

The Golden Calf

Exodus 32:1-35



Old Testament 4
Part 1: God's People in the Desert

SUNDAY MORNING

Old Testament 4 [Class Attendance Sheet](#) provided in activity sheets (NOTE: The document is interactive, allowing the teacher to type in the Class, Teacher, and the children's names.)

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Exodus 32:1-35; 20:2-5; Deuteronomy 9:7-21; Matthew 4:10

MEMORY WORK:

YOUNGER CHILDREN: "Therefore you shall love the Lord your God, and keep...His commandments always" (Deuteronomy 11:1).

OLDER CHILDREN: "You shall not make for yourself any carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth" (Exodus 20:4).

SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS (SEE END OF LESSON FOR WORDS):

A [song book](#) and [audio recordings](#) of many of the curriculum songs are available on the curriculum Web site.

- ["The Ten Commandments"](#)
- ["Deuteronomy 10:12-13"](#)
- ["The Golden Calf Destroyed"](#)
- ["Moses Receives the Commandments"](#)
- ["On Top of Mt. Sinai"](#)

LESSON VISUALS AND TEACHING AIDS (NOTE ANY DISCLAIMERS):

- See [AP's Pinterest page](#) for ideas on bulletin boards, visuals, crafts, etc. [DISCLAIMER: Pins may sometimes need to be adjusted to be scriptural.]
- [God's People and Joshua Bible fact cards](#) (provided under "O.T. 4 Bible Facts" on curriculum Web site)
- Apologetics Press' [Bible Timeline](#)
- "Summary of the Bible" from ["Kids Prep"](#) CD by Jeff Miller
- A Beka Flash-A-Card Series: Journey to Sinai (DISCLAIMER: use the cards, *not the lesson book*)



PERSONAL APPLICATION:

I should never allow anything or anyone to be more important to me than God.

LESSON STARTS HERE

INTRODUCTION: (YOUNGER CHILDREN)

What is the most important thing in this world? (Loving God and obeying Him) How do you think God would feel if we let things or people become more important than God? Do you think God would be sad? Today we'll learn what happened when some of God's people decided to worship a statue instead of God.

INTRODUCTION: (OLDER CHILDREN)

Review last week's lesson.

The children of Israel knew God was the one true God and that they were supposed to only worship Him. How do you think God would feel if, after all He had done for them, the people decided to worship a golden statue instead of Him?

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Moses was on Mount Sinai for 40 days and 40 nights while God was giving him the laws and commandments for the Israelites. He left Aaron and Hur in charge of leading the people and settling any problems that might come up between the people. Joshua went to the mountain and waited for Moses to return.
2. Because Moses was gone for so long, the people became restless and questioned whether he was coming back. After many days, they forgot how afraid they had been when the thunder, lightning, and earthquakes shook the mountain. They also forgot that they had promised Moses and God that they would follow each and every one of God's commandments. They went to Aaron and told him they didn't think Moses was coming back; they told Aaron they wanted an idol to worship instead of God.
3. Aaron should have refused and tried to stop the people from doing something God had specifically told them not to do. He should have reminded them of their promise to obey God completely. Instead, he went along with the people, telling them to bring him all their **gold**, and they did. Aaron melted down the gold and shaped it into a golden calf. Some of the people took the calf and put it in the middle of the huge camp, telling the rest of the people that the idol was the god that brought them out of Egypt! When Aaron saw how much all the people liked the golden calf, he built an altar for it and said they would have a great feast the next day!



NOTE: The gold which the Israelites used to make the idol was probably the same gold they received as gifts from the Egyptians as they were leaving Egypt.

