

General Church Education



Family Lesson: Daniel 3
The Fiery Furnace

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Family Lesson 17 - A

The Fiery Furnace
Daniel 3

Family Talk:
THE FIERY FURNACE

Rev. Alfred Acton

How much do you trust the Lord? This morning we heard a story about some men who trusted the Lord so much that they were ready to give up their lives in order to follow Him. You remember who they were. Their names were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. These three men were living in a foreign country, but they very much loved the Lord. Every day they worshiped the Lord as the Lord had asked them to. They would say their prayers. However, the king of that foreign land called Babylon, a king named Nebuchadnezzar, did not understand their love to the Lord. He asked them to worship a huge image of himself which he had made.

Imagine a king thinking that he was the Lord, and expecting people who really knew about the Lord to worship him! Well, these three men would not do what the king wanted. So they had to face the penalty of the law which meant that they would be burnt to death in a fiery furnace. These men knew very well that they were going to die if they did not do what the king said. But they trusted in the Lord. They believed that if they kept doing what was right the Lord would be with them and protect them. They knew that even if they died in that fiery furnace the Lord would be with them.

King Nebuchadnezzar was angry at these men for their strong trust. So he wanted to hurt them worse than he might normally punish someone. He asked his servants to make the fire seven times hotter than normal. In fact the fire got so hot that when one of the king's men went to stoke the fire he died from the heat. At last the king thought the fire was hot enough and he had Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego tied up and thrown into the huge furnace.

A little while later the king wanted to make sure that his punishment had succeeded. And so he looked down into that furnace. To his amazement he saw people walking around in the fire. Even more surprising, there were four people there! The king called to others to look. "How many people are there?" he asked. "How many people did we cast into the fire?" "Three" was the answer. "But I see four, and one is like the Son of God," answered the king. The Lord had sent his angel to protect Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego. The angel had untied them, and they were not in the least bit burnt by the fire. The Lord's power to protect them was complete. He had saved them.

The Lord's power is always perfect. Any time that you are facing the temptations of evil spirits, if you pick up the Lord's Word and start to read it, if you bring the Lord to you, and if you pray to Him for help, He will be right there ready to protect you from all hatred and selfishness which comes like fire from hell. That is a wonderful thing to know. It is also very important that we have the kind of trust that Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego had; that we truly can, even in the face of the greatest temptations from hell, stand up to evil spirits and trust in the Lord. If we have that kind of courage, the Lord will be with us and guide us and help us to find the happiness of heaven.

The Fiery Furnace

Based on Daniel 3

Lori Odhner



Shad - rach and Me - shach and al - so A - bed - ne - go,
 Ne - bu - chad - nez - zar the king of all Bab - y - lon
 So then the king called those three men to - geth - er and
 But the three men in the fi - e - ry fur - nace were



they loved the Lord and they tried to be good.
 called all the prin - ces and to them he told,
 asked them if they would kneel down as he said.
 saved by the Lord when an An - gel ap - peared.



So when the peo - ple bowed down to an i - dol,
 "When there is mu - sic of flutes and of trum - pets
 When they said no, he just filled up with an - ger
 So they came out of the fire safe and eas - y,



they would - n't for they did - n't think that they should.
 the peo - ple must bow to my sta - tue of gold."
 and threw them in fire to burn them all dead.
 and then the king knew that the Lord should be feared.



Shad - rach and Me - shach and al - so A - bed - ne - go,



they loved the Lord and they tried to be good.

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The Fiery Furnace

Daniel 3

LEVEL 1 – SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABED-NEGO

Materials Needed

Scissors, Paper clips or tape

Red, yellow, and orange crayons or markers (optional)

Instructions for Parents:

Tell your child the worship story in your own words or you may use this:

