

LESSON 36

The Golden Calf

EXODUS 32



BIBLE TRUTH

WHERE SIN IS GREAT, GOD'S GRACE IS GREATER

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION 5 MIN

2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

SUPPLIES: *The Gospel Story Bible* (story 36)

3. BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION 5 MIN

Where Is Jesus?

SUPPLIES: Bible (ESV preferred); Review “Where Is Jesus?” to prepare

4. SNACK QUESTIONS 10 MIN

SUPPLIES: Snack food/water

5. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5-10 MIN

6. ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS (CHOOSE ONE OR MORE) 20-30 MIN

Coloring Page 36

SUPPLIES: markers/crayons

Turning Away from the Lord

SUPPLIES: a stuffed animal

Making an Idol

SUPPLIES: yellow paper cut up into small pieces (enough for each child to have several pieces); calf cut out of the same yellow paper; brown bag

7. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

TOTAL 60-75 MIN

THE LESSON

OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION 5 MIN

In today's lesson the children will hear how the people made a calf as a false god to worship.

Ask the children to help you understand what an idol is. If they cannot think of an answer, tell them that people who lived during Bible times used to worship idols instead of God. See if they can come up with other answers. They might say a statue or give you another animal. Ask them if they know how something becomes an idol. It's not just that someone has to make it, but someone has to worship it.

Explain that an idol is something we want more than God. An idol can be something good that we want too much—something we worship. Give them examples: perhaps we want a new bike so much that we get angry when we don't get one. Getting angry over something we want is a sure sign that we want it more than we want God. Help the class to understand that we have idols today. Though we don't worship calves or statues, we do sometimes want things more than God.

Pray for the remainder of the class time before moving forward with the lesson.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read story 36, "The Golden Calf," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION 5 MIN

After reading the story, use the following questions to involve the children in a discussion:

- **What is an idol?**
(An idol is anything we worship and say in our hearts is "god." At the time of this story, idols were often statues made to look like certain animals but were said to be gods.)
- **Why is making and worshiping an idol disobedience to God?**
(Idol worship disobeys the second commandment: "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything ..." [Exodus 20:4].)

- What did Moses do when he returned and saw the Israelites worshipping the statue?
(Moses threw down on the ground the two stone tablets containing the Ten Commandments and destroyed the idol statue of the golden calf.)

SNACK QUESTIONS 10 MIN

While the children are eating the snack, engage them by asking:

- What was Israel’s idol in this story?
(a golden calf)
- What is an idol?
(An idol is something we worship instead of God.)
- Why are idols sinful?
(They take the place of God in our lives.)
- Can idols help you?
(No, there is only one God. Idols are worthless.)
- Why do people worship idols?
(They want to control God. They want to see God. In their sin, people do not like to worship a God they cannot see and cannot control.)

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5-10 MIN

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS. 20-30 MIN

Coloring Activity

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page 36—one copy for each child

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

Where Is Jesus? _____

Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.

Passage: Hebrews 8:5–13

Though there are many significant differences between Moses (he was a sinner) and Jesus (he was sinless), there are similarities as well. Moses and Jesus were both mediators between God and man. Just as Moses pleaded with God not to destroy the Israelites when they worshiped the golden calf, Jesus asked his father to have mercy on those who crucified him (Luke 23:34).

- What are the people doing around the statue of the golden calf?
(They are singing, dancing, and worshiping the idol.)
- Why did Moses get angry when he saw the people singing and dancing and worshiping around this statue?
(Moses was angry that the people had turned from the Lord.)

Turning Away from the Lord

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ stuffed animal

Have one child play the part of Moses; another, the part of Aaron; and the other children, the Israelites. Have Moses tell the people that he is going to go to talk to God. Have Moses leave. Ask the children to trust the Lord and explain to them that trusting God involves waiting patiently for him. Then instruct the children to act like the Israelites in the story. Have them complain that Moses is taking so long. Then have them ask Aaron for another "god." Read Exodus 32:1–4. (You can use a stuffed animal to represent the idol.) Have Aaron present the idol and tell the Israelites that this is now their "god."

Ask the following questions:

- What was wrong with the way the Israelites acted?
- Can you think of another time when the Israelites did not want to trust in God?
- Did the Israelites make good choices for themselves?

Making an Idol

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ yellow paper cut up into small pieces to represent jewelry (enough for each child to have several pieces)
- ✓ a calf cut out of the same yellow paper
- ✓ brown bag

Before class, place the “calf” in the bag.

Pass out the pieces of yellow paper so that every child gets a few. Retell the story of the golden calf in your own words. When the time comes to collect the gold things, collect the papers from the children in the bag with the calf inside. Make sure you hold the bag high enough so the calf remains concealed. After collecting all the “jewelry” tell the children that you are heating up the gold so it melts so that you can make a golden calf. (Shake the bag for extra effect.) Reach in and suddenly pull out the calf. Then say to the children, “This is the god who led you through the desert.”

Ask the children if they think the calf is a real god. Then show them that it can do nothing. Set it down on the table and say, “Golden calf, I’m thirsty. Get me a glass of water.” (Of course nothing will happen.)

Tell the children that the people sinned very badly against God. God led them out of Egypt and they made a calf to represent God and worshiped it instead of God. This goes against the first commandment. Go back to Exodus 20, read the first commandment and ask the children how the golden calf goes against God’s commandment.

PRAY **5 MIN**

Take time at the end of class to thank God for all you learned today. Include parts of your Bible lesson in your prayer as another way for the children to remember what today's lesson was about.

