

The Golden calf

Exodus 32

MEMORY VERSE

MATTHEW 4:10b

"For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.' "

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A special box with enough small prizes for your class.

Enough writing paper for your class.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Worship Only God

Talk about worship with your class. Talk about how some countries use bowing as a greeting and to show respect. Then bow reverently to one of the children, ask how it feels, have children practice bowing to one another and talk about it afterward. Some bowing seems different than other bowing.

Sometimes you can tell if a person thinks it is silly to bow, or if they just don't want to bow, or maybe they really like you and you can tell by their bow. Imagine how it was when God had done so much for the Israelites and they made a little cow to bow down to.

LESSON TIME!

Moses had been on Mount Sinai for forty days talking with God. Yet the Israelites back at the camp grew restless and instead of believing in God they chose unbelief. Even though God sent to them the cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night to remind them of His presence, the people were faithless and wanted a visible God to serve. Their unbelief in God's word ended up causing a lot of problems. Unbelief results in the costly consequences of sin.

The Israelites' impatience caused them to act without thinking. They had a desire to worship, but they refused to wait upon the Lord. Instead they desired an idol to worship. So Aaron, Moses brother, foolishly constructed a golden calf out of their gold earrings for them to worship. What was even sadder is that this is the gold and jewelry that God provided for His people from the Egyptians when they left Egypt. So now they were giving from God's provision to make something to worship that would insult God.

Aaron then blasphemously calls for a feast the next day after building an altar before this heap of gold. This great sin would soon bring deadly results. Impatience (when we can't wait for God) reveals our lack of faith in God, which will always result in problems. We must wait on God alone. **God wants us to worship only Him.**

EXODUS 32:7-10

And the LORD said to Moses, "Go, get down! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves.

"They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made themselves a molded calf, and worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, 'This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!' "

And the LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and indeed it is a stiff-necked people!

"Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation."

God did not even want to claim these people as His own because of their wickedness and unbelief in Him. Our disobedience is seen by God who is completely holy. God proclaims His judgment on these people because of their willful disobedience and defiance of Him.

Moses proceeded to intercede (stand in their place) for the people and to cry out for mercy for them. He did not try to defend the people nor make excuses for them but he cried out for God's mercy. God heard Moses' cry just as He hears our cries when we are truly sorry for what we have done and we humble ourselves before Him.

EXODUS 32:19-20

So it was, as soon as he came near the camp, that he saw the calf and the dancing. So Moses' anger became hot, and he cast the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain.

Then he took the calf which they had made, burned it in the fire, and ground it to powder; and he scattered it on the water and made the children of Israel drink it.

Moses was carrying the very Word of God which God wrote and engraved Himself. Moses broke these holy tablets when he saw the people's wickedness as they sinned before their idol, by doing bad things against God's commandments. The breaking of the tablets only revealed outwardly that the word of the Lord had been broken by the people in their hearts.

Moses burned the idol revealing its lack of power and made the people drink it demonstrating that the Israelites must face the result of their actions. **God wants us to worship only Him.**

Thank The Giver

Bring a special box containing small prizes to class. Give out the small prizes, being sure to show the box in the middle of the circle while they enjoy their prizes. Ask them if they think they should thank the box for the prizes or you who brought them.

The golden calf, like the box, was just a thing that could be made, but God was the one who had brought the Israelites out of slavery with many miracles.

EXODUS 32:26-29

...then Moses stood in the entrance of the camp, and said, "Whoever is on the Lord's side, let him come to me." And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him.

And he said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Let every man put his sword on his side, and go in and out from entrance to entrance throughout the camp, and let every man kill his brother, every man his companion, and every man his neighbor.' "

So the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And about three thousand men of the people fell that day.

Then Moses said, "Consecrate yourselves today to the LORD, that He may bestow on you a blessing this day, for every man has opposed his son and his brother."

Moses called all those to himself that were on the side of God. These men and women were repentant (they wanted to turn from their wickedness back to God's way). God spared those who asked for forgiveness yet those who chose to walk in sin and defy the Creator of the universe were punished. Many died because of their

disobedience to God's ways. Only God's way is right and when we choose to defy Him and His word we must suffer the consequences. "You who love the Lord, hate evil" Psalm 97:10. **God wants us to worship only Him.**

EXODUS 32:33-35

And the LORD said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book.

"Now therefore, go, lead the people to the place of which I have spoken to you. Behold, My Angel shall go before you. Nevertheless, in the day when I visit for punishment, I will visit punishment upon them for their sin."

So the LORD plagued the people because of what they did with the calf which Aaron made.

Moses interceded for the people and asked God for mercy for them. God is full of great love and will bestow great grace upon those who call on Him yet, sometimes we still have to pay for our sins. He forgives the sinner but the sin must still be punished because it is an abomination (something He hates) to Him. Also there are results of our sin that we have to bear. These are called consequences. God has great plans for us and awesome works He wants to do through our lives as His children. We need to obey Him and His word.

Willful disobedience hinders this great will He has for us as sin results in tragedy. The Israelites were punished for their defiance of God's ways. Let us not follow the path of the sinful but give our lives completely to Him to work good through.

"Trust in the Lord and do good. Dwell in the land and feed on His faithfulness. Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of you heart." Psalm 37:3-4. **God wants us to worship only Him.**

Standing In The Gap

Moses intercedes for the evil people; he was even willing to have his name blotted out of God's book. Write down some names of people who need to be saved and pray for them as a class. Maybe pray for them every week for the next few weeks.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to follow the Lord and not the world and its idols. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.