

# LESSON 2



## DO NOT WORSHIP IDOLS

### BEFORE YOU TEACH

#### Idols

Idols were appealing to the Israelites. All the countries they defeated or conquered after wandering for forty years in the wilderness worshipped idols, and their idol worshipping always seemed to result in farming or military success. So, even though the Israelites were already worshipping God, it seemed only logical to them to worship idols as well for more power and reliance.

Idolatry as portrayed in the Old Testament seems strange in today's society. With the ever-sophisticated advances of modern science, few people still believe in the power of bronze statues and carved wood. However, idols still thrive in certain countries. Similar to those who sought idolatry in the Old Testament, some people today still believe that certain gods control events such as diseases and natural disasters. They believe that these gods must be kept happy at all times or else the people will suffer their wrath. Others treat idols as good luck charms and pray to them only in times of desperation.

### UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS

Today, there are many different kinds of idolatry. While most people nowadays do not worship or pray to traditional idols, these people still practice different forms of idolatry. Anything that takes a person away from being faithful to God and His word can be considered an idol. For example, idolizing famous people, such as movie stars, or being preoccupied with television shows or computer games can take time away from God and be considered forms of idolatry. Another form of idolatry is the idolization of oneself. Instead of spending time communing with the Lord, people spend all their energy trying to reach their own goals and desires.

It is very easy for your students to fall into this type of idolatry. For example, at this age, your students may have many favorite cartoons or television stars. They may spend a considerable amount of time watching TV shows and might even be willing to give up just about anything to watch them. They may even purchase products related to their favorite shows and talk about them all the time.

It is important to help students understand what crossing the line to idolatry looks like—it is when you start to seek after what you like at all costs. Sometimes it is helpful just to talk about this issue and let them become aware of what they are doing. Survey how much time the students spend doing what they like versus how much time they spend with God. They may not realize how much time they are spending on things other than God until they see it on paper. It will help them put things into perspective.

### BIBLE TEXT

Exodus 20:1-6  
1 Kings 12:25-33; 16:29-33; 22:29-40  
2 Kings 9:30-37  
Daniel 3

### BIBLE TRUTH

God commanded us not to worship idols.

### LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. To put God first in our lives.
2. To obey God's commands with faith and courage.

### MEMORY VERSE

"Yet for us there is one God,  
the Father, of whom are all things,  
and we for Him."

(1 Corinthians 8:6a)

### PRAYER

In the name of the Lord Jesus, we pray. Lord, we know that You are the only true God in this entire universe. Idols are meaningless and useless things. They cannot protect us and love us the way that You do. Please keep us from worshipping them and let us be completely devoted to You. May You keep us in Your love and grace every day. Hallelujah! Amen.

## REVIEW

Last week, we learned about the first commandment that God gave Moses on Mount Sinai. What is the first commandment? (To have no other gods before God.) God gave this commandment because He knows that many people like to worship idols that are not real. These idols cannot save us nor let us go to heaven. Only God has that power, and He wants everyone to be saved. While Moses was on the mountain, the people sinned and broke God's first commandment because they made a golden calf and began to worship it. In the end, Moses rebuked them and God sent a plague onto the people because of their sin. We learned that God is the only true God. He is the Creator of all things and the only one we should worship.

## VOCABULARY

**idol:** an object that is worshipped or adored

**furnace:** a structure in which heat is generated, usually with a fire

## BIBLE STORY

### The Second Commandment

Does anyone remember where Moses was when God gave him the Ten Commandments? (Mount Sinai.) When Moses was on Mount Sinai receiving the Ten Commandments from God, he listened very carefully because they were important. God was very serious when He gave the Ten Commandments to Moses. Why do you think God was very serious? God was very serious because He wanted His chosen people, the Israelites, to obey Him. God gave the first commandment to tell the Israelites that they could only worship Him. Then, God gave the second commandment. Let's find out what the second commandment is. Let's turn to Exodus 20:4-5a. [Have a student read the verses aloud.] God said, "You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them."

These verses record that it is wrong to make or worship idols. Do you know what an idol is? Discuss. (It's okay if the students only mention tangible idols. Non-tangible idols are mentioned in the Life Application section.)

