

GRADES  
K-6

# MOSES & THE GOLDEN CALF IDOL

Printable Lesson Kit



**M**  **GHTY MESSAGES**

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# MOSES & THE GOLDEN CALF IDOL

## LESSON OVERVIEW

### MOSES & THE GOLDEN CALF IDOL MIGHTY MESSAGES

This Lesson on Moses' and God's response to the golden calf idol will shed light on God's anger. It is quite real; it can be set off. But it is not easy to ignite. God is longsuffering, and an insider's view can show why worshipping things other than God is hurtful to him, his loved ones, and to ourselves!

#### How to Use the Lesson Kit:

This kit includes a variety of activities that you can select from to customize your perfect lesson. We suggest beginning with the Scripture Reading & Lesson followed by the Discussion Questions. From there, feel free to mix & match the activities to build your lesson plan based on the time you have allotted and the age level/interests of your kids.



#### WHAT'S INCLUDED:

- Scripture Reading & Lesson
- Discussion Questions
- Printable Craft
- Game
- Coloring Page
- Wordsearch
- Crossword Puzzle
- Learning Lookups Journaling
- Parent Handout
- Quiz
- Reference Sheet
- Certificate of Completion
- Answer Page



#### MATERIALS LIST:

- Crayons
- Glue sticks
- Scissors
- Moderately sized rope like a clothesline, eight feet long (game)
- Blindfolds, enough for half of your students (game)
- Cell phone with a camera and timer (game)
- Pencils or pens
- Bibles (electronic or hardcopy)

# MOSES & THE GOLDEN CALF IDOL

## SCRIPTURE & LESSON

### PASSAGE : EXODUS 32

Read the following excerpts as shown (NIV translation), or read from your chosen Bible translation:



### Exodus 32

When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, “Come, make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don’t know what has happened to him.”

<sup>2</sup> Aaron answered them, “Take off the gold earrings that your wives, your sons and your daughters are wearing, and bring them to me.” <sup>3</sup> So all the people took off their earrings and brought them to Aaron. <sup>4</sup> He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with a tool. Then they said, “These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.”

<sup>5</sup> When Aaron saw this, he built an altar in front of the calf and announced, “Tomorrow there will be a festival to the Lord.” <sup>6</sup> So the next day the people rose early and sacrificed burnt offerings and presented fellowship offerings. Afterward they sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry.

<sup>7</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses, “Go down, because your people, whom you brought up out of Egypt, have become corrupt. <sup>8</sup> They have been quick to turn away from what I commanded them and have made themselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf. They have bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and have said, ‘These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.’

<sup>9</sup> “I have seen these people,” the Lord said to Moses, “and they are a stiff-necked people. <sup>10</sup> Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation.”

<sup>11</sup> But Moses sought the favor of the Lord his God. “Lord,” he said, “why should your anger burn against your people, whom you brought out of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand? <sup>12</sup> Why should the Egyptians say, ‘It was with evil intent that he brought them out, to kill them in the mountains and to wipe them off the face of the earth’? Turn from your fierce anger; relent and do not bring disaster on your people. <sup>13</sup> Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Israel, to whom you swore by your own self: ‘I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and I will give your descendants all this land I promised them, and it will be their inheritance forever.’” <sup>14</sup> Then the Lord relented and did not bring on his people the disaster he had threatened.



## Exodus 32

<sup>15</sup> Moses turned and went down the mountain with the two tablets of the covenant law in his hands. They were inscribed on both sides, front and back. <sup>16</sup> The tablets were the work of God; the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets.

<sup>17</sup> When Joshua heard the noise of the people shouting, he said to Moses, “There is the sound of war in the camp.”

<sup>18</sup> Moses replied:

“It is not the sound of victory,  
it is not the sound of defeat;  
it is the sound of singing that I hear.”

<sup>19</sup> When Moses approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, his anger burned and he threw the tablets out of his hands, breaking them to pieces at the foot of the mountain. <sup>20</sup> And he took the calf the people had made and burned it in the fire; then he ground it to powder, scattered it on the water and made the Israelites drink it.

<sup>21</sup> He said to Aaron, “What did these people do to you, that you led them into such great sin?”

<sup>22</sup> “Do not be angry, my lord,” Aaron answered. “You know how prone these people are to evil. <sup>23</sup> They said to me, ‘Make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don’t know what has happened to him.’ <sup>24</sup> So I told them, ‘Whoever has any gold jewelry, take it off.’ Then they gave me the gold, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf!”

<sup>25</sup> Moses saw that the people were running wild and that Aaron had let them get out of control and so become a laughingstock to their enemies. <sup>26</sup> So he stood at the entrance to the camp and said, “Whoever is for the Lord, come to me.” And all the Levites rallied to him.

<sup>27</sup> Then he said to them, “This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘Each man strap a sword to his side. Go back and forth through the camp from one end to the other, each killing his brother and friend and neighbor.’” <sup>28</sup> The Levites did as Moses commanded, and that day about three thousand of the people died. <sup>29</sup> Then Moses said, “You have been set apart to the Lord today, for you were against your own sons and brothers, and he has blessed you this day.”

<sup>30</sup> The next day Moses said to the people, “You have committed a great sin. But now I will go up to the Lord; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.”

<sup>31</sup> So Moses went back to the Lord and said, “Oh, what a great sin these people have committed! They have made themselves gods of gold. <sup>32</sup> But now, please forgive their sin—but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written.”

<sup>33</sup> The Lord replied to Moses, “Whoever has sinned against me I will blot out of my book. <sup>34</sup> Now go, lead the people to the place I spoke of, and my angel will go before you. However, when the time comes for me to punish, I will punish them for their sin.”

<sup>35</sup> And the Lord struck the people with a plague because of what they did with the calf Aaron had made.

## Questions for Children about Moses & the Golden Calf Idol

1. Verses 1 and 23 both tell us why the people built the golden calf idol. What was their reason? **Moses stayed in the mountains a long time, and they thought he had died or deserted them. Later passages tell us that Moses was on the mountain 40 days.** There's a saying among Christians: "God usually takes longer than we expect to deliver one of his promises." How does that saying relate to the situation in this story? **The people were unwilling to wait as long as God wanted them to wait for Moses to return with their laws, their greater understanding of him.**

2. Bible scholars estimate that the number of people who left Israel on the Exodus was around 2.4 million. On this day, God ordered the Levites to kill their own friends and relatives who were involved. The Levites ended up killing 3,000 people. Twenty-thousand people would only be one percent. But this is still a lot of people.

This is one of the more difficult passages in the Old Testament to understand. Why would God allow 3,000 people to die in a day? What good would it do for the millions who remained? If they were to eventually survive as their own nation, what kind of people would the Israelites need to be? **Strong. People who can't wait 40 days are not strong. People who are quick to worship idols are not strong. People who can't rely on God are not strong. People who follow the crowd into terrible behaviors are not strong.**

3. Does this story make God too scary? Should we be worried about him getting angry at us? Why or why not? **The Bible says God is SLOW to anger. He IS slow to anger. Children don't have to worry about God being made angry enough to kill one of them. These people were being sissies and babies when their very ability to survive required courage and growth.**



## TEACHER'S MIGHTY MESSAGE

Let's take a look at this sin the Israelites committed and see why it was so awful. At the time of the idol worship, the Hebrew people had been in the desert for a matter of only months. Before they left Egypt, they got to watch 10 different ways God stood up for them with the bad guys:

God struck the waters of the Nile for them and turned it to blood. That was the first of 10 plagues the people got to witness. Their own water was untouched. God released frogs, flies, lice, locusts on the Egyptian captors so they would stop being stubborn and let the people go. The Egyptians lost animals and children, yet God made sure the Hebrew animals and children didn't get touched.

Then, God parted a big body of water, the Red Sea, so they could escape from Egypt. They were able to see the Egyptian army get drowned. They were able to see the light of angels who went before them and protected them from behind.