4. Just a few months before, the Israelites had seen the 10 plagues that proved the Egyptian gods were no gods at all. The Israelites had seen the Red Sea split apart, and they had walked to the other side on dry land. They had eaten food and drank water given directly to them by God. Now they were willing to fall down and worship something Aaron had made with his own hands, rather than worship the all-powerful Creator of all things (see Romans 1:21-23).
5. The next day the people had a great party, celebrating, drinking, and worshiping the golden calf. God, seeing their disobedience and ingratitude was very angry! Already the Israelites were breaking two of the Ten Commandments: “You shall have no other gods before Me,” and “You shall not make for yourself an idol.” God was angry that they had already decided to disobey Him, and He intended to punish them immediately. He told Moses what was happening below the mountain and said that He was going to destroy the people. But Moses asked Him not to destroy the entire nation. So God listened to Moses and changed His mind, but while all of the Israelites would not be killed, some still would (Exodus 32:27).
6. Moses took the two tablets of stone, on which God had written the Ten Commandments, and went down the mountain to see for himself what was happening. When he saw them, he was so angry that he threw the tablets down, breaking them into pieces. Then he took the golden calf, burned it, and ground it into powder. Then he put this powder (gold dust) into the people’s water supply and made them drink it (Deuteronomy 9:21).
7. Moses was very angry with Aaron. He asked his brother why he had done such a terrible thing, encouraging the people to sin against God. Aaron tried to make excuses for himself. He said that the people had given him gold which he threw into the fire and, “out came this golden calf!” (Exodus 32:24). But Moses knew that Aaron had not been a good leader and that he had allowed the people to get completely out of control.
8. Moses stood at the entrance of the camp and called out, “Whoever is for the Lord, come to me!” All the Levites went and stood with Moses. He told them to go throughout the camp and kill the wicked, not sparing their own family and friends. Three thousand people died that day.



NOTE: Many commentators believe that those who were killed were the ring leaders or the more brazenly wicked, unrepentant people, rather than all of the people who were worshipping the calf.

9. The next day Moses spoke to the people and told them again what terrible sins they had committed against God. The people had “**corrupted**” themselves. He told them that he would ask God to forgive them. He went back to Mount Sinai and even offered to accept their punishment himself. Moses was on Mount Sinai another 40 days and 40 nights (Deuteronomy 9:18; 10:10).



NOTE: The people had “corrupted” themselves (Exodus 32:7). Literally, they had perverted or ruined themselves. They had made themselves unholy—the opposite of what God expected them to be. In Exodus 19:10, the people were consecrated (i.e., made holy) to the Lord, and now they had made themselves unconsecrated.

10. If we “go along with the crowd,” as Aaron did, we will usually end up in trouble. It is hard **not** to do something wrong if everyone around us is doing wrong. But it is very important to remember that God knows what we do all the time, and every time we do something wrong, we hurt God very much.

11. While we do not worship wooden or golden images that we buy or make, we can still have idols. What can become our idols? An idol can be anything or anyone that is more important to us than God. When other things or people become our idols, we gradually ignore what God says is right and wrong (read Matthew 6:24; Ephesians 5:5; Colossians 3:5; Deuteronomy 10:17,20,21; 6:4).

OLDER CHILDREN:

Discuss the attachment some people have to movie and TV stars, athletes, sports teams, etc. Some religions today, such as Hinduism, still promote animal worship and ancestor worship.



RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS: See the article titled “**Who Wrote on the Second Pair of Tablets?**” by Eric Lyons on the Apologetics Press Web site for a response to an alleged discrepancy regarding who (God or Moses) wrote on the second pair of tablets after Moses destroyed the first.

PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—BEFORE CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):

- Click here for complete [Activity Book](#) and [Answer Key](#).

Ages 2-5:

- “[The Golden Calf Coloring Sheet](#)” (provided in activity sheets)
- “[The Golden Calf Memory Verse](#)” game sewing card for each child. Print the memory verse onto large cutouts of a calf shape. Punch holes around the edges and give the children yarn to lace their cards. (provided in activity sheets)
- Numbers Matching game: Cut out 20 cards of cardstock. On 10 of the cards, draw objects (1 object on one card, 2 on another, 3 on another, etc.). On the other 10 cards, write a number (1-10) and draw the same number of dots (the number 1 with 1 dot; the number 2 with 2 dots; etc.). Encourage the children to match the numbers to the pictures. [With more than one of these sets of cards, more than one small group of children can play. Make sure cards are laminated.]