It is wrong to worship idols because when people worship idols, they cannot be truly faithful to God. He is the only true God and that is why people should only worship Him and nothing else. Also, idols are not God. God also said that if the people disobeyed Him, they would be severely punished and would not be blessed by God.

### Idol-Worshippers

Even though God gave the Israelites this commandment not to worship idols, not everyone obeyed God. There were still many people who chose to disobey Him. Some of them were even kings. There were two kings in the northern kingdom of Israel who were famous for

worshipping idols. Their names were King Jeroboam and King Ahab. King Jeroboam even stopped the Israelites from worshipping in Jerusalem by setting up two golden calves in Dan and Bethel. God abandoned him and the kingdom of Israel because they chose to follow idols.

King Ahab married the evil Jezebel, and she introduced the idol Baal to the Israelites. King Ahab rebuilt the idol worship places that his father Hezekiah had destroyed. He constructed altars for Baal, and he bowed down to worship them. Eventually, both King Ahab and Queen Jezebel died terrible deaths: Ahab was killed during a battle even though he tried to disguise himself, and Jezebel was trampled by a horse and her flesh eaten by dogs. They were both punished harshly for worshipping idols and leaving God.

### Worshippers of God

However, not everyone disobeyed God. Many people knew that God was the only true God, so they followed His teachings. Three well-known people who obeyed God were Daniel's three friends: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. They risked their lives in order to obey God. They were taken as prisoners from Judah to Babylon. The king of Babylon was an idol worshipper named Nebuchadnezzar.

One day, King Nebuchadnezzar decided to build a giant golden statue that was ninety feet tall and nine feet wide. He wanted everyone to worship it whenever he played certain music. The Babylonians obeyed and bowed down before the statue when they heard that music. But Daniel's three friends would not. They knew that it was wrong to worship idols. When others found out, they reported it to the king. He was very angry when he learned that they had not obeyed his orders.

The king had them brought before him, and he gave them one last chance to change their minds. If they still

refused, then he would throw them into a fiery furnace.

But the three men were very strong in their faith and bravely answered the king, "We do not need to defend ourselves before you. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve will be able to save us. Even if He doesn't, we still won't serve your god nor worship the idol."

The king was furious when he heard their answer. He ordered the furnace to be heated seven times hotter than usual and had the three men bound with rope. Then they were thrown into the fire! The fire was so hot that it killed the men who had thrown them into the furnace.

Amazingly, the three friends were not hurt at all. The king looked into the furnace and saw that instead of three persons, there were now four. The extra figure looked like an angel. In fact, it was God who had come to save His followers. The king immediately called Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego to come out of the fire. When they came out, they were unharmed and didn't even smell like smoke. King Nebuchadnezzar was shocked. He began to praise the one true God because he realized there was no other God like Him. Imagine that! At first, King Nebuchadnezzar put people to death for not worshipping the idol. But after he saw the miracle, he began to praise God.

After this, the three men were appointed to work in the king's court. Unlike the evil kings who had just been mentioned, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego were obedient and refused to worship idols. Even when King Nebuchadnezzar threatened to throw them into the fiery furnace, they believed and obeyed God's commands. As God had promised to those who listen to His teachings, He protected them and blessed them.

### Worship God

Today, there are many things that can be idols. They might not be tall, shiny, golden statues. They might be other

things or even people. However, if there is a person who should be worshipped above all other things, that person should be Jesus Christ. He is God, and He left wonderful examples for everyone to follow. Jesus showed people how to love, how to have compassion on others, and how to live. When people truly understand the love of God, they will know why He gave the second commandment, and then they will be able to put away all the idols in their lives. God wants everyone to live a righteous life and to go to the heavenly kingdom. He wants to help people by giving these commandments to them to follow. To be truly blessed, everyone should live for Jesus and for Him alone.

