this by playing exciting, sad or scary music during a film. We may see something that looks ordinary but feel scared because scary music is playing. Or perhaps we hear a violin play a sweet tune and know two people will fall in love. Music brings emotion and meaning to the images we see.

Similarly, advertisers use catchy musical jingles to persuade us to buy products. We may hear the jingles in our minds when we see the products in a store. The music is designed to make us feel we *want* the product, or to think happy thoughts when we see it.

Studies show that buying patterns in stores change when classical or pop music is used. One study showed that people took longer to shop and bought more products when classical music was playing, and took less time and bought fewer products when pop music was playing. Stores also use fast and slow music to encourage people to check out quickly or to linger in the aisles.

Listening to music can speed up or slow down a heartbeat. Some musical sounds produce anxiety—for example certain extremely low tones. Other sounds calm people down and alleviate distress. Many athletes use music to pace a run or work out.

For thousands of years tolling bells have announced worship or signaled the end of wars; trumpets have led soldiers into battle; singing has been used to celebrate special events. The Word gives many examples of songs, such as the Psalms. As people are being prepared to enter heaven, they may learn to come into harmony with others in the society they are entering by singing with them in choirs.

Music is an important part of the story of King Nebuchadnezzar's golden image. Nebuchadnezzar represents selfishness. The tall skinny image he made is a spiritual picture of what selfish thinking looks like. Selfishness ideas may make a person think he or she is taller or more important than everyone else, but in truth they are skinny and lack substance.

The music Nebuchadnezzar used to call people to bow down to his selfish idea represent affections that can be used to justify and drive selfish thoughts. The New Church teaches that a mind has two parts: a will and an understanding. The will directs *intentions* or the *desire* to do things. The understanding directs *thoughts*, or the *things* we want to do. The will and understanding work together. A heavenly mind consists of true thoughts working with good loves, e.g. doing what the Lord wants because we love Him. A hellish mind consists of false thoughts working with selfish feelings, e.g. doing whatever we want because we love ourselves. This kind of "music" can justify what we think in many different ways.



## Recitation and Closing

The Book of Daniel contains beautiful prayers. We are focusing on one quotation during the close of each lesson. Most of the quotations were spoken by Daniel after he received the power to explain Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Daniel 2). They are arranged in an order that reflects the story for each week. The quotation for lesson three was spoken by Nebuchadnezzar after he recognized the Lord as the true God (Daniel 4).

For this lesson, focus on quotation 3: "How great are His signs and how mighty His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. And His dominion is from generation to generation." Read the verse aloud and invite the students to repeat it with you.

What signs and wonders happened in the story? What signs and wonders have you encountered in your life?

### Closing

Even when the king threatened to throw everyone who disobeyed his orders into a furnace, Shadrach, Meshach

and Abednego ignored his order and prayed to the Lord. The Lord sent His angel into the fire and saved them.

Like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, the Lord's truth stands firm for what is true and right in the face of the outbursts of our selfish loves. It has power to protect and save us from selfish feelings and thoughts if we allow it to.

Give students a Take Home Card (p. 10) as they leave.

#### Walking in the Furnace

Nebuchadnezzar was so angry when Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to worship his golden statue that he had the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual before having them thrown into it. Fire often represents love. The fire of the sun keeps our bodies alive as the Lord's love keeps us alive spiritually. But it can also represent hatred. Like fire, hatred can be terribly damaging. Hatred others may feel toward us, and also hatred we may feel for others. The Lord sent an angel to protect the three men in the fiery furnace. He will be with you when you struggle with hatred too. He also works through other people.

Who, in your life, would walk with you in the furnace and help protect you from the flames of hatred? Write their name(s) in the frame below.



## Prayers in Daniel

1. Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are His.
2. He reveals deep and secret things. He knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with Him.
3. **How great are His signs and how mighty His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. And His dominion is from generation to generation.**
4. He gives wisdom to the wise, and knowledge to those who have understanding.
5. And He changes the times and the seasons. He removes kings and raises up kings.
6. I thank You and praise You, O God of my fathers. For You have given me wisdom and might.

*Daniel 2:20-23; 4:3 adapted*

# Jake Home Cards

Cut the Take Home Cards apart and give one to each student.

## Walking in the Furnace

Nebuchadnezzar was so angry when Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to worship his golden statue that he had the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual before having them thrown into it. Fire often represents love. The fire of the sun keeps our bodies alive as the Lord's love keeps us alive spiritually. But it can also represent hatred. Like fire, hatred can be terribly damaging—hatred others may feel toward us, and also hatred we may feel for others. The Lord sent an angel to protect the three men in the fiery furnace. He will be with you when you struggle with hatred too. And He also works through other people.

Who, in your life, would walk with you in the furnace and help protect you from the flames of hatred? Write their name(s) in the frame below.



## Walking in the Furnace

Nebuchadnezzar was so angry when Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to worship his golden statue that he had the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual before having them thrown into it. Fire often represents love. The fire of the sun keeps our bodies alive as the Lord's love keeps us alive spiritually. But it can also represent hatred. Like fire, hatred can be terribly damaging—hatred others may feel toward us, and also hatred we may feel for others. The Lord sent an angel to protect the three men in the fiery furnace. He will be with you when you struggle with hatred too. And He also works through other people.

Who, in your life, would walk with you in the furnace and help protect you from the flames of hatred? Write their name(s) in the frame below.

