

UNIT 5 | SESSION 2

# THE GOLDEN CALF

EXODUS 32; 34



**KEY PASSAGE:** 1 Samuel 2:2

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Why do we need to be saved? People are sinful and cannot save themselves.

**CHRIST CONNECTION:** The people chose to worship a golden calf instead of God, and God's anger burned against them. Moses interceded so that God would forgive them. We are all sinners who deserve the wrath of God, but Jesus interceded for us through His life, death, and resurrection so we can be saved!

**STORY POINT:** The Israelites sinned by making and 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 kids and open the session



### LEARN

#### 25-30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



### LOVE

#### 15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



### LIVE

#### 15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



## PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

## GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



### WELCOME

#### Activity Page

- "Image Search" activity page

#### Session Starter (Option 1)

- packets of instant pudding, 2
- milk
- glass mixing bowls, 2
- spoons, 2
- vinegar
- popcorn kernels

#### Session Starter (Option 2)

- trash can
- foam ball or crumpled paper
- painter's tape



### LOVE

#### Review & Bible Skills

- Small Group Timeline and Map Set (optional)



### LIVE

#### Activity Choice (Option 2)

- empty cardboard tubes cut in half, 1 per kid
- table tennis balls, 1 per kid
- baskets or boxes, 2 per team

#### Reflection and Prayer

- Bible Story Coloring Page (optional)



### LEARN

#### Introduce the Session

- countdown video
- Story Point Poster

#### Big Picture Question

- Big Picture Question Poster

#### Review the Timeline

- Giant Timeline

#### Tell the Bible Story

- "The Golden Calf" video
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- felt cut-outs and felt board (optional)

#### Questions from Kids

- "Unit 5, Session 2" Questions from Kids video

#### Missions Moment

- "Hembree Family Photo" printable

#### Key Passage Activity

- Key Passage Poster
- "No One Like the Lord (1 Samuel 2:2)" song
- worship song of your choice (optional)
- foam cups



## WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

**SAY** “Have you ever said ‘I’m sorry’ when you did something wrong? Has anyone ever said ‘I’m sorry’ to you? Why do you think it’s important to say, ‘I’m sorry’?”

### 1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Image Search” activity page.

**SAY** “God told His people they should only worship Him. In today’s story, we will learn how **THE ISRAELITES SINNED AGAINST GOD BY MAKING AND WORSHIPPING A GOLDEN CALF.**”

### 2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

#### OPTION 1: MY OWN WAY



Before the session, gather the materials from the supply list. Place all the materials on a table.

Ask for a volunteer to come assist you in making the pudding. Read the directions to make instant pudding aloud. Invite the volunteer to place the ingredients in the bowl as you read. Then tell kids you are going to make the recipe your own way. Allow kids to smell the vinegar by walking the bottle around to the kids. Pour the second packet of instant pudding into a bowl and add vinegar instead of milk. Then mix in some popcorn kernels. Then compare the two puddings. Ask kids which one they would rather eat and why.

**SAY** “How did the vinegar smell? [Allow responses.] Vinegar has a strong sour smell. Was vinegar a part of the ingredients needed to make the pudding? [Allow responses.] No, milk was needed. Today, we’ll see how God’s people didn’t follow His instructions or commands. We’ll learn how **THE ISRAELITES SINNED AGAINST GOD BY MAKING AND WORSHIPPING A GOLDEN CALF.**”

#### OPTION 2: TRASHKETBALL



Place a clean trash can at the front of your room. Use painter’s tape to create a “free throw line” five or six feet away from the trash can. Form kids into teams of four or five. Direct kids to listen carefully as you call out the name of a book of the Bible. Challenge teams to decide if the book is found in the Old Testament or the New Testament. The first team to answer correctly will send one kid to make a free throw into the trash can. If the kid makes it, he earns one point for his team. Continue as time allows. At the end of the activity, determine which team has the most points.

**SAY** “No one can make every basket they shoot. In a similar way, no one except Jesus can perfectly obey all of God’s commands. As humans, we will all mess up and sin against the Lord. Today, we’ll see how the Israelites sinned against God. Sin deserves punishment, but God sent Jesus to take our punishment for us so we can be forgiven.”

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





## INTRODUCE the Bible Story

### 1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

**SAY** “Welcome, kids! My name is [your name], and I am so glad you are here! Each time we meet, we learn about a story from God’s Word together. If you have a Bible with you, will you take it out? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.] Today, we will learn how **THE ISRAELITES SINNED BY MAKING AND WORSHIPING A GOLDEN CALF**. [Display the Story Point Poster.]

