



LESSON 3

THE GOLDEN CALF

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Only God Is Worthy of Worship

SCRIPTURE: Exodus 32

GOD'S BIG STORY: While Moses listens to God on the mountain, the Israelites become restless and fashion a golden calf and worship it, yet God is faithful and shows only He is worthy of worship.

WORD OF WONDER: Even if we are not faithful, he remains faithful. He must be true to himself.

—2 Timothy 2:13

- PRE-SERVICE
 - OPTION 1 Interactive Game: My Number One
 - OPTION 2 Interactive Game: OUR Favorites
- Welcome Question: What do you give a lot of your time and attention to?
- Curiosity Questions
- SMALL GROUP
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation
- Worship: That's Who I Praise, All of Me
- God's Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- In Awe of God's Wonder
- Responding in Worship: Name Above All Names
- Blessing Your Kids



SCAN FOR THIS
WEEK'S VIDEO!

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Only God Is Worthy of Worship

SCRIPTURE: Exodus 32

WORD OF WONDER: 2 Timothy 2:13

In every human mind, there is a part that functions like a magnifying glass, bringing whatever we choose into focus and making it appear larger. Did you know God made your mind capable of examining things deeply from every angle? We can place that imaginary magnifying glass over anything!

Let's aim our focus at Exodus 32 now, and as we read, invite the Holy Spirit to highlight whatever is on God's heart for you today. Where does your imagination come alive in this story? Can you see the sights and hear the people in the wilderness? Can you envision their jewelry melting in the fire? What sounds floated up the mountain to Moses as the Israelites disobeyed God? Did they think they were having fun?

We may not carve golden calves anymore, but we all encounter distractions that can seem larger than life and threaten to take our attention from Jesus. What has been attempting to distract you lately?

When this happens, it's natural to be pulled off course for a moment or two, but then what? What will you do with your powerful mind? Let's choose to return our gaze to the face of Jesus. Only God is worthy of worship, and when we place the magnifying glass in our minds upon Him, we will find more goodness, more wisdom, and more to admire than we could ever imagine.

—Nancy Wood Clark

Children's Pastor

Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

The Israelites—God’s people whom He rescued from slavery in Egypt. God kept all His promises, and the people put their trust in Him and became bonded to Him through the covenant of the law at Mount Sinai.

WHAT?

The covenant at Mount Sinai was similar to a wedding between God and His people. The Israelites immediately broke their vows and cheated on the God who had been faithful to them. They worshiped another god and created a graven image—breaking one of the Ten Commandments.

WHERE?

God led the Israelites out of Egypt and into the desert. They went to the foot of Mount Sinai, which is the same place Moses met God at the burning bush years before. Mount Sinai is also called Mount Horeb in the Bible.

WHEN?

It had been three months since the Israelites left Egypt. As a consequence of their sin, 3,000 people died (Exodus 32:27–28). By the time of Jesus, the biblical holiday of Pentecost was associated with the giving of the law at Mount Sinai.

CONNECTING TO GOD’S BIG STORY:

The Israelites expected their God to be like other gods. God forbade them from making a created image because the exact image of God would arrive in the person of Jesus. When people look at Jesus, they see the God worthy of worship.

LESSON 3 ELEMENTARY & PRETEEN

Large Group

Spark curiosity and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Only God Is Worthy of Worship

SCRIPTURE: Exodus 32

WORD OF WONDER: 2 Timothy 2:13

Series Bumper and Countdown Videos

Choose between the [Think Again Series Bumper Video](#) and [Countdown Videos](#) to introduce the kids to the series.

Welcome Question

SUPPLIES: paper, coloring utensils, whiteboard (optional), dry-erase marker (optional)

Before kids arrive, display the Golden Calf Welcome Question Slide or write the following question on a whiteboard: “What do you give a lot of your time and attention to?” Set out paper and coloring utensils.



As kids arrive ...

Welcome kids warmly by inviting them into your group and giving them high fives. Show kids the Welcome Question and encourage them to share their answers with a friend. For younger kids, read the question to them. Share your response as well. If time permits, kids can draw a picture to illustrate their response.

