

The Golden Calf

Theme

Worship God and Him alone.

Object

A small statue

Scripture

Exodus 32:1-14

Explain to the kids that each time you hold up the statue that you brought with you, that they have to freeze like a statue. They must hold their frozen statue pose until you are no longer holding the statue up in the air. You will do this multiple times as you tell today's lesson so encourage them to pay close attention.

Who can tell me what this is? (Give time for answers.) That's right, it's a statue. (Hold it up and kids freeze.) How many of you have statues (Hold it up and kids freeze.) in your home? Have you ever seen any statues in parks around the city? Perhaps you've seen a statue of a famous baseball player or an artist or author. I once went to a park with statues of characters from books by Dr. Seuss. My favorite was Horton the elephant.

Statues are fine unless they become something that we worship other than God. (Hold it up and kids freeze.) When we do that, the statue becomes an idol that replaces our God.

That is what our Bible lesson is about this morning. Moses was up on a mountain called Mt. Sanai. I am sure that you remember that God had told Moses to go up on the mountain so that God could give him the Ten Commandments for the people to follow.

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Now Moses stayed up on the mountain longer than the people thought he should. (Hold it up and kids freeze.) They went to Aaron and said to him, "We want you to create gods who will go before us so that we will know what way to go. As for this fellow, Moses, who brought us out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him."

Aaron answered them, "Take off the gold earrings you are wearing and bring them to me." So all the people took off their earrings and brought them to Aaron. He took all the gold they had given to him and made it into an idol in the shape of a calf. (Hold it up and kids freeze.) The people were very happy with the idol that had been made for them.

When Aaron saw how happy the people were, he built an altar for the calf. He said, "Tomorrow will be a festival to the Lord and you are to rise up early and make a sacrifice of burnt offerings before the calf." (Hold it up and kids freeze.)

When God saw what the people were doing, He became very angry and told Moses that He was going to destroy the people because of their unfaithfulness. But Moses begged the Lord to remember the promise that He had made to Abraham, Isaac, and the children of Israel. Moses convinced the Lord and He changed His mind and did not do what He said He might do—He did not destroy them.

What can we learn from this? We sometimes put other things before God. It may not be an idol made of gold in the shape of a calf, but it may be things like money, friends, or sports. Anything we put ahead of our love for God becomes an idol and that is a big mistake.

Dear God, let us always remember that You created us and all we have. You must always have first place in our life. In Jesus' name, amen.

Sermon Title: "You Are Invited"

Scripture Reading: Matthew 22:1-14

EXCUSES GAME:

Have children sit in a circle with a big ball! A child will toss the ball to another player and give an excuse that they can think of. The child who catches the ball will then give an excuse and roll or toss the ball to someone else, etc. Children will begin to realize how funny excuses sound. Begin to tell the story.

TEACHER WITH EXCUSES:

The teacher can start the class with EXCUSES, such as I can't take attendance because I don't like this pencil, I can't write on the chalk board because the chalk is too short, or I can't get your construction paper because my back hurts, I can't open this can of cookies because the lid is on too tight, etc. Children will begin to get the LESSON VERY QUICKLY!

THEME IN CHALK:

Write our theme today on the chalkboard but leave out many letters for children to guess at during the lesson. After someone has guessed the theme words of MAKING EXCUSES TO GOD, let children children write their own names on the board if they have ever made excuses.

R.S.V.P. 2 GOD BOOK MARKER:

Children can cut out letters R - S - V - P and glue them to another piece of paper in the shape and size of a book marker. Give children markers to write the 2 GOD and write Matthew 22:1-3. Hole punch the top and let children put a ribbon in the top of the book marker.

BIBLE INVITATIONS:

Give children pages to staple together to form a BIBLE (the cover can be a colored piece of construction paper and the pages can be white. Children can write one of the invitations from our lesson, on each page of their BIBLE INVITATIONS (written on the cover of their "Bible"), such as Rev 22:17, Matthew 11:28, Matthew 19:14, Matthew 16:24, Hebrews 4:16, John 6:35, Isaiah 1:18, Isaiah 55:3, Psalms 101:2, Mark 10:14 and John 7:37.

PLAY DRESS UP:

Give children choices of dressing up like a KING, or a Bride or as servants. After being dressed up, let them recite and try to memorize the verse. Take a picture of the kids all dressed up to put in a frame the next week! The teacher could have a large poster board with the Bible verse written out on it, to have the children hold while taking the picture.

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PARTY TIME:

After listening to the Bible story today, let children have a short "party time" with the dress up, balloons, whistles, party hats and music and some treats in a basket, etc. Review the story about people not wanting to come and that others were invited and had a great time. Ask the children who the KING was in the story and who was His Son and what INVITATION does Jesus send to US? THANK JESUS for inviting us to come and receive the FREE gift of life which He offers.

FREE GIFT:

The teacher can have a gift wrapped for each child to take home at the end of class. Tell the children that it is a FREE GIFT from the teacher. On the gift TAG, the teacher can write, RECEIVE GOD'S FREE GIFT OF SALVATION, or another Bible verse or saying about today's lesson, as teacher chooses.