#### Lesson 1:

#### Golden Calf

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE:

Exodus 20:2-5; 32:1-35

MEMORY WORK:

Joshua 1:9

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

I should never allow anything or anyone to be more important to me than God.

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| **LESSON STARTS HERE** |

INTRODUCTION:

What is the most important thing in this world? (Loving God and obeying Him) How do you think God would feel if we let things or people become more important than God? Do you think God would be sad? Today we’ll learn what happened when some of God’s people decided to worship a statue instead of God.

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Moses was on Mount Sinai for 40 days and 40 nights while God was giving him the laws and commandments for the Israelites. He left Aaron and Hur in charge of leading the people and settling any problems that might come up between the people. Joshua went to the mountain and waited for Moses to return.
2. Because Moses was gone for so long, the people became restless and questioned whether he was coming back. After many days, they forgot how afraid they had been when the thunder, lightning, and earthquakes shook the mountain. They also forgot that they had promised Moses and God that they would follow each and every one of God’s commandments. They went to Aaron and told him they didn’t think Moses was coming back; they told Aaron they wanted an idol to worship instead of God.
3. Aaron should have refused and tried to stop the people from doing something God had specifically told them not to do. He should have reminded them of their promise to obey God completely. Instead, he went along with the people, telling them to bring him all their gold, and they did. Aaron melted down the gold and shaped it into a golden calf. Some of the people took the calf and put it in the middle of the huge camp, telling the rest of the people that the idol was the god that brought them out of Egypt! When Aaron saw how much all the people liked the golden calf, he built an altar for it and said they would have a great feast the next day!

**NOTE:** The gold which the Israelites used to make the idol was probably the same gold they received as gifts from the Egyptians as they were leaving Egypt.

1. Just a few months before, the Israelites had seen the 10 plagues that proved the Egyptian gods were no gods at all. The Israelites had seen the Red Sea split apart, and they had walked to the other side on dry land. They had eaten food and drank water given directly to them by God. Now they were willing to fall down and worship something Aaron had made with his own hands, rather than worship the all-powerful Creator of all things (see Romans 1:21-23).
2. The next day the people had a great party, celebrating, drinking, and worshiping the golden calf. God, seeing their disobedience and ingratitude was very angry! Already the Israelites were breaking two of the Ten Commandments: “You shall have no other gods before Me,” and “You shall not make for yourself an idol.” God was angry that they had already decided to disobey Him, and He intended to punish them immediately. He told Moses what was happening below the mountain and said that He was going to destroy the people. But Moses asked Him not to destroy the entire nation. So God listened to Moses and changed His mind, but while all of the Israelites would not be killed, some still would (Exodus 32:27).
3. Moses took the two tablets of stone, on which God had written the Ten Commandments, and went down the mountain to see for himself what was happening. When he saw them, he was so angry that he threw the tablets down, breaking them into pieces. Then he took the golden calf, burned it, and ground it into powder. Then he put this powder (gold dust) into the people’s water supply and made them drink it (Deuteronomy 9:21).
4. Moses was very angry with Aaron. He asked his brother why he had done such a terrible thing, encouraging the people to sin against God. Aaron tried to make excuses for himself. He said that the people had given him gold which he threw into the fire and, “out came this golden calf!” (Exodus 32:24). But Moses knew that Aaron had not been a good leader and that he had allowed the people to get completely out of control.
5. Moses stood at the entrance of the camp and called out, “Whoever is for the Lord, come to me!” All the Levites went and stood with Moses. He told them to go throughout the camp and kill the wicked, not sparing their own family and friends. Three thousand people died that day.

**NOTE:** Many commentators believe that those who were killed were the ring leaders or the more brazenly wicked, unrepentant people, rather than all of the people who were worshipping the calf.

1. The next day Moses spoke to the people and told them again what terrible sins they had committed against God. The people had “**corrupted**” themselves. He told them that he would ask God to forgive them. He went back to Mount Sinai and even offered to accept their punishment himself. Moses was on Mount Sinai another 40 days and 40 nights (Deuteronomy 9:18; 10:10).