Yet three months later, they were no longer able to believe. They lost their faith that quickly.

These were the first recorded miracles in human history. The people were clear from the start that God would use miraculous means to gain their trust. At the time they built the idol, God was still dropping bread and birds from the sky daily so they wouldn't fret about having enough food.

Yet, because they waited for Moses for 40 days and he hadn't come down off Mount Sinai yet, they decide this God doesn't exist?

This wasn't just insulting. It was dangerous. God knew they would have to rely on him if they were going to become a nation and survive, surrounded by some of the most brutal nations in history.

This is not the only time in the Bible that God allowed for the deaths of some to protect and strengthen others. God is a God of love and passionate feelings. The only people who have to be concerned about God's anger are those who don't believe it.





### MATERIALS:

- Golden Calf Printable Craft Template
- White Cardstock or Gold Cardstock
- Coloring Utensils
- Scissors
- Glue Stick



### PREPARATION:

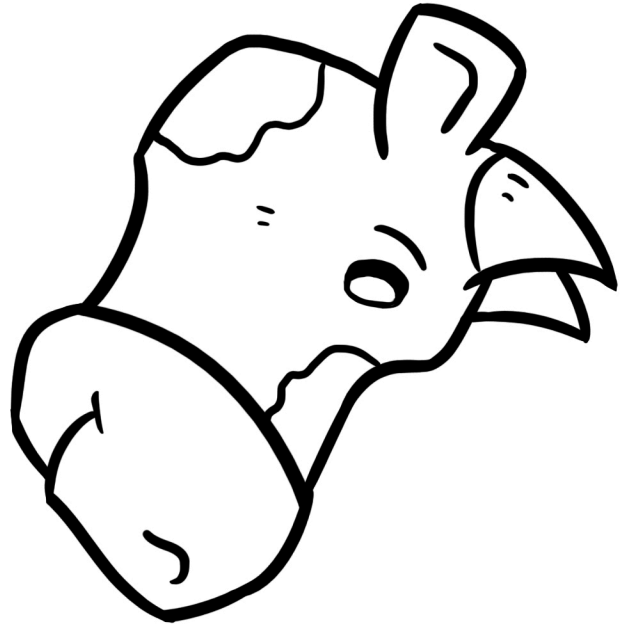
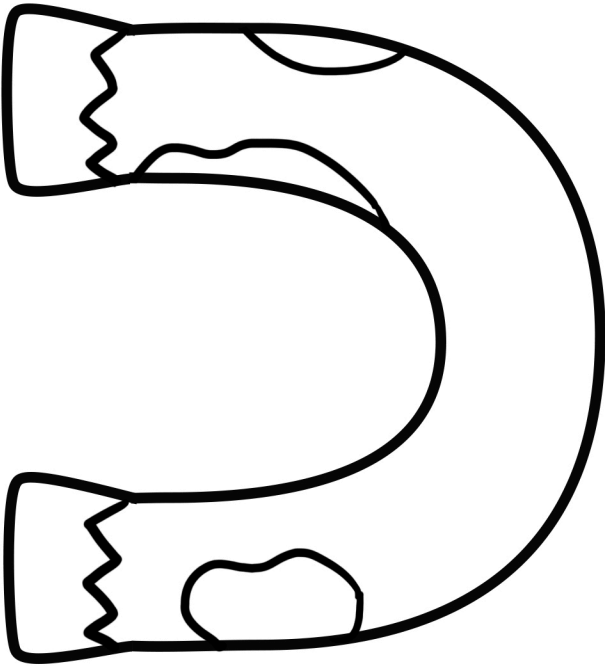
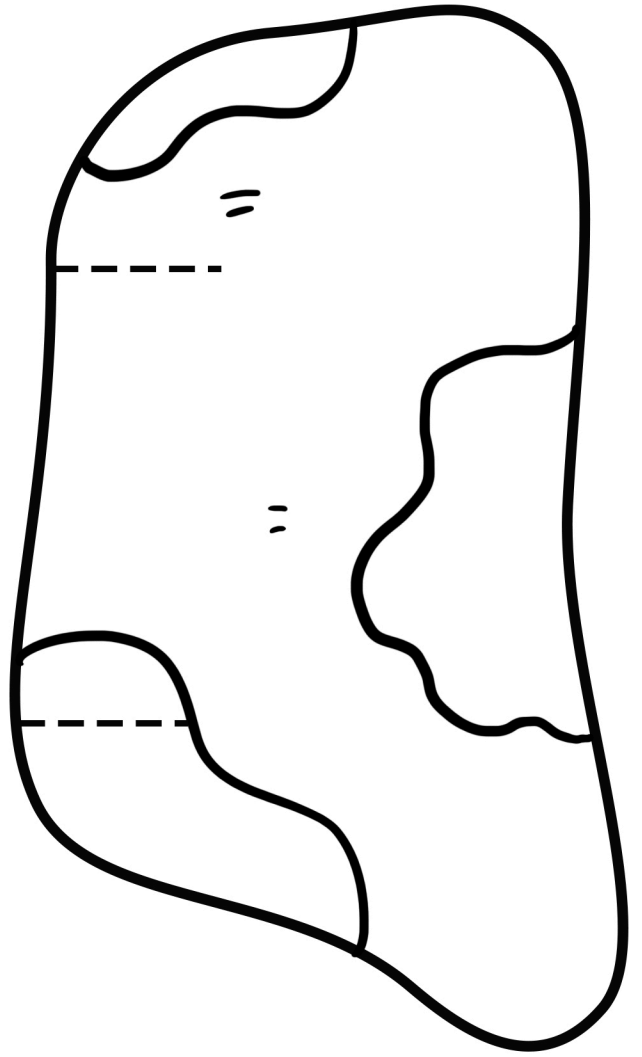
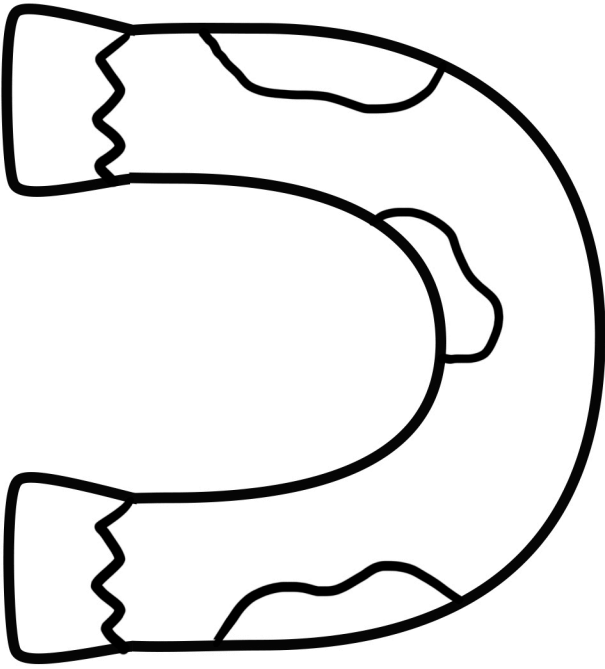
1. Print out a copy of the printable craft for each student, which includes one regular and one reverse side. (You can select from the 3 Calf template options- Black & White, Color, and Golden)