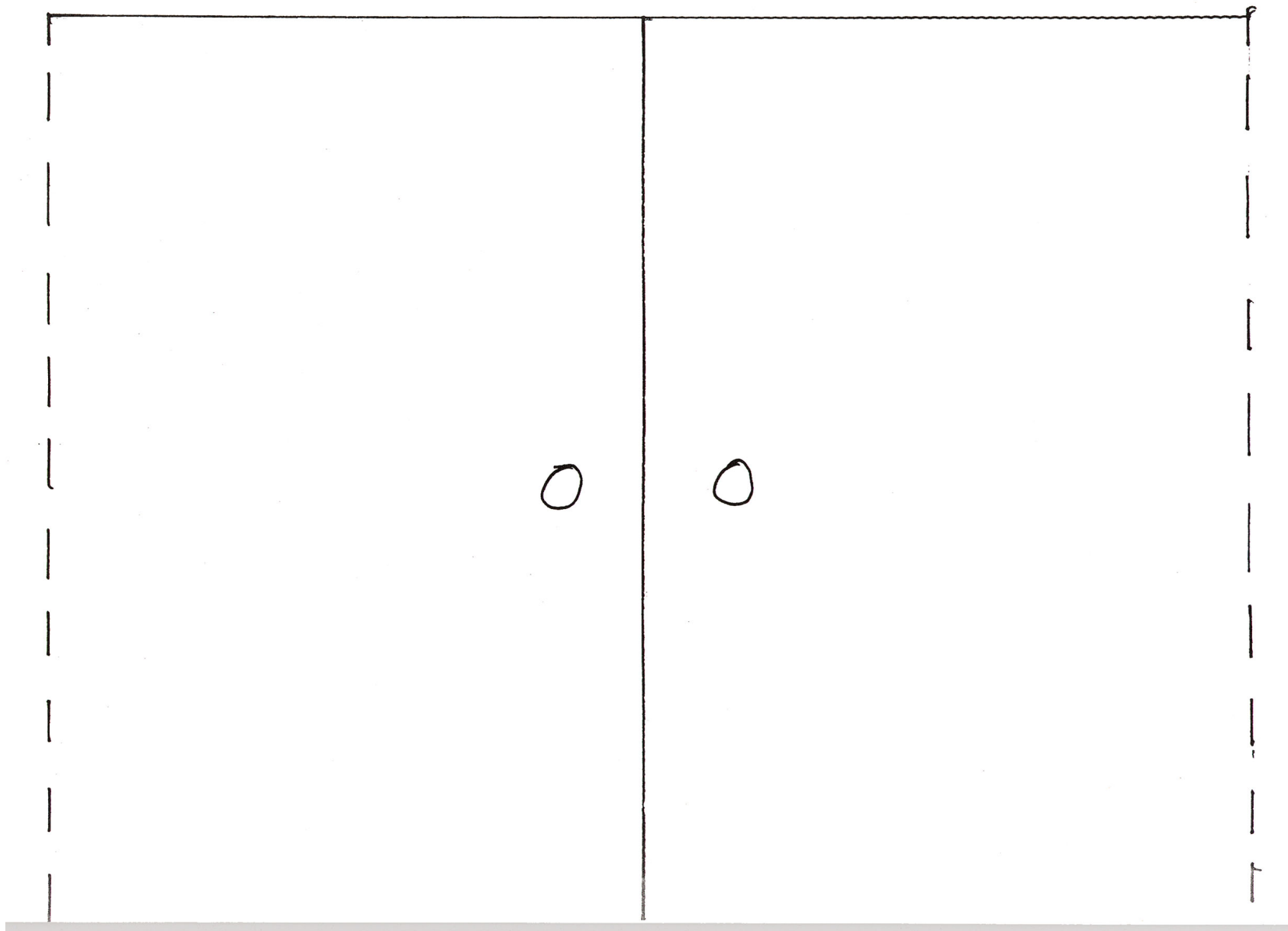
“Once there were three good young men living in Israel named Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. They were captured by King Nebuchadnezzar and taken to his country. The king built an idol (statue) and said everyone must worship the idol or be thrown into a fiery furnace. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego loved the Lord and worshiped Him. They would not worship the idol. They were not afraid of the fiery furnace. They trusted the Lord and thought He would save them. When the king saw that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego would not worship the idol, he commanded his men to throw them into a fiery furnace. The furnace was so hot that the king’s men burnt up. In a few minutes you will see what happened to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego.”

