



3. In the fiery furnace....

Age range: Primary

Theme: We gather as a community for collective worship that is **inspiring, invitational and inclusive**, reflecting the fact that we are a part of a diverse school family and the wider church community, serving the needs of our unique school communities. We begin this new term, and 2026, with a new story-saga theme, based on the story of Daniel and how his actions stood out in the challenging times in which he lived. Whilst we recognise that all these stories contain challenging themes, and imply that standing up for your beliefs could mean certain death, we take the positive messages from each story in how Daniel and his friends were such a contrast to the leaders they served. In our world today, we want to inspire resilience in our pupils to be confident in who they are and what they stand for, just like Daniel, and to be positive role models in your school community, even when it might be difficult. **This week, we continue our new series in the saga-story of Daniel, as we are introduced to his brave friends Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. We have been intentionally careful in our choice of words to set Daniel's story in the history of God's people, because of the current conflict in the Middle East and the sensitivities for people on both sides. Although we don't mention the fact that we live in a country that highly values freedom of religion and belief, this may come up in discussion with older pupils, and may need sensitive handling. Persecution is a lived reality for many people across the world, across different beliefs and cultures, and some of your families may have experienced this.**



How does this link to your school's Christian vision & values?

This week, encourage pupils to think / talk about how we all experience ups and downs in life, and that we sometimes need to be very **courageous** in some things that happen to us. The emphasis in this script is on how God helped Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to stand up for things that they knew were right and was with them in the challenging time that followed.

Resources:

- **Please remember that the resources that we provide should be adapted where needed, to suit the context of your own school and your own pupils. This week, as we explore what happened to Daniel's friends, please be aware of any children or families in your community for whom difficult times like this might have been a reality, or whose adverse life experiences might mean that it is challenging for them to talk about hard times.**
- This term, in addition to our usual gathering and sending slides, we are including a slide at the very start to help to 'still' pupils, and help them to enter into the 'sacred' space of collective worship, ready to think, reflect, talk or pray. You might also want to use this in your class to change the 'mood' for any class-based worship. Take this at whatever pace seems necessary for your pupils. It ends with a visual 'timetable', setting out some of the elements that will be included in our time together, which we hope may help some pupils. You can also find these as cards to print out to use in other collective worship if this helps you.
- As always, there are also some ideas for **reflective activities / ideas** to ponder for use in your reflective areas for this term, listed at the end of the script along with a handy wall chart to print each week for your reflective area. You can find all these as a separate file in our resources area, which may make it easier for teachers to print and use in their classrooms.
- The PowerPoint slides are numbered with a point in the script so you can find your way, and the parts in **bold** show you where to click on to activate the next slide or animation. There are slides to go with today's script, but you could quite easily use some of this collective worship without the PowerPoint if you preferred.
- **Reflective prayer activity:** you will need to print the challenge cards, which will give them particular things to think/talk about. These are on p.6-8 and are designed to be double-sided. We encourage you to talk through some of these scenarios together, especially if you have younger pupils.

Gathering:

Slide 1: Candle flame stilling exercise

Use the stilling slide if desired: the suggested words should be spoken slowly, leaving pauses inbetween to create a sense of stillness.

As you sit quietly, watch the candle flame flicker....[PAUSE]

Now practise slower breathing.....in.....and out.....in.....and out.....keep this going as you continue to look at the flame....[PAUSE]

You maybe notice that you are feeling calmer and more relaxed....[PAUSE]

We come into this special / sacred space and time to be still....to think deeply.....to be together as a school community.....

In our time together today, we will **watch a short video clip, talk together, share the next part of our story and then reflect together.**



But first, let's welcome one another as we begin....

Slide 2: Let's use our new greeting to say to each other as we begin....

Leader: As we gather together today....

ALL:we bring our thoughts and our hearts into this sacred space.