At your start time ...

Call on several kids to share their answers to the Welcome Question: **What do you give a lot of your time and attention to?**

Leader Tip: To capture kids’ attention, do a crazy dance move for the rest of the group to copy at random moments throughout the lesson, either after each kid shares his answer to the Welcome Question or between discussion questions.

In today’s story, we’ll see how a group of people gave their attention to something other than God and what happened as a result.

OPTION 1 Interactive Activity: My Number One

Before the game begins, encourage kids to squat down as close to the floor as they can.

Display the first of the My Number One Slides. Let's play a fun game called My Number One! You're going to see a picture on the screen. As soon as you see the picture, jump up and shout what your number one, or favorite, thing is for that picture. Let me show you an example.



Advance to the second slide. **This is a cake. Jump up and shout out your number one flavor of cake!** Allow kids to respond. **Awesome! Let's play!**

Advance through the My Number One Slides, pausing at each for kids to jump up and shout out their number ones. Before they sit down again, give them six seconds to share their number ones with a neighbor. Then they can sit back down to be ready for the next slide.

For your reference, the slides include pictures of the following:

Drink
Sport
Toy
Season
Candy
Color
Game
Holiday

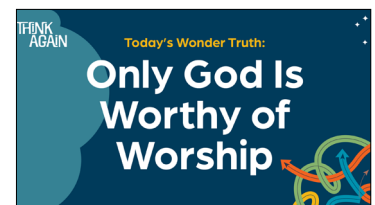
We all have different favorites and things we love, and that's OK! But it's important to remember that no matter what we love, we show our love to God the most. We worship Him first.

What does it mean to worship something? Allow kids to respond.

When we worship something, it means we make that the most important thing. We give it the most time and attention. When we worship God, nothing we do or have is more important than Him. We give Him all of the honor and glory. We put Him first, making Him the most important in our lives. Nothing takes the place of Him.

We'll see in today's story that only God is worthy of our worship.

Display the Golden Calf Wonder Truth Slide. Today's Wonder Truth is **ONLY GOD IS WORTHY OF WORSHIP.**



OPTION 2 Interactive Game: OUR Favorites!

SUPPLIES: writing utensils, timer (optional)

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: OUR Favorites! Sheet (1 per kid) * By Request

Ahead of time, print a copy of the OUR Favorites! Sheet for each kid.

Display the OUR Favorites! Slide Gather the kids and give each one a writing utensil and a copy of the OUR Favorites! Sheet. Have them write down their favorite of each category in the boxes. They can ignore the FREE box for now. Once kids are finished, explain that this is like a game of Tic-Tac-Toe. Give them time to mingle among the group and find others who have written down the same favorites. If they find someone who has written the same thing in a certain box, both players can mark that box complete by drawing an “X” across the box. Play until one or more players have managed to complete a full row, column, or diagonal, or set a timer for three minutes and see how far everyone has gotten when the timer goes off.

OUR Favorites!			NAME _____
Color	Sport	Animal	
Season	FREE	Dessert	
Holiday	Game	Musical Instrument	

Wonder Ink

LESSON 3 OUR FAVORITES! SHEET
PETERSEN



Make It Inclusive: If there are kids in your group who are not confident writers, consider having kids complete this activity in pairs. Give each pair an OUR Favorites! Sheet and a writing utensil. One kid can do the writing, but include both kids' favorites in each box. Then they can mark the box complete if one of their favorites matches someone else's.

We all have different favorites and things we love, and that's OK! But it's important to remember that no matter what we love, we show our love to God the most. We worship Him first.

What does it mean to worship something? Allow kids to respond.

When we worship something, it means we make that the most important thing in our lives.

We give it the most time and attention. When we worship God, nothing we do or have is more important than Him. We give Him all of the honor and glory. We put Him first, making Him the most important in our lives. Nothing takes the place of Him. We'll see in today's story that only God is worthy of our worship. Display the Golden Calf Wonder Truth slide. **Today's Wonder Truth is ONLY GOD IS WORTHY OF WORSHIP.**



Small Group

Introduce small group time. While kids are in small group, consider sitting in the groups for a few minutes each. Engage and interact as is appropriate.