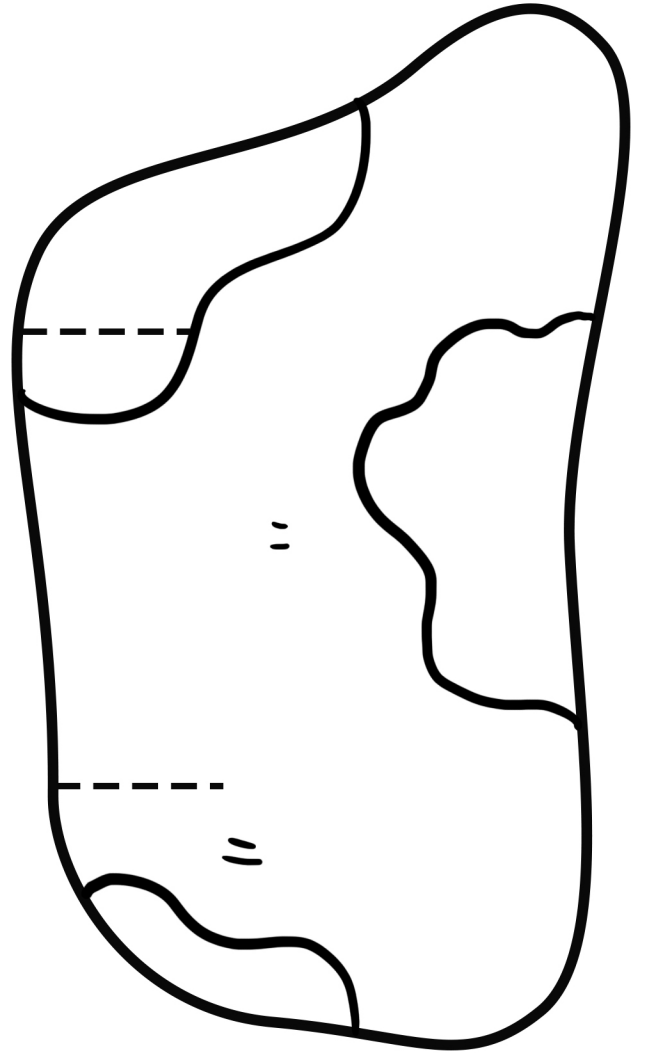
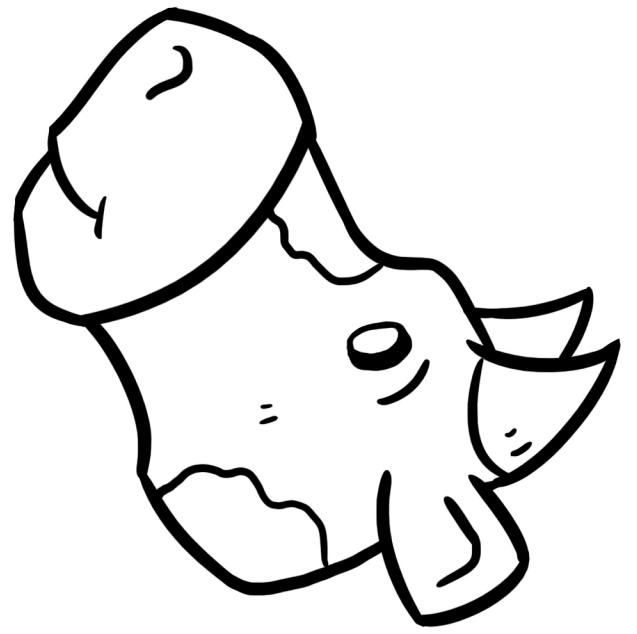
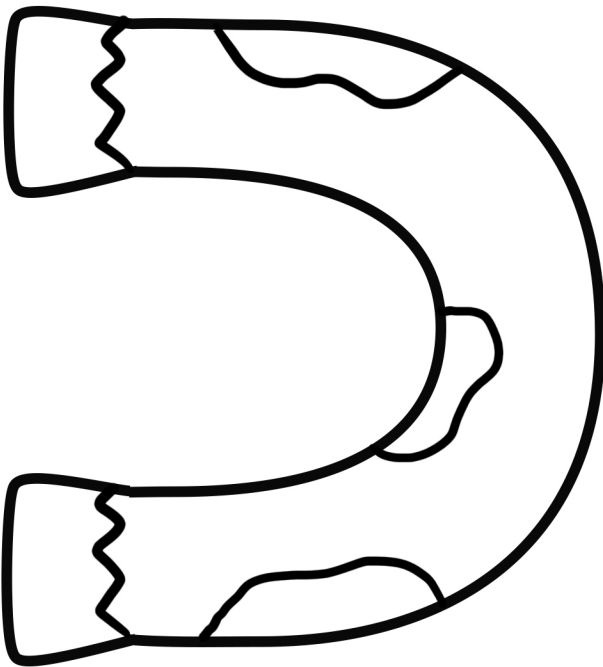
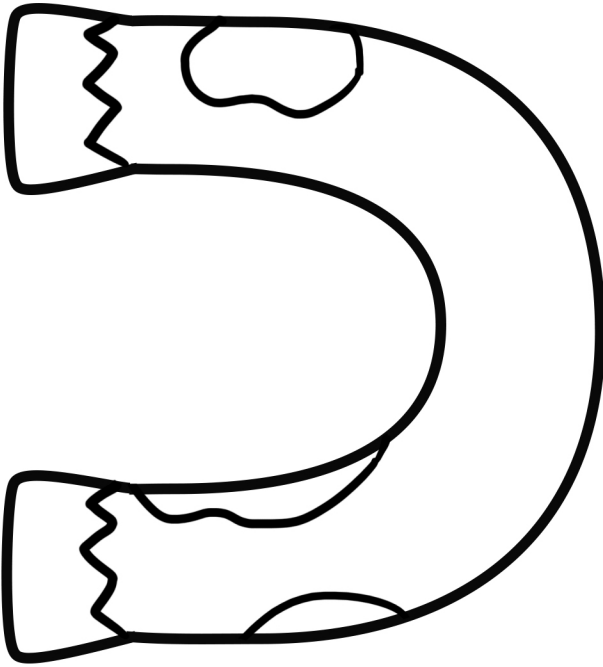
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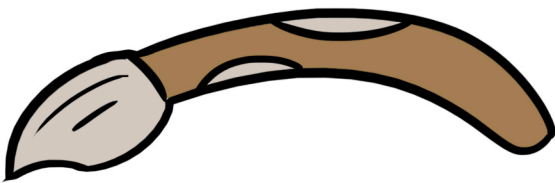
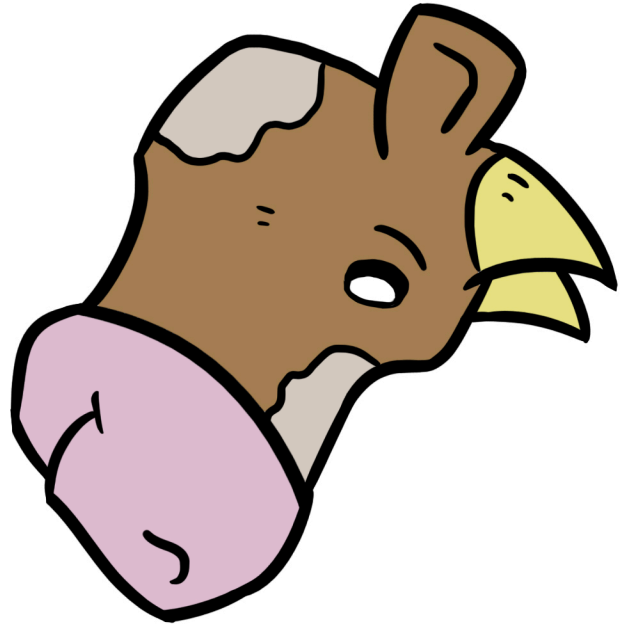
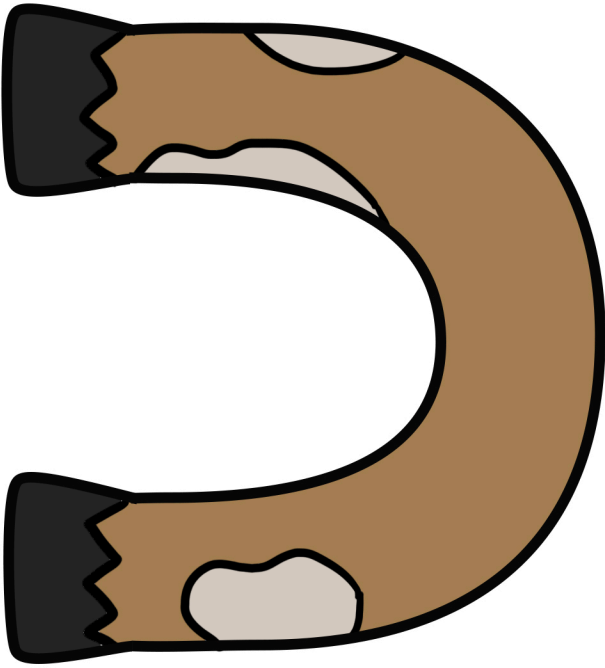
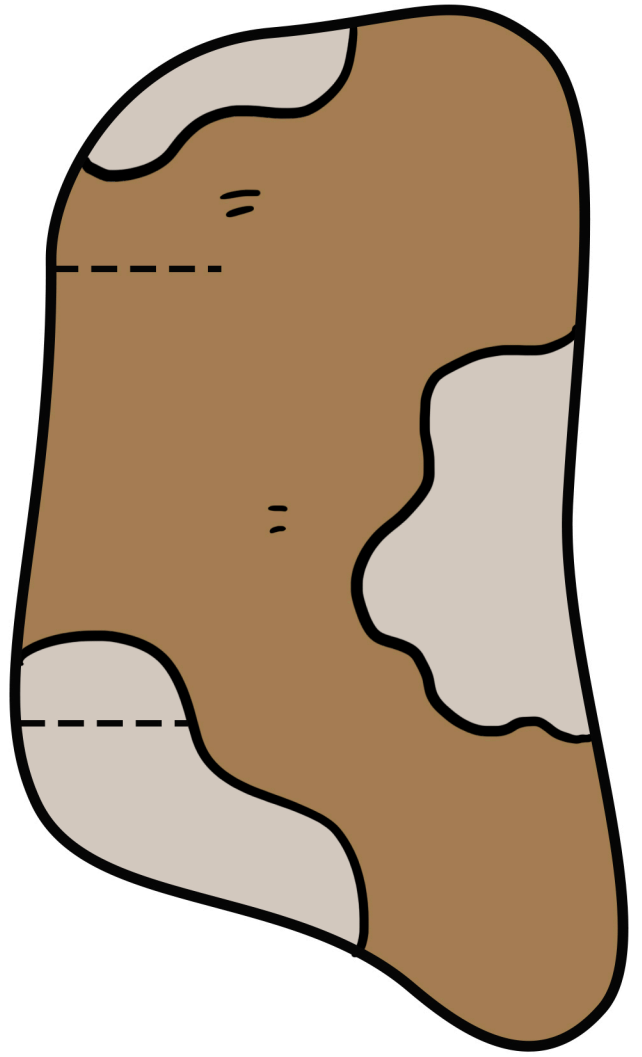
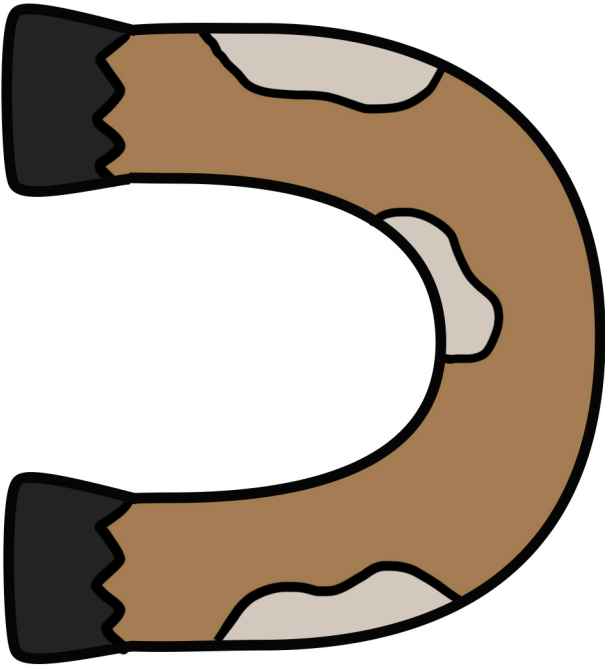
1. Cut out Calf Pieces for both regular and reverse sides
2. Glue Tail and Reverse Tail together, then Legs and Reverse Legs together
3. Glue Head to Body on one side, then flip over and glue Tail piece to the inside. Glue reverse Body Piece on top, and then finish by gluing Reverse Head on top.
4. Cut slits on dotted lines for Leg Pieces
5. Insert Leg pieces and stand up Calf