Here are BSL actions for some of the words:

Leader's words:

Gather: <https://www.signbsl.com/sign/gather> (1st video)

Today: <https://www.signbsl.com/sign/today> (1st video)

Pupils' response:

Thoughts: <https://www.signbsl.com/sign/thoughts> (1st video)

Hearts: <https://www.signbsl.com/sign/heart> (1st video)

Engaging:

Slide 3: We're going to start our time together by looking at a short video clip. Can you guess what it might be of?!! *[a roller-coaster ride! There is no sound, but you may find that you get some natural sound-scaping from children! Click and the video will start. If you re-click on any part of the picture, you can replay it as needed.]*



Some people say that **life is a bit like a roller-coaster** – I wonder why this might be? I wonder what the 'ups' and 'downs' of life might look like for us?

[allow children to talk together, maybe in pairs; ask for some feedback from children]

We're going to return to this idea at the end of our time today, but now let's return to Daniel's story.

Slide 4: When we left Daniel and his friends last week, they had found favour with the King because God had given them great wisdom....and we left on a cliffhanger, with God giving Daniel a very special talent. So, what was it?!....

God gave Daniel the ability to understand people's dreams and to tell them what they meant, which is very useful, as the Kings Daniel serves have a lot of very strange dreams! Although today's story is not about that, don't forget this important detail, because it will come in handy in the weeks to come....!

Slide 5: As we go deeper into Daniel's story, we will meet some ups, some downs and some twists and turns – and some really big challenges. Daniel isn't in this part of the story, but today we see his friends Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego having to make some more really difficult decisions.

To help us to get really involved in the story today, we're going to engage our best pantomime actions: **we'll cheer the goodies, 'Hurray!!' and 'boo!' the baddies** – and you'll see these signs pop up to help you to get them in the right place!!

Slide 6: King Nebuchadnezzar was a very powerful and bossy king. He was used to getting his own way – and he didn't like it one little bit if people didn't do what he said! **'Boooo!!'**

Slide 7: King Nebuchadnezzar wanted to make himself the most important person in the Kingdom. **'Boooo!'** 'Everyone must bow down and pray to a big gold statue I have made. It will be your God,' said the king.

Slide 8: Daniel's good friends Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego heard what the King had decreed. Like Daniel, they wanted to follow God and would not worship the big gold statue. **'Hurray!!'** 'We only worship and pray to God,' they said, 'not to a statue a man has made.'

Slide 9: The king was very angry, and he made another rule to punish Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. **'Boooo!!'** 'These men must be thrown into a fire,' he said. 'Make a very hot fire and they will change their mind.'

Slide 10: The soldiers made a very hot fire. **'Boooo!'** The three friends prayed and asked God to help them. They would not bow down to King Nebuchadnezzar's statue. **'Hurray!'**

Slide 11: The king's soldiers threw the three friends into the fire. **'Boooo!'**

It was very hot, but it didn't burn them! **'Hurray!'** God was looking after them! Not even their clothes got burnt.... **'Hurray!'**

Slide 12: The King looked into the fire and saw God's angel looking after the men. **'Hurray!'**

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He knew a statue could never do that. Then the King believed in God. 'Hurray!'

Slide 13: Then the King made a new rule. 'These three men were right and I was wrong.' 'Hurray!' 'Everyone in my kingdom must pray to the one true God and not to statues,' he said.

Slide 14: Responding and words for worship

As we think about this story of how Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego stood up for the things that they believed to be true, we are going to reflect on our own lives now.

As we said when we watched the rollercoaster clip, our lives are full of ups and downs, and twists and turns – and sometimes it means that life can be hard. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego made a difficult choice to do what they believed was right, not knowing what might happen next. Let's be still and wonder together.....

....I wonder if you've ever had to make a very difficult choice....

....or stand up for something you believe is right?....

....I wonder what helps us to know what's right and what's wrong?....

[We recommend that you give some time this week to talking in class about these pondering questions – we have also created some reflection situation cards to help pupils to think. These are included with our resources.]