Countdown

After about 15 minutes of small group, give a 5 minute warning and begin the countdown.

VIDEO: COUNTDOWN

"Hey everyone! Welcome to our Large Group Worship time! My name is _____ and I'm excited to take this time to worship God, review what we just read, and talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning about God! We are going to pray as we prepare our hearts to worship God!"

Declaring God's Wonder

Display the Golden Calf Declaration Slide.

Read each line boldly and invite kids to repeat after you.

Thank You, God, that You are good! (Kids repeat.)

You made me on purpose, for a purpose. (Kids repeat.)

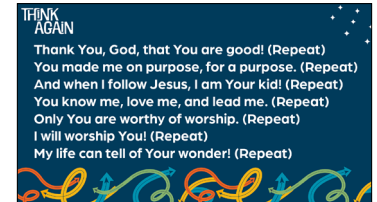
And when I follow Jesus, I am Your kid! (Kids repeat.)

You know me, love me, and lead me. (Kids repeat.)

Only You are worthy of worship. (Kids repeat.)

I will worship You! (Kids repeat.)

My life can tell of Your wonder! (Kids repeat.)



Prayer of Invitation

Lead kids in a prayer of invitation before entering into worship and God's big story: **God, we thank You that You love us so much and that You're always good and faithful. You're the only One who deserves all our praise and worship. Help us to keep our focus on You today as we learn more about who You are. We love You! In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Worship

God loves us, and He's always faithful to us. He's the only One who is worthy of our worship! Let's worship Him now through music. Play *That's Who I Praise*, *All of Me* and encourage the kids to sing and dance as they praise God.

God's Big Story

Display the Golden Calf Title Slide. Tell kids today's story comes directly from the Bible, God's Word. **Today we are learning that God alone is worthy of our worship. As you watch, think about why the Israelites chose the golden calf instead of trusting God and how we can choose to keep our focus on Him every day.**

Watch the God's Big Story Video

LESSON 3 THE GOLDEN CALF

EXPERIENCE IT! SCRIPT

SUPPLIES: play dough (1 lump per kid)

Give each kid a lump of play dough.

We need your help today to illustrate what happened in this part of God's big story! As we go through the story, we'll stop at certain points and mold a picture of what is happening in that part of the story using our play dough. Are you ready?

Long ago, God chose a man named Abraham and promised to bless the whole world through his family. Let's create Abraham from our dough. Pause to let kids mold a figure of Abraham. Encourage them for their creativity and pottery skills before continuing. **Abraham's family became known as the Israelites. And even though they were sinful people who disobeyed God like everyone else, God still had a plan for His people.**

The Israelites spent hundreds of years as slaves in Egypt, but God rescued them and brought them out of their slavery so that they could worship Him only. How would you mold the Red Sea parting? Pause to let kids mold the Red Sea splitting in two, so God's people could walk through it and escape Egypt. **God gave them His instructions so that they could follow Him and show others what He is like. Everyone saw the amazing things God did when He rescued them, and they said, "Yes, God! We want to worship You only!" Let's mold something that reminds us of worship.** Pause to let kids mold. If kids get stumped, suggest they create a big letter "W" for worship.

God called an Israelite named Moses to lead His people. Let's create Moses. Pause to let kids mold a figure of Moses. **After God rescued them from slavery, Moses climbed up Mount Sinai and stayed there for 40 days, listening to God and getting all of His instructions. It's time to create Mount Sinai with our dough.** Pause to let kids mold Mount Sinai. **Although the Israelites knew that Moses was with God, they got restless. They went to Aaron, Moses' brother, and asked him to make them an idol to worship. The same people who knew that only God was worthy of worship decided to worship an idol, a false god made by human hands. Let's take half our dough and make a small letter "w."** Pause to let kids use only half of their play dough to mold a small "w" for worship.