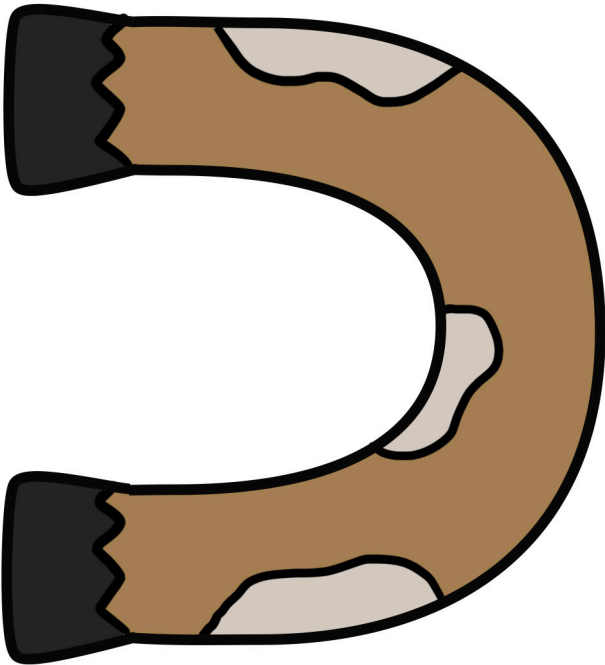
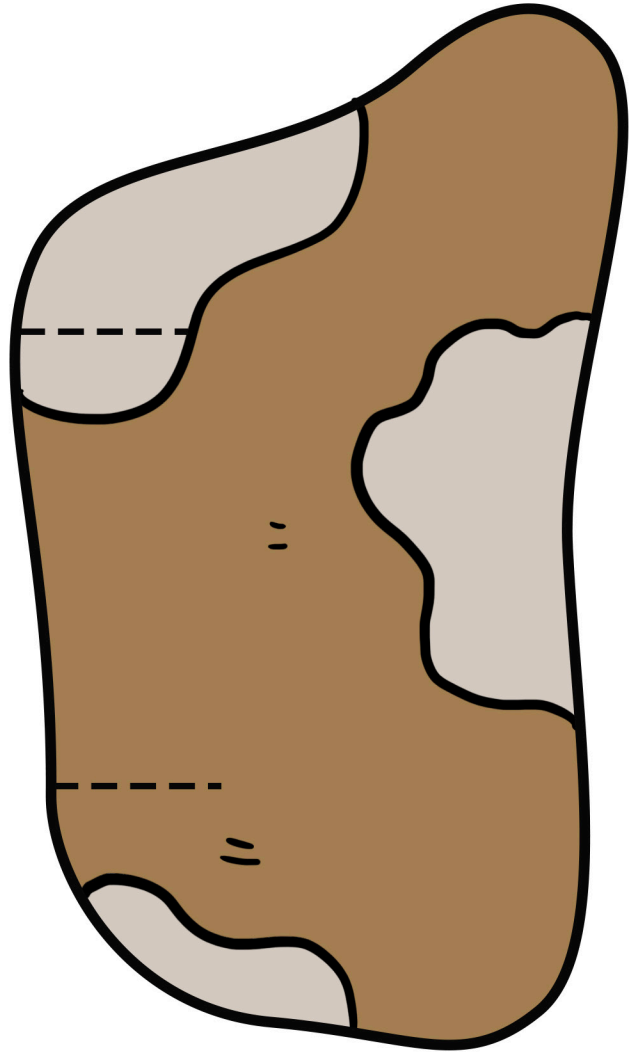
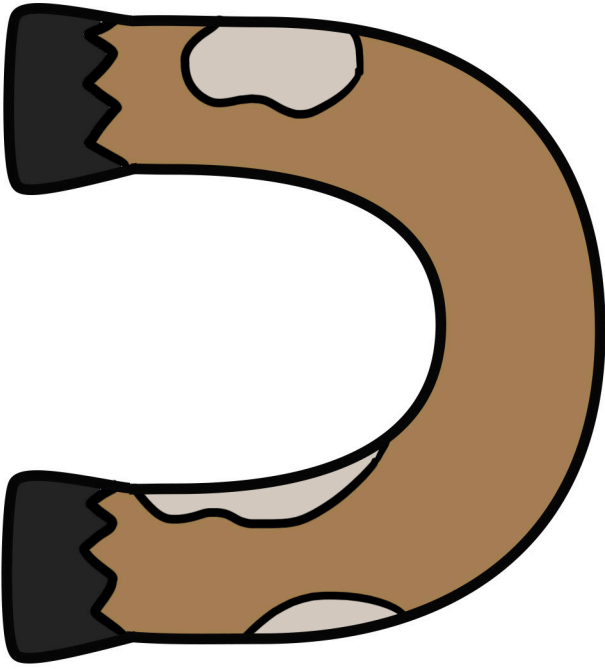
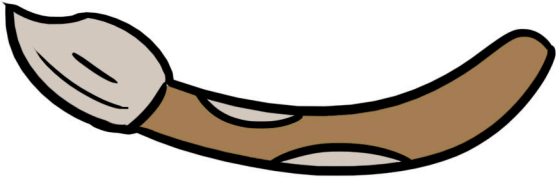