Slide 15: We're going to return to one very key moment in the story now, for a last bit of reflecting, as we come to the end of our time together. When the King looked into the fire, he saw that the three friends were not alone – God sent an angel to be with them. Some people think that it might even have been God himself who stood with them in the fire.

....I wonder how this idea might help someone who is going through a very difficult time?....Or give us courage when we need to stand up for something we believe in?

[Leave some time for personal thinking. Remind children that whether or not they believe in God, whatever they might be facing at the moment, they are not alone – emphasise who can help them and how.]

It's not always easy to stand up for the things that we believe are right, especially when other people don't seem to understand – or even make it difficult for us. I'm going to use some words as a prayer now, asking God to give us courage. You might want to make them your own and then join me by saying Amen at the end.

Slide 16: So, I invite you to pray with me if you'd like to. There are some words for you to join in with, if you'd like to.... **.....Give us courage, O God.**

Slide 17: When difficult decisions come our way.....**Give us courage, O God.**

Slide 18: When others make it difficult to make good choices.....**Give us courage, O God.**

Slide 19: When we have to stand up for something we believe is right.....**Give us courage, O God.**

Slide 20: When something is wrong and others need us to act**Give us courage, O God.**

Slide 21: When we know what the right thing to do is, but it's really hard.....**Give us courage, O God.**

Slide 22: Amen.

Sending: Slide 23

Leader: As we leave this place & time and go into the day ahead...

All: May we shine like stars!

Pupils' response:

Shine: <https://www.signbsl.com/sign/shine> (4th video)

Stars: <https://www.signbsl.com/sign/stars> (4th video)



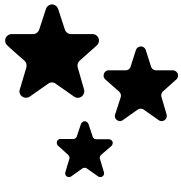
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To listen to / sing:

Choose a song from the selection for the first half of term e.g. [Resilience in me](#) or [Justice](#)



Slide 24: Reflective areas

Print out the cards on p.6-8, with the stars on one side and scenarios on the other

Do: Pick a card and read the scenario on the back.

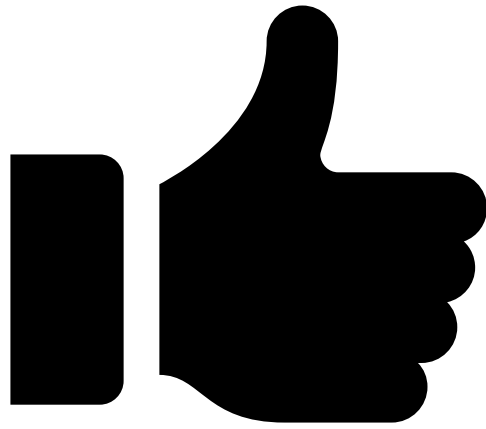
Think: What is the right thing to do?

Talk: What might help you to do the right thing? What might make this a hard thing to do? How might we help each other?



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Do what's right



Pick a starry challenge card and read the scenario on the back.



What is the right thing to do?



What might help you to do the right thing?

What might make this a hard thing to do?

How might we help each other?

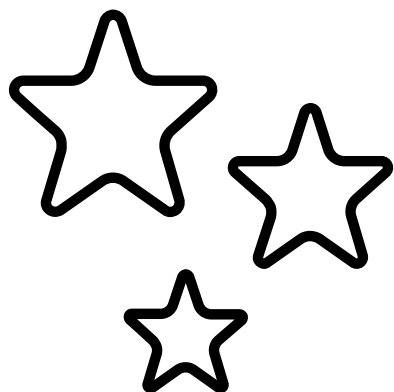


Shine like stars!

