

UNIT 5 | SESSION 2

PreK 2/16/25

THE GOLDEN CALF

EXODUS 32; 34



CHRIST CONNECTION: The people were wrong to worship a golden calf. Moses asked God to forgive them. When we do wrong, we can pray and ask Jesus to forgive us. Jesus died and came back to life to rescue us from our sins.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why do we need to be saved? We are sinful and need Jesus to rescue us from sin.

KEY PASSAGE: There is no one holy like the Lord. 1 Samuel 2:2

STORY POINT: The people sinned by worshiping a golden calf.



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

Exodus 32's account of the golden calf showcases the sinful idolatry of people in contrast with the merciful nature of God. In the 40 days it took Moses to return from Mount Sinai, the people had grown impatient. They urged Aaron to join in their mission to find a new object they deemed worthy of worship and devotion: a golden calf.

What led God's people to fall prey to this idolatry? How does Moses' leadership foreshadow Christ's intercession for God's people?

An idol is anything we worship in the place of God. Unfortunately, the Israelites wrongly believed they needed a new god to go before them since Moses' absence left them doubting if he would return and worried about who would lead them. How ironic it was that they sought to dethrone God while claiming to throw a festival in His honor (Exodus 32:5). Their impatient uncertainty led them to replace God's sovereign plans and rightful worship with this golden god of their own creation.

As God's anger grew against the Israelites' sin, Moses reminded the Lord of all He had done for His people since Egypt and urged Him to relent from His planned destruction. In remembering His covenant with Abraham from long ago, and upon Moses' urging, God did not completely destroy His people. God was faithful to uphold His covenant promises despite the unfaithfulness of His people. He instructed Moses to create two new stone tablets on which God Himself would engrave the Ten Commandments. Moses pleaded for the Lord to journey with His people, forgive them, and set them apart as His own nation and possession.

Moses was a sinful man, so his intercession for God's people was not enough to bring everlasting forgiveness. A greater Intercessor would be needed to offer a greater sacrifice to atone for sin. We see the mercies of God through the intercession of Christ's life, death, and resurrection so that all who trust in Him will be saved. Help boys and girls see the greatness of God's mercy through the faithful mediation of Moses and ultimately, Jesus.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10-15 MINUTES

Greet preschoolers and open the session



LEARN

25-30 MINUTES

Teach preschoolers the story of the gospel



LOVE

Lead preschoolers to love the God of the gospel

30-40 MINUTES



LIVE

Lead preschoolers to live the mission of the gospel



BONUS

60-65 MINUTES

Teach preschoolers for an additional hour



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a supply of the following items available during all teaching sessions: Allergy Alert, Bibles, washable markers, crayons, scissors (adult use), blunt-tipped scissors, construction paper, copy paper, glue sticks, glue, tape, baby dolls, blocks, play dough, and a beanbag.



WELCOME

Find toy cows

- Big Picture Question Poster
- toy cow figures



LEARN

Choose a suitcase

- small overnight bag
- larger suitcase

Tell the Bible story

- "The Golden Calf" video (optional)

Review the Bible story

- Bible Story Picture Poster
- toy cow figures

Learn and practice the key passage phrase

- Key Passage Phrase Marker



LOVE

Sort adult and baby animals

- adult and baby toy animal figures
- basket

Watch ice melt

- ice cube tray
- frozen ice cubes
- food color
- rock salt
- plastic tablecloth
- towel



LIVE

Build the fire

- "Key Passage Fire" printable, 1 copy

Missions activity

- "Hembree Family Photo" printable
- "Washington, DC Landmarks and Monuments" printable

Snack and Transition

- hand sanitizer (optional)
- "Draw an X" activity page, 1 per child
- Big Picture Cards for Families



BONUS

Say the key passage phrase

- Key Passage Phrase Marker

Give a card to a friend

- cardstock hearts
- assorted stickers

Add ten commandments

- "Ten Commandments" printable



WELCOME Preschoolers

Provide as many learning activities as possible from the Love and Live sections to give preschoolers choices to learn. Incorporate the Bible story, Christ Connection, story point, and key passage phrase in your conversations as the preschoolers engage in learning activities throughout the session.

Use the following activity to greet children as they enter the classroom. Talk about the big picture question and answer. After each child completes the welcome activity, encourage him to participate in the activities provided from the Love and Live sections of the leader guide.

FIND TOY COWS

Display the Big Picture Question Poster. Hide toy cows around the room for children to find. Instruct children as they arrive to find a cow and bring it to you. Read the big picture question and answer aloud to each child when he brings a cow to you. Allow children to hide the cows for others to find as they arrive.

SAY 🍌 I'm so glad to see you today. I see you found a toy cow we hid around the room. These toy cows remind me of a time God's people sinned and needed to be rescued. Our big picture question and answer is, **Why do we need to be saved? We are sinful and need Jesus to rescue us from sin.** In our Bible story today, we will learn about a time **THE PEOPLE SINNED BY WORSHIPPING A GOLDEN CALF**. I can't wait to learn more about it with you! 🍌

worship

* Everywhere I go

* God is so good

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

3 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY



Display the Bible Story Picture Poster. Invite children to help retell the Bible story by playing it out together. Lead a child to be Moses and walk up the mountain. Assign other children to give gold items to a child playing out Aaron. Pretend to be happy with the golden calf. Lead Moses to come back down the mountain with the Ten Commandments. Have Moses throw them on the ground, unhappy with the people. Have Moses gather all of the toy cow figures and throw them away before returning back up to the top of the mountain to worship God and get new stone tablets.