### Final Thoughts

What have we learned from the Bible stories today? [Give the students time to think and answer.] We learned that God commanded the Israelites not to worship idols because they are not God. The golden statue that King Nebuchadnezzar made was just a statue. It had no life, it couldn't move, and it wasn't God. God didn't want the Israelites to make and worship idols; He wanted them to worship Him, the one true God. Did all of the Israelites obey God? No, King Ahab and King Jeroboam worshipped idols and were punished by God.

However, not everyone disobeyed God. There were other people who obeyed God and only worshipped Him. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego obeyed God even though their lives were threatened. King Nebuchadnezzar told them that they would be thrown into the fiery furnace if they didn't worship the golden statue, but they still had faith in God. They believed in God's commands and His promises, and they were not hurt when they were thrown into the furnace. We can see that God blesses and protects those who listen to His teachings.

Today, we should do the same thing. We must only worship God. We can do that by putting Jesus first in our lives. When we obey God, we will also be blessed.

## CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. **What is the second commandment?** You shall not bow down to idols nor serve them.
2. **What happened to King Jeroboam and King Ahab because of their idol worshipping?** God punished them.
3. **What did King Nebuchadnezzar want Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego to do?** He wanted them to bow down to the golden statue.
4. **Why were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego thrown into the fiery furnace?** They refused to bow down and worship the golden statue.
5. **King Nebuchadnezzar threatened the three men with death. Would it have been okay for them to worship the golden statue first and then ask for God's forgiveness later?** No. God commanded us to worship Him only. We must believe in God and obey Him. If we believe in His promises, we believe that He will protect us.
6. **Is it okay to worship a good idol?** No, there is no such thing as a good idol. Idols are not God. We should only be worshipping the one true God.
7. **Whom does God want us to worship?** He wants us to worship Him with all our heart.
8. **What are some of the idols you face today?** Answers may vary.
9. **What can we do to overcome the temptation of worshipping idols?** We can read the Bible to know God's words, believe in God's commandments and His promises, and pray to and ask God for strength.



## MEMORY VERSE PRACTICE

Please reinforce the memory verse every week.  
You can practice the memory verse with your students anytime during class.

**“Yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him.” (1 Corinthians 8:6a)**

## SPIRITUAL TEACHING & LIFE APPLICATION

### Do Not Worship Idols

Let's turn to Exodus 20:3. [Ask students to read aloud together.] “You shall have no other gods before Me.” Now, take a closer look at the word “gods.” Is the letter “g” capitalized? No, it isn't. What does this tell us? [Let students think and share their answers.] These “gods” are different than our God, with a capital “G.” [Write “gods” and “God” on the board so that your students can visualize the difference.] Many people believe that some things are “gods,” but they are merely idols, objects blindly worshipped as gods. They are powerless. Let's turn to a passage in the Bible, Psalm 115:4-7:

*“Their idols are silver and gold,  
The work of men's hands.  
They have mouths, but they do not speak;  
Eyes they have, but they do not see;  
They have ears, but they do not hear;  
Noses they have, but they do not smell;  
They have hands, but they do not handle;  
Feet they have, but they do not walk;  
Nor do they mutter through their throat.”*

In contrast to our God, who is the Creator of the universe, an idol, such as the golden calf the Israelites made for themselves, is made by human hands. An idol can never be a real “god.” We, too, can build something that has a mouth, eyes, nose, hands, and feet, but we cannot give life to it. After God made Adam, the first human ever created, the Bible said that He “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being” (Gen 2:7). God is the only God who can give life. Other so-called “gods,” on the contrary, are all manmade idols without life.

The idols in today's lesson were the golden statue and other carved images. However, we might not see them very often these days. In this generation, other kinds of idols are more common. What does that mean? What could be idols today?

Today, an idol is anything that we put before God because we think that it's more important than God. Let's read the second commandment again: “You shall have no other gods before Me.” The word “before” indicates a level of

importance. God doesn't want us to place anything we deem important above Him. He doesn't want us to spend more time on things other than worshipping Him! You may ask, how is that possible? Yes, you may spend more time at school than you do at church. But worshipping God comes in many forms. Do you pray every morning when you wake up? When something good happens to you, do you give thanks to God in your heart? When you have to make a decision, do you ask God for His wisdom? When you do something wrong, do you repent? When you need help, do you think about asking God for it? When you have something to share, happy or unhappy, do you talk to God about it? If you do all these things I just asked, there is no doubt that you spend a lot of time worshipping God every day.

