

TURN UP THE HEAT Study



Read Torah: Bereshit 37:19-30

Query to think about: When we face peer pressure, do we take a stand for what we know is right?

Do: Before class setup 2 lines or circles of dominos. The first line should be set up in the standard way so that each of the dominos will fall in order. The second line should be set up in the exact same manner with one change. Brace the 12th domino in the sequence with glue, tape, or some other stabilizer so that it will not fall. Be sure to test the dominos before service to make sure that the domino will not fall.

Say: Being a kid is GREAT, but it isn't always easy. First, there are a lot of rules we have to learn, and decide which ones we are going to follow. Also lots of consequences, good and bad that come with those decisions. Second, there's all the studying, reading, and homework that we have to do, it's necessary, but it is not *all* amazingly interesting, and sometimes it is downright tiresome. Third, there are lots of other children who we will interact with. Some are believers, some are not. Some are kind and honest, and others; well let's be truthful and say that they can make our life... painful... AND no matter what we not only have to find a way to get along with them, and get along with them while simultaneously being a light that points them to Yeshua. Even the more *difficult* ones.

Every time we walk into the world, we have a great opportunity to strengthen our faith. Today, we're going to talk about how we live out our faith everyday in the outside world. We're going to talk about peer pressure. Peer pressure is defined as the feeling that someone around our own age is pushing us toward making a certain choice, good or bad. What happened with Reuven, and Judah? What did they do wrong? What did they do right? (call on respectfully raised hands)

Peer pressure is very powerful. We all want to fit in and be a part of the group. Sometimes this means we are more open to try something good, because everyone else in our group enjoys it. Sometimes this means that we do something we don't normally do, just to fit in. Sometimes it means that we do something we know is wrong, so we don't stand out. Here on the table, I have some dominos set up.

Do: Show the first group of dominoes

Say: Peer pressure is a lot like these dominos. What do you think will happen if I push this first domino? (call on respectfully raised hands)

Agree: Right, the pressure of it falling will cause the next domino to fall. Then, each domino in the line falls like the one before. It looks something like this.

Do: Set off the first line of dominos

Say: When we encounter peer pressure, take a stand for what we know is right. we will have a choice to be like one of these dominos and just go with the flow, or we can stand up for what is right. How do we know what is right? We can know what is right by studying G-D's Word and applying it to our lives.

Say: we can feel pressured in a lot of ways at school, even in a “Christian” school, at our activities, or even in Synagogue! We can feel pressured to look a certain way or act a certain way that really goes against what G-D’s Word teaches us. In those situations, how will we stand up to the pressure?

In the Tanakh, there is an excellent example of how we can stand against peer pressure. We’re going to look at the story about three righteous boys named Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

The Book of Daniel tells us about a king named Nebuchadnezzar. He was the King of Babylon. One day, King Nebuchadnezzar and his army marched into Jerusalem and took over. They made all the people slaves, and they took the most promising young men back to Babylon with them.

We are introduced to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Once they arrived in Babylon, the King changed their names Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah changed to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These were special young men who were dedicated to serving the One True G-D. Choose one of the yeladim to read Daniel 3:1-3.

Understand that the people of Babylon did not worship the One True G-D. In fact, they had many small “G” gods (also known as demons), often worshiped idols, and even objects. Daniel 3 tells us that King Nebuchadnezzar built a golden image that was 90 feet high and 9 feet wide. This thing was really tall, about as tall as our backyard is long. Imagine 15 men standing on one another’s shoulder, that’s about equal to the height of this gold statue.

Listen to what King Nebuchadnezzar did next.

Choose one of the yeladim to read Daniel 3:4–7.

Say: At the signal, all the people would bow down to this gold statue; all the people except these three righteous young men. They refused to bow down to the idol like everyone else. Why did they refused to bow down to the idol even when everyone else was bowing? (call on respectfully raised hands)

Agree:

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego knew in their hearts what was right and wrong. They understood G-D’s commands, and they wanted to be obedient to HIM. This meant that they had to take a stand to be different than everyone else, even though, **HEAR ME ABOUT THIS; *even though they knew* there would be consequences.**

Choose one of the yeladim to read Daniel 3:8–13.

Say: When Nebuchadnezzar learned that the boys refused to bow down, he was furious. He demanded that they bow down or be thrown into the fiery furnace.