SAY “ The people sinned while Moses was on the mountain talking to God. God gave Moses the Ten Commandments before he came back down to the people. When Moses returned, **THE PEOPLE SINNED BY WORSHIPING A GOLDEN CALF**. He was angry and broke the tablets on the ground. Then, Moses went back up the mountain to worship God and make new tablets. ”

4 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of “The Wheels On the Bus”:

There is no one holy like the Lord
Like the Lord, like the Lord
There is no one holy like the Lord

1 Samuel 2:2

* ^W No one worship song

5 LEARN AND PRACTICE THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE



Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker at 1 Samuel 2:2. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Learn the key passage phrase. Lead children to stand up and sit down on alternating words.

SAY “ The people grew tired of waiting for Moses to come back from speaking with God. They chose to worship the statue of the baby cow, but it was not holy. Only God is holy. ”

6 PRAY

Pray, thanking God for being holy and worthy of our worship.





LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LEARN the Bible Story

1 CHOOSE A SUITCASE

Set a large suitcase and smaller overnight bag next to one another in front of the children. Ask children which they would take if they were going on a long trip and which they would take if they were going on a short trip.

SAY “I’m so glad you are with us today! I am thinking about going on a trip, and I am trying to figure out what size suitcase to take with me. I want to make sure I am prepared for my trip. Which bag will I need if my trip is only one night? Which one will I need if I want to be gone for 10 nights? In our Bible story, Moses was gone on a trip for a long time—longer than anyone expected. While he was gone, the people made a wrong decision. God was not happy with the people. They broke one of His rules. Let’s learn more together.”



2 TELL THE BIBLE STORY video

Open your Bible to Exodus 32; 34. Tell the following Bible story using the provided storytelling points. You may choose to review the Bible story by showing the video.

THE GOLDEN CALF

SAY “Moses went up on a mountain to talk with God. He was gone so long, the rest of God’s people were afraid he was not coming back. They asked Moses’ brother, Aaron, to make a new god for them.

Aaron took gold from the people and used it to make a statue that looked like a baby cow. The people were happy! But God was not happy. God told Moses, “Go down the mountain! The people did something wrong. They made a cow to worship instead of worshipping Me.”

Moses went down the mountain. He carried two stone tablets from God. When Moses saw the people worshipping the golden calf, he was angry! Moses smashed the tablets on the ground and destroyed the cow statue.

Then Moses went back up the mountain. He asked God to forgive the people for what they did wrong. God told Moses to make two new stone tablets. Then God said that He is kind and loving, even when people do wrong things. Moses worshiped God. Then Moses took the two stone tablets and went back to the people.”

Christ Connection: Jesus came, died on the cross, and came back to life to rescue people from sin. We can pray and ask God to forgive us for our sin.



THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God because of what we learned

1 PLAY A WAITING GAME



Guide the children to line up across one side of the room. Show a green sheet of paper when it is OK for them to walk and a red sheet when it is time to stop. Lead children to only take one step each time you hold up green and stop as you hold up red again. Hold up the red paper for longer and longer periods of time. Talk about how hard it is to wait for the green. Hold up the green one more time and allow children to walk to the opposite side of the room when they grow tired of waiting.

SAY 📖 The people grew tired of waiting for Moses. They asked Aaron to make something for them to worship instead of God. Aaron made a golden calf for them. Aaron and **THE PEOPLE SINNED BY WORSHIPING A GOLDEN CALF**. God is holy, and we should worship only Him. 📖

2 SORT ADULT AND BABY ANIMALS

Place a basket of mixed animal figures, adult and baby, on the floor for children to sort into two groups. Encourage preschoolers to identify the name and sound of each animal.

SAY 📖 The people asked Aaron to make the idol. He made a golden calf for the people to worship instead of worshiping God. This was a sin. God told the people to worship only Him. God is holy, and no one else is like Him. Our key passage phrase reminds us there is no one holy like the Lord. 📖

3 WATCH ICE MELT

Prior to the session, freeze water in an ice tray. Keep it frozen until the session starts. Place the blocks of ice on a tray with sides. Set the tray on a towel on a low table covered with a vinyl tablecloth. Place magnifying glasses nearby. Drop food color and rock salt on the tops of each block of ice. Look at the ice together using the magnifying glasses. Talk about the cracks in the ice, how the color runs in the cracks, how the salt is making the ice melt faster, and so forth. Allow children time to observe the ice.

SAY 📖 This ice is taking a long time to melt. Are you tired of watching it yet? In the Bible story, we learned the people disobeyed God and worshiped the golden calf. The people grew tired of waiting for Moses to return, even though they knew he was talking with God up on the mountain. Our big picture question says, **Why do we need to be saved? We are sinful and need Jesus to rescue us from sin.** The people sinned when they asked Aaron to make them an idol from their gold so they could worship it instead of holy God. 📖

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE for God out of love

1 BUILD THE FIRE

Print and cut apart the “Key Passage Fire” printable. Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker in the Bible at 1 Samuel 2:2. Give each child a flame from the printable.