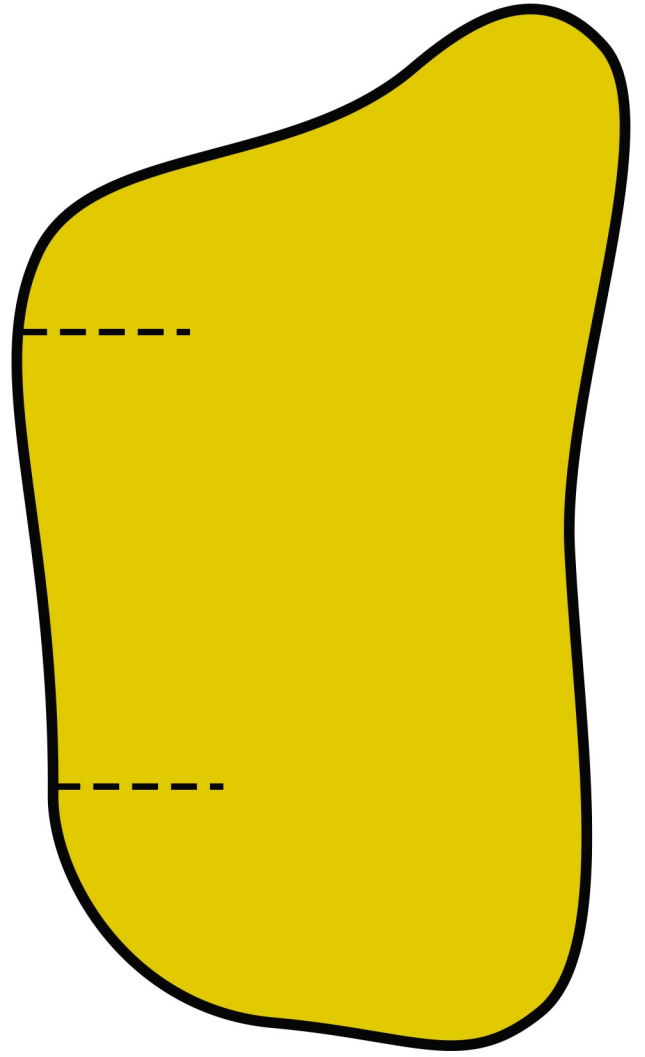
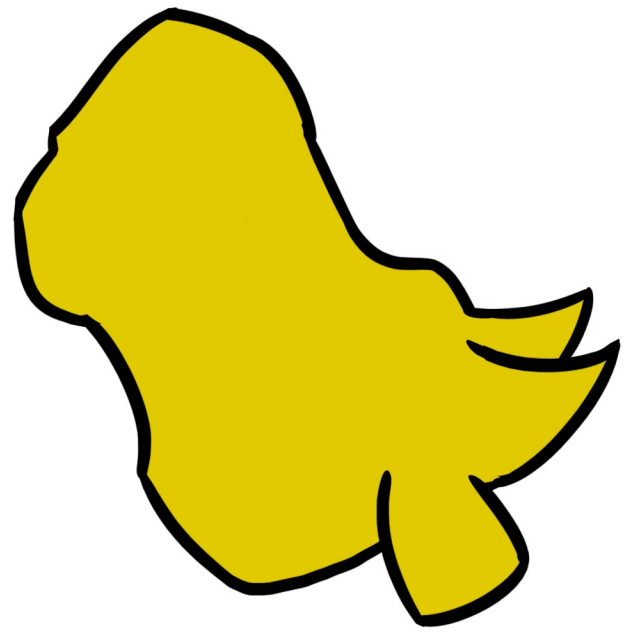
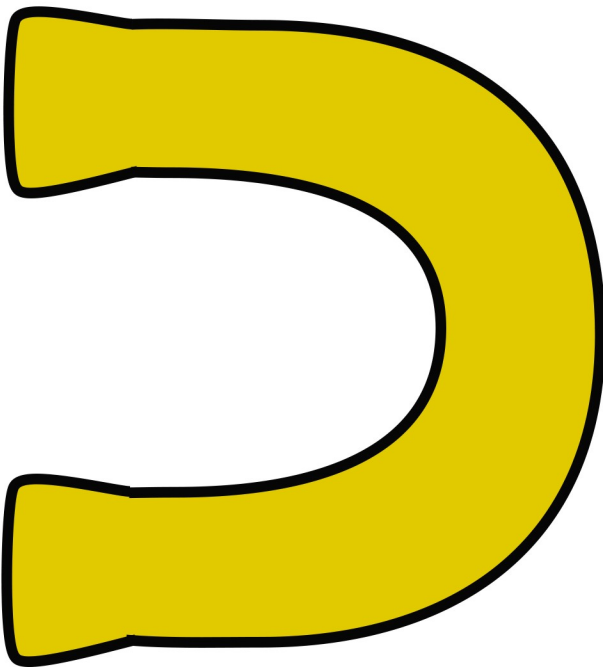
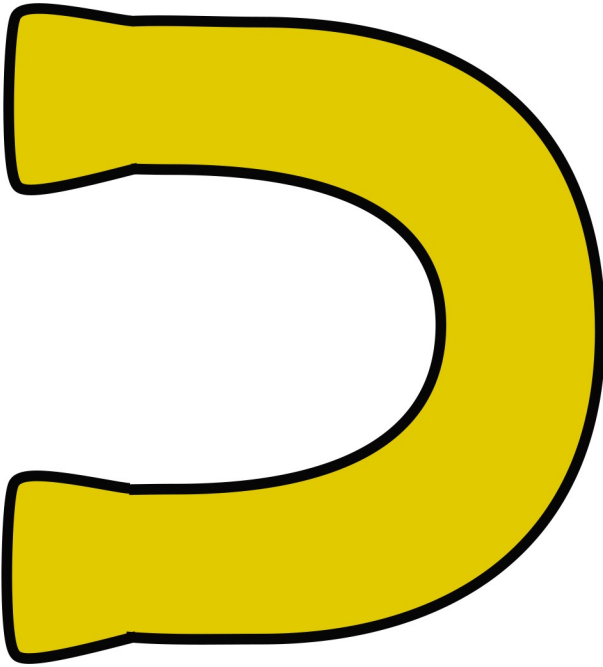
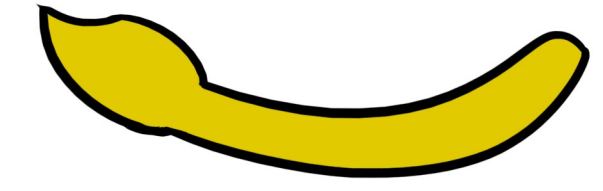