All people sin. This is really sad news. But God’s Word gives us good news! God made the way to forgive people’s sin by sending His Son, Jesus, to take the punishment our sin deserves. As we hear our story, we can be reminded that God does punish sin, but if we trust in Jesus, we won’t receive His punishment because Jesus took the punishment for us. Let’s pray and ask God to help our hearts treasure this good news: ‘Dear God, please help us see Your mercy and grace even when we sin. Please help us turn from sin and turn to Jesus. Amen.’ ”

Worship

### 2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

\* Firm Foundation (He went)  
\* Living Hope  
\* offering

**SAY** “The big picture question we learned last week is, Why do we need to be saved? What is the answer? [Allow responses.] People are sinful and cannot save themselves. Let’s repeat the answer: **People are sinful and cannot save themselves.**

God gave His people commandments to help them live rightly and honor Him. Today, we will see how **THE ISRAELITES SINNED AGAINST GOD BY WORSHIPING A GOLDEN CALF** instead of the one true God. All people sin against God, and we cannot save ourselves from our sin. But God loved us so much that He sent His Son, Jesus, to save us from our sins. ”

### 3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

**SAY** “Last week, we learned that when God gave His people the Ten Commandments, He told them they were His people He had saved out of Egypt and had chosen. God’s people were chosen to be set apart and holy. This means they were to show other people what God is like. The Ten Commandments were a way for God’s people to live in ways that showed what God is like and what He cares about. The Israelites weren’t any better than other people, but God had chosen them because He made a promise to Abraham. God told Abraham that He would one day send Someone from his family to bless the whole world. Abraham’s descendant, Jesus, would come and rescue people from sin. Today, we will learn more about our need to be rescued as we see how Israel sinned. ”



## LEARN the Bible Story



### 1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Exodus 32; 34:1-9. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “The Golden Calf.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

#### THE GOLDEN CALF

“ Before **Moses** received the two stone tablets, he **was up on Mount Sinai for 40 days and 40 nights talking with God. When the people saw Moses did not come back quickly, they came to Aaron and said, “Come and make gods for us who will go before us. Moses has left us, and we don’t know what has happened to him!”**

**Aaron asked them to take off all their gold jewelry and bring it to him. He made the gold jewelry into the image of a calf. The people said, “These are our gods who brought us up from the land of Egypt!” They had a big party and made sacrifices to the golden calf.**

**The Lord** knew what the people were doing. He **said to Moses: “Go down the mountain at once! The people have sinned. They have disobeyed Me and made a golden calf to worship. My anger burns against them!” But Moses said, “Please turn from Your anger and do not destroy the people! Remember the promise You made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that their children would be as many as the stars in the sky!” The Lord heard Moses and agreed not to destroy the Israelites.**

**Then Moses went down the mountain with the two stone tablets in his hands. He was angry when he saw the people worshipping the golden calf. He smashed the tablets on the ground and destroyed the calf they had made. He said, “You have sinned against the LORD. I will go up to Him and ask Him to forgive you.”**

**Moses returned to the Lord and said, “The people have sinned by making a god of gold for themselves. Please forgive their sin. But if You will not, please punish me with them.” God told Moses that whoever has sinned against Him will be held accountable for their sin. Then God told Moses to lead the people to the place He told him about.**

**God instructed Moses to make two new stone tablets, just like the ones that had broken. God said, “The LORD is compassionate and gracious. He is slow to anger and abounding in love and truth.” Moses worshiped God. Then he said to God, “Please go with us, forgive our sin, and make us Your people.” Moses then returned to the people with the two tablets in his hands.**

Christ Connection: The people chose to worship a golden calf instead of God, and God’s anger burned against them. Moses interceded so that God would forgive them. We are all sinners who deserve the wrath of God, but Jesus interceded for us through His life, death, and resurrection so we can be saved! 🙏

#### STORYTELLING TIPS

**Create a felt board:** Use felt cut-outs of the people in the story and a felt board as a way to capture kids attention.

**Active listening:** Challenge kids to listen closely for the words “sin” or “calf”. Encourage kids to make an X with their arms each time they hear one of these words in the story.



## LEARN

### THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

## 2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

**SAY** 🗣️ In last week's story, we saw that the people made a promise and said they would obey God. Did the people keep their promise? How did they sin? [Allow responses.] The people became impatient waiting for Moses to come down the mountain. So, they chose to make their own god to worship. This god is called an idol. An idol can be an object like a golden calf or it can be anything we worship in place of God. Worshiping an idol is sin because only God deserves worship. **THE ISRAELITES SINNED BY MAKING AND WORSHIPPING A GOLDEN CALF.**

God became angry with His people, and He was going to destroy them. Was God right to be angry? Why? [Allow responses.] God always does what is right, and He was right to want to punish them. Sin against God deserves death (Romans 6:23). But Moses begged God to not destroy them. He asked God to remember the promise He made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God promised to make Abraham's family into a great nation. God heard Moses' prayer and did not destroy the people.

