

NOVEMBER 8-14

FOR PARENTS

Daniel lived during a time of exile. The people of Israel had been dragged off to a faraway, strange land. They suffered under cruel kings. They were asked to worship false gods. It was a difficult time, and punishments were harsh. God's people in exile wondered if their God had abandoned them. But Daniel and his friends remained faithful to God, and God remained faithful to his people in exile.

During the Persian Empire, King Darius allowed God's people to return to Israel and begin the rebuilding of the temple and city of Jerusalem. The story of Ezra and Nehemiah tells this part of the history of Israel. The story of Esther takes place during this time but tells the story of the people who did not return to Israel and how Esther was in the palace "for such a time as this." Fun fact is that the book of Esther never mentions God, yet it is obvious that God is acting in the lives of Esther and her uncle.

KID CONNECTION

The stories of Daniel in the lion's den, the three friends in the fiery furnace, and Queen Esther are dramatic and capture the imagination of children. They are all stories of the faithful people of God and what it looks like to stand up for God and our beliefs. Help your children take a stand for their faith in situations that warrant it. Encourage them to be brave. They are capable of more than we give them credit for. Nurture their resilience and faithfulness as they face life in a world that is challenged by not knowing God.

REMEMBER 1 THING

**God called Daniel and his friends to take a stand for God and God's ways. Be faithful!
Will you take a stand for God?**

READING PLAN

Day	Chapter Titles	Scripture
	From <i>Read and Learn Bible</i> <i>* find this story on website</i>	
11/8	A Sad Ending (repeat)	2 Kings 24-25
11/9	Daniel and the King's Dream; The King's Dream	Daniel 1-2
11/10	The Angel in the Fire	Daniel 3:8-30
11/11	Daniel and the Lions	Daniel 6
11/12	Rebuilding the Temple*; Reading God's Word Together*	Ezra 3:10-11; Nehemiah 6:9
11/13	Queen Esther	Esther 3-9
Sunday	Three Faithful Friends	Daniel 3

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Instructions and discussion tips are available on the church website.

Choose one or more activities that will interest your family as you make this week's stories your own.

Make a Family Prayer Jar

Create a prayer jar to include different types of prayers in your family repertoire.

Vegetable Delight

Just as Daniel and his friends chose to eat vegetables and other healthy meals, your family can learn to enjoy different vegetables through this eating activity.

Paintings of Leonid Afremov

Introduce your family to the work of this Russian Israeli artist. His paintings are unique in the way he applies the paint and his use of color and light. Create a piece of art in the style of Afremov about the story of three friends in the fiery furnace.

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Make a Family Prayer Jar

Create a family prayer jar to help family members remember to pray regularly, just like Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did. Recall that the story of Daniel in the lion's den says that Daniel prayed three times a day. Good times to pray are: first thing in the morning, before meals and before bed.

You can use a mason jar, a soup can, an empty food jar, or any vessel to hold the prayers.

Directions for a suggested prayer jar can be found here- <https://www.ssw.com/blog/how-to-make-prayer-jars-religious-craft-activity-lesson/>

The idea is to pull a prayer starter from the prayer jar and invite each family member to pray using that prayer prompt. (Example: Name 5 people you want to pray for; God I am thankful for...)

Vegetable Delight

Prepare a tray of raw vegetables using broccoli, cauliflower, edamame, cucumbers, carrots, or whatever is available in season. (This might be a time to introduce a new vegetable to your child.)

Invite family member to sample the prepared veggies. Remind your child that these are the kinds of food that Daniel and his friends chose to eat in order to be faithful to God. Explain that the meat and other rich foods at the king's table had been offered to idols and could not be eaten by those who serve and worship the One True God. (Review what an idol is from your reading of the 10 commandments.)

Wonder together why eating vegetables is more healthy than other foods. Talk about a time when a family member had to stand up for what they believed.

Make a list of all the vegetables your family members liked and work together to create menus that include these healthy foods.

Say a prayer thanking God for these healthy foods and the example of Daniel and his three friends.

Introduce your children to the paintings of Leonid Afremov

Google the Russian/Israeli artist [Leonid Afremov](#) and show your child some of his paintings like *City by the Lake*, *Farewell to Anger* or *Fall Date*. Talk about the vibrant colors he uses and that he didn't use brushes. Instead, he used a palette knife to create his paintings. Ask your child to share their feelings as they look at the paintings of this artist.

Invite them to create the 3 friends in a fiery furnace scene using the style of Afremov.

Rubber band a yellow, orange, and red marker or crayon (you might also add blue) together making sure their tips are even and will touch the bottom at the same time. Provide a piece of paper for each family member and invite them to draw a picture of the three friends in the fiery furnace. Use the rubber banded colors to create the fire surrounding the friends. Talk about the bravery it took for these three men to be faithful knowing what the consequences would be. Ask, "When was a time you had to be brave to be faithful to God?"