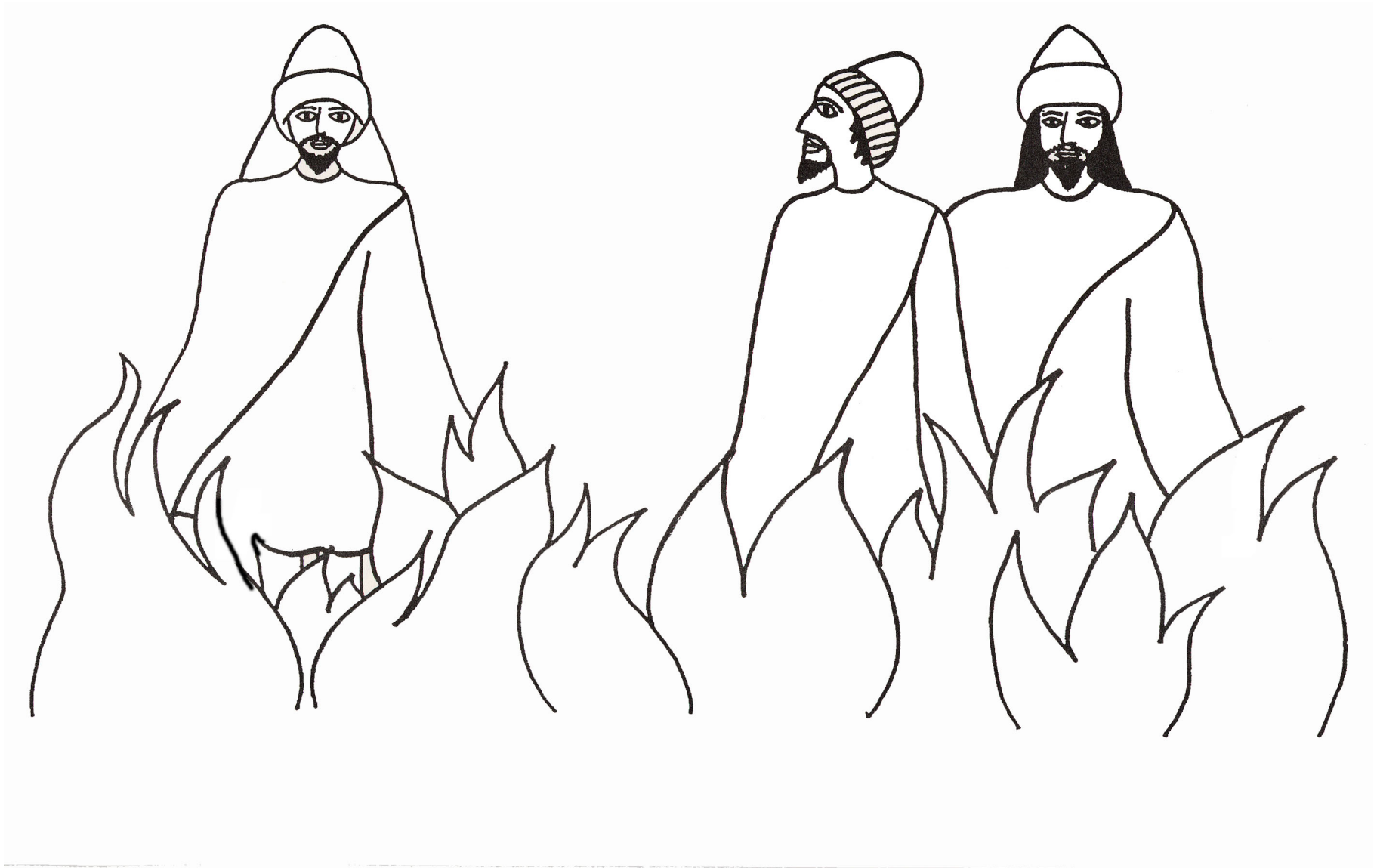
Directions for Project:

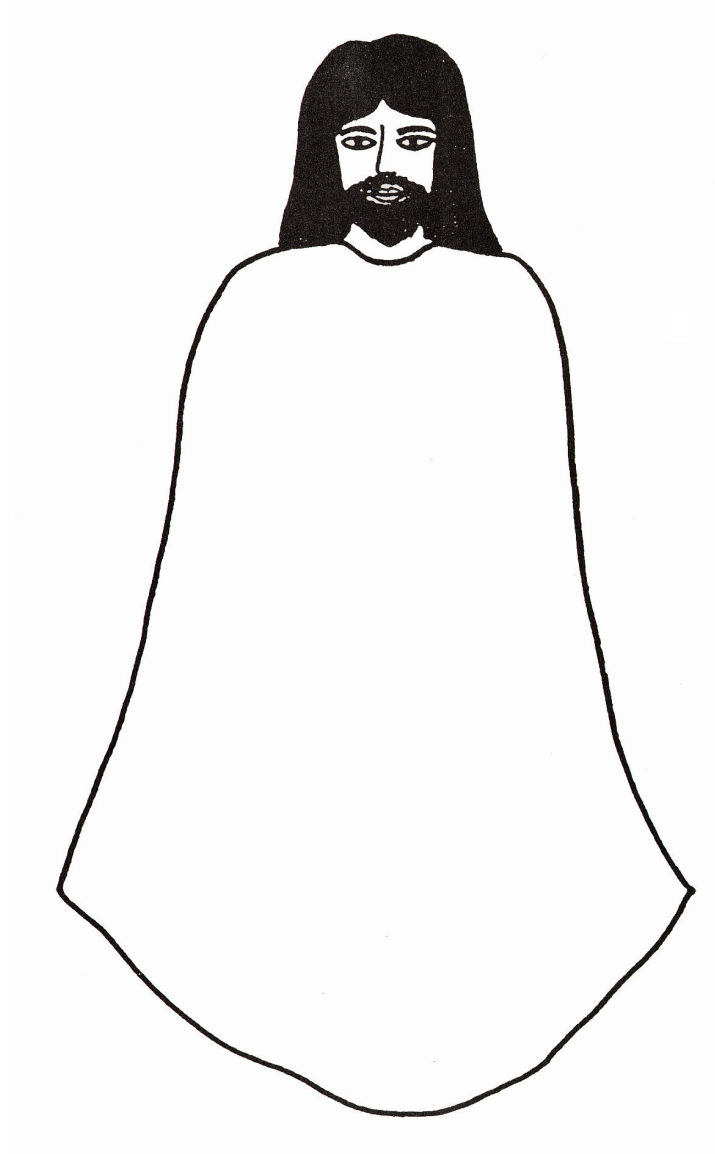
Cut along the solid lines of the furnace door on page two. Then fold the doors out and crease along the dotted line. Re-close the doors. Color the flames in the picture of the three young men (page three). Cut out the angel (page four), and glue or tape him to the back of the flames picture, so that he is seen only when the picture is held up to the light. Now place the door page over the flames picture and paper clip or tape them together. (Be careful not to show the back of the flames picture to your child.)

To the Child:

“Now you are ready to see what happened to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. Open the doors of the furnace. The fire is hot, but it is not burning up the three young men. Why didn’t the fire burn them up? If you hold the picture up to a light you will see why. You will see what the king saw when he looked into the furnace. He saw not three but **four** men in the furnace. The fourth man was an angel sent from the Lord. The Lord saved Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego from the fire. The king saw how powerful the Lord is and took the young men out of the furnace and made them rulers in Babylon. The Lord protects, or takes care of, everyone who tries to be good.”