1st-2nd Graders:

- Play Tic-Tac-Toe or Hang Man games on the chalkboard to review facts about this and previous lessons. ([Tic-Tac-Toe Instructions](#) and game board provided in activity section of Web site)
- “[The Golden Calf Word Search](#)” (provided in activity sheets)
- “[The Golden Calf Crossword Puzzle](#)” (provided in activity sheets)

3rd-4th Graders:

- Play Tic-Tac-Toe or Hang Man games on the chalkboard to review facts about this and previous lessons. ([Tic-Tac-Toe Instructions](#) and game board provided in activity section of Web site)
- “[The Golden Calf Word Search](#)” (provided in activity sheets)

- [“The Golden Calf Crossword Puzzle”](#) (provided in activity sheets)
- Have the children read the following:
 - Exodus 32, as well as Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy nine if they did not do so last week.
 - *Discovery* articles: [February, 2001](#) (“Idolatry in the Old Testament” and “Some People Still Worship Idols”)

SONGS:

“THE TEN COMMANDMENTS”

Author: Jeff Miller

(Tune: See [“Kids Prep”](#) CD)

No other gods before Me;
 No carved images to bow down and serve;
 Don't take the name of the Lord your God in vain;
 Remember and keep the Sabbath holy.

Honor your father and your mother;
 No murder, no adultery, and you shall not steal;
 Don't lie against your neighbor;
 Or covet what is his.

These are the Ten Commandments.

“DEUTERONOMY 10:12-13”

Author: Jeff Miller

(Tune: See [“Hidden in My Heart”](#) CD)

“THE GOLDEN CALF DESTROYED”

Author: Jewel Kendrick

(Tune: “London Bridge”)

(Words: See *Sing a Story: Volume I*, by Jewel Kendrick)

“MOSES RECEIVES THE COMMANDMENTS”

Author: Jewel Kendrick

(Tune: “Up on the Housetop”)

(Words: See *Sing a Story: Volume I*, by Jewel Kendrick)

“ON TOP OF MT. SINAI” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Dorothy Sain

(Tune: “On Top of Old Smoky”)

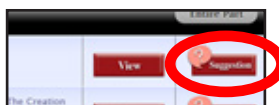
On top of the mountain,
 All covered with smoke,
 God spoke ten commandments,

Which later He wrote.
On tablets of stone,
For Moses to teach,
So the children of Israel,
His law they would keep.

The people of Israel,
Very quickly forgot,
What God said they could do,
And what they could not.
They molded an image,
From earrings of gold,
And later to Moses,
A falsehood was told.

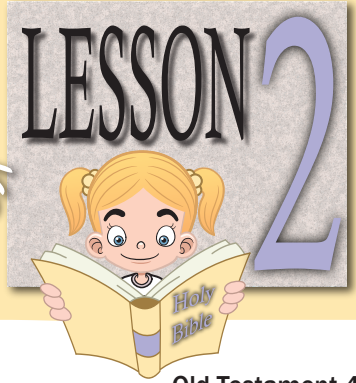
Their sin was not hidden,
As some maybe think,
The idol was ground up,
And put in their drink.
To teach them that sinning,
Brought nothing but regret,
And God can be angry,
When laws are not met.

***** IF YOU HAVE SUGGESTIONS PERTAINING TO THIS LESSON, PLEASE CLICK THE
“SUGGESTION” BUTTON BESIDE THE BUTTON FOR THIS LESSON ON THE
CURRICULUM WEB SITE.**



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WEDNESDAY EVENING

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PERSONAL APPLICATION:

I should never allow anything or anyone to be more important to me than God.

INTRODUCTION:

Review [O.T. 4 Bible Facts Flashcards](#) (provided under “O.T. 4 Bible Facts” on curriculum Web site).

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Review Sunday’s lesson (see [O.T. 4 Review Questions](#) for example questions).
1. Continue reviewing the books of the Bible and the [Ten Commandments](#).

PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—**BEFORE** CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):

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