Preschool–Grade 6

The Golden Calf

Sunday School Lesson for Preschool (Ages 3–5), 20–30 minutes

Main point: Only God is God. I will love God most of all.
Bible passage: Exodus 32. Read Exodus 32 yourself before class.
Memory verse: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." *Exodus 20:3 (KJV).* **Before me** means in God's place.
You need: a Bible, crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: put a bookmark in your Bible at Exodus 32.

1. Opening game: Wait for It (5 minutes)

Everyone sits on the floor with hands on their knees. Say, "Wait... wait... wait..." and then, "Jump up!" Everyone jumps up. Play it a few times, making the wait a little longer each time. Say: "Waiting is hard! Today we will hear a true story about people who did not want to wait."

2. Bible story (5 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to Exodus 32. Say: "This story is true. It is in God's Word." Read each line slowly and do the motion. When you see **Say it with me**, the kids say the line back to you.

God's people were camped by a big mountain. *(Make a mountain with your arms.)*
Moses went up the mountain to talk with God (Exodus 24:18). *(Climb with your hands.)*
Moses was gone a long, long time: forty days (24:18). *(Tap your wrist.)*
The people did not wait for Moses (32:1). *(Fold your arms and tap your foot.)*
They said to Aaron, "Up, make us gods" (32:1). *(Shake your head: no, no, no!)*
They gave Aaron their gold earrings (32:2–3). *(Touch your ears.)*
Aaron made a calf out of the gold (32:4). *(Shake your head again.)*
The people said the calf brought them out of Egypt. But God did that (20:2; 32:4)! *(Point up.)*
Say it with me: "Only God is God!"
Moses prayed for the people (32:11). *(Fold your hands.)*
God listened to Moses. God showed mercy (32:14). *(Hug yourself.)*
Moses came down with two stone tables. God wrote on them (32:15–16). *(Hold out two flat hands.)*
Moses saw the calf. He threw the tables down, and they broke (32:19). *(Drop your hands.)*
Moses burned the calf and ground it to powder (32:20). *(Rub your hands together.)*
Say it with me: "I will love God most of all!"

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3. Questions to ask (3 minutes)

1. What did the people give Aaron? *(Their gold earrings, Exodus 32:3)*
2. Who did Moses pray for? *(The people, 32:11)*
3. Who should we love most of all? *(God, 20:3)*

4. Memory verse (3 minutes)

Say: "God said, 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me.' That means nothing gets God's place. There is only one God." Teach the motion: hold up one finger high for "one God." Say the verse with the motion three times: in a normal voice, in a whisper, and in a happy loud voice. Then say "Exodus 20:3" and clap three times.

5. What this means for us (3 minutes)

Say: "God loves you! Everyone has done wrong things. That is called sin (Romans 3:23). Jesus is God. He came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus died for our sins. He was buried. Then He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! The Bible tells us what to do (Acts 2:38). We repent: we tell God we are sorry, and we stop doing wrong. We are baptized in Jesus' name, down under the water, and our sins are washed away. And God gives us the Holy Ghost. That is God's own Spirit in us. When people are filled with the Holy Ghost, they speak in other tongues, words God gives them (Acts 2:4)."
Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

6. Activity: Two Stone Tables (5–10 minutes)

Give each child a take-home sheet. In the drawing box, help them draw two stone tables with rounded tops, side by side, like the ones God gave Moses (Exodus 32:15–16). They color them gray and draw little lines on them for God's writing. While they color, ask: "Who wrote on the tables? Who do we love most of all?"

7. Prayer

Say each line, and the kids say it after you:
"Dear God, You are the only God.
I will love You most of all. In Jesus' name, amen."

Tips for little ones: keep the story moving and do every motion with them. If they get wiggly, play "Wait for It" again. Send the take-home sheet home so parents can tell the story again this week.

Left out on purpose: this lesson tells only Exodus 32:1–20 in short lines. Read the whole chapter yourself before class. If a child asks why Moses was angry, say: "The people made a calf and said it was their god. That was a great sin. But Moses prayed, and God showed mercy" (32:14, 32:30).

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