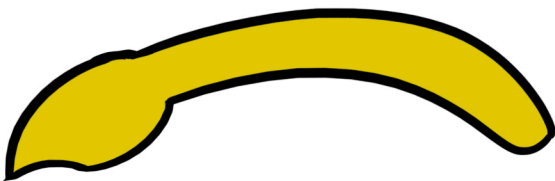
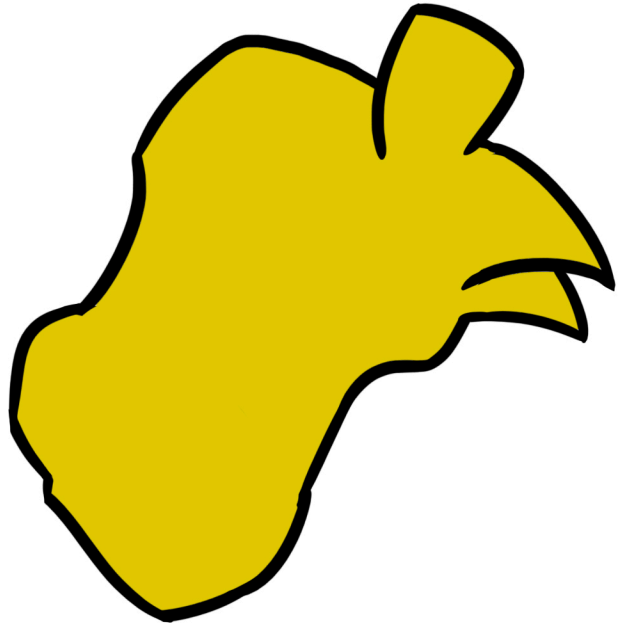
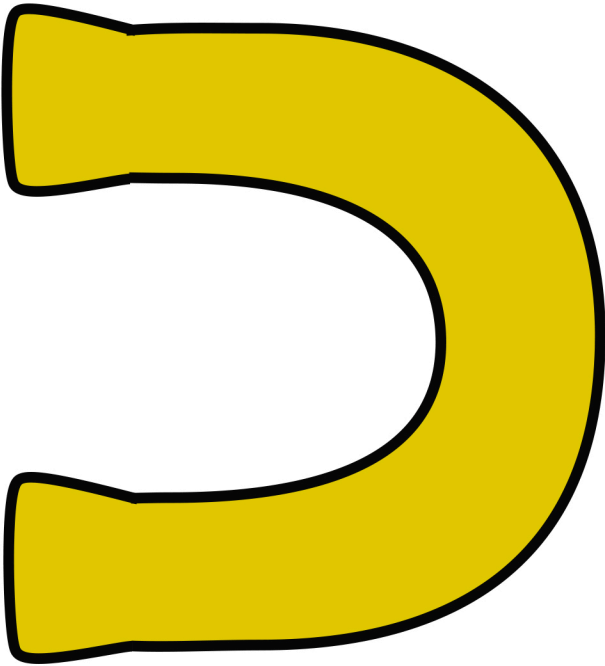
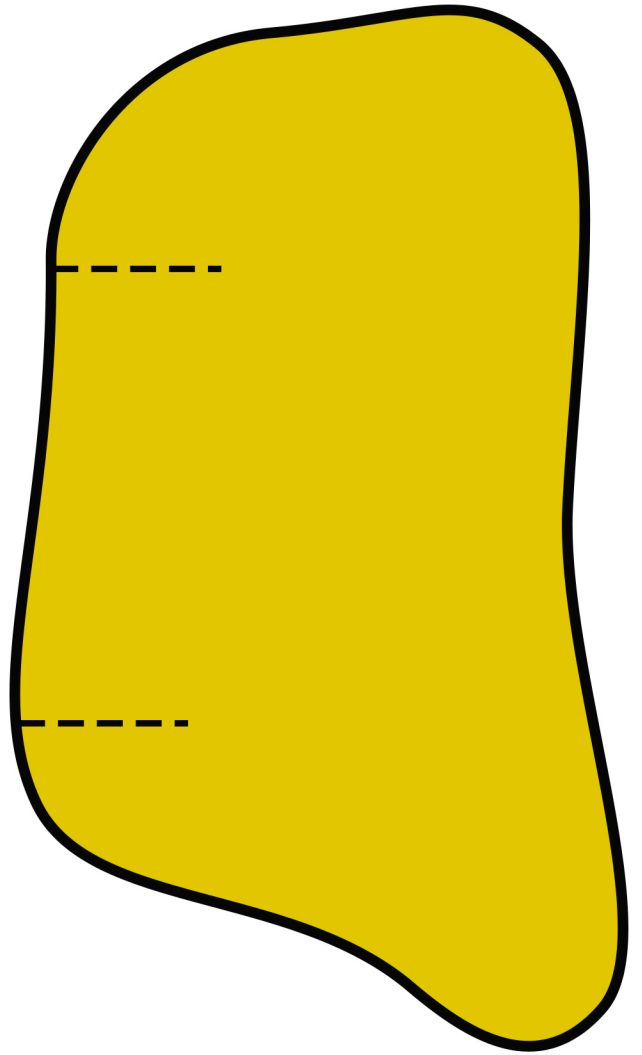
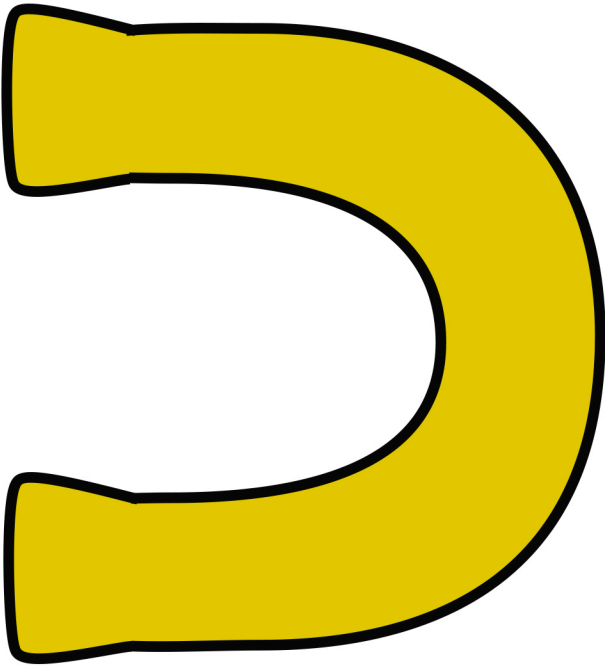








