

Get Ready!

Who's Pushing You?

By: Wally Winner



Text

Daniel 3:1-29

Key Quest Verse

The angel of the Lord encamped around them that fear him, and delivered them. O taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusts in him. Psalm 34:7, 8

Bible Background

The events of chapter three probably happen sometime after events of chapters two and four of Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar, possibly remembering the image of about fifteen years previous, decided to build it. Nebuchadnezzar knew from Daniel that he was the “head of gold” (2:38) and he was greatly flattered by that interpretation. In an attempt, perhaps, to show the impact of his world empire, he had an image covered with gold made. He had forgot his ten acknowledgement of the God of Israel.

Enter into this situation Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Nebuchadnezzar had once appointed these three administrators of the province of Babylon (2:49). Their refusal to adopt the culture and religious patterns must have caused animosity and bitterness that increased with each passing year. There was a strong anti-Jewish movement going on throughout the Book of Daniel. Nobody expected that these three would bend or bow. However, what they didn't count on was that they wouldn't burn either.

Get Ready!**Lesson Quest**

What I want my students to:

Know: Peer pressure comes from inside us.

Feel: That it is all right to be in the minority.

Do: Establish a list of unbreakables that they will not do under any circumstances.

Leader's Devotion

Someone has said that peer pressure is “that hungry urge to conform to the standards of others without any conscious or reasonable personal decision to do so.” You find yourself doing things just to “fit in” or to please other people. How easy it is to give in to the crowd and be pressured. The right decision could have unpleasant consequences such as social rejection, job problems and public ridicule. Don’t let circumstances or people’s expectations control you. We need to stand true to God, and refuse to compromise His standards for living.

Some friendships might not last forever. However, the choices that are made during those friendships will produce effects in our lives that will be far reaching. Not all decisions will have an immediate impact on our lives. But some of those decisions could change the direction of our whole life. Sometimes the seeds we plant produce an unpleasant harvest in our future and the people who influenced us have long passed out of our lives.

Peer pressure isn’t all bad. Although Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego would have made the same decision if they were alone, deciding to resist together didn’t hurt. This is called positive peer pressure. We can all benefit from positive peer pressure.

Get Set!



Option A

Materials: Paper dolls, rubbing alcohol and water (half and half mixture), matches and tongs.

Wet the paper dolls in the water/alcohol mixture. Hold them with the tongs and light them. The alcohol will burn off because it burns at a lower temperature, leaving the paper dolls undamaged. Experiment with this a little before class. There are things in this world that we can't immediately explain. One of those is how God sometimes provides extraordinary protection to His followers.

GO TO THE BIBLE STORY



Option B

Materials: Crayons, paper and objects with some texture (like a coin, leaf, etc.).

Put the paper over the object and rub it with the crayon. There should be a “picture” of the original. Our friends rub off on us and we rub off on them: good or bad. It is important that the things that “rub off” from us are positive. We don't want somebody, someday to talk about how we failed them.

GO TO THE BIBLE STORY

Go!**Friendship Recipe****CREATIVE WRITING**

Materials: Recipe Cards (3 x 5) and pencils.

**Quest Connection**

What kind of friend are you? There is a huge difference between knowing someone well and being a true friend. The greatest evidence of genuine friendship is loyalty – being there for the good times and the bad times. There are enough fair-weather friends in this world. If you hand built a friend for yourself, could those traits be applied to you?

Procedure: Write on a chalkboard or show the students a recipe (like for a cake or cookies). Have them write a recipe that would make a good friend. Collect them and redistribute them. Read them out loud and discuss the qualities. Maybe listing them on the chalkboard.

Discuss the following questions:

What do you like most about your friends?

What do you like least about your friends?

How much say should your parents have in the selection of your friends?

Do friends influence you for good or bad?

Do we influence our friends for good or bad?

Close

Ask for volunteers to work as a “buddy system”. Pair individuals to give mutual encouragement and support. The commitment is for each to help the other resist peer pressure. Then the pairs pray with each other.

Go!**Follow the Leader****GAME****Materials:** None**Quest Connection**

Peer pressure has a lot to do with the way we all live. Adults are not immune from it. We have heard about keeping up with “the Jones”. However, the teenage years seem to provide the greatest pressure to investigate or experiment. We entertain some suggestions, even though we know them to be wrong, because we want to belong. Sometimes we sacrifice our value system to belong at all costs.

Procedure: Play a good game of follow the leader going outside if possible. Make the game interesting.

Discuss the following questions:

Would you like to go play the game by yourself? Why?

Did going along with the group force you to do some things you really prefer not doing?

Who is really in charge if you copy the people around you?

At what point could we be guilty of conforming to the world (Romans 12:1, 2)?

Close

Spend some time in prayer asking God to help the students overcome the pressures of conformity.