The Fiery Furnace

Daniel 3

LEVEL 2 – FOUR MEN: FINGER PUPPETS AND STAGE

Materials Needed

2 pieces white paper

Crayons or markers

Scissors, scotch tape

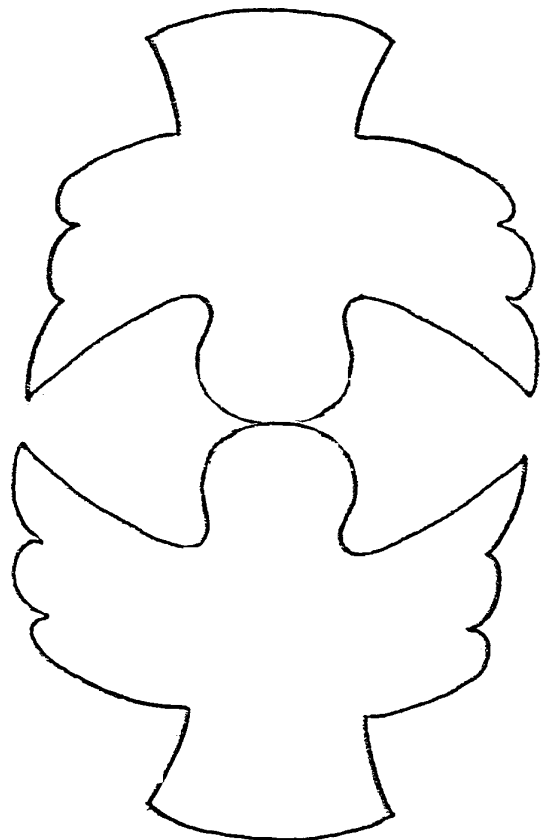
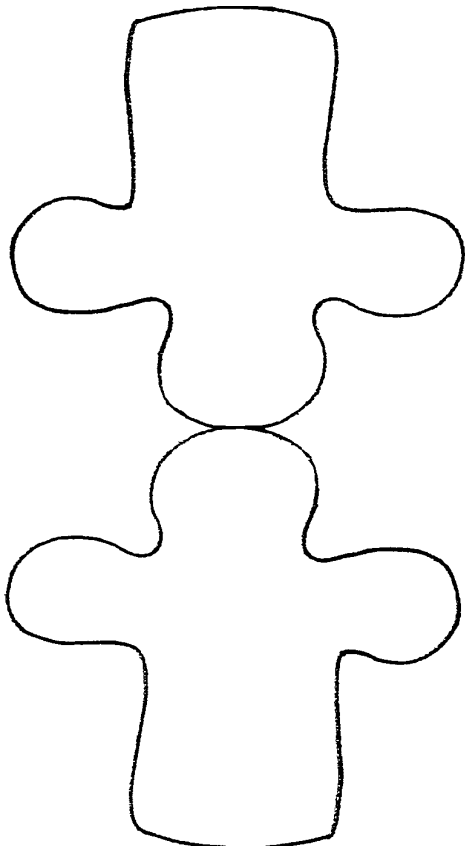
Shoebox (without lid)

Optional: instruments such as bells, tambourine, drum, recorder

Read Daniel chapter 3 with your child. Then follow the directions below to construct finger puppets and a stage.

Finger Puppets

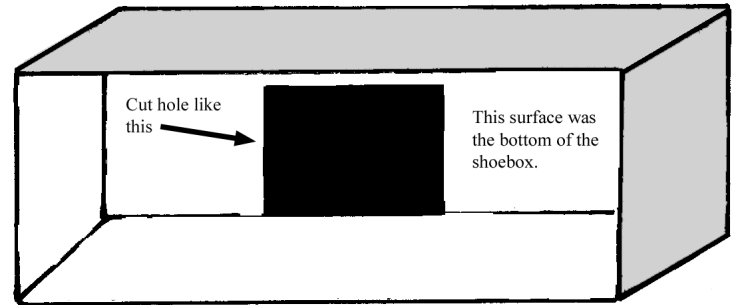
1. Cut out the pattern pieces below and trace around 3 men and one angel on a piece of paper.
2. Color the 4 puppets.
3. Cut out the puppets so that the heads stay attached, as shown.
4. Close the two sides of each puppet by taping them at the sides below the arms. Tape the angels wings closed as well.



