LESSON 7: SHADRACH, MESHACH and ABEDNEGO

AIM: To show how God gave three young men the courage to do what was right, even in the face of death.

MEMORY VERSE: Worship the Lord with the beauty of holy lives (Psalm 96:9a)

PRESENTATION: This story lends itself well to dramatization. With a minimum of preparation, three children could take the part of the 3 heroes in this story which would help to increase involvement and interest.

OPENING ACTIVITY: KNIGHTS OF THE SEA

The earth’s waters are filled with unique characters. Otters are clowns, dolphins are friends, and oysters are jewellers. However, there is no character quite like the hard-shell, armoured knight, the lobster. Most of us don’t live near lobsters, so we know little of how they get around. I think it is fair to say there is no stranger creature in the sea. Lobsters seem to do everything either backwards or upside down. The lobster’s brain is in its throat. It tastes with its feet and hears with its legs. After a lobster has swallowed, it chews its food with teeth inside its stomach. Not only is it tough in a fight, but a lobster is great at recovering. If it has a claw or a leg torn off, it can grow the part back. It may take a while, but it can be done even after the lobster has lost a large section of its body. Often a lobster will have one slender claw and the other will be thick and heavy. It uses the smaller one to lunge out and grab an enemy. When it catches its victim, it then lays the big one on him.

Usually the knight of the sea prefers to hide during the day. At night it climbs out from behind a rock and looks for supper. A lobster needs all the armour it can get. From its first day, this creature leads a hard life. Only one in 10,000 lobsters will ever live long enough to grow up. If a fisherman catches an elderly lobster, which may weigh about 25 pounds, he will see many marks and scars on its shell. These are evidence of the many battles it has survived.
Some days many of us wish we had a tough set of armour. When you play football or basketball, a good, hard suit of armour could come in handy. There is also an invisible suit of armour that will help us! The Bible tells us that this world can be mean and evil sometimes. All of us feel how cruel life is once in a while. We can protect ourselves by putting on a suit of armour called right living. By doing what is good and right we keep from being captured by our sin. The person who is determined to do what is right does not have to be afraid. He has his armour on (Ephesians 6:11-20).

STORY: Daniel chapter 3
King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon was a great king – well, he thought he was anyway. So he had a huge golden statue made of himself. It was about four times higher than a house. He sent out a command through all the country that everyone was to come and worship his statue. (It might be good, at this point, to ensure that children understand what worship means, i.e. to give great love and respect to... Ask the children what they think first). All the best musicians were to be present at the ceremony and as soon as they began to play, everyone had to fall flat on the ground and worship the statue. King Nebuchadnezzar made it quite clear that the punishment for anyone who disobeyed his command was to be thrown into a flaming furnace.

Now, there were some Israelites living in Babylon at the time and they believed, obeyed and worshipped God. They knew that God had made a special rule about worship. (Ask a child to read Exodus 20:3-5). So when these men heard about the king’s command, they decided to obey God rather than do what they knew to be wrong.

Some of the king’s men heard about Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego’s decision and quickly informed the king. King Nebuchadnezzar was furious and ordered the three young Israelite men to be brought to the palace. When they arrived, the king told them he would give them one more chance to change their behaviour. But they refused to do so and stuck with their decision to obey God.

The king, in his anger, ordered the fire in the furnace to be made seven times hotter than usual. Shadrach, Mesach and Abednego were then tied up and taken to the furnace to be burnt to death. They were thrown into the furnace and the fire was so fierce by this time that the soldiers who threw them in were burnt to death themselves.

The king was watching all this from a safe distance, of course, and suddenly he jumped up in amazement. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were walking around in the middle of the fire, the ropes had been burned off, but they were not even singed by the flames. As the king stood watching, he saw another person with the three Israelites. He called some of his men and asked how many were thrown into the fire. They told him that there were only three, but King Nebuchadnezzar pointed out the fourth man who he said ‘looked like a god’. (Ask the children who they think the fourth man might have been. Some people think that it may have been Jesus, but other Bible scholars interpret it as being an angel. Despite his identity, the man was obviously sent from God.)

King Nebuchadnezzar approached the open door of the furnace and called Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego out. Everyone crowded around as they had never seen anything quite like this before. The three men were unharmed. The Bible says their hair wasn’t even singed, nor was there even the smell of
The king was so impressed by the courage of Shadrach, Meschach and Abednego, their willingness to obey God even in the face of death, and the miraculous way in which God saved them that he made a new law that said no one was to say a word against the true God and if they broke the law that they would be severely punished. The three men were then given high positions in the country as a reward for their bravery.

CLOSING ACTIVITIES:
1. Colour in the pictures
2. Puzzle, “Who is in the Fiery Furnace?”
3. Write the memory verse in the fiery border.
SHADRACH, MESHACH & ABEDNEGO

God gave three young men the courage to do what was right, even in the face of death. He will do the same for you.

Look up Psalm 96:9(a). Read it together. Write it on the lines below.

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WHO DID WHAT WAS RIGHT
EVEN IN THE FACE OF DEATH?

CHECK IF YOU ARE RIGHT IN DANIEL 3

1.  ow + "\text{air}

2.  rh + sh + "\text{e}\text{h}

3.  A + "\text{al}

BIBLE HEROES