LESSON 3 **FOR LEADERS**

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father …

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Only God Is Worthy of Worship
SCRIPTURE: Exodus 32
WORD OF WONDER: From 2 Timothy 2:13

In every human mind, there is a part that functions like a magnifying glass, bringing whatever we choose into focus and making it appear larger. Did you know God made your mind capable of examining things deeply from every angle? We can place that imaginary magnifying glass over anything!

Let's aim our focus at Exodus 32 now, and as we read, invite the Holy Spirit to highlight whatever is on God's heart for you today. Where does your imagination come alive in this story? Can you see the sights and hear the people in the wilderness? Can you envision their jewelry melting in the fire? What sounds floated up the mountain to Moses as the Israelites disobeyed God? Did they think they were having fun?

We may not carve golden calves anymore, but we all encounter distractions that can seem larger than life and threaten to take our attention from Jesus. What has been attempting to distract you lately?

When this happens, it's natural to be pulled off course for a moment or two, but then what? What will you do with your powerful mind? Let's choose to return our gaze to the face of Jesus. Only God is worthy of worship, and when we place the magnifying glass in our minds upon Him, we will find more goodness, more wisdom, and more to admire than we could ever imagine.

—Nancy Wood Clark

Children's Pastor

Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

The Israelites—God's people whom He rescued from slavery in Egypt. God kept all His promises, and the people put their trust in Him and became bonded to Him through the covenant of the law at Mount Sinai.

WHAT?

The covenant at Mount Sinai was similar to a wedding between God and His people. The Israelites immediately broke their vows and cheated on the God who had been faithful to them. They worshiped another god and created a graven image—breaking one of the Ten Commandments.

WHERE?

God led the Israelites out of Egypt and into the desert. They went to the foot of Mount Sinai, which is the same place Moses met God at the burning bush years before. Mount Sinai is also called Mount Horeb in the Bible.

WHEN?

It had been three months since the Israelites left Egypt. As a consequence of their sin, 3,000 people died (Exodus 32:27–28). By the time of Jesus, the biblical holiday of Pentecost was associated with the giving of the law at Mount Sinai.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

The Israelites expected their God to be like other gods. God forbade them from making a created image because the exact image of God would arrive in the person of Jesus. When people look at Jesus, they see the God worthy of worship.

Welcome & Curiosity Questions

SUPPLIES: Golden Calf Welcome Question Slide



At your start time ...

Ask kids to share their answers to the Welcome Question: **What do you give a lot of your time and attention to?**

In today's story, we'll see how a group of people gave their attention to something other than God and what happened as a result. But now, it's time to be curious!

Ask the following "I'm curious" questions. Say, "I'm curious ..." before each question and give kids a chance to think about and answer each one.

I'm curious ...

- **Why is it easy to give your time and attention to things you love?**
- **Do you think God deserves our time and attention? Why or why not?**

Curiosity Activity: My Number One

Supplies: My Number One Slides, Golden Calf Wonder Truth Slide

Before the game begins, encourage kids to squat down as close to the floor as they can. Display the first of the My Number One Slides. **Let's play a fun game called My Number One! You're going to see a picture on the screen. As soon as you see the picture, jump up and shout what your number one, or favorite, thing is for that picture. Let me show you an example.**



Advance to the second slide. **This is a cake. Jump up and shout out your number one flavor of cake!** Allow kids to respond. **Awesome! Let's play!**

Advance through the My Number One Slides, pausing at each for kids to jump up and shout out their number ones. Before they sit down again, give them six seconds to share their number ones with a neighbor. Then they can sit back down to be ready for the next slide.

For your reference, the slides include pictures of the following:

Drink

Sport

Toy

Season

Candy

Color

Game

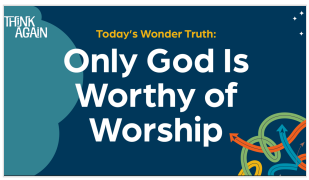
Holiday

We all have different favorites and things we love, and that's OK! But it's important to remember that no matter what we love, we show our love to God the most. We worship Him first.

What does it mean to worship something? Allow kids to respond.

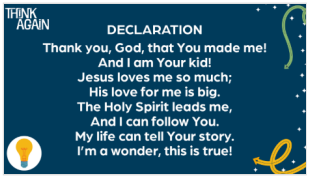
When we *worship* something, it means we make that the most important thing. We give it the most time and attention. When we worship God, nothing we do or have is more important than Him. We give Him all of the honor and glory. We put Him first, making Him the most important in our lives. Nothing takes the place of Him.

We'll see in today's story that only God is worthy of our worship. Display the Golden Calf Wonder Truth Slide. **Today's Wonder Truth is ONLY GOD IS WORTHY OF WORSHIP.**



Declaring God's Wonder

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Declaration Slide



Thank You, God, that You made me! *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*
Make prayer hands, then point up to God and to yourself.

And I am Your kid! *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*
Put your hands on your hips.