Shoebbox Stage

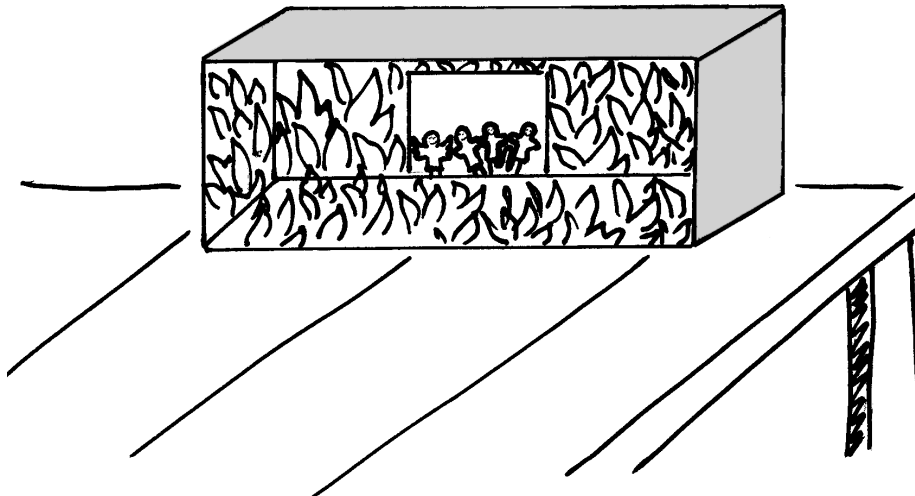
1. Color the second piece of white paper full of flames. Fill the entire page.

1. Turn the shoebox on its long side and cut a 5" x 5" hole in the center of what is now the back of the stage, as pictured.



2. Tape flames into shoebox, covering the back and floor. (The paper may not cover the ceiling, which is fine.) Cut away the part of the flames that covers the hole and use that extra piece for the inside walls of the stage.
3. Set the stage up at the end of a table, so that the performer can kneel behind the table, out of sight.

It is fun to act out the whole story! A family member can help by reading, playing King Nebuchadnezzar, or playing an instrument when it is time to bow to the golden statue. (Any object may be used as the statue.) This is a wonderful story that the family will enjoy watching.



Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste and spoke, saying to his counselors, “Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?” They answered and said to the king, “True, O King.” “Look!” he answered, “I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God”

(Daniel 3:24,25)

The Fiery Furnace
Daniel 3
LEVEL 3 – WHAT THE KING SAW

Materials Needed

The Word or a Bible, cardboard, tape
pencil, pen, crayons, scissors

Read Daniel, Chapter 3 and fill in the blanks in the story below. (Under each blank is the chapter and verse needed to check your answers.)

Nebuchadnezzar was the _____ of Babylon.
3:1

He made an image of gold and commanded that all the people _____
it when the music sounded. 3:5

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego were _____, not Babylonians.
3:12

They would not worship the idol Nebuchadnezzar made. They would only worship
_____.
3:17

So Nebuchadnezzar was full of _____.
3:19

He commanded the furnace to be heated _____ times
hotter than usual. 3:19

Then he commanded mighty men of valor to throw Shadrach, Meshach, and
Abed-Nego into the fire. It was so hot the mighty men were _____
3:22

But King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished! He looked in the fire and what
did he see? _____
3:25

Who saved Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego? _____
3:28

Why were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego heroes? _____

3:28

Draw what King Nebuchadnezzar Saw

You will need:

1. One piece of lightweight yellow paper
2. Red and orange crayons
3. Scissors
4. A piece of light cardboard— an old cereal box will do fine
5. Tape

Directions:

1. Cut 3 men and 1 angel out of cardboard. (*Cut your own simple shapes or trace just the outline of the pattern below onto cardboard.*)
2. Tape the 4 cutouts to one side of the yellow paper.
3. Turn the yellow paper over. This is the window to the fiery furnace.
4. Now color red and orange **hot** flames all over the paper.

Do you see appearing what Nebuchadnezzar saw?



The Fiery Furnace
Daniel 3
LEVEL 4 – WHAT’S IN A NAME?

We call our church *The New Church* or *The New Christian Church*. What is so very “new” about our church? Here are some of the “new” teachings:

1. The Lord God Jesus Christ is **One** Lord, and He has made His Second Coming.
2. The Word of the Lord has an internal sense, or an inner meaning, that we might not see until we read the Writings of the New Church.
3. In order to become an angel, we must shun (reject) evils as sins against the Lord, and live a life of love and service to our neighbors.

In this lesson, you will see how the Hebrew alphabet and language helped to reveal the “internal” or inner meaning of the Lord.

Daniel and his friends given new names

Daniel and his three friends were given new names when they were captives in Babylon.