Go!**Old Friends****DISCUSSION**

Materials: Some old high school year books

Quest Connection

We live in a “whatever” world. Let’s do “whatever” is right for this moment. We use to refer to this concept as situation ethics. No hard and fast rules. Just make a decision based on the circumstances of the moment. The trouble is, sometimes we set a life course on a moment’s decision. Great decisions are usually preceded by a series of good decisions.

Procedure: Gather some books that have personal messages written in them. Let the students look at the books and read some of the friendship messages. Gain some information on what happen to some of the people in the year books. You might want some of the book owners to be present. They might want to continue this with their parents at home and discuss what happened to some of their parents’ friends.

Discuss the following questions:

What previous decision (Daniel 1) helped Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego with their decision before the idol?

Do you think they were thinking about the future?

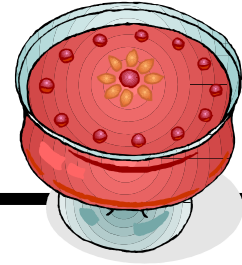
Why is it harder to make choices for the future?

What are some of the most dangerous bad choices we can make? Why?

What are some of the most beneficial good choices you can make? Why?

Close

Pray together remembering that the consequences of our choices will outlast our friendship.

Go!**Taste Test****FOOD**

Materials: Punch, cups (any food or drink)

Quest Connection

The pressures on young people to conform are enormous. One fad after another sweeps through schools. The need to be wearing some “name brand” items can get overwhelming (and expensive). It becomes difficult to stick to your own convictions. It is hard to resist pressure to change or conform. There is a strong possibility that the values of this world are going to be in opposition to the values of the Kingdom of God.

Procedure: Inform the students they are to be part of a “taste test” to determine which punch drink is the best. Mark a container “A” and the other “B”. Give each student a cup and a chance to taste the punch from each container. Before class, ask a couple of students to chose brand “A”. They are to persuade as many students as possible that “A” is best. After a while tell them that both drinks are exactly the same.

Discuss the following questions:

Were Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego followers or leaders?

What is the difference between being a leader or a follower?

Is there anything wrong with being a follower?

Why do we yield sometimes to others’ opinions?

What is the best way to say no when someone tries to pressure you to do something wrong?

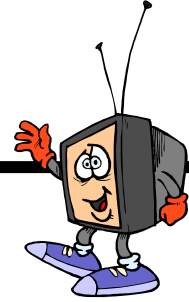
Close

Spend time praying that we will “seek first the Kingdom of God” and make consistently right decisions.

Go!**Take the Punch**

VIDEO

Materials: TV, VCR/DVD, Andy Griffith episode #79 “One Punch Opie”

**Quest Connection**

Taking a stand, holding your ground, means high stakes. It might cost you your friends. It might determine whether or not you have a date on the weekends. But let us assure you of one thing – the benefits of being able to persevere against peer pressure always outweigh the price. The ability to make choices freely, without the influence of others, is the truest evidence that you are growing up instead of growing older.

Procedure: A new boy moves into town and stirs up trouble. Most of the boys favor his activity suggestions over Opie’s. It eventually leads to some mischief in Mayberry. Opie stands up to him prepared to fight.

Discuss the following questions:

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego had worked with these people that turned them in to Nebuchadnezzar. Why is the ability to make right choices in the face of pressure from my friends an evidence that we really know who we are?

Do people who put pressure on us have pressure on them?

What do you think you could lose if you refuse to give in to the peer pressure you face?