Jesus loves me so much; *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*
Spread your arms out wide to your side one at a time, then pull them in for a hug around your chest.

His love for me is big. *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*
Hold your arms up high and wide above your head.

The Holy Spirit leads me, *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*
Bring your arms down from above, making a path in front of you.

And I can follow You. *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*
March in place like you're following the leader.

My life can tell Your story, *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*
Hold your hands in front of you like an open book.

I’m a wonder; this is true. *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*
Put your hands up, shake your fingers, and celebrate (“praise hands”).

God's Big Story

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid), Golden Calf Title Slide



Display the Golden Calf Title Slide. Tell kids today's story comes directly from the Bible, God's Word. Help kids find Exodus 32 in their Bibles. Explain that the book of Exodus is the second book in the Bible in the Old Testament. **Let's start by reading part of God's big story directly from the Bible. Afterward, we'll watch and experience more of the story!**

Leader Tip: This is a difficult passage. It highlights God's holiness and shows the importance of His people being set apart for Him. Be sure to read the selected verses ahead of time and discern the best way to engage your unique group of kids with this important but hard part of God's story.

Read Exodus 32:1–4, 7–9, 19–20, 30–34 aloud. Then do one or both of the following:

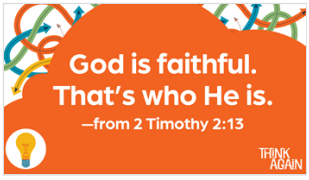
Word of Wonder

SUPPLIES: Bible, Think Again Word of Wonder Slide

WORD OF WONDER

God is faithful. That's who He is.

—from 2 Timothy 2:13



Display the Word of Wonder Slide . **Our Word of Wonder for the Think Again series is from 2 Timothy 2:13. Let's practice saying the Word of Wonder together.** Open a Bible to 2 Timothy 2:13 and practice the verse with the kids.

Gather the kids in a circle. Review the Word of Wonder with kids by saying it a couple of times, encouraging kids to say it with you.

Our Word of Wonder for this series tells us that God is faithful. In our story today, we saw that God was faithful to His people, even when they were wrong and didn't worship Him. We can learn from this story and make God our number one. We can worship Him and make Him the most important. And He will always be faithful because that's who He is! Let's practice the verse so we can always remember it.

Encourage the kids to do the motions and say the verse with you.

- **GOD—***Point up.*

- **IS FAITHFUL.—***Give two thumbs-up (one on each word).*
- **THAT'S WHO—***Put your arms out in front of you, palms up (one on each word).*
- **HE IS.—***Point up (once on each word).*
- **FROM 2 TIMOTHY 2:13— ***Hold your hands open in front of you, as if holding a book.*

Gather the kids and ask them to sit in a circle. Invite kids to play a game of popcorn by going around the circle and encouraging each kid to say the next word of the verse while popping up. Continue until everyone has had a turn. The group can say the verse a few times.

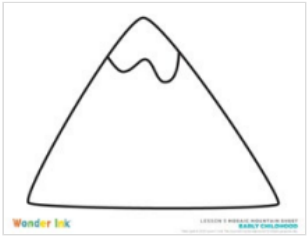
Gather kids to discuss these questions:

- **How do you feel knowing God is always with you, even when you make bad choices?**
- **This verse tells us God is faithful, which means He always keeps His promises and stays with us. Because He is faithful, we can trust Him and worship Him. How can you worship God this week?**

Craft: Mosaic Mountain

SUPPLIES: construction paper (various colors), paper bowls (1 per 4–5 kids), glue sticks (1 per kid), markers, Mosaic Mountain Sheet (1 per kid)

Ahead of time, cut or tear construction paper into small pieces and put the pieces into paper bowls or plates. Print a Mosaic Mountain Sheet for each kid.

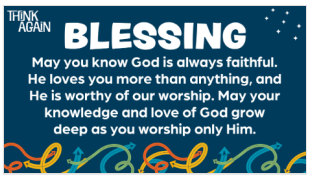


In today's story, we learned that the people promised to worship only God, but they broke their promise. But even when people do something wrong, God stays faithful. Today's Wonder Truth is: ONLY GOD IS WORTHY OF WORSHIP. We're going to make mountains to help us remember that Moses worshiped God and talked with Him on the mountain, and only God deserves our worship!

Give each kid a glue stick and a Mosaic Mountain Sheet. Encourage kids to write their names on their sheet. Set out the bowls or plates of construction paper pieces. Have kids glue the pieces onto the mountain on their sheet to make a mosaic. After they've covered their mountain, encourage kids to use a marker to draw Moses standing at the top of the mountain.

Blessing Your Kids

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Golden Calf Blessing Slide



Speak this blessing over your kids, as a group or as individuals. If you bless kids individually, insert each kid's name at the beginning of the blessing.

Blessing: May you know God is always faithful. He loves you more than anything, and He is worthy of our worship. May your knowledge and love of God grow deep as you worship only Him.