Their Hebrew names all contained **the name of the Lord**. Instead of the Lord’s name, the Babylonian names contained **the name of an idol**.

Application

- 1) Do you know the meaning of your name? Write it here:
Name _____ Meaning _____
- 2) On page 2 is a key and a list of names from the story of Daniel. See if you can use the key to figure out what all the names mean.

Key

abed = servant of

Aku = Aku, the moon god

azar = has helped

Balat = Baal

dan = judge

El = the Lord (from Elohim)

hanan = is gracious

kudurri = the boundary

mi = who is

Nego = the god Nabu

Nabu = the god Nabu

sha = like

shar = the king

shudur = command

usur = protect

Yah = the Lord (from Jehovah)

1. **Daniel** = dan - El = -----

2. **Belteshazzar** = Balat - shar - usur = -----

3. **Hananian** = hanan - Yah = -----

4. **Shadrach** = shudur - Aku = -----

5. **Mishael** = mi - sha - El = -----

6. **Meshach** = mi - sha - Aku = -----

7. **Azariah** = azar - yah = -----

8. **Abednego** = abed - Nego = -----

9. **Nebuchadnezzar** = Nabu - Kudurri - usur = -----

The Fiery Furnace
Daniel 3
LEVEL 5 – THE FIERY FURNACE



As you become familiar with the Writings you will learn about a book called *Prophets and Psalms*. In this book we are told about the inner meaning of the events in the story of Daniel and the fiery furnace.

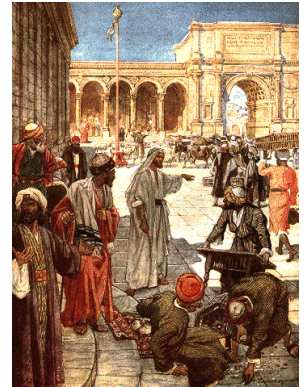
In the Writings, Swedenborg revealed the spiritual sense of several different books of the Old and New Testaments. For example, in the *Arcana Coelestia*, now printed in twelve volumes, we find the spiritual sense of the books of *Genesis* and *Exodus*. Another eight volumes are devoted to describing the spiritual sense of the book of *Revelation*. Scattered throughout other published works of the Writings are other references to parts of the Word.

The Lord came to Redeem (make people free so that they can go to heaven)

As you perhaps know, the Lord came into the world to expose evil, and so to bring about a judgment on the Hebrew Church.



At the same time that the Lord was judging the church on earth, He was also, through temptation, conquering hell and setting up a new heaven to which people could go from the new church which He started, the Christian Church.



Prophets and Psalms

These events and states are prophesied again and again in the different stories and poems found in *Prophets and Psalms*. This book can be found in Volume II of the *Posthumous Theological Works*. (“Posthumous” means published after the death of the author.) It tells us about the spiritual sense of all of the books of the prophets and the psalms.

At the beginning of this book is a **Table of Subjects** which we have reproduced on page 3. You’ll see that the table of subjects has numbers running from 1 through 17. Each of these numbers describes a theme that is found in the *Prophets and Psalms*. They tell how different parts of these *Prophets and Psalms* prophecy events in the Lord’s life. Look at this example:

Number **1** says, “The Lord’s advent.” So whenever a **1** is put in the margin it means that the verse prophecies the Lord’s Advent.

Look at this general outline on page 3 and see how the Lord brought about the **redemption** of mankind. Redemption means making people free so that they can go to heaven.

TABLE OF SUBJECTS FROM THE PROPHETS AND PSALMS

1. The Lord's Advent
2. The successive vastation (taking away of pretended good) of the church.
3. The church totally devastated, and its rejection.
4. The rejection of the Lord by the church.
5. Temptations of the Lord in general.
6. Temptations even to despair.
7. The combats of the Lord with the hells.
8. Victory over them, or their subjugation.
9. The passion of the cross.
10. The glorification of the Human of the Lord, or its union with the Divine.
11. A new church in place of the former.
12. A new church together with a new heaven.
13. The state of humiliation before the Father.

[Editor's Note: number 14 is crossed out by Swedenborg in his manuscripts and is never referred to in the text. It reads, "The state of union with His Divine," which is the same as number 10.]