Sadly, many people don't have a habit of doing these things. Instead, they constantly place their focus on things other than God. For example, all day they think about making money, playing video games, or watching their favorite TV shows. This doesn't mean that money, video games, or TV shows are necessarily idols. They only become idols if we put them above God and spend more time and energy on them than on God. Moreover, being a worshipper of God certainly doesn't mean that we shouldn't do these things. Making money is important; we need money to survive. Likewise, playing video games or watching TV could be a healthy form of entertainment. But again, they could easily become modern-day idols if we spend excessive time and energy on these things. Let me share with you one example:

After working in the same company for some time, Janice felt that her work experience could get her a better-paying job. She went to a few companies for a job interview, in hopes that she could get a new job. A few weeks later, Janice received two job offers. The two offers had similar job descriptions, but they differed in their pay. The first company was offering her \$40,000 a year, and the second, \$50,000. The second company offered her higher pay because the job required Janice to work occasionally on the weekends, including Saturdays. So, this is what Janice thought to herself:

"If the second company is willing to pay me \$50,000 a year, that means my experience is worth more than what the first company is offering me. Why should I work for a company that doesn't pay me what my experience is worth? Moreover, they only said that I may have to work on occasionally on the weekends, which means that I will probably have to work on Saturdays only once in a while. I won't be skipping church services too often. It's not that bad! I'm sure God will understand."

### Reflection Questions

- 1. What are the idols in Janice's heart?** Money and a better-paying job that pays her according to her work experience are the idols in Janice's heart.
- 2. Why is money an idol for Janice?** Money is an idol for Janice because she is willing to give up observing Sabbath once in a while for a better-paying job. It is one of God's commandments to keep the Sabbath, and we should never put this day for God at risk.

Here is the another example:

For the last two weeks, Henry attended the Student Spiritual Convocation at church. On the first day, many of the SSC students were not very focused yet since they were still adjusting to the event. During lunch and dinnertime, they would be talking about things other than the SSC. But thank God, after the first and second day, all the students became a lot more focused, both in their learning and prayers. There was one exception, though, and this was Henry.

Henry loves watching TV. Every day, he watches TV from the time he gets home from school to the time he has dinner. After dinner, he watches TV again until his bedtime. Show after show, he never gets bored of watching TV. During the SSC, Henry was always thinking about the TV shows he watches every day. Many times, he got anxious and lost focus during a lesson because he kept thinking about how he was missing his shows. He never felt close to God during the SSC and didn't do so well on his tests. When it was over, Henry was very happy that the SSC had ended because he could finally go home and watch all of the TV recordings from the past two weeks.

### Reflection Questions

- 1. What are the idols in Henry's heart?** The television and his favorite shows are the idols in Henry's heart.
- 2. Why is the television an idol for Henry?** TV is an idol for Henry because he thinks excessively about watching his favorite TV shows when he is supposed to be learning the word of God. During the SSC, Henry should have been very focused in his learning and prayers, just like his friends were. However, Henry failed

to place God's wisdom above his favorite TV shows. At the end, he didn't have any regrets that he didn't do well on his tests. All he cared was that he could finally go home and watch TV again.

From these examples, we should be reminded not to let the things we like take the place of God. We should spend more time worshipping and praising God, rather than pursuing after what we like all the time. In order not to idolize things, we must have self-control. Let's say that we are playing our favorite video game. When our parents tell us that time is up, we must stop. If we feel like we can't stop playing the game, then we know that the video game has a very high potential of becoming an idol. And when does it really become one? [Let students answer.] It becomes an idol when we prioritize the video game above God.

Now, we know that worshipping idols is a sin in God's eyes because He has commanded us to have no other gods before Him. In the Bible, idol worshipping is also known as "idolatry." [Write the word "idolatry" on the board and ask your students to read it aloud a few times in order to familiarize themselves with this vocabulary word.] So, what does the Bible say about idolatry? What can we do to prevent ourselves from becoming an idol worshipper? Let's take a look at a few examples.