Choose one of the yeladim to read Daniel 3:14–15.

Say: *Even though they knew* there would be consequences. Remember: These consequences are not just being teased by some mean children, made to feel embarrassed, or even threatened with being beat up. The consequence was their lives. Nevertheless...

Choose one of the yeladim to read Daniel 3:16

Say: Wow! I mean WOW! That is very powerful, imagine you were one of these young men, facing a terrible king, facing a horrible death. Imagine the faith to say that to the face of a king who could and would end your life. Let's all read that again together.

Read Daniel 3:16 together, read with emphasis and energy.

Say: There is another 3:16 that I really love can anyone guess? (call on respectfully raised hands but do not stray too long off topic)

Okay lets hear what happened next.

Choose one of the yeladim to read Daniel 3:17–23

Say: So that just happened! Of course Nebuchadnezzar was so angry he couldn't see straight, so hot that he heated the furnace *seven times hotter* than it had ever been heated. He took the three boys, and he had them thrown into the furnace. The furnace was so hot that the guards that threw the boys in were immediately killed.

-Pause to let that sit a moment. -

Say: Remember that those guards probably had families. Remember too, that when you do deeds that are unrighteous for someone else, even if you are just following orders, you will sometimes face an immediate consequence.

Okay so what happened next, was that also it for our righteous young men? (call on respectfully raised hands)

Choose one of the yeladim to read Daniel 3:24–27.

Say: Imagine watching as the King and his men looked into the furnace, they saw “How many?” men walking in the midst of the fire and not being burned at all. Nebuchadnezzar called Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to come out of the fiery furnace. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego walked out of the furnace with no burns, no singed hairs, and not even the smell of smoke on their clothes!

A Miracle! Listen to king Nebuchadnezzar.

Choose one of the yeladim to read Daniel 3:28–30.

Say: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego made a righteous choice to stand against the pressure. While all their peers were bowing down to the golden image, they chose to be faithful and obedient to G-D. Even when it cost them, they stood firm and did what was right. Do you wish to do the same? (rhetorical)

In life we will be tempted by peer pressure. It may be a temptation to wear certain clothes, makeup, or our hair in a certain way in order to fit in with the “popular” or even the “not popular” crowd. It may be pressure to bully or make fun of others who are different from the way we see ourselves. It may be a temptation just to fade into the background and never let anyone know about our faith in G-D, or show our obedience to HIM or our parents. When negative peer pressure comes, we will have to make a choice. A choice to go with the flow or to take a stand for what is right.

Remember what happened with the dominos before? They all fell, one after the other, under the pressure. But what if one of them was able to stay standing. What if one of them was able to withstand the pressure and hold firm in an upright position. What do we think would happen? Maybe something like this...

(Set off the second line of dominos)

Point out the still standing dominoes.

Say: Even when all the dominos were falling and there was a ton of pressure, this domino stood firm. It had a lot of help to stand because it was anchored to the foundation. Look too, at all the dominoes after it did not fall. Sometimes when we stand firm, we save others around us from falling too! Listen to what king Nebuchadnezzar said about our G-D after this experience...

Choose one of the yeladim to read Daniel 3:31–33.

Say: Indeed, how mighty are HIS wonders! Our foundation is G-D's Word. It shows us what is wrong and what is right so that we can be prepared to take a stand when pressure comes. We know that the Mighty and Wonderful Creator of the entire universe is always there beside us! We can always know that when we face peer pressure, HE will give us the strength to take a stand for what HE has said is right.

SMALL GROUP

Supplies: One pack of dominoes and piece of duct tape per small group.

Small Group Activity: Students work together and setup the dominoes in a creative pattern. Next, the group leader picks a volunteer, who faces their back toward the group and closes their eyes. At the same time, the other players tape one of the dominoes in the pattern to the floor. The idea is to make the tape unnoticeable. When complete, the volunteer has three guesses to find out which piece is taped. Next, tip over the dominoes and watch as they fall and stopped by the piece taped to the floor.

Discuss the following questions:

- How is peer pressure like the dominoes falling over?**
- What does the taped piece represent?**
- What are some things our classmates do that everyone follows?**
- Why do we think it is easier to go along with what everyone else is doing?**
- What's dangerous about following the crowd?**
- What can we take a stand for this week?**