**NOTE:** The people had “corrupted” themselves (Exodus 32:7). Literally, they had perverted or ruined themselves. They had made themselves unholy—the opposite of what God expected them to be. In Exodus 19:10, the people were consecrated (i.e., made holy) to the Lord, and now they had made themselves unconsecrated.

1. If we “go along with the crowd,” as Aaron did, we will usually end up in trouble. It is hard **not** to do something wrong if everyone around us is doing wrong. But it is very important to remember that God knows what we do all the time, and every time we do something wrong, we hurt God very much.
2. While we do not worship wooden or golden images that we buy or make, we can still have idols. What can become our idols? An idol can be anything or anyone that is more important to us than God. When other things or people become our idols, we gradually ignore what God says is right and wrong (read Matthew 6:24; Ephesians 5:5; Colossians 3:5; Deuteronomy 10:17,20,21; 6:4).

RECOMMENDED ADDITIONAL VISUALS (note disclaimers):

##### Betty Lukens’ felt pieces, Lesson 37 in Betty Lukens Manual

* ABeka Flash-a-Card Series (DISCLAIMER: use the cards, not the lesson book;)
* Free Bible Images – Saved on flash drive. Can be presented on classroom tv. Script included in lesson file. File will be labeled “01” in the Visuals Folder
* Spray paint a toy cow figure gold to show what the idol may have looked like. Talk about how ridiculous it was to treat a created object like a god. For a larger visual a donkey piñata painted gold also looks like a calf.
* Gold glitter can represent the powdered gold

SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS:

**“The Golden Calf Destr****oyed”**

Author: Unknown\* (Tune: “London Bridge”)

Moses took the golden calf, golden calf, golden calf.

Moses took the golden calf, Made it powder!

Put it in the water then, water then, water then.

Put it in the water then, Made them drink it!

### SUNDAY

LEARNING CENTERS AND ACTIVITIES:

##### Act out parts of the story

##### Giving Jewelry to Aaron

##### Make idol out of yellow play doh

##### Throw down tablets (graham crackers) and crush them. I would highly recommend doing this on top of a plastic tablecloth

##### Throw play doh calf into the fire (red and yellow gift wrap tissue paper)

##### Eating the powdered gold (unsweetened lemonade mix)

### WEDNESDAY NIGHT

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Review Sunday’s lesson. briefly (See [Review Questions](http://www.apcurriculum.com/dcirfol/4-24-32RQ.pdf) for example questions.)

LEARNING CENTERS AND ACTIVITIES:

##### Review Story Using Little People figures and toy cow or felt figures. Let the children tell part of the story to see how much they remember.

##### Review Game – Prepare a picture of an idol. Cut it into pieces and attach magnets on the back to be used on the dry erase board. Ask a review question. If they answer a question correctly, remove a piece of the idol. The class wins the game when the entire idol is “torn down.”

### Review Questions

### Who did Moses leave in charge of the Israelites?

### Aaron and Hur

### What did the people tell Aaron that they wanted to worship?

### An idol

### What did Aaron tell the Israelites to do?

### He told them to gather all of their gold and bring it to him, and he melted it and shaped it into a golden calf.

### What happened when God saw the Israelites partying and worshipping the golden calf?

### He was angry and said He would punish all of them.

### What did Moses ask God to do?

### Not destroy the Israelites for their sin.

### What happened when Moses came down from the mountain with the Ten Commandments in his hands?

### He threw the tablets down and they broke into pieces.

### What did Moses do with the golden calf?

### He burned it, ground it into powder, put the powder into the people’s water supply, and made them drink it.

### What did Aaron say when Moses asked him about the golden calf?

### He said the people gave him the gold, and he threw it into the fire and the calf came out of the fire on its own.

### When Moses announced, “Whoever is for the Lord, come to me,” who came forward?

### All of the Levites

### What did Moses tell the Levites to do?

### To go through the camp and kill the wicked that they met.

### How many people were killed that day?

### About 3,000)

Additional Notes / Activities Performed & Curriculum Feed Back

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