Ephesians 5:5 records that a covetous man is an "idolater." [Write the word "idolater" on the board.] To be covetous means to be greedy. An "idolater" is a person who worships idols. Why do you think that a covetous man is an idolater? In other words, why can the love of money lead us to become an idol worshipper? [Let students think and then have them share their answers.] If someone is greedy, he is probably not happy with what he has and wants more. For him, something other than God is his top priority, so that thing is an idol.

In order for us to be a true worshipper of God with no idols in our hearts, we need to be content with what we have. One way to do so is to always give thanks to God for everything that He has given us. Compared to many people in third world countries, or even in this country, we have a lot. Wanting something is not the best feeling. Instead of thinking about what we desire, we should focus on what we already have and be content with it. Ephesians 5:20 encourages us to give "thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Not only does giving thanks please our heavenly Father, it also helps us maintain a pure heart with God as the central focus in our lives. Now, use the next minute to list the many blessings that you have received from God (e.g., loving parents, friends, food, shelter, etc.).

OK, now take a moment to think about something that

we each really, really like. [Give students a moment to think.] How much time and energy do you spend on this thing? Does it take away the time and energy you would usually spend on God? How much self-control do you have? [Give students a minute to think and then have them share.] Once again, we can see that having self-control keeps us separated from idols. In fact, self-control is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. We can always pray for the Spirit of God to fill us so that we can have more self-control. When we do so, the Holy Spirit will help us stop thinking or acting upon our excessive desires. Let me share a testimony with you:

Every day, Sean is allowed to play video games for an hour after dinner if he has already finished all his homework. Last week, Sean had so much homework that he didn't get a chance to play at all for the entire week. Today, Sean finally got a chance to play. As soon as he finished dinner, he jumped on the couch and turned his video games on. Time flew and an hour passed. Then Sean's mom came to talk to him:

**Mom:** "Time's up! You need to go get ready for bed."

**Sean:** "No! I didn't get to play at all last week. I should get more time to play this week! One more game, please?!"

**Mom:** "I understand. But you have school very early tomorrow morning and it's close to your bedtime now. It's time to turn it off."

**Sean:** "Well, it's close to my bedtime. If I skip reading the Bible and praying tonight, I can play for another twenty minutes and then go to sleep!"

**Mom:** "No, it's not right for you to do that. Your

priorities are wrong. Let me ask you, what is your priority? God, or your video games?"

**Sean:** "...God. You're right, Mom. I shouldn't use my time for God on video games. It's just that I haven't played for so long that I feel like I haven't played enough tonight. I should go pray now to repent and ask God to help take away my excessive desire for video games. The more I play, the less I have for reading the Bible and praying to God. If you didn't tell me to stop tonight, like many other nights before, I would have kept playing until I was too tired to do anything else."

That night, Sean's mom prayed and read the Bible with Sean. They talked about ways that could help Sean draw closer to God so that he could overcome his desire for video games with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Students, what are some things we can do that can help us draw closer to God? Well, one thing we can most definitely do is to invest more time in worshipping God on a daily basis. For example, we can sing hymns to praise God, giving thanks by remembering what He has given us (Ps 30:4), read the Bible regularly to learn about His wisdom, share a favorite verse with someone, pray to Him, or even talk to Him about anything and everything, as if you were talking to your dearest friend. God is pleased when we do these things because, by putting Him above everything else, we are showing how much we care about our relationship with Him. The closer we are to God, the further away we are from idols. "You shall have no other gods before Me." Let's begin following this commandment by putting God first in our lives!

## HOMWORK ANSWER KEY

1. B
2. False; do not worship idols is the second commandment.
3. False; there are many different kinds of idols.
4. True
5. False; God punished them and they died terrible deaths.
6. False; they refused to worship the idol.
7. False; they came out unharmed.
8. golden calves; God
9. God
10. Answers may vary.

## ACTIVITY

1

## Be Brave / Part A

**Objective:** To help the students identify ways to put God first in their lives and to help them not let any idols take the place of God.