The people had just promised God that they would worship only Him and that they would never make any idols! But they didn't know what had happened to Moses. And the Israelites were so used to following the ways of the Egyptians, who didn't know the one true God, that their first thought was to make an idol and worship it as though it was God.

Aaron knew better, but he did what the people wanted. He told them to take off their gold earrings and give them to him. Let's make some earrings using just half of our dough. Pause to let kids use half of their play dough to mold earrings. **He heated their gold and molded it into the shape of a calf to be an idol for them. Now we need to make our earrings into a calf!** Pause to let kids mold their play dough earrings into a small "c." **The people said, "Israel, here is your god who brought you up out of Egypt" (Exodus 32:4b). The people began to worship the idol as if it were God and offer sacrifices to it.**

Up on the mountain, God knew what was happening. Let's take all of our dough and make Mount Sinai. Pause to let kids use all of their play dough to mold Mount Sinai again. He told Moses about it, saying that the people were being sinful and that they had already disobeyed the commands they had just promised to keep. God was angry with the people—they were stubborn and had fallen back into a pattern of worshiping idols. They had forgotten that God is not an idol to be made and controlled by human hands. They had forgotten that only God is worthy of worship.

Moses came down the mountain, and when he saw the Israelites worshiping the golden calf, he was very angry. He knew the people would face consequences for what they had done. Let's make a sad face with our dough. Pause to let kids mold a sad face.

Moses went back to talk to God and asked Him to forgive the Israelites. God punished the people for their sin, but He didn't leave them on their own. God stayed faithful to them because He had promised to—God is faithful even when we aren't. Let's make a big letter "F" that reminds us that God is faithful. Pause to let kids mold a big letter "F" for faithful.

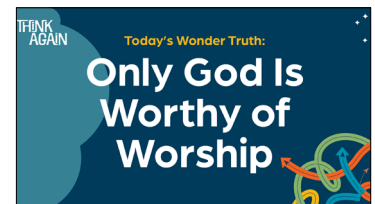
The Israelites promised to only worship God and to not make any idols, but they broke their promise right away. All of us get tempted to turn away from God and give our attention or love to the wrong things. But we have a God who loves us and stays faithful to us. He keeps all His promises, and we can trust Him. Because of this, we know that only God is worthy of worship. Let's make a big "W"! Pause to let kids use all of their play dough to mold a big letter "W" for worship.

Connecting the Wonder Truth

Display the Golden Calf Wonder Truth Slide. Our Wonder Truth today is **ONLY GOD IS WORTHY OF WORSHIP**. Where did you see our Wonder Truth in the story? Allow kids to answer freely.

We see in today's story that the Israelites expected the one true God

to be like other people's false gods, but God forbade them from making a created image of God. He knew that one day the exact image of God would arrive in the person of Jesus. When people look at Jesus, they see the God worthy of worship.



In Awe of God's Wonder

Spend a few moments allowing kids to think about the wonder of God's story.

Today's story talked about the people getting restless because Moses was on the mountain with God for a long time. If you had been there waiting, would you have wondered about what God was saying to Moses? What would you have been thinking? Allow kids to answer freely.

Did it surprise you when Aaron knew it wasn't right to make an idol but did it anyway? Why do you think Aaron did it? Allow kids to answer freely.

Responding in Worship

SLIDE: RESPONDING IN WORSHIP

Talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning with next steps such as tithing, prayer, asking questions, and worship. Encourage kids to ask their SG leaders any questions they were wondering during the lesson.

***Introduce this next song and invite kids to respond and participate in worship. See the "Worship Posture Tutorial" on the RBKids Resource Page.



WORSHIP VIDEO: [Name Above All Names](#)

Blessing Your Kids

Display the Golden Calf Blessing Slide. Speak this blessing over your kids, as a group or as individuals. If you bless kids individually, insert each kid's name at the beginning of the blessing.

Blessing: May you know God is always faithful. He loves you more than anything, and He is worthy of our worship. May your knowledge and love of God grow deep as you worship only Him.