



The Israelites Worship a Golden Calf

Exodus 32:1-25

First- and second-graders can understand worship only in a limited sense; it's much easier for them to understand the concept of love. As children grow in their understanding of who God is and how much he loves them, their natural response will be one of worship. Use this lesson to help kids understand that although they can't see God, they can still be sure of his loving presence.



► **Bible Point**
Only God deserves our worship.


Key Verse
"You shall have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3).

Weaving Faith Into Life
Kids will worship God.

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
1 Getting Started	Character Catch <i>(about 10 min.)</i> Play a game as they name characteristics and actions of God.	ball	
2 Bible Exploration	Let's Wait! <i>(about 5 min.)</i> Practice waiting to see how the Israelites might've felt.	Bible, stopwatch	
	We Can't Wait <i>(about 5 min.)</i> Learn how the Israelites made a golden calf.	CD player Teacher Pack: CD	
	The Golden Calf <i>(about 20 min.)</i> Learn why it's important that we worship only God.	Bible, caramel popcorn, napkins, 2 small plastic bags per child, rubber bands, antibacterial gel (optional)	

***Bold text** within the lesson is spoken text.*



LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
<p>3</p> <p>Weaving Faith Into Life</p>	<p>Worship Action <i>(about 20 min.)</i> Worship God through singing and creating collages of reasons to worship God.</p>	<p>My Bible Fun, CD player, 1 copy per child of the lyrics page (at the end of the lesson), construction paper, several pairs of scissors, crayons, glue Teacher Pack: CD, "Mobile Patterns"</p> 	<p>Tear out the Lesson 6 pages from each My Bible Fun student book. Punch out the shapes on the "Mobile Patterns" card.</p>
<p>4</p> <p>Lasting Impressions</p>	<p>Daily Challenges <i>(about 5 min.)</i> Choose a Daily Challenge to apply God's Word.</p>	<p>My Bible Fun, pens</p>	
	<p>Weaving Faith at Home <i>(about 2 min.)</i> Talk about how to share what they learned with their families.</p>		

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Exodus 32:1-25

BIBLE BACKGROUND
FOR LEADERS

Out of Sight

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Moses was up on the mountain for a long time receiving all the laws from God—almost six weeks (Exodus 24:18)! It's likely that the Israelites feared Moses had perished on the mountain. Since he had been their main contact with God, they may have reasoned that they had lost contact with God, too.

The Hebrews spent more than 400 years seeing “gods” in Egypt, and now they’d been asked to serve and follow a God they couldn’t see. For the majority of the time they’d known God, he’d had personal relationships with individuals among them. They may not have realized God was interested in each of them individually and as an entire community.

They’d been camped in the same place for six weeks and were likely getting anxious to move on. They couldn’t even see God’s representative, so they fell back on what they were familiar with and asked for a god they could see who would continue to lead them.

What Was Aaron Thinking?

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Aaron’s willingness to go along suggests that he, too, had some doubt about Moses’ return. However, some believe that Aaron’s request for gold earrings was an attempt to avert the people’s desire for a god. If they realized they had to give up things of value, they might decide they didn’t really want a golden god after all. If that was Aaron’s intent, his attempt failed.

After making the idol, Aaron’s proclamation was that there’d be a “festival to the Lord.” The name translated Lord (Yahweh) is the name by which God had announced himself to Moses at the burning bush. Apparently, Aaron thought that this idol could somehow represent the true God. Regardless of his motives, Aaron was wrong in making the idol.

He led the people in disobeying God’s second commandment (Exodus 20:4).

In talking to Moses, Aaron tried to make it seem as if he had no choice and that the fire itself had mysteriously shaped the calf. God’s sparing of Aaron in this situation was certainly an example of his mercy and grace.

The Jesus Connection

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We are surrounded by things that promise to bring us immediate pleasure and satisfaction. Many of these promises are deceitful, leading to destruction. But even God’s blessings themselves can distract us from our true calling of worshipping God. Jesus came to offer the only thing that’s truly worth having. Take a moment to write a prayer revealing your heart’s desire to follow God and asking for his help in dislodging some things that might be stealing your worship away from God.



Character Catch Supplies

ball

1 GETTING STARTED

Character Catch

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Welcome kids warmly as they arrive, and ask them how their week went.

Gather everyone in a circle.

Say: **Let's think about what God is like. I'll roll a ball to someone in the circle. When the ball comes to you, say something about what God is like or something God does. For example, you might say, "God is strong" or "God loves me." When you've said something, roll the ball to someone else. Each person will name something about God. I'll start. Ready?**

Name something about God, and then gently roll the ball to someone in the circle. If necessary, help the child think of a characteristic or action of God. Then encourage him or her to roll the ball to someone else. As kids roll the ball around the circle, help them think of characteristics and actions of God.