SAY “ Let’s use our flames to put the key passage phrase in order. What did we build? [Allow responses.] Aaron told Moses the golden calf had just come out of the fire. But Aaron made the golden calf when the people asked him to. **THE PEOPLE SINNED BY WORSHIPPING A GOLDEN CALF.** ”

2 MISSIONS ACTIVITY



Print and display the “Washington, DC Landmarks and Monuments” and “Hembree Family Photo” printables. Show the appropriate landmark photo as you discuss these places. Tell preschoolers that Washington, DC, has many important government buildings, including the United States Capitol. The White House is where the president of the United States lives and works. The Washington Monument, Thomas Jefferson Memorial, and the Lincoln Memorial are all important landmarks in Washington, DC. Many people visit these famous places every year.

SAY “ Missionaries like Brandon Hembree want to tell people about Jesus throughout Washington, DC. Brandon and his wife, Ellen, recently started a new church called Impact Church. Brandon and Ellen are excited to lead this church and help people learn about Jesus. [Lead a prayer.] ”

3 SNACK AND TRANSITION



Post an Allergy Alert. Serve the snack. As children eat, review and talk about the Bible story. When children finish their snack, lead them to complete the activity page. As they work, continue talking about the Bible story and emphasize the Christ Connection.

SAY “ The people were wrong to worship a golden calf. Moses asked God to forgive them. When we do wrong, we can pray and ask Jesus to forgive us. Jesus died and came back to life to rescue us from our sins. ”

Remember to communicate helpful information to the bonus teaching hour leaders. If parents are picking up children at this time, tell them something their child did well during the session. Distribute Big Picture Cards for Families. Encourage parents to engage with the family discussion starters and family activities during the week.



BONUS Teaching Hour Group Time

1 DUMP OUT GOLD

Greet children for group time. Lead children to put “gold” items into a basket. Dump the basket out in front of the children and ask them if it made a golden calf. Tell them Aaron took gold from the people and melted it to make something new for the people to worship. Ask children to listen closely to learn what Aaron made and what happened as a result of the peoples’ choices.

2 TALK ABOUT THE BIBLE STORY

Open the Bible to Exodus 32; 34. Use the summarized points below to talk about the Bible story:

THE GOLDEN CALF

- Moses went up on a mountain to talk with God. He was gone a long time. The people were afraid Moses would not come back, so they asked Moses’ brother, Aaron, to make them a new god.
- Aaron made a golden statue that looked like a baby cow. The people were happy! But God was not happy. God said the people were doing the wrong thing.
- Moses went down the mountain. He was angry, and he got rid of the cow statue. He told the people to only worship God.
- Moses went back up the mountain. He asked God to forgive the people for what they did wrong. God is kind and loving, even when people do wrong things. Moses worshiped God. Then Moses went back to the people.

3 SING A SONG

Sing the song below to the tune of “The Wheels On the Bus”:

There is no one holy like the Lord
Like the Lord, like the Lord
There is no one holy like the Lord
1 Samuel 2:2

4 SAY THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker at 1 Samuel 2:2. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Lead children to pretend to climb a mountain as they say the key passage phrase together.

5 PRAY

Pray, asking God to help us worship Him alone.



BONUS Teaching Hour Activities

6 MOLD PLAY DOUGH

Give children play dough and ask them mold something from it. Remind them Aaron molded a calf for the people to worship.

SAY “ Our key passage phrase tells us that God is holy and no one is like Him. God gave Moses the Ten Commandments. One of the commandments tells us to only worship God. **THE PEOPLE SINNED BY WORSHIPPING A GOLDEN CALF.** ”

7 GIVE A HEART TO A FRIEND

Cut paper hearts from cardstock. Allow children to decorate the hearts with crayons and stickers. Allow them to make as many as time allows. Lead children to give their hearts to their friends and say, “God loves you.”

SAY “ When God’s people sinned and worshiped the golden calf Aaron made, it made Moses angry. Moses knew God’s rules. Moses told them to only worship God. Moses asked God to forgive the people for the wrong thing they did. God loved the people. God loved the people, and Moses made new stone tablets. ”

8 ADD TEN COMMANDMENTS

Print the “Ten Commandments” printable for each child. Assist preschoolers in using blunt scissors to cut out the stone tablets and the Commandments. Assist preschoolers in gluing the Ten Commandments onto their tablets.

SAY “ Moses came down from the mountain and saw people worshiping the golden calf. He threw the tablets with the Ten Commandments on them to the ground and broke them. God had written those tablets with His own finger! Moses had to go back up the mountain and write two more tablets himself for the people to have the 10 rules God had given them. The Commandments helped the people know how God wanted them to live. God loved them, even though **THE PEOPLE SINNED BY WORSHIPPING A GOLDEN CALF.** ”

Release preschoolers to parents according to your church’s security procedure. Tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session.