Why is God alone worthy of worship? [Allow responses.] God is holy, perfect, good, and the Creator of everything. He deserves worship for who He is as our King and Creator. He also deserves worship for all He does, from taking care of people and providing for their needs to saving them from sin. We were made to worship Him, and our hearts are most happy when we do.

The people chose to worship a golden calf instead of God, and God's anger burned against them. Moses interceded so that God would forgive them. We are all sinners who deserve the wrath of God, but Jesus interceded for us through His life, death, and resurrection so we can be saved. When we say 'Jesus interceded,' we mean that Jesus stepped in and lived a perfect life, died for our sin, and rose again to save anyone who trusts in Him. 🙏

## 3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

**SAY** 🗣️ The Bible tells us that we all sin against God, and sin must be punished. Jesus took the punishment for our sins on the cross so that we can have forgiveness and a right relationship with God. If you want to learn more about trusting in Jesus as your Savior and Lord, I would love to talk with you. 🙏

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)

## 4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the "Unit 5, Session 2" Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. Is it OK to forget to pray to be forgiven of our sins? Why?
2. Jesus prays for those who have trusted in Him. If you've trusted in Jesus, how does this encourage you when you sin?



## LEARN

### THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

#### 5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Display the “Hembree Family Photo” printable as you tell kids about their work in Washington, DC. Tell kids that Washington, DC, is one of the most visited locations in the United States with more than 20 million visitors a year. Discuss how it is also one of America’s top 25 most populated areas to live. Discuss how the population of Washington, DC, continues to grow and that there are very few gospel-centered churches in the city compared to the population size.

**SAY** “ Missionary church planters Brandon and Ellen Hembree are telling people about Jesus throughout America’s capital. He and his wife began their first church in Fairfax County, Virginia, right outside of Washington, DC, and have recently started a new church called Impact Church in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Through Impact Church, the Hembrees hope to continue making disciples who will make disciples that plant more churches. Brandon said, ‘We truly believe that if God sent an awakening to our nation’s capital, it would make an IMPACT throughout the nations on earth.’ Let’s pray for the Hembree family and Impact Church as they tell the good news about Jesus. ”

#### 6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Before this activity, make a set of foam cups with one word from the key passage on the rim of each cup. Create several sets depending on the size of your group. Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud 1 Samuel 2:2 together.

**SAY** “ There is no one like our God! He is holy and worthy of our worship. And without faith in Jesus, we cannot be with God. When we confess our sins and trust in Jesus, we are saved and made right with God. ”

Form kids into groups of two or three and distribute a cup set to each group. Instruct kids to separate the cups from the stack and then challenge them to stack the cups as quickly as possible in the correct order. Repeat as time allows.

Lead kids to sing “No One Like the Lord (1 Samuel 2:2).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

#### 7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

**SAY** “ Thank You, Lord, for Your mercy. Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, so we can have forgiveness of our sins. You alone are worthy of worship. Help us honor You in all we do. In Jesus’ name, amen. ”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**







## THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

# LOVE God by Applying the Story

### 1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to the Table of Contents. Invite kids to read some of the Bible book names aloud. Challenge kids to find certain books using the page number listed in the Table of Contents. Then ask kids to turn to Exodus 34.

Consider pointing out Mount Sinai (19) on the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Exodus 34:6-7 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verses aloud.

**SAY** 🗨️ God told Moses what He is like. God said He is compassionate. This means God shows that He cares for others and understands how they feel. God is gracious, meaning He is kind to people even when they don't deserve it. God doesn't get angry quickly, and His love never gives up. God is truthful. He forgives sin.

God is also holy and good and cannot let sin go unpunished. He will punish people when they sin. But there's good news! Those who turn to Jesus and trust in Him will have all of their sins forgiven forever! Jesus took our punishment so we can be saved. 🗨️

### 2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

| **SAY** 🗨️ Why do we sin? 🗨️

Remind kids how sin entered the world through Adam and Eve's disobedience. Tell kids that sin spread to all people because we are all born with hearts that want our way rather than God's way. Discuss how we sin when we disobey God and His commands.

| **SAY** 🗨️ Why does sin separate us from God? 🗨️

Tell kids that God is perfect and holy. He hates sin because sin is against God and what He loves. Discuss how Jesus came to pay the price for our sin by dying on the cross. When we trust Jesus as Savior, He forgives our sins and gives us His righteousness. Those who trust in Jesus will live with God forever.

| **SAY** 🗨️ Why did Jesus have to pay for our sin? 🗨️

Share that the Bible tells us the payment for sin is death (Romans 6:23). God will not allow sin to go unpunished because all sin is an eternal wrong against God. Encourage kids with the gospel: Because of God's great love for us, He sent Jesus to pay the price for our sins. Jesus died in our place so that those who trust in Him will be free from the punishment of sin and experience new life with Him forever.

