

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 respectful greeting. Then bow reverently to one of the children and 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 do not want to bow, or maybe they really like you, and you can tell by their bow. God had done so much for the Israelites. How sad it must have been as God observed His people making a little bow and then bowing down to the bow.

LESSON TIME!

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

EXODUS 32:7-12

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."

"Then Moses pleaded with the Lord his God, and said: "Lord, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?"

"Why should the Egyptians speak, and say, "He brought them out to harm them, to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from Your fierce wrath, and relent from this harm to Your people."

Impatient and full of unbelief, the Israelites had urged Aaron to construct an idol and Aaron foolishly consented. Using the gold and jewelry that God had provided for His people when they left Egypt, Aaron constructed a golden calf. How sad they gave from God's provision the materials to make something that would insult God.

The day after constructing the idol, Aaron blasphemously called for a feast before this heap of gold. This great sin had deadly results. Unbelief and sin always has consequences. **God wants us to worship only Him.**

Notice, God said, “your people” to Moses. God did not even claim these people as His own. A holy God could not tolerate sin; instead, God proclaimed His judgment upon this willfully disobedient and defiant people.

Moses proceeded to intercede--to stand in the place of His people requesting mercy for them. He did not try to defend their actions or make excuses, but cried out for God's mercy. God heard Moses' cry just as He will hear our cries whether we are asking for mercy for own sin or interceding for others. Remember, It was God who planted within Moses a great love for His people and called Him to lead them. Moses' intercession provided God, who is holy and must punish sin, with an excuse to show the mercy He desired to show.

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 that He had written and engraved Himself. Moses broke these holy tablets when he saw the people's wickedness as they sinned before their idol, breaking God's commandments. The breaking of the tablets revealed in an outward way 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 to himself all those that would stand 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 and many died. So, we must choose—to serve God or follow our own ways. There is only one choice that leads to salvation and eternal life—faith in Jesus Christ who bore the penalty for our sins. To not choose to follow Jesus Christ (to be a Christian) is to choose a path leading to judgment and eternal separation from God in Hell.

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 and forgiveness upon all those who call on Him. Yet, we may still experience the results (the consequences) of our sinful actions. In Hosea we read, "For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind..." (Hosea 8:7a).

Our choices are important. The wrong choices can result in tragedy; in fact, a decision not to follow Jesus Christ will result in eternal separation from God. Because the Israelites defied God's ways, many were slain. How much better to obey God and keep our focus on Him! God's intentions for our lives are only good. Psalm 37:3-4 states: "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." **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. Perhaps the class can 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.