**Instructions:** Read the following sentences and look at the pictures. These people are going to attend Bible camp but they are not acting like they want to worship God and put Him first in their lives. What is holding them back? How can they change? Discuss each case as a class.

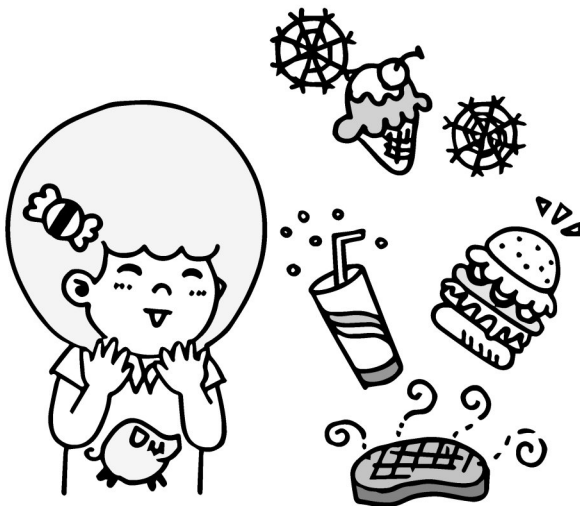
"I don't want to miss my favorite television show."



"My best friend can't go, so I won't have any fun."



"They probably don't have delicious food."



"I just bought a new computer game that I want to play, so I can't go."

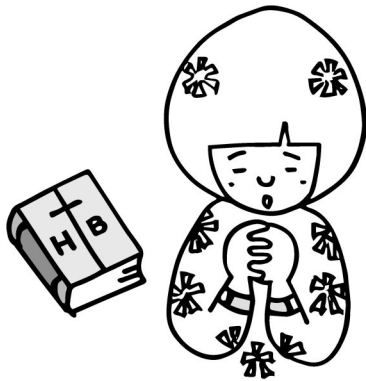




Be Brave / Part B

**Instructions:** Are there things that are keeping you from putting God first in your life? Check the statements below to tell yourself what you need to do to help you worship God. Is there anything else you can do?

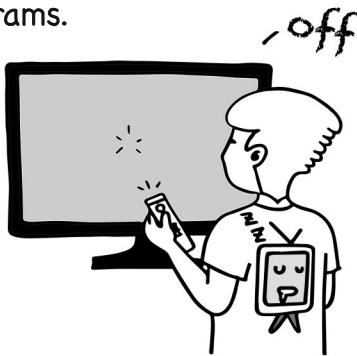
Read my Bible and pray to God every day to thank Him.



Give some of my money to church as an offering.



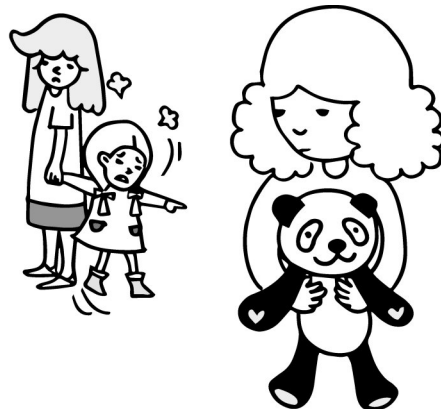
Stop watching so many television programs.



Use my time to help other people.