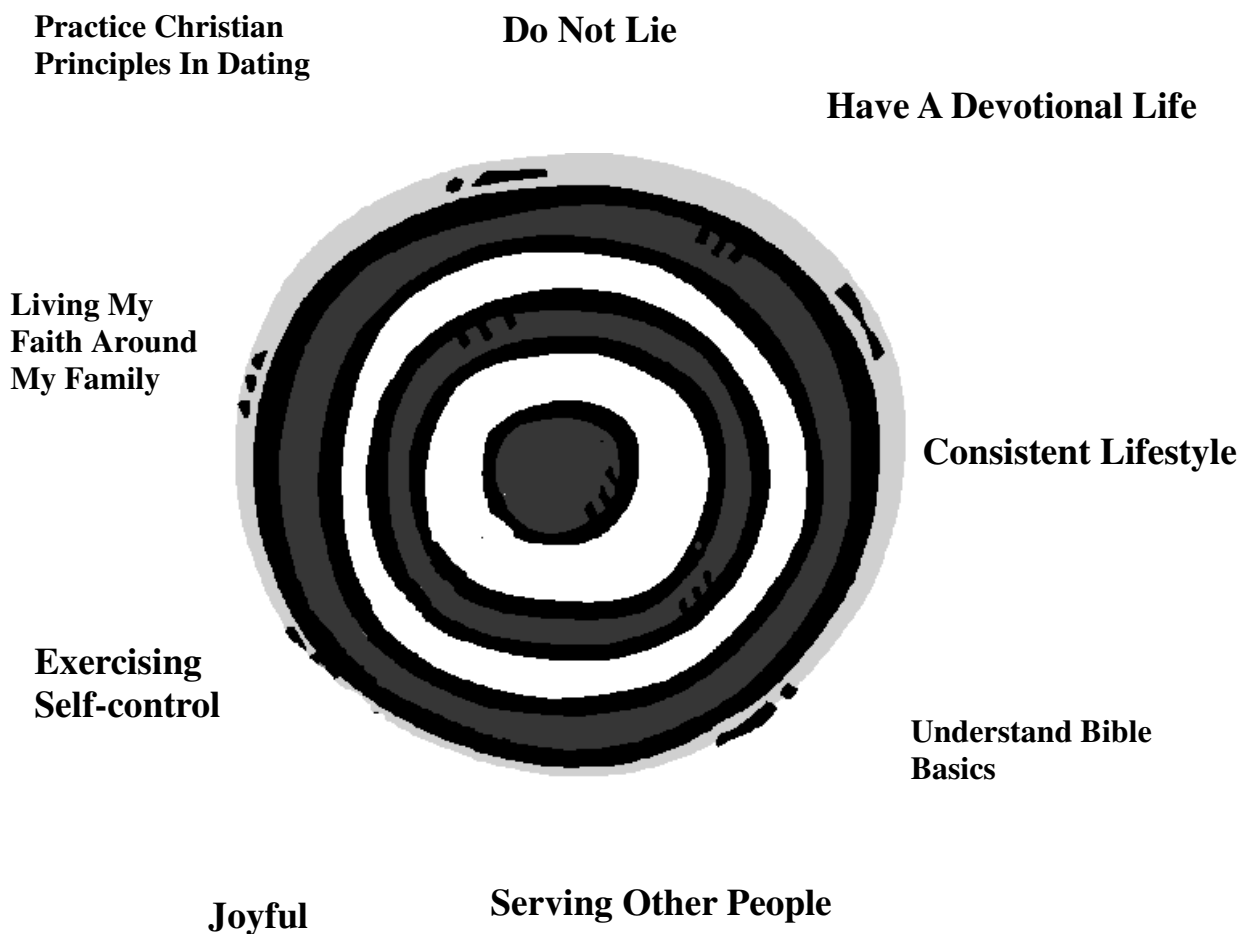
What do you think you would gain or hang on to, if you refused to give in to the peer pressure you face?

Close

In a circle of prayer, holding hands thanking God for good friends.

WORKSHEET

One of the problems in our Christian walk is when our values (the things we know to be right) and behavior have a substantial difference. Knowing to do the right thing is not enough. Doing the right thing is where we show our Christian maturity. Draw an arrow on the value target where your behavior is. The center circle represents values and behavior that are in complete harmony.



Target Your Values!

WORKSHEET

Three of Daniel

M W Q M R M P H C L N T C N F Q
X F O X U D T B O U A V E U D M
R I F G Y I L H U E F D R W C O
M E S H A C H M R G L N M A V R
R R F F S C D G A O A J P X I F
F Y Z U L A C F G C S T T D D S
D P I H S R O W E H I N O E E H
G E H T H E M G D V D L R C R A
F H W S Q U D E E X E C U T E D
H B B O U O I S R N E V E W D R
O T A E H F T P E W D Y H Q R A
U D N B I S W N V O G E E L O C
H Q X R Y N J T I R N Y B H D H
L N O Z G L G P L H I D E A T H
T L U S E R O P E T K H Z W U C
G S R A Z Z E N D A H C U B E N

WORSHIP

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

GOLDEN IDOL

ORDERED

FAITH

COURAGE

FAITH

WHEN

SHADRACH

MESHACH

ABED-NEGO

THEY

REFUSED

EXECUTED

BEING

THROWN

BABYLON

SHOWED

INTO

FIERY

FURNACE

GLORIFIED

KING

EVEN

RESULT

DEATH

FROM

THEM

DELIVERED

He Is

The following questions are from Daniel chapter 3 and the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Decide if the statement is true or false and circle the letter under that column.

	True	False
1. King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of silver.	B	U
2. If you didn't worship the image, you were beaten.	P	B
3. The sheriffs arrested the Jews.	T	R
4. Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego did not worship the image.	A	L
5. The furnace was heated three times as hot as usual.	H	G
6. They stripped the men before throwing them in the furnace.	E	I
7. The flames killed the soldiers.	O	N
8. The king saw four men sitting in the furnace.	F	D
9. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the furnace unharmed.	S	J
10. The king declared that no one should speak against God.	L	A

Unscramble the circled letters to reveal a Bible truth.

O _ _ _ _ _ E



Journal Page

We all face our moment of truth and look at a fiery furnace. Sometimes that fiery furnace comes back to haunt us and we must deal with it a second time or more. Think about your fiery furnace. Sometimes we go through the fire and sometimes we are saved from it. Remember God is always in control.

What is your present fiery furnace?

Has it occurred in the past? If so, how did you deal with it?

Are you dealing with it in the same fashion or have you decided on a new way of handling it?

Do you feel that God has spoken to you through your fiery furnace?

