

	Even If
 BIG IDEA	When you put everything in God’s hands, you eventually begin to see God’s hands in everything. An “even if” faith gives us the courage to stand for God, knowing He is always with us.
 ICE BREAKER	1. Have you ever faced a situation where doing the right thing was also the hardest thing? 2. Who has had the biggest influence on your faith journey? 3. When has God shown Himself faithful in your life, even if it wasn’t in the way you expected?
 MAIN POINTS	The world offers shiny promises but only God gives lasting identity. When Babylon conquered Israel, King Nebuchadnezzar took the brightest young men, including Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and immersed them in an indoctrination program designed to change who they were. They were given new names, a new culture, and a new identity. Shan pointed out that the king’s 90-foot statue was likely wood covered in gold, beautiful on the outside but hollow within. The world still offers “gold-plated” idols today: success, popularity, wealth, and approval. They may look impressive, but only God provides an identity that truly lasts. Stand for God, even when it’s uncomfortable. Shan described three kinds of people: stuck up, suck up, and stand up. While everyone else bowed to the culture around them, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego stood firm in their faith. Most of the time, we compromise because we’re afraid of what we’ll lose, acceptance, friendships, status, opportunities, or comfort. They chose the hard right over the easy wrong, trusting that obedience to God is always worth it. Faith says, “Even if.” The three friends believed God could rescue them, but their faith wasn’t dependent on the outcome. They boldly declared, “Even if He does not...” they would still worship God alone. Shan challenged us to move beyond conditional faith toward complete trust. When we place everything in God’s hands, we eventually begin to see God’s hands in everything. An “even if” faith is the kind of faith that invites us to experience God’s power in ways we never could if we only trusted Him when life went our way. God is always with you. When Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego entered the furnace, they discovered they weren’t alone. Jesus was with them in the fire. Shan reminded us that we may sometimes question whether we’re with God, but we should never question whether God is with us. Through the Holy Spirit, God continues to walk with us today, comforting us, strengthening us, and guiding us through every challenge. His presence doesn’t always remove the fire, but it always changes how we walk through it.

 DISCUSS	1. Where do you feel the greatest pressure to compromise your faith in today's culture? 2. Which of these best describes your faith today: <i>"I trust God if..."</i>, <i>"I trust God because..."</i>, or <i>"I trust God even if..."</i>? Why? 3. How have you experienced God's presence during a difficult season rather than being rescued from it? 4. Who helped shape your faith, and what impact did they have on your life? 5. What is one area where God is inviting you to trust Him more fully this week?
 NEXT STEP	Jesus First Read Daniel 3 this week and ask God to strengthen your faith. Pray for the courage to trust Him even when the outcome is uncertain. People Always God often strengthens our faith through community. If you're not already connected, take a step toward joining a Group where you can encourage others and be encouraged in return. Made for More Think about who God has placed in your life to influence. Whether it's your children, coworkers, neighbors, classmates, or friends, ask God to help you model a faith that trusts Him—even if.
 SCRIPTURE	Daniel 3:16–18
 NEXT WEEK SNEAK PEAK	This weekend we celebrated lives changed through baptism as many students—and adults—publicly declared their faith in Jesus. Continue praying for those who took that next step and consider what next step God may be inviting you to take.