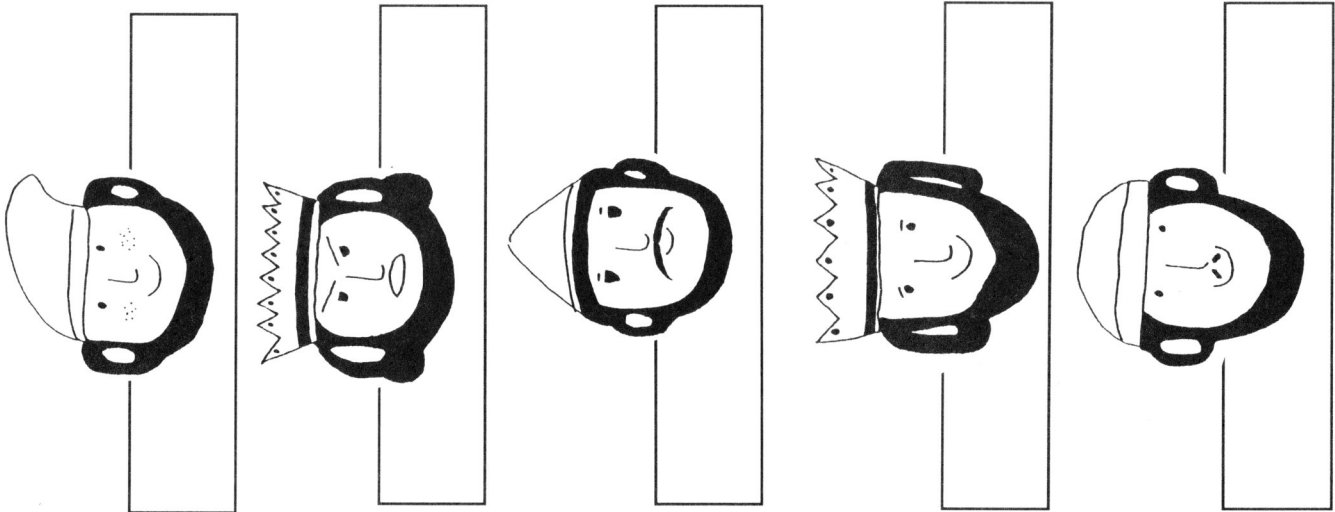


Give and share my things with the needy.





2

**Worshipping God Role-Play****Objective:** To help students recall the story of the three brave followers of God.**Instructions:** Use the puppets or props to role-play the story of Daniel's three friends. Show how God delivered them when they chose to worship Him at all costs. The teacher can draw out a furnace or ask the students to imagine one.

3

**Remember the Commandments / Optional****Objective:** To use classroom decorations to remind the students of the commandments they have learned.**Instructions**

Since this quarter's lessons focus on the Ten Commandments, it would be nice to decorate the classroom with each commandment. These decorations will also serve to remind the students how to obey God.

Have the students write out the commandment that they learned in this lesson on a piece of construction paper and decorate it to make it meaningful. After the students are done, the teacher can put the commandment on a classroom wall for all the students to see.

This lesson's commandment is: **"2. You shall not bow down to idols nor serve them."**

E1 Year 3 Book 1 Lesson 2—Do Not Worship Idols

# Homework Assignment

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Bible Truth:** God commanded us not to worship idols.

**Lesson Objectives:** To put God first in our lives and to obey God's commands with faith and courage.

**Bible Reading:** Please put a check mark in the space when you complete the reading each day.

**Prayer:** Please put a check mark in the space provided on the days you prayed to God.

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Bible Reading							
Prayer							

## Memory Verse

Please write down this week's memory verse.

(1 Corinthians 8:6a)

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## What I Learned from the Bible This Week

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

# Homework Assignment

*Understanding What You Have Learned*

## Multiple Choice

1. \_\_\_\_\_ : Why is it wrong to worship idols?
  - a. Some Israelites worshipped idols.
  - b. God commanded us not to worship idols because they are not God.
  - c. Some idols are golden.

## True or False

2. "You shall not bow down to idols nor serve them" is the third commandment. \_\_\_\_\_
3. There is only one kind of idol and that is the golden statue. \_\_\_\_\_
4. King Ahab married the evil Jezebel, and she introduced the idol Baal to the Israelites. King Ahab rebuilt the idol worship places that his father Hezekiah had destroyed. He constructed altars for Baal and bowed to them. \_\_\_\_\_
5. King Jeroboam and King Ahab weren't punished harshly. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego bowed down to the golden statue. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego were only burned a little bit when they came out of the fiery furnace.  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Fill In the Blank

God    golden calves    God
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8. King Jeroboam set up two \_\_\_\_\_ and stopped the Israelites from worshipping \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Besides Daniel's three friends, \_\_\_\_\_ was also in the fiery furnace.

## Life Application

10. List 3 ways we can put God first in our lives.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_