15. A last judgment by the Lord.
16. Celebration and worship of the Lord.
17. Redemption and salvation by the Lord.

Once a general Table of Subjects had been written, Swedenborg turned to the Prophets and Psalms, giving a more detailed spiritual sense, chapter by chapter and verse by verse. Look at the outline of Daniel, Chapter 3 below.

In the first column are the numbers of the verses.

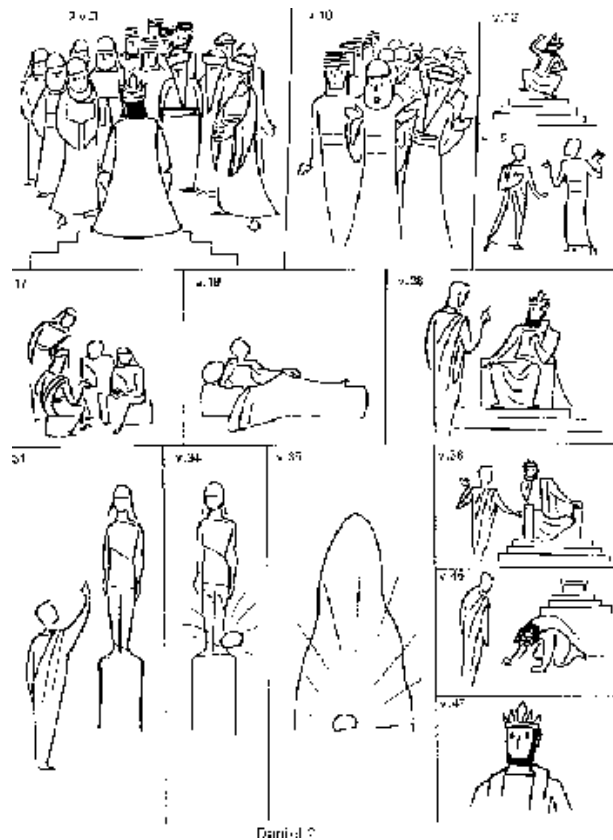
In the second column are the numbers of the general themes taken from the Table of Subjects (page 3).

In the third column is a more detailed spiritual sense of what is happening in the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego.

OUTLINE OF DANIEL CHAPTER 3

Verses from Chapter 3	Numbers of General Themes from Table of Subjects	Subject
1 & 2	2	“Babylon” decided to depart from the worship of the Lord to the worship of another god, which is the “statue of gold set up by Nebuchadnezzar.”
3-7	2 & 15	All such agreed together, threatening all that they would otherwise be cast into hell.
8-12	11	Those rulers who worshiped the Lord did not obey.
12-21	3-11	They were therefore excommunicated and condemned to hell by “Babylon,” together with all things of the Lord’s church.
22-25	11	But still no harm came to them, and it was clearly seen that they were protected by the Lord.
26-30	11	“Babylon” was compelled by this to acknowledge and worship the Lord.

Application



- 1) In your copy of the Word, read the story in Daniel, chapter 3.
- 2) Then do the worksheet of page 6.
 Notice that the worksheet has an A and B section for each set of verses.

In section A, put the spiritual sense from column 3 of the chart on page 4. Use your own words if you like.

In section B, write what is happening in the story told in Daniel 3.

We have done the first two verses for you. Can you see how the spiritual sense and the story go together?

For example, in the story, “Babylon” is the church, and the fact that Nebuchadnezzar sets up this statue of gold illustrates how that church was becoming more and more idolatrous, down to worshiping a living king instead of the Lord.

Worksheet for Daniel 3

Verses from Chapter 3 of Subjects	Numbers of General Themes from Table	Subject
1 & 2	2	A. <u>The "church" at that time stops worshiping the Lord</u> B. <u>The people of Babylon got so bad that they started to worship a man—the king Nebuchadnezzar.</u>
3-7	2 & 15	A. _____ B. _____
8-12	11	A. _____ B. _____
13-21	3-11	A. _____ B. _____
22-25	11	A. _____ B. _____
6-30	11	A. _____ B. _____