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





## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

### LIVE the Mission

#### 1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

##### OPTION 1: TURN AWAY



Play a game similar to “Red Light, Green Light” but with a twist. Choose one kid to be It. Tell It to stand at one end of the room, while the remaining kids stand at the other end of the room. Direct It to stand with her back facing the other kids and randomly say aloud “come forward” or “turn away.” When It says “come forward,” the kids take two steps forward. When It says “turn away,” she must turn around and try to tag a kid, while the kids turn around and run away. The first kid to be tagged is now It. Play again as time allows.

**SAY** “When you heard the words ‘turn away,’ you knew you needed to make a run for it. In a similar way, when we begin to be tempted to sin, we need to make a run for it. God wants us to turn away from sin and turn to Jesus. Sin leads to death, but Jesus leads people to life. In our story, **THE ISRAELITES SINNED BY MAKING AND WORSHIPPING A GOLDEN CALF**. They didn’t turn away from their sin but believed a lie. God wants us to believe what is true. When we turn away from sin and turn to Jesus, we believe truth.”

##### OPTION 2: PASS THE PRAYERS

Before the session, cut empty cardboard tubes in half lengthwise. Create enough for each kid to have one. Provide each kid with a table tennis ball and invite him or her to write a short prayer to God on the ball. For example, kids may write, Thank you for Jesus or Forgive my sin. Assist kids as needed.

Form kids into two teams and guide the teams to form separate lines. At both ends of each line, place a box or a basket. Direct kids to place their balls in one basket; this will be the start of the line. Lead kids on each team to stand side-by-side so that their tubes are overlapping, creating a slide for the balls to roll down. At your start, the first kid will pick up a “prayer ball,” place it in her tube, and tilt her tube so the ball slides down into the basket at the end of the line. Teams will repeat this process until all of the prayers have been passed down the line. The team to pass their prayers first wins.

**SAY** “Moses prayed and asked God to forgive the Israelites’ sin. Did you know that Jesus prays for those who trust in Him? If we trust in Jesus, our sins are forgiven forever, and we can know Jesus prays for us.”

#### 2 REFLECTION AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper and pencil to each kid. Ask kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Who can I tell about this story?

Be sure to send the sheets home with the kids along with the activity pages so parents can continue to discuss the Bible story with their kids. If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page. Pray for your group.



JOURNAL PAGE

1. What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
2. What does this story teach me about myself?
3. Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
4. Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
5. How does this story help me to live on mission better?



## THE GOLDEN CALF

Unit 5 • Session 2  
Exodus 32: 34

### WHY DO WE NEED TO BE SAVED? PEOPLE ARE SINFUL AND CANNOT SAVE THEMSELVES.

Moses was on Mount Sinai for 40 days and 40 nights talking with God. When the people saw that Moses did not come back quickly, they came to Aaron and said, "Come and make gods who will go before us."

Aaron asked them to take off all their gold jewelry and bring it to him. He made the gold jewelry into the image of a calf. The people said, "These are our gods who brought us up from the land of Egypt!"

The Lord said to Moses: "Go down the mountain at once! The people have sinned. They have disobeyed Me and made a golden calf to worship. But Moses said, "Please do not destroy the people!" The Lord heard Moses and agreed not to destroy the Israelites.

Moses was angry when he saw the people worshipping the golden calf. He smashed the tablets on the ground and destroyed the calf they had made. He said, "You have sinned against the LORD. I will go up to Him and ask Him to forgive you." Moses returned to the Lord and said, "The people have sinned by making a god of gold for themselves. Please forgive their sin." God told Moses that whoever has sinned against Him will be held accountable.


































God instructed Moses to make two new stone tablets. God said, "The LORD is compassionate and gracious. He is slow to anger and abounding in love and truth."

**Christ Connection:** The people chose to worship a golden calf instead of God, and God's anger burned against them. Moses interceded so that God would forgive them. We are all sinners who deserve the wrath of God, but Jesus interceded for us through His life, death, and resurrection so we can be saved!

**SCAN THE QR CODE FOR RESOURCES TO USE AT HOME!**



## Crack the Code | Use the symbol key to decode the message.

										
<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>I</b>						
										
<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>V</b>						
										
<b>O</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>							

**Is It True?** | Write T if the sentence is true or F if the sentence is false.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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- Moses stayed on Mount Sinai for 10 days and 10 nights talking with God.
- The people became impatient and told Aaron to make gods for them.
- The people worshiped a bronze bird.
- God knew what the people were doing, and His anger burned against them.
- Moses asked God to turn from His anger and not destroy the Israelites.
- Moses was angry at the people's sin and set the stone tablets down gently.
- Moses went to the people and told them they had sinned against the Lord.
- Moses returned to the people with three new stone tablets.