Ensure every child gets at least one turn. Continue until children seem to be running out of ideas.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What's your favorite thing about God?**
- **What are some ways we worship God?**
- **Why does God deserve our worship?**

Say: **No one else is like God. And because of who God is and what he does, ► ONLY GOD DESERVES OUR WORSHIP. It's important that we don't worship anyone or anything else besides the real God. Today we'll hear about some people who worshipped something besides God. Let's hear what happened.**

2 BIBLE EXPLORATION

Let's Wait!

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Open your Bible to Exodus 32:1-25, and show kids the passage. Say: **In the Bible today, we'll learn that God tells us not to worship anything or anyone except him.**

The Bible tells us that God gave the Israelites the Ten Commandments to protect them and make their lives healthy and good. Let kids share some of the commandments if they remember any. Mention "You shall have no other gods before me" if it's not mentioned.

Say: **God actually gave the Israelites' leader, Moses, the commandments so he could tell them to his people. God gave Moses the Ten Commandments when he was on the top of a mountain. But Moses was up there for a long time, and while the people were waiting and waiting for him to come back, they started getting really tired of waiting. Let's play a waiting game to see how they might've felt.**

Explain that kids will close their eyes. When you say "go," kids should start silently waiting until they think a minute has passed. When they think a minute has passed, they can raise their hands and open their eyes, but they should still be silent in case other kids are still waiting. Give the starting signal. Use a stopwatch or a clock with a second hand to time one minute. After one minute, call time.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What were you thinking as you waited in this game?**
- **Tell about a time you waited for something for what seemed like a long time.**
- **Why might God ask us to wait sometimes?**

Say: **Sometimes when we're waiting for something, it seems to take forever to get here. Maybe that's how the Israelites felt as they waited for Moses to come down from the mountain. In fact, they got so tired of waiting that they decided that maybe Moses wasn't coming back, and they decided to make an idol to worship. We might feel impatient for God to do things at times, too, but ► ONLY GOD DESERVES OUR WORSHIP.** Let's hear what happened with the Israelites.



Let's Wait! Supplies

Bible
stopwatch



We Can't Wait Supplies

CD player

Teacher Pack

CD: "We Can't Wait"
(track 7)

The Golden Calf Supplies

Bible

caramel popcorn

napkins

2 small plastic bags per
child

rubber bands

antibacterial gel
(optional)

**! ALLERGY
ALERT**

We Can't Wait

What You'll Do

Say: **The Israelites really did have to wait for a long time. Let's hear more about what they did when they got tired of waiting.**

Play "We Can't Wait" (track 7 on the CD).

Say: **Think about the Israelites and all their complaints. What kinds of things do you get impatient about?** Let several children answer. After each child answers, have the whole group give a big groan.

Talk With Kids

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What was it like to hear everyone groan and complain?**
- **What do you think about what the Israelites did?**
- **Why is God the only one you want to worship?**

Say: **The Israelites got so impatient that they tried to make their own god, and they worshipped that pretend god. But the truth is that our God is the only true God. And ► ONLY GOD DESERVES OUR WORSHIP. He made us—not the other way around! We worship God because he's wonderful, he takes care of us, and he's the only true God.**

The Golden Calf

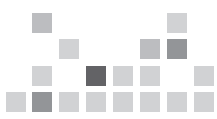
What You'll Do

Say: **God brought the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt, but the Israelites seemed to forget that pretty quickly! Now they were tired of waiting for Moses, and they wanted a new god—one they made themselves. As silly as that sounds, that's what they wanted. Let's see what they did.**

Give each child two small plastic bags. Help kids put a bag on each of their hands. Secure the bags on kids' hands with loose-fitting rubber bands.

Say: **Here's how Aaron and the Israelites thought they could make their own god. First, Aaron told all the people to give him their gold earrings. We don't have gold earrings, but we do have gold caramel popcorn.** Give each child some caramel popcorn on a napkin.

Say: **Then Aaron took all of the earrings, and he melted the gold together. He made a golden calf, or baby cow, out of the melted gold.** Have each child try to make a cow shape by squashing the popcorn together or by laying it out on the napkin. Then let kids take the bags off their hands, but have them wait to eat until you tell them to.



Say: **Our Key Verse today tells us that our God is the only one we should worship. Let's look at that passage.** Open your Bible to Exodus 20:3, and show it to kids. Read the verse aloud: **"You shall have no other gods before me."** Lead kids in repeating the verse with you several times: **"You shall have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3).**

Say: **Our Key Verse tells us that God wants us to worship only him. But the Israelites sure didn't obey that! When the people saw the golden calf, they decided to have a festival to celebrate and worship it. This made God very angry because** ► **ONLY GOD DESERVES OUR WORSHIP.** He told Moses to go down the mountain because the people were worshipping a golden calf. Thank the children for waiting, have them clean their hands, and allow them to eat the popcorn on their napkins.