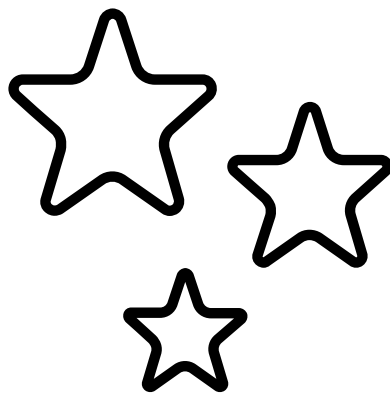
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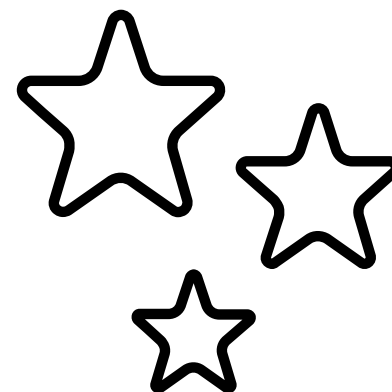
Print these challenges onto card for your reflective area this week: this page is for the reverse side of the others



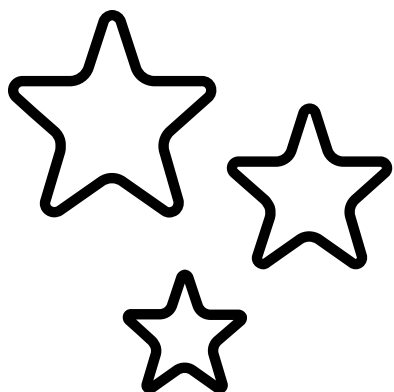
Shine like stars!



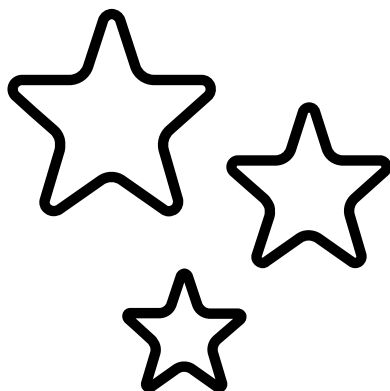
Shine like stars!



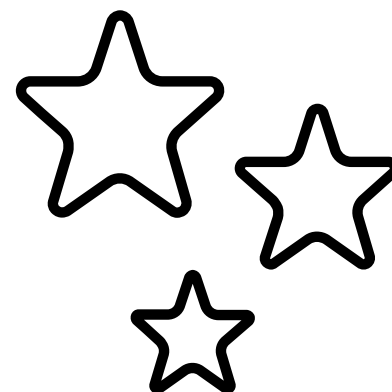
Shine like stars!



Shine like stars!



Shine like stars!



Shine like stars!



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Print these challenges onto card for your reflective area this week:

<p>You are in the playground with your friends. A new person wants to join your game but there's no space.</p> <p><i>What's the right thing to do?</i></p>	<p>Your cloakroom has coats all over the floor. Your coat is hanging up, so it's not your fault!</p> <p><i>What's the right thing to do?</i></p>	<p>You see someone crying in the playground, but you really want to play with your friends.</p> <p><i>What's the right thing to do?</i></p>
<p>Your friends make fun of someone who has slipped over in a patch of mud.</p> <p><i>What's the right thing to do?</i></p>	<p>You see someone being really unkind to another child. You're worried that they might be unkind to you as well...</p> <p><i>What's the right thing to do?</i></p>	<p>You hear someone making a joke about the things that another child believes....</p> <p><i>What's the right thing to do?</i></p>



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Print these challenges onto card for your reflective area this week:

A new child has started in your class. It's playtime and you really want to play with your friends.....

What's the right thing to do?

You've finished your work, so you're allowed to choose what to do next, but you see someone in your group struggling with their work....

What's the right thing to do?

There's a treat for pudding at home, but there are only 3 pieces and there are 5 people in your family....

What's the right thing to do?

You've been allowed to choose the film for family movie night.....

What's the right thing to do?

You've made a really great Lego model, but today someone else needs the pieces for their model....

What's the right thing to do?

You are playing a board game or a card game and you are losing.....

What's the right thing to do?



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