



WEEK 4

ELEMENTARY LESSON OUTLINE

THANKS!

BIG IDEA

We can thank God for not giving up on us.

THE BIBLE

The Golden Calf: Exodus 32:1-35
(John 14:15, Matthew 6:19-21)

THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE

LARGE GROUP TIME

- **ACTIVITY** | Thankfulness Hot Potato
- **ACTIVITY** | Real Or Fake
- **STORY** | Share a time when you have had to wait for something.
- **OBJECT LESSON** | Fake Fruit
- **THE BIG IDEA** | We can thank God for not giving up on us.
- **BIBLE STORY** | Exodus 32:1-35
- **ACTIVITY** | Make Room for God: Part 1
- **VIDEO** | What is Idol Worship?
- **SCRIPTURE** | John 14:15
- **RESPONSE** | Journal Writing
- **ACTIVITY** | Make Room for God: Part 2
- **ACTIVITY** | Thankful Sticks
- **TALK** | RECAP OF THE MONTH
- **MEMORY VERSES** | Psalm 56:3; Matthew 6:33

SMALL GROUP TIME

- **DISCUSSION**
 - Why did the Israelites convince Aaron to make the golden calf?
 - Why do you think Aaron chose to listen to the Israelites?
 - Why do you think God still loved the Israelites even after they worshiped the idol?
 - How can we stand up for what is right even when others don't?
 - Who is someone you can pray for this week who needs to learn more about the love of God?
 - What is one way you can thank God for being God?
- **SCRIPTURE** | Matthew 6:19-21
- **ACTIVITY** | Jewelry Idol Making
- **MEMORY VERSES** | Psalm 56:3; Matthew 6:33



WEEK 4

ELEMENTARY LESSON GUIDE

THANKS!

BIG IDEA

We can thank God for not giving up on us.

THE BIBLE

The Golden Calf: Exodus 32:1-35
(John 14:15, Matthew 6:19-21)

LARGE GROUP TIME

WHAT? *What are we talking about today*

ACTIVITY | Thankfulness Hot Potato

- Welcome! Our series has been about being thankful, so let's think about some things we're thankful for!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Have the kids sit in a circle and give them a beanbag to use as a hot potato. Play high energy music and have them pass the beanbag. Stop the music at different times while they're passing. For older kids, they have to say one thing they're thankful for each time the beanbag comes to them before passing it. For younger kids, have them pass it and say one thing they're thankful for only when it stops on them.*
- Sometimes, it's hard to think of things we're thankful for, and we get grumpy and we complain. But when we try to think of things to be thankful for, we see there's so much to be thankful for!
- Today, we're going to learn one more reason we can be thankful.

ACTIVITY | Real Or Fake

- We've been learning about when God gave the Israelites the Ten Commandments through Moses. Today, we're going to learn about a bad decision the Israelites made.
- Let's test your skills and see if you can guess what's real and what's fake.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Poll the kids to see if they think each animal listed below is real or fake.*
 - Narwhal (*Real*)
 - Long-necked African Tortoise (*Fake*)
 - Dog-bird (*Fake*)

- Guinea Lion (*Fake*)
- Hummingbird Hawk Moth (*Real*)
- Yeti Crab (*Real*)
- Shoebill (*Real*)
- Mantis Shrimp (*Real*)
- Duck-Billed Elephant (*Fake*)
- Burmese Tiger Dog (*Fake*)
- Blobfish (*Real*)
- **FOR PRETEENS:** Have them draw a fast, 20-second picture of what they imagine each animal to look like before you tell them whether it's real or fake.

STORY | Share a time when you have had to wait for something.

- **Can anyone share a time when you have had to wait a long time for something?** Maybe you were so excited for a special present or event, or you had to wait in the car for a long time to get to a fun trip. Maybe you had to wait at the doctor's office for a long time.
- **Why is it sometimes hard to wait for a long time?**
- It can be hard to be patient! Today, we'll hear about when the Israelites were impatient and they made a bad choice.

SO WHAT? *Why does it matter to God and to us?*

OBJECT LESSON | Fake Fruit

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Show the kids a piece of fake fruit and a piece of real fruit.
- Look at these beautiful pieces of fruit! I can't decide which one I want to eat first!
- **Why are you looking at me like that? Don't you think I should eat this fruit?** Oh, yeah! One of them is fake!
- **Would you like to eat the fake plastic fruit?**
- No, of course not! I'm just being silly. This plastic fruit wouldn't taste as good as the real thing.
- **Would eating this fake plastic fruit be good for you or make you healthier?**
- No, it definitely wouldn't. Even though this fake fruit looks very similar to the real thing, it can't replace real fruit.
- Today, we're going to hear a story from the Bible about a false god. Choosing to worship a false god or an idol is like choosing to eat fake fruit over the real thing. That wouldn't be good!

