

# EXODUS 32

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Parents, you are awesome! As much as we love our jobs and being with your kids, please know that you have even more influence on your child's faith formation than anyone! You can do this. This time that you spend learning together and talking about your faith is wonderful. You don't have to have all the answers to everything (who does?). The biggest thing is that your kids see that faith is important to you, and that learning about God's story as a family and how those stories changes our lives today will have a huge impact. Thank you for your work and dedication to your faith and to your kids' faith!

Below are some ideas for learning about the story and activities for thinking about how the story applies to our lives.

## **Read scripture with child(ren)**

*Exodus 32: 1-14*

## **What Happened in the Story?**

- What do you think about the story for today? What jumped out at you either because it was nice or strange or confusing? (Let kids think about it on their own and spark conversations based on their thoughts first)
- How would you feel if you were one of the Israelites wandering in the wilderness? Would you be amazed at all the miracles you saw God do? Would you feel grateful for all the ways God was providing for you? Would you be scared and mad at God for having to go camping for 40 years? Something else?
- What does it say about God that God stuck with the Israelites even when they worshiped an idol and continued to take care of them?
  - *God is merciful*
  - *God is committed to God's people*
  - *God is more able to be faithful to people than people are able to be faithful to God*
  - *God can do amazing miracles in order to take care of the Israelites*

- Moses was able to change God's mind when he convinced God to have mercy on the unfaithful Israelites. What does this say about the relationship that we have with God and the power of prayer - since prayer is talking to God?
  - *God takes our relationship seriously enough to listen and be moved by what we say.*
  - *Prayer can be powerful!*

## Coloring page

Take time to color in the coloring page. You can choose to save them each week, three-hole punch them, then put them into a three-pronged folder at the end of the year to create their own story Bible.



## Craft: Smash the Idols!

### What you'll need:

Template, cut out one cow per child

Markers/Crayons - make sure there are plenty of yellows and oranges

Scissors

Tape

"Today for our craft we are going to smash a golden cow idol as we tape one to the bottom of our shoe!"

Have them color in their golden cow picture, then cut it out as best they can. It doesn't have to be perfect!

They can then make a little circle out of tape to stick their cow to the bottom of their shoe.

## **Story Meditation**

Taking time to meditate with scriptures is a great way to teach kids how to connect more deeply with God and the Bible. Plus, today more than ever, it's so good to teach kids how to meditate and calm themselves down and practice breathing techniques every week. I would encourage you to incorporate Story Meditation each week. You can either show the video to the kids and have them do this meditation with me, or you can watch it ahead of time, learn it, and be the leader in person yourself. The prayer in it will change each week to fit each story lesson.

Find the story meditation here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8zXUdr0nWx0&feature=youtu.be>

## **Service Project: Book Drive, Part 1**

### What you'll need:

Large cardboard box (or other container) in which to collect books

Markers

Paper

Stamps, bingo daubers, or streamers optional

"We are going to begin a project today that we'll focus on over the next couple of weeks." Explain what the book drive is for.

There are several options for your book drive. You could stick with the refugee theme from last week and connect it to the Israelites who are still traveling to their new home country in today's story. Make sure to check with your area Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (or other refugee settlement office) to see if they could use books for their new folks coming in who are perhaps still working on their language skills (children's books through adult). You could also check with your area schools, women's shelters, or other organizations to see if they could use gently used books. If not, have fun doing a little free library within your own congregation. Do what best makes sense for your context.

How you set it up will also depend on your context. For today, the plan is to create and decorate the container to set out in a main area to collect books in next Sunday. You can decide if you want to keep it within the children's ministry area or if you want to announce the book drive to the rest of the congregation and set it out front for everyone.

Consider working with the other age groups to create your book collection box and space. The older kids could outline the words for the sign and make more intricate decorations like paper flowers (like this: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9QIHNNQLI3c>). The younger groups could color in the letters for the sign and make easier decorations (like snowflakes or tissue paper flowers). The PreK kids could have stamps or bingo daubers to add to the decorating or could string streamers around the collection box area (or anything else would make sense).

Let kids know that over the next week they can look through their old books and see if they have any they'd like to donate and give to someone else. Make sure to let them know if they don't have books that they are able to give away, it is perfectly okay. Decorating the collection box is a great contribution to the service project! A note about this will be included in the Take Home Note.

As you plan for next week, consider inviting someone from the organization you are giving the books to (if that is what you are doing), to talk about how their books will make a difference.

### Faith Story Prompts

At some point, you can tell them a faith story of yours related to this story of creation. Hearing about your faith each week is a way for you to witness to the gospel, giving them examples of what faith looks like as it is enacted in and affected by life. Here are some ideas:

- Talk about a time when your faith was not very strong and it was easier to put your trust in something else (being in control, having a certain thing happening the way you wanted it to, etc). What was your journey back to God like? It's okay to acknowledge that the struggle between putting our trust in things other than God and putting our trust in God is a lifelong thing.
- Have you witnessed God at work in a miraculous way like the Israelites did?

- Is there a particular thing that's not God that you know you go to when life gets hard? Perhaps when you find yourself putting your sense of security in it you know you are stressed and need to re-ground yourself in God? Talk a little about that and your process of figuring out your non-God idols. What do you do to return to God?

### **Discipleship Take Away**

"As disciples, a big thing we learn from this story is that it's easy to get distracted by idols and we can find ourselves looking for ways to find security in places other than God. But will those idols really help us? (pause for responses) No! Only God is God and as disciples we put our trust and our sense of security in God alone.

There is a verse in Psalm 56 that says, 'When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.' First, let's memorize it. (Help you kids memorize this verse. It's an easy one to add a beat to, like 'When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.' Or however you'd like to make it fun.)

Next, when we say it, we are going to pause at the word 'afraid' and I want you to be as dramatically afraid as you can. We'll see who can look or act the most afraid! As we continue, when we say, 'you' we'll make a heart shape with our hands. Why do you think we'll do a heart shape with our hands to point to God? (pause for responses) Because God is love! Sometimes we think we should point to the sky as if God is far away up in heaven, but is God really far away? (pause for responses) No! God is with us right here, too. Let's give it a try!" (Have them do this.)

### **Closing Prayer**

"Let's close our eyes and close our hands and pray,

Dear God,

we know there will be times in our lives when things get tough. In those times especially, help us to remember that you are faithful to us and that we can always put our trust in you."

## **Blessing**

Make the sign of the cross in the air in front of each of them as you look them in the eye and say, "May you always find your sense of safety in God."

## **Throughout the Week**

In your prayers this week, you could pray a special prayer for all those who live in places of suffering and for refugees around the world who are seeking a safe place to live.

One way we can remember God's faithfulness, too, is by sharing something we are grateful for at the end of each day. Either for the week or for the whole year, you could take some time at supper or bedtime to have everyone share something they are grateful for – either in general about their life or about something specific that happened that day.

# Exodus 32:1-14

The Israelites lose faith and make a golden calf

