

# 17. Obedience



## BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

### Exodus 32

The Israelites make a golden calf to worship



## AIMS

To help the children understand that sin separates us from God, but that when we say sorry he promises to forgive

To allow them to reflect on anything they may want to say sorry for

**Despite God's faithfulness to the Israelites, they struggled to be faithful to him and obey him, building a golden calf to worship. We also struggle to obey God's rules, and there are consequences to that, but God remains faithful.**



## PREP FOR LEADERS

Read through the Bible passages for this session and reflect:

- Why do you think the Israelites worshipped the golden calf?
- Why was this sin so serious?
- Is there anything you want to confess to God?

Take some time to pray for your group.



## GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Choose one of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

### ▶ Hey, Harry

*You will need: lipstick and baby wipes, or small coloured stickers*

Have the children sitting in a circle. One is designated to start. They turn to the person on their left and say "Hey, Harry!" That person responds, "What, Harry?" and the first child says, "Tell Harry," indicating the person two places to their left.

The second child then turns to the person on their left and

repeats the conversation. It passes round the circle in this manner.

If someone makes a mistake at any point by saying the wrong words or speaking at the wrong time, they receive a spot of lipstick or a sticker on their face, and instead of being referred to as Harry they are now referred to as "One Spot." If they make a mistake again they become "Two Spot" and so on.

This game highlights the challenges of keeping to the rules.

### ▶ Rapidough

*You will need: play dough*

Divide the children into teams of four or five. Give each team some play dough. Get one child from each team to come to you and tell them the first

*(continued overleaf)*

thing they are to make. They have to return to their team and make that item from the play dough and their team have to guess what it is. Once they guess correctly, another member of the team comes to you for the next word. They repeat this until they have completed the list of words. The first team to do so wins.

A suggested list of words, which will help to briefly recap Moses' story so far is: baby, basket, bush, arrow, frog, cloud, calf.

When they reach the final word - calf- tell them to keep their models so you can refer to them as you tell the story.

### ► Obedience Games

Three further games on the theme of obedience are included in Session 3 of One Big Story.



### ► Recap

*You will need: pictures of commandments tablets (see additional document: Stone tablets). These could simply be printed out on paper or you could glue them onto cardboard and cut round the outline of the tablets.*

If you used the Rapidough game, you can use the items the children modelled to briefly recap Moses' story. He was rescued as a **baby** by being put in the river in a **basket** and he was adopted by the princess of Egypt. Many years later he had run away but God spoke to him in a burning **bush** and told him to go (**arrow**) to Egypt to speak to Pharaoh and to lead the Israelites to freedom. Pharaoh refused several times so God sent plagues (**frog**). Finally he let the Israelites go and God led

them by a pillar of **cloud** and fire and opened up the sea for them to escape. The **calf** is part of this week's story so we'll find out about that soon.

Remind the children of what they learned last week - that now God had rescued the Israelites and he was leading them to their own land, he gave them some rules to follow to tell them how they should live as his people. See if the children can remember any of the 10 Commandments.

Show "stone" tablets and explain that God gave them to Moses to remind the people of his commands.

### ► The Golden Calf

*You will need: printed pictures (see below) or equipment to display images on PowerPoint, Sin picture (from Session 13 additional document: sin)*

Tell the next part of the story using images from [bit.ly/2KD1QUA](http://bit.ly/2KD1QUA)

The numbers by the different parts of the story relate to the slide numbers in the presentation found at the link. (Some slides have been omitted for brevity.)

**1. While Moses was up the mountain getting the 10 Commandments from God, the Israelites were waiting down at the bottom of the mountain. Moses was gone for quite a long time, and after a while they started to get fed up and wonder where he was.**

**2. Eventually they said to Aaron, Moses' brother, "Moses isn't coming back. He's left us here." So they asked Aaron to make a god to lead them in place of Moses.**

**3. Aaron asked all the people to bring their gold earrings together. There were thousands and thousands of people, so Aaron collected a lot of gold.**

**4. He melted it down and then he took the gold and made it into a statue of a calf.**

**7. They started worshipping it by bowing down and singing to the golden calf and praising it, saying it was the golden calf that had rescued them from Egypt. It sounds ridiculous! The golden calf was just something that they had made themselves. How could it have rescued them from Egypt? Some of you made a calf from play dough earlier on, but it would be silly to think you had made a god you could pray to! I wonder why the Israelites did that!**

**12. Finally Moses came back down from the mountain where he had spoken to God. As he reached the Israelite camp he heard them singing and saw them dancing and as he got closer he saw the golden calf in the middle of all the people and he saw the people bowing down to it and worshipping it. Moses was absolutely furious.**

**14. In fact, he was so angry that he took the stone tablets from God and he threw them down on the ground and they smashed into little pieces. Then he took the calf and burned it. He told the Israelites that if they were going to be God's people they had to listen to God and do what he said.**

**20. Moses asked the people to make a choice and gave them a chance to say they were on God's side. Several of those who didn't were punished and God sent a plague on the people. Moses knew that all the people deserved to die. After God had saved them from being slaves and led them on their journey and helped them so much what the Israelites had done was really bad. Moses pleaded with God not to abandon the people and to forgive them and keep on helping them. The Israelites**

weren't really sorry for what they had done and it damaged their friendship with God but even so, God didn't abandon them. He promised to still be with them and to help them.

**The Bible teaches us that God still always cares about people and loves them even if they do really bad things. But those things are a problem and they have to be dealt with. We talk about that as sin.** (You could refer back to the definition of sin given in Session 13 and show the card used to illustrate that. See Session 13 additional document: Sin)



## REFLECT & RESPOND

### ▶ Reflection

**We can see that what the Israelites did was bad, but I'm sure all of us do things that are bad as well. It might be things that seem pretty small like fighting with our brother or sister or not doing what our mum or dad tell us to or telling a little tiny lie, but actually any sin, no matter how small, causes problems between us and God.**

**However God promises that if we are sorry he will always forgive us. Take a moment to think if there's something you want to say sorry to God for.**

### ▶ Prayer Activities

*You will need: soluble vitamin tablets and bowl of water, or tray with sand*

You could give each child a piece of a soluble vitamin tablet - get them to think of something they want to say sorry for, then drop it into a bowl of water and watch it dissolve as a reminder that when we say sorry to God he promises to forgive.

Alternatively, you could provide a tray of sand and let each child in turn write the word "sin" in the sand with their finger while thinking about something they want to say sorry for. Then they can wipe the word away as a reminder that when we say sorry to God, he promises to forgive.

Lead the children in prayer, thanking God for his forgiveness.