THE BIG IDEA | We can thank God for not giving up on us.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Each week, do a big reveal (and make it fun) when you announce the Big Idea, like:
 - Ask the kids to give you a drumroll by stomping their feet or patting their laps.
 - Shout the Big Idea, then point to the kids and have them shout it back (Change it up by using funny voices, different volumes, or inflections).
 - Have a character (either recurring or rotating) come out every week to reveal the Big Idea.
 - Write it on a piece of paper and hide it somewhere in the room. Have the kids go on a "hunt" for it. When it's found, ask someone to come up and read it.
- This week's Big Idea: **We can thank God for not giving up on us.**

BIBLE STORY | Exodus 32:1-35

- Last week, we learned about Moses getting the Ten Commandments from God. This week, we'll hear about what else happened when he was on the mountain.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Look up the story in your Bible and encourage the kids to do the same. Read it!*
- When Moses was on Mount Sinai, the Israelites got tired of waiting and became impatient. **Do you know how long Moses was on the mountain getting the Ten Commandments from God?** He was there for 40 days and nights. The Israelites were waiting and waiting . . . and waiting!
- They stopped putting their trust in God and decided to put their trust in a fake god, an idol. They convinced Moses' brother Aaron to take their gold jewelry and make something they could worship instead of God.
- **Does this remind you of any of the commandments?** God commanded them to keep Him first and not worship idols. They disobeyed God and it made God mad! But Moses asked God to forgive them, and God did forgive them and continued to lead them.
- **Why do you think the Israelites chose to worship an idol after all God had done for them? Do you remember how God helped the Israelites get out of Egypt? God parted the waters so they could walk through the sea on dry land. God did such amazing things for them, and even when they disobeyed, God was still with them.**
- God still loved them. God provided for them and gave them gifts. God helped them when they needed help. Even when they turned their backs on God, God was always with them. **Do you think God is always with us, even when we mess up? How do you know?**
- The Bible says we have all sinned. We've done things we shouldn't do. **Do we deserve a second chance?** Even if we don't deserve forgiveness and gifts from God, God gives it to us. That's called grace. God gives us things we don't deserve.
- Even if we don't give God the attention we should or don't worship or spend time with Him, God is always with us. We can thank God for not giving up on us.

ACTIVITY | Make Room for God: Part 1

- What are things that take up a lot of our time, attention, or money?
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *On a table, place an empty pitcher on a towel on the other side of the room. As the kids tell you things that might take up time, attention, or money, write their answers on small craft sticks using a permanent marker. Put the craft sticks in the pitcher.*
- This pitcher is like an empty heart. Our hearts were made to be filled by God.
- Sometimes, things in our lives become like idols, crowding God out. **God wants to be first in our lives, but if we have too many other things we care about more, how can we put God first?**
- Let's leave this pitcher here and come back to this in a bit.

NOW WHAT? *What does God want us to do about it?*

VIDEO | What is Idol Worship?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Show [this](#) video.*
- **FOR PRETEENS:** *Ask them to name a celebrity some people idolize. Have them share what about that person makes others idolize them. Then, talk about why God is better and more important than those people.*

- **What is an idol?** An idol is anything we value or love more than God.
- As you were watching this video, God may have brought to your mind some things you value more than God. If that happened, ask for help putting God first.
- The good news is God is patient with us. We can thank God for never giving up on us.

SCRIPTURE | John 14:15

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Look up the verse and read it!*
- Jesus teaches us to love Him and obey His commands. God wants us to obey His commands because God loves us and knows what is best for us. Obeying God commands actually helps us live better lives.
- In the story we heard today, the Israelites grew impatient waiting on Moses to come back down from the mountain and they started worshipping other things besides God.
- **Do you ever find it challenging to obey God?**
- **What are some things you can do to help show your love to God through obedience and putting God first?**

RESPONSE | Journal Writing

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Give the kids half sheets of paper and markers. Have them write or draw a picture of two things that could become idols in their lives.*
- The first commandment is to keep God first. When we allow other things like video games or sports or our electronic devices to become more important than God in our lives, they become like the idols we read about in the Bible today.
- **Have you allowed anything to be more important than God?** On your journal page, write or draw a picture of one or two things you have made more important than God.
- As you draw or write, ask for help putting God first in your life and to not let anything become more important than God.
- We can thank God for never giving up on us even though we don't always put Him first like we should.