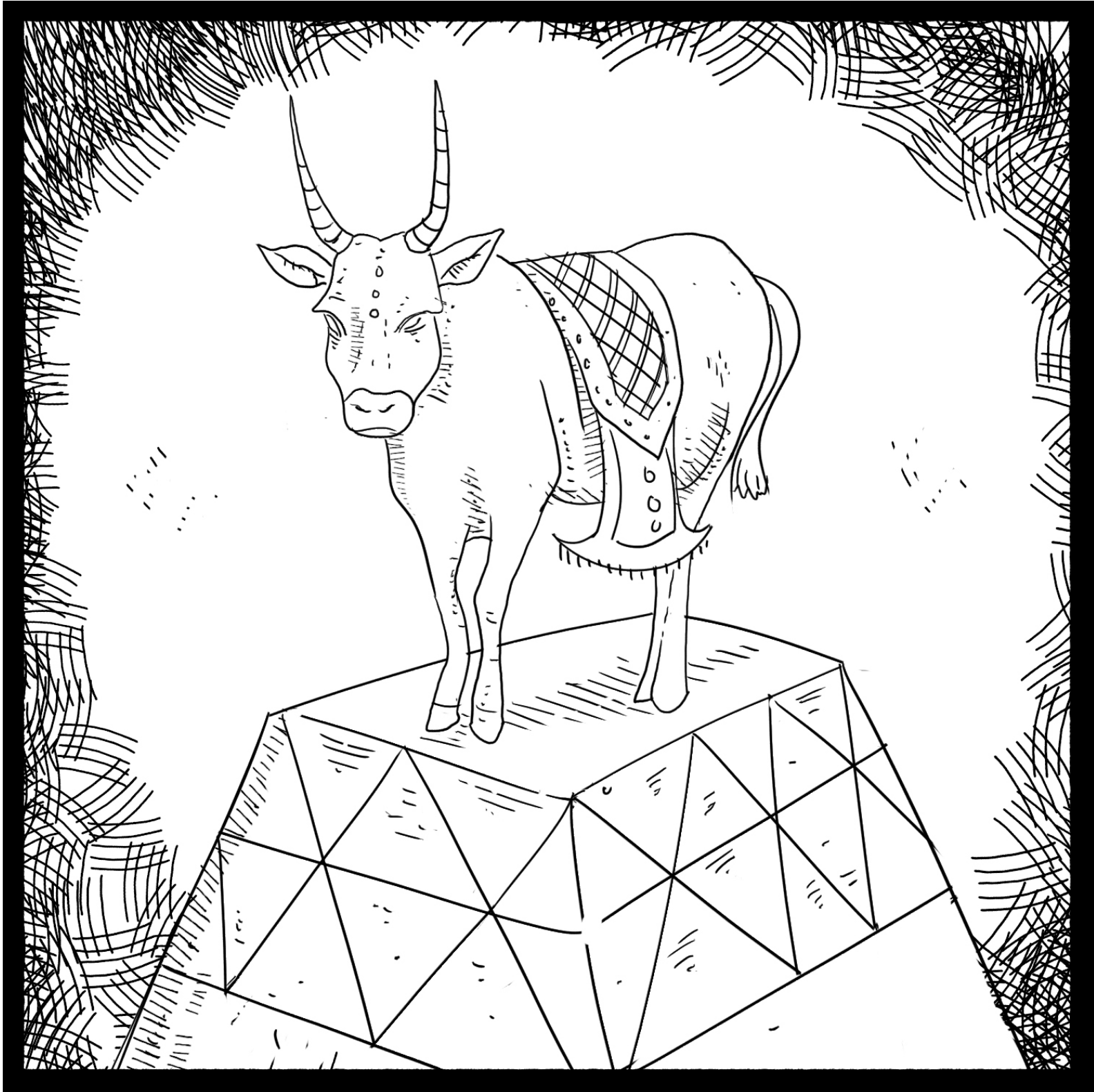




# MOSES & THE GOLDEN CALF IDOL

## COLORING PAGE

*So Moses went back to the Lord and said, "Oh, what a great sin these people have committed! They have made themselves gods of gold..."* Exodus 32:31



### SQUARE ROPE RACE

This game will help students begin to understand the importance of teamwork. They will learn about working together and what it means to be a member of a team--all the while blindfolded.



#### MATERIALS:

- Moderately sized rope like a clothesline, eight feet long
- Blindfolds, enough for half your students
- Cell phone with a camera and timer

#### Objective

Make a square the fastest out of rope while blindfolded.

### INTRODUCTION

When the Hebrew people were new to the Exodus, they realized that two things would be needed by all: reliance on God and reliance on each other. Let's see how much we can relate to them as we play a game.



#### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Divide the class into two teams.
2. Choose one team to go first and make sure each student is blindfolded.
3. Put the rope in the hands of one of the blindfolded students.
4. When you say "Go!" start your timer for two minutes. Students will then work together to try and lay the rope in a perfect square on the ground.
5. They may NOT undo their blindfolds.
6. Make soft commands to them like "the lower left corner needs work." Or "the upper right corner is too small."
7. Say "stop" either when their square is perfect or the two-minute bell on the timer goes off.
8. Take a picture to compare to the next team's square, and then give the next team a turn.
9. The team that finishes the fastest is the winner.

#### Conclusion

If the Hebrew people had not been so forgetful—they would have been relying on God. If they had been using teamwork, the bad influencers would not have gotten carried away. Let's remember to rely on God and on each other as we walk through our daily lives.





# WORD SEARCH

The story of the golden calf idol provides lessons on faith and how things go wrong with lack of faith. Some of the words below mean “faith.” Others mean “lack of faith.” Find them all in the word search, then circle the ones meaning “lack of faith.” Remember not to commit them if you see yourself moving in that direction!

Y	R	F	E	B	L	H	Q	U	B	Q	I	N	I	Q	U	I	T	Y	H
F	M	S	C	U	N	R	I	G	H	T	E	O	U	S	N	E	S	S	G
Z	Z	B	E	R	P	I	V	H	H	X	M	X	M	W	S	P	R	F	A
S	U	G	X	B	E	G	M	P	A	B	G	X	C	A	C	Z	R	T	U
E	G	N	Y	L	O	D	Q	M	U	Y	H	T	R	E	S	P	A	S	S
T	X	V	G	P	W	M	E	A	O	S	M	Q	C	R	I	M	E	Y	A
T	V	P	E	O	N	I	W	N	C	R	U	Q	Z	O	M	T	V	L	S
R	C	D	E	N	D	R	C	R	C	C	A	R	Z	V	G	R	L	E	S
A	C	F	J	C	I	L	R	K	O	E	E	L	E	B	B	U	L	C	U
N	O	P	K	K	T	A	I	A	E	N	Y	P	I	N	A	S	F	O	R
S	N	P	O	W	G	A	L	N	G	D	G	K	T	T	E	T	Z	N	A
G	F	Q	D	Q	S	F	T	I	E	E	N	D	C	A	Y	S	Y	V	N
R	I	B	E	L	I	E	F	I	T	S	C	E	O	Q	N	Z	S	I	C
E	D	S	C	G	G	B	P	V	O	Y	S	F	S	I	R	C	S	C	E
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O	E	D	V	Y	A	F	C	D	E	P	E	N	D	E	N	C	E	N	O
N	B	I	C	S	J	K	B	R	P	E	E	V	I	L	U	M	A	A	R
G	O	T	E	D	H	U	M	N	G	K	Z	W	U	A	P	S	A	D	L

