

Heroes of Scripture and Screen:

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and Hocus Pocus

After watching the movie, read these **questions** and the Bible passage and talk about them as a family. It's best to do this right after watching the movie but you can also do it in the next day or so. The conversation could take anywhere from 10-20 minutes but we hope that it sparks an interest in noticing and sharing God throughout your daily life.

A Moment to Remember: **Which moment in the movie did you like the most? Why?**

Read this passage from the Bible (Daniel 3: 1, 3-5, 8-9, 12-14, 16-19, 21, 24-25, 28 NRSV):

King Nebuchadnezzar made a golden statue.... So... all the officials of the provinces, assembled for the dedication of the statue that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. The herald proclaimed aloud, 'You are commanded, O peoples, ...you are to fall down and worship the golden statue.... Whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be thrown into a furnace of blazing fire.' Accordingly, at this time certain Chaldeans came forward.... They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These pay no heed to you, O king. ...So they brought those men before the king. Nebuchadnezzar said to them, 'Is it true... that you do not serve my gods and you do not worship the golden statue that I have set up? Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered the king, 'If our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire and out of your hand, O king, let him deliver us. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods and we will not worship the golden statue that you have set up.' Then Nebuchadnezzar was so filled with rage... that his face was distorted. He ordered the furnace to be heated up seven times more than was customary. So the men were bound... and they were thrown into the furnace of blazing fire. Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up quickly. He said to his counsellors, 'Was it not three men that we threw bound into the fire?' They answered the king, 'True, O king.' He replied, 'But I see four men unbound, walking in the middle of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the fourth has the appearance of a god.' Nebuchadnezzar said, 'Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants who trusted in him. They disobeyed the king's command and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God.'

*If you have the time, take a look at this Venn Diagram and talk about whether it lines up with how you interpret the scripture and the movie (or just skip to the rest of the **questions**):*

Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego

They refuse to worship anyone but God and act selflessly.

They aren't burned up and get to hang out with an angel.

There are three of them.

They get locked in a fiery furnace.

Binx is as steadfast and faithful as Nebuchadnezzar is changeable and selfish.

Sanderson Sisters

They worship the devil and think only of themselves.

They are burnt to ash, but come back yet again to terrorize the town some more.

Theme in Scripture – Faithfulness:

Despite the threat of death, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refuse to worship a false god. These officials would have known all too well that Babylonian Emperor Nebuchadnezzar followed through on even his cruelest threats. After superheating the furnace, Nebuchadnezzar is shocked to see people walking around unharmed rather than piles of ash. He declares his respect for the Jewish officials and their God. Yet, only three chapters later in the Bible, Nebuchadnezzar goes through nearly the exact same process with Daniel and the lions' den. The emperor displays the opposite of Shadrach's, Meshach's, and Abednego's faithfulness. **Who else in this story displays faithfulness, and how does that help us to define the word itself?**

Theme on the Screen – Faithfulness:

Obviously the Sanderson sisters are not the heroes of their story. The hero of Hocus Pocus is Thackery Binx, who spends most of the film as a cat. Winifred, Sarah, and Mary are a group of three and they get caught in a furnace but their similarities with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego end there. The Sandersons more closely resemble the cruelty and egotism of Nebuchadnezzar. On the flip side, Binx dedicates himself for hundreds of years to the mission of never again letting the sisters harm anyone like they harmed his sister. His faithfulness is deeply admirable. **What motivates Binx to be so faithful? Do you think you'd be that motivated?**

The Scene that Says it All: **Which scene in the movie best represents this theme of faithfulness. Why?** *(Is it when Binx explains his mission, or when Max drinks the potion, or another scene?)*

Bonus question: **If you had to be trapped in the body of an immortal house pet for hundreds of years, what would you want to be? Cat, dog, hamster, goldfish...?**