Say: **Moses went down the mountain and saw the people. Moses was so mad that he took the golden calf and burned it. Then he ground the pieces of gold into a powder and put the powder into water. Then Moses made the people drink the water with the gold powder in it.**

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- Explain whether you think the golden calf you made was worth worshipping.
- Why might it be hurtful to the people for them to worship an idol rather than God?
- Why is worshipping God different from worshipping the golden calf?

Say: ► **ONLY GOD DESERVES OUR WORSHIP.** There are no other gods, and it's wrong to worship anything or anyone other than God. It's also silly to worship something else—just like it would be silly for us to worship the popcorn cows. Instead, we worship our awesome God. Let's do that now!

3 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

Worship Action

What You'll Do ■■■■

Say: **Let's act on what we've learned today and worship God together. Remember,** ► **ONLY GOD DESERVES OUR WORSHIP,** so let's focus on him, telling him how much we love him. Let's begin by singing a worship song.

Distribute copies of the lyrics page, and play "Praise Him" (track 6 on the CD). Lead children in singing and worshipping God as they choose. You may want to sing the song several times as the children get to know the lyrics.

Worship Action Supplies


- My Bible Fun
- CD player
- 1 copy per child of the lyrics page (at the end of the lesson)
- construction paper
- several pairs of scissors
- crayons
- glue
- Teacher Pack**
- CD: "Praise Him" (track 6)
- "Mobile Patterns"

Worship Action Easy Prep

- Tear out the Lesson 6 pages from each My Bible Fun student book. Punch out the shapes on the "Mobile Patterns" card.





 Praise him; praise him.
 Praise him in the morning;
 Praise him in the noontime.

Praise him; praise him.
 Praise him when the sun goes down.

Love him; love him.
 Love him in the morning;
 Love him in the noontime.

Love him; love him.
 Love him when the sun goes down.

Serve him; serve him.
 Serve him in the morning;
 Serve him in the noontime.

Serve him; serve him.
 Serve him when the sun goes down.

(Repeat from the beginning.)

Give each child a Lesson 6 My Bible Fun page, and point out the “Why We Worship” section. Say: **What are some things God has done for you? For example, maybe God protected you when you were afraid, or maybe he gave your family something when you really needed it.** Allow time for several kids to share their ideas.

Set out colored construction paper, scissors, glue, crayons, and shapes from the “Mobile Patterns” sheet. Have kids make collages on the “Why We Worship” section of their My Bible Fun pages. They can use the shapes and construction paper to trace and cut out many shapes.

When kids finish, encourage them to display their collages for everyone.

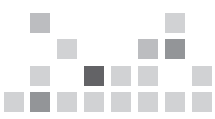
Talk With Kids

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- What was it like for you to worship God today?
- What does it mean to worship God each day?

Say: **The Israelites wanted to worship someone or something, so they made a silly golden calf to worship. But no one else is like God. Because of who God is and what he does, ► ONLY GOD DESERVES OUR WORSHIP. Take your collage home with you. It can remind you why God deserves our worship.**



4

LASTING
IMPRESSIONS

Daily Challenges

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Say: **Let's think about how ► ONLY GOD DESERVES OUR WORSHIP.**

Have kids find this week's Daily Challenges in their My Bible Fun pages and choose one to do this week. They can choose one or more of these three options:

- **Sing a song to God each night before you go to bed.**
- **Teach a friend or neighbor a worship song, and then worship God together.**
- **Pray with your family members at dinnertime, and ask God to give you each a sincere heart to worship him.**

Make sure you choose a Daily Challenge as well, and tell kids what you chose. Kids will be more inclined to follow through on their commitments when they see you doing the same.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What's a practical way you're going to do your Daily Challenge? Include a time, a place, and other ideas.**

Say: **The Israelites worshipped something they made, and sometimes we can worship silly things, too. But let's remember this week that ► ONLY GOD DESERVES OUR WORSHIP as we follow through on our Daily Challenges.**

Weaving Faith at Home

Encourage kids to talk with their parents about the Daily Challenges they chose and what they learned about how only God deserves our worship. Kids can also do the activities in the "HomeConnect" section of their My Bible Fun pages with their families.

Talk to your Director about emailing the FREE FamilyConnect to all your church's families. Available at group.com/digital.

If time allows, let the children sing a short worship song they all know and love. Then take a couple of minutes to pray with your kids, thanking God that he's the only true God. Pray: **God, we know that only you deserve our worship. Help us remember that this week. In Jesus' name, amen.**



Daily Challenges Supplies

My Bible Fun
pens



**Lyrics** ■■■■**Praise Him**

Praise him; praise him.
Praise him in the morning;
Praise him in the noontime.

Praise him; praise him.
Praise him when the sun goes down.

Love him; love him.
Love him in the morning;
Love him in the noontime.

Love him; love him.
Love him when the sun goes down.

Serve him; serve him.
Serve him in the morning;
Serve him in the noontime.

Serve him; serve him.
Serve him when the sun goes down.

(Repeat from the beginning.)

OK
TO COPY