**Words to Find:**

ACCEPTANCE  
ASSURANCE  
BELIEF  
CONFIDENCE  
CONVICTION  
UNRIGHTEOUSNESS

CREDENCE  
CREDIT  
CRIME  
DEPENDENCE  
DISOBEDIENCE  
VENIALITY

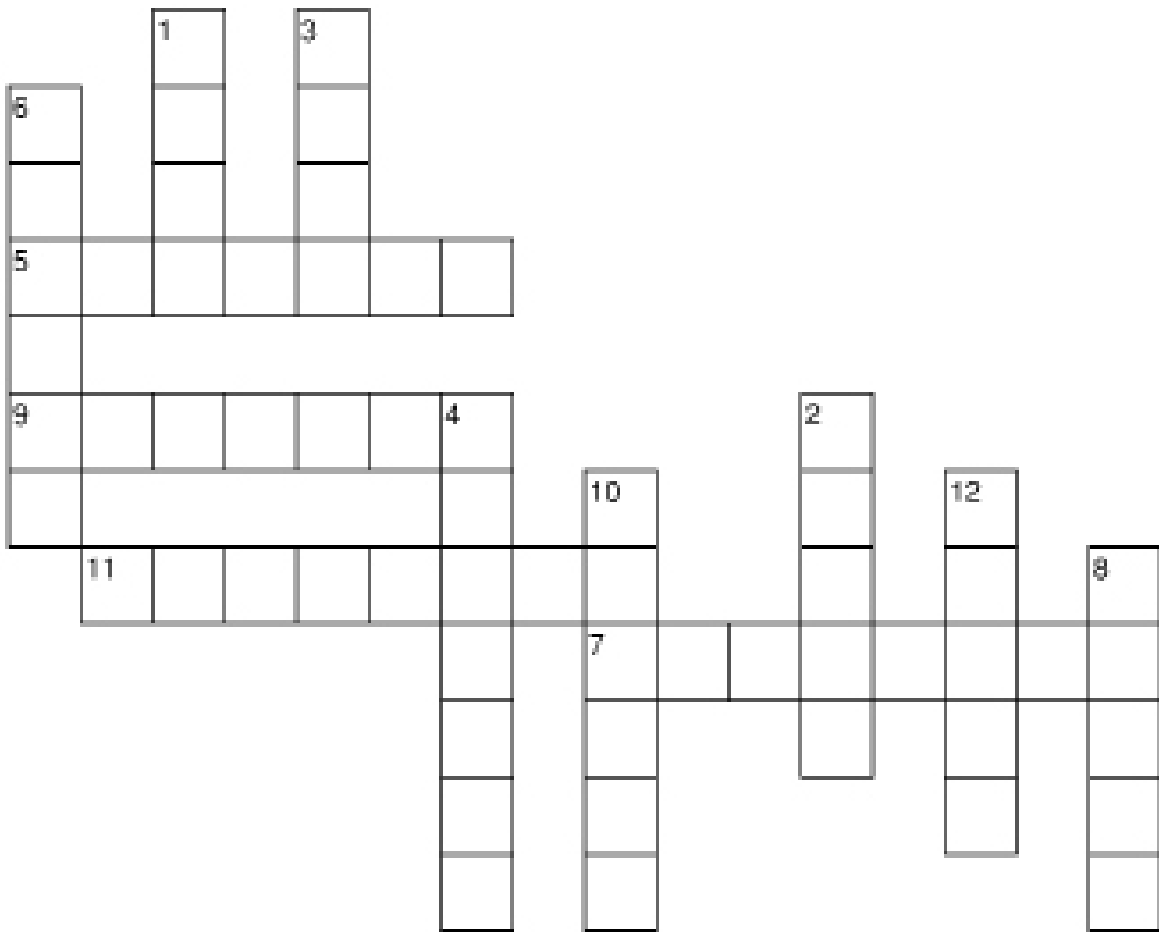
ERROR  
EVIL  
EXPECTATION  
IMMORALITY  
INIQUITY  
WICKEDNESS

SURENESS  
TRANSGRESSION  
TRESPASS  
TRUST  
UNGODLINESS  
WRONGDOING



# CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Use your At-A-Glance Sheet, The Ten Commandments, to fill out this crossword and learn more about the spiritual laws Moses was receiving when the people lost patience down below.



**Across**

- 5. Your father and mother are worthy of this
- 7. Another word for cheating on a marriage partner
- 9. another word for jealous
- 11. This is what you must do with the Sabbath

**Down**

- 1. You shall have none of these before me
- 2. You shall not bow down or worship these
- 3. You shall not misuse this of the Lord your God
- 4. A day you shall remember to keep holy
- 6. Another word for killing
- 8. Bearing false evidence against your neighbor is the same as this
- 10. Don't make these kinds of images
- 12. To rob someone is another term for this

# MOSES & THE GOLDEN CALF IDOL

## PARENT HANDOUT



Scriptures to Read: Exodus 32



### This Week We Learned About ...

...Moses' and God's response to the golden calf idol. The story of the people creating a golden god shed light on God's angry-emotion. It is quite real; it can be set off. But it is not easy to ignite. God is long suffering, and an insider's view can show why worshipping things other than God is hurtful to him, his loved ones, and to ourselves!



#### ✓ Questions for Kids:

1. What were the Israelites doing to the calf that made God so angry? **A. Worshipping it.**
2. How did the Lord punish the people?  
**A. He sent a plague**
3. Where was Moses while the people were building the golden calf? **A. On the mountain.**

#### ✓ Dinner Table Discussion:

God wants us to love him more than anything else, but it is easy to forget and put other things before him. What are some things you could see kids your age putting before God? Explain.

Tell a story about a time you thought you knew how a problem should be solved, but God solved it in a different way. What does that tell you about being patient for God's plan to unfold?

#### Scripture Notes (tuck in lunchboxes, tape to mirrors, etc.):



*You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on earth beneath or in the water under the earth. Exodus 20:4*



*Let there be no strange God among you; Nor shall you worship any foreign God. Psalm 81:9*



*For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the Kingdom of God. Ephesians 5:5*

# MOSES & THE GOLDEN CALF IDOL

## AT-A-GLANCE

### THE TEN COMMANDMENTS FROM THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION:

This is a list of the 10 Commandments that most churches use:

- 1 You shall have no other Gods but me.
- 2 You shall not make for yourself any idol, nor bow down to it or worship it.
- 3 You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.
- 4 You shall remember and keep the Sabbath day holy.
- 5 Respect your father and mother.
- 6 You must not commit murder.
- 7 You must not commit adultery.
- 8 You must not steal.
- 9 You must not give false evidence against your neighbor.
- 10 You must not be envious of your neighbor's goods. You shall not be envious of his house nor his wife, nor anything that belongs to your neighbor

### THE TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR KIDS:

This is a list of the Ten Commandments for Kids, which is simplified and makes for easy memorization:

- 1 You shall have no other gods.
- 2 Don't make graven images.
- 3 Don't take the Lord's name in vain.
- 4 Remember the Sabbath.
- 5 Honor your parents.
- 6 Don't murder.
- 7 Don't cheat on your spouse.
- 8 Don't steal.
- 9 Don't lie.
- 10 Don't be jealous





# LEARNING LOOKUPS

# MOSES & THE GOLDEN CALF IDOL

**Lookup:** 1 John 5:21 and write it down.

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**Lookup:** Hebrews 13:5 and write it down.

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Question: An idol isn't necessarily a statue to worship. It is anything that distracts us from God's love and makes us feel envious of others or hatred toward them for what they have. In our wealthy country, it is easy for people to make money into an idol. List some other things that can become idols to us.

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Create a prayer below. Speak to God and write it. Ask God to keep you from making idols out of things, using your own words:

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# MOSES & THE GOLDEN CALF IDOL

## QUIZ

**Instructions: Look up Exodus 32 in an NIV translation Bible. The odd-numbered questions are fill in the blanks. The even-numbered ones ask a question to help you understand the situation.**

### UNDERSTANDING THE GOLDEN CALF STORY

1. Aaron answered them, "Take off the gold \_\_\_\_\_ that your wives, your sons and your daughters are wearing, and bring them to me."

**2. Understanding:** The people made an idol out of gold, but what is it they really wanted, after Moses was gone too long?

- a. Easy access to guidance      b. To be rebellious due to impatience      c. Both

3. Then the Lord said to Moses, "Go down, because your people, whom you brought up out of Egypt, have become \_\_\_\_\_"

**4. Understanding:** Why was God so upset with these people?

- a. They refused to trust him      b. They hated each other      c. They ruined jewelry

5. But Moses sought the favor of the Lord his God. "Lord," he said, "why should your anger burn against your people, whom you brought out of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians say, 'It was with \_\_\_\_\_ that he brought them out, to kill them in the mountains and to wipe them off the face of the earth'?"

**6. Understanding:** Moses was famous for a lot of reasons, but mostly for this:

- a