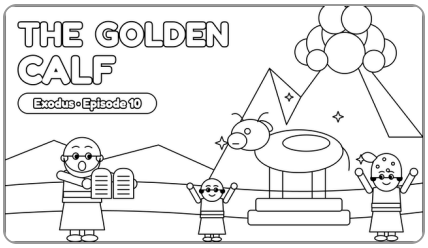
The Bible Under the Baobab · Discussion sheet for season 2, episode 10

The Golden Calf

Exodus 32 · For ages 3 to 10 · Video: 5 min 54



The story in brief

Moses is slow to come down from the mountain, and the people grow tired of waiting. With everyone's gold rings, Aaron makes a calf, and the people sing and dance around it. God is angry; Moses prays for the people, and the Lord changes his mind about the disaster. On his way down, Moses breaks the two tablets of stone and destroys the calf, then he goes back up to ask forgiveness for the people.

> **Note for parents.** This is a serious chapter, and the episode tells it soberly, showing nothing violent. God's anger is said in one sentence ("a great disaster was about to fall on them"); the threat of 32:10 is not quoted. The heart of the episode is the prayer of Moses, twice, and the sentence: "The Lord changed his mind: he did not bring on his people the disaster he had spoken of." Moses breaks the tablets and destroys the calf ("threw it into the fire and ground it to dust"). The water the people are made to drink (32:20), the three thousand deaths (32:25-29) and the plague (32:35) are not told. The feast around the calf is shown with singing and dancing. God is never shown: only the cloud, the fire and the light. At the end, Grandma says that the wrong was serious and that God did not say it was forgotten, but that he did not abandon his people; the story goes on in the next episode.

Let's talk about it

1. How long does Moses stay on the mountain? What does God give him?
2. What do the people ask Aaron for? What is the calf made from?
3. What does Moses do when God is angry with the people? What does the Lord do then?
4. What does Moses do with the stone tablets when he sees the calf and the dancing?
5. What excuse does Aaron give? What do you think of it?
6. Nia says the seeds jumped into her hand all by themselves, and later she says she is sorry. Is it hard to say "It was me"? Have you ever asked for something good for someone else, as Moses did?

> **Notes for the grown-up.** Forty days and forty nights; God gives him two tablets of stone. The people ask, "Make us a god who will go before us!" The calf is made from the gold rings they all brought. Moses pleads with the Lord and reminds him of his promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; the Lord changes his mind and does not bring the disaster. Moses throws the tablets down, and they break at the foot of the mountain; then he destroys the calf. Aaron says, "They gave me their gold, I threw it into the fire... and out came this calf!" The next day, Moses goes back up to the Lord and prays again: "Forgive them!"

To remember

When I do wrong, sorry is what I say. God hears the prayer, he does not turn away!

The song: When I do wrong, sorry is what I say

When I do wrong, sorry is what I say!
God hears the prayer, he does not turn away!

To do

Is there someone you would like to say sorry to? Go and tell them, or make them a drawing. Then think of someone who needs help: like Moses, ask for something good for them.

Watch the episode and hear the song: labiblesouslebaobab.com/en/episodes/the-golden-calf/
From the book of Exodus, chapter 32 (and, to set the scene, 24:12-18 and 31:18). Free for home, Sunday school and children's ministry.