ACTIVITY | Make Room for God: Part 2

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Give the kids index cards and pens and have them write or draw two things they're thankful for. As they're writing, give each kid a cup with a little water. The amount of water from all the cups put together should be enough to fill the pitcher from the previous Make Room for God activity. When the kids are done drawing or writing, have them pour their cups into the pitcher one at a time.*
- **FOR PRETEENS:** *See your weekly instructions for an activity to help preteens see where they can spend time with God in their days.*
- **Do you remember the question I asked when we filled the pitcher with the craft sticks?** I asked, "How can we make room for God in our lives?" **What was your answer?**
- In the story we heard today, the Israelites made the golden calf because they forgot everything God had done for them. Instead of remembering God's goodness, they turned to an idol.
- When we remember God's goodness, we put God above all things.
- Bring your cup of water up and pour it into the pitcher. As you pour the water, read what you wrote on the card.

- **What happened as you poured in the water? Did the craft sticks keep the water out?**
- No, they didn't. They floated, and if we put enough water in the pitcher, it would push the craft sticks right out of the pitcher.
- When we put God first, God will fill our hearts. If we are beginning to value or love other things more than God, we can focus on thankfulness to God. When we're thankful, we keep other less important things from crowding our heart. Even when we mess up, God will forgive us and help us.
- We can thank God for never giving up on us.

ACTIVITY | Thankful Sticks

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give each kid five craft sticks and a marker. Have them write one word on each stick they're thankful for: a person, a place, a thing, a food, and an event or memory.
- **FOR KIDS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:** Expressing their thoughts is not easy for some kids with special needs. Allow wait time. Give examples of each category. You may write up the list ahead of time or write as you talk to your student. If a student is nonverbal and uses a communication device, the device usually has the categories of people, place, food, and things. Help students identify one thing for each category and write it on each stick.
- This week, pick one craft stick each day and say a "thank you" prayer to God for something new. Read the stick, and thank God for something that's on it. Use it as a guide to say prayers of thanks to God all day for whatever you choose.

TALK | RECAP OF THE MONTH

- We've had four weeks of games and activities to help us remember that God deserves our thanks! After all these great Bible stories, we hope you're ready to make God number one in your life and thank God for all you've been given.
- We learned how **we can thank God for providing for us**, like God provided manna and quail for the Israelites.
- As we looked at the first four commandments, we learned **we can thank God for being God**.
- As we learned about the last six commandments, we learned **we can thank God for wisdom**.
- And today, we learned that **we can thank God for not giving up on us** by learning about the Israelites and the golden calf.
- We learned so much this month! Now, don't forget to keep God number one and be thankful for who God is and what God has done!

MEMORY VERSES | Psalm 56:3; Matthew 6:33

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give every kid memory verse magnets or stickers. Then, work on the memory verse together. For ideas on how to do this well, check out the Memory Verse Guide in your Programming folder and give them to your small group leaders, if you'd like.

SMALL GROUP TIME

DISCUSSION

- **Why did the Israelites want Aaron to make the golden calf?** (They were impatient.)
- **Why do you think Aaron chose to listen to the Israelites?**

- Why do you think God still loved the Israelites even after they worshiped the idol?
- How can we stand up for what is right even when others don't?
- Who is someone you can pray for this week who needs to learn more about the love of God?

SCRIPTURE | Matthew 6:19-21

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Look up the verses in your Bible and encourage the kids to do the same. Read them!
- **What does it mean to store up treasures in heaven? How do we do that?**
- How can you put God first in your life every day?

ACTIVITY | Jewelry Idol Making

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give each kid a piece of aluminum foil. Tell them to make their foil into something that looks like jewelry (a watch, earrings, a necklace, a crown, etc.). Then, have them put all their foil together and shape it into a cow.
- **FOR KIDS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:** They may enjoy playing with their own Play-Doh and shaping different Play-Doh pieces together to form a cow.
- **How did the Israelites make their golden calf idol?** They melted their golden jewelry together and made a shape of a calf out of it. We might not make our idols out of gold, but we can sometimes put things before God. Even when we do put other things first, God forgives us and gives us grace. We can thank God for that!

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