

# An Idol Bows to God's Ark

1 Samuel 5:1-5

November  
Week 2

2



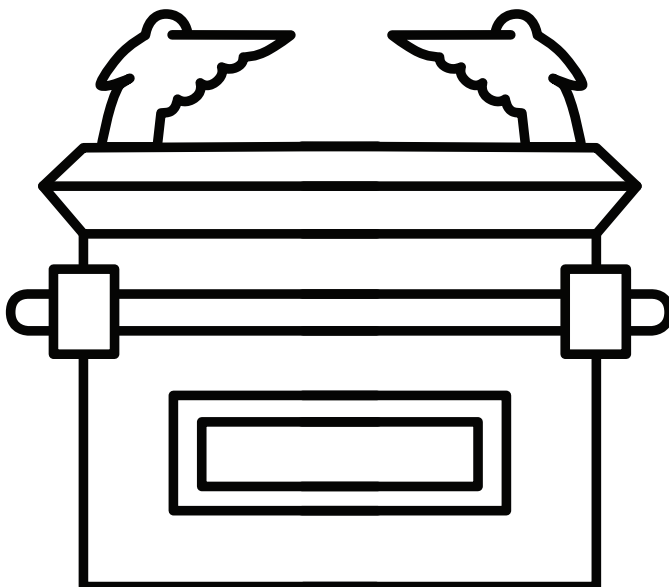
## Teacher Background

**What Happens:** The Philistines capture the Ark of God, a holy box that represents God's presence. They put the Ark in a temple with an idol named Dagon, and Dagon keeps falling before the Ark! This demonstrates that God is real and the idol isn't.

**Why It Matters:** This lesson will help kids explore modern-day idols. They're probably not statues like Dagon, but they may be things kids put before God. Help kids understand that because God is real, we believe in and worship only him as the one true God.

**Think About:** Ask God to show you what might be an idol in your life—anyone or anything that becomes more important than God.

**Pray** that your kids will recognize God as the real, true God, regardless of what our society might tell them.



### Point

God is real.



### Key Verse

"So don't be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows."

Matthew 10:31

### QUICK TIP

As you discuss today's point, some kids may stick to talking about idols such as athletes or celebrities. Older kids might ask questions about other religions or scientific theories. Allow kids to grapple with this point on their level, but draw them back to the same conclusion: God is real, and we believe he's the one true God.

# This Lesson at a Glance



| WHAT HAPPENS                                                                                                     | KIDS DISCOVER                                     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| <b>CHECK IN</b><br>Connect about the week.                                                                       | The importance of friendships at church.          |
| <b>SET THE STAGE</b><br>Share about a topic related to the lesson.                                               | The connection between their world and the Bible. |
| <b>EXPERIENCE THE BIBLE</b><br>Make paper idols and then destroy the idols as they make them fall before an ark. | That only God is the real god.                    |
| <b>HANDS-ON DISCOVERY</b><br>Make their own constellations.                                                      | How God's creation shows us he's real.            |
| <b>PLAY A GAME</b><br>Pass an imaginary ball.                                                                    | That it doesn't make sense to worship a fake god. |
| <b>PRAY TOGETHER</b><br>Bow before God and pray.                                                                 | How to show reverence for God.                    |

## EASY SUPPLIES

- Bible
- tissue box or other small box
- paper
- markers
- black construction paper (1 sheet per child)
- pencils
- toothpicks (1 per child)
- craft foam
- flashlight



## CHECK IN (5 MINUTES)

- Thank kids for coming and have kids give a side hug to one friend.
- Make announcements and collect offering.
- Celebrate any birthdays by having kids hop on one foot while they sing “Happy Birthday.”

**ASK:** Tell one fun thing that happened this week. Share your own quick story first, and then let everyone share! For groups of more than six, have kids share in pairs so everyone has a turn to talk.



## SET THE STAGE (5 MINUTES)

**SAY:** Today we’re going to learn that ➡ **God is real**, so we believe he’s the one true God. God is real, but some other things aren’t.

**ASK:** Tell about a story from a movie or book that you wish were real. Share your own quick story first, and then let everyone share!

**SAY:** It’s fun to think about those stories becoming real, but we know the difference between real and fake. In our Bible story, people acted like a pretend god—a statue—was real! Let’s look in the Bible to see how we know ➡ **God is real**.



## EXPERIENCE THE BIBLE (10 MINUTES)



### SUPPLIES

- Bible
- tissue box or other small box
- paper
- markers

### USE PAPER TO REENACT THE STORY

**SAY:** Today’s story involves the Ark of the Lord. That’s not a boat kind of ark like Noah had; it was a special box that contained the Ten Commandments, a staff, and a jar of manna. Those were things that reminded God’s people that ➡ **God is real** and he was always with them.

And the Ark was *so holy*—so perfect, pure, and special—that no one was even supposed to touch it! Let’s make our own ark to help us explore this story.

Set out a small box. Set out markers and paper to share. Have kids help you fill the ark by drawing a staff, a jar, and two tablets, then stuffing the pictures inside the box.

**SAY:** OK, so we have our ark. The problem in the Bible was that some people called Philistines stole the Ark and put it in a temple made for an idol named Dagon (DAY-gon)! If we’re going to have a standoff, we’ll need a statue that looks like a person, so let’s make something like that.

Give each child a piece of paper. Have kids fold their papers in half and then draw a stick figure on the front of their “cards.” Have kids set the Dagon “idols” up in a circle facing the ark.

**SAY:** Now let’s see what happened to Dagon when the Philistines placed the Ark, which represented the real God, next to the idol.



Read 1 Samuel 5:1-3.



Have kids blow their idols over so they fall in front of the ark. Then have kids set the idols upright again.

**SAY:** When we respect someone or recognize that someone else is better than we are, sometimes we bow to that person. Bowing happened a lot more in Bible times. So when the idol fell before the Ark, it was like it bowed to God!

Of course, ➡ **God is real** and the idol wasn't, so it couldn't move on its own. God's power must've been so real and so strong that it made the idol fall over! Let's see what happened next.



Read 1 Samuel 5:4-5.

Have kids blow their idols over again and then tear off the heads and hands and set them by their cards.

**ASK:** What do you think this story shows about God?

**SAY:** This story is a funny way to see that ➡ **God is real** and fake gods can't stand up against God's real power. ➡ **God is real**, so we believe he's the one true God.

## THINK ABOUT TODAY'S IDOLS

**SAY:** Let's think about what this story means for us. Most people don't worship statues today, but we *do* worship other "idols." An idol doesn't have to be something you can touch; it can be anything or anyone that people pay too much attention to. Hold your idol papers and share some things people today value or focus on. Allow time for kids to call out ideas.

Hold up the Ark box. We don't have the Ark of the Lord anymore to remind us that ➡ **God is real** and he is with us. But other things can remind us of God.

**ASK:** Name some things that remind you of God. Allow time for kids to call out ideas.

**SAY:** Dagon, a fake god, fell before the Ark that represented God, the real God. And in the same way, none of today's idols can stand up against God. When we know that ➡ **God is real**, we'll believe he's the one true God, and all these other idols will become much less important to us than God is. To show that, knock over your idols.

Have kids knock over their idol cards before the ark.

**PRAY:** God, help us recognize that ➡ **you are real** and that no fake god or idol will ever have your power or love. Help us put you first and not worship any fake gods. In Jesus' name, amen.

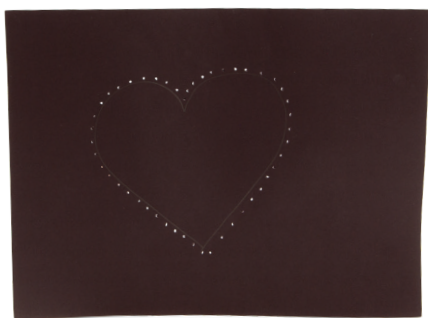
### QUICK TIP

This discussion may be over the heads of little ones, but older kids will have a lot to share! And don't worry—sometimes it's helpful for preschoolers to learn by listening to their older peers.



**SUPPLIES**

- Bible
- black construction paper (1 sheet per child)
- pencils
- toothpicks (1 per child)
- craft foam
- flashlight

**QUICK TIP**

Preschoolers may have a difficult time using the toothpicks to poke holes. If that's the case, let them use their pencil points instead. The holes will be bigger, but that will still make the point.

**CELEBRATE SMALL**

Smaller, mixed-age groups are great! You're offering an opportunity for older kids to befriend and lead younger kids as they make crafts or play games together!

**EXPLORE PSALM 19:1**

**SAY:** The Philistines learned that ➡ **God is real** when their pretend god fell down in front of the Ark of God. Let's see what the Bible says about how we can know that ➡ **God is real**.



Read Psalm 19:1.

**SAY:** *Proclaim* means to shout or show or tell. God's wonderful creation shows us that ➡ **God is real**. None of it could've happened on its own!

**MAKE CONSTELLATIONS**

**SAY:** One of the most amazing things God created is the night sky full of stars! At most, you might be able to see thousands of stars when you go out at night, but there are actually *billions* of stars out there.

**ASK:** Tell about a time you were able to see the stars really well.

**SAY:** A constellation is a group of stars that look like they make the outline of a picture. Kind of like connect-the-dots!

**ASK:** What constellations have you seen or heard of?

**SAY:** Let's think about God's awesome creative power as we make some constellations of our own.

- Give kids each a sheet of black construction paper, a pencil, and a toothpick.
- Encourage kids to use pencils to draw a *simple* shape on their papers.
- Have kids place their papers on craft foam. This will help kids poke the papers on a table or floor without poking their fingers.
- Show kids how to carefully use the toothpicks to poke small holes in the paper along the outline of the shape, about every  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch. (You can demonstrate the distance for kids to copy, and you'll want to be available to help preschoolers.)
- After kids finish with their constellations, dim the lights, if possible. If that's not possible, encourage kids to form a tight circle blocking as much light as they can.
- Encourage kids to take turns holding the flashlight behind their papers so the light shines through the holes onto the wall or ceiling.
- Have kids guess the shape based on the points of light.

**SAY:** God filled our world with things that point us to him. Psalm 19:1 tells us that things in the sky—like stars—display the work of God's hands. They show us that ➡ **God is real**. But there are a lot of things God made!

**ASK:** What's something in nature that reminds *you* ➡ **God is real**?

**SAY:** Those things show us that ➡ **God is real**, so we believe he's the one true God.



## PASS A FAKE BALL

**SAY:** Even though we can't see him or touch him, we know ➡ **God is real** because the Bible tells us so and because we've experienced him at work.

In this game, we'll play with a ball that's *not* real.

**ASK:** What's a game you've played that involves a ball?

**SAY:** Well, are you ready to play with a pretend ball? Let's see!

- Kids form a circle.
- Kids will pass an imaginary ball around the circle, changing something about the ball each time it changes hands.
- Before passing the ball along, whoever is pretending to hold it must do something with it as other kids attempt to guess what kind of ball it is. For instance, a child might pretend to roll a bowling ball at imaginary pins or throw a football to a downfield receiver.
- The goal is to see how long a circle can keep going before kids are stumped trying to imagine a new type of ball.
- If kids need help, here are some ideas: beach balls, marbles, stress balls, soccer balls, basketballs, Wiffle balls, volleyballs, golf balls, rugby balls, baseballs, tennis balls, billiard balls, ping-pong balls, hacky sacks, and juggling balls.
- When kids get stumped, start a new game where kids pass around a fake paper bag and must pretend to pull different items out of it. Items can be anything, from a slice of pizza to a hamster!



## TALK ABOUT IT

**ASK:** So what's more fun: playing with a real ball or a pretend ball? Why?

**ASK:** What's better about worshipping a real God instead of an idol?

**SAY:** I'm glad ➡ **God is real**. You can't do much with a fake ball, and you can't do much with a fake god! An idol has no power and can't be your friend. But God can!

### QUICK TIP

If you have mostly older kids, age this game up by having kids come up with a game to play, such as soccer or basketball, and let them play it with the fake ball. You can periodically call out a change to the ball and kids can imagine the change in playing basketball with a bowling ball!





## BOW AND PRAY

**SAY:** In the Bible story, God caused the idol to fall, almost as if it were bowing to him. Bowing is a sign of respect. It's a physical way to show that we believe ➡ **God is real.**

- Have kids spread out and get in a bowing position. This may be on their knees and bowing, standing and bowing, or any other way they feel comfortable.
- Have kids talk to God about what they learned today as they're bowing.

## WRAP UP

Kids can ask God to remove any idols in their lives—anyone or anything that becomes more important to them than God.

**PRAY:** God, you're real, and we believe you are the one true God. Thank you that we don't worship a fake god or a statue; we worship you, and you're real! In Jesus' name, amen.

Thank kids for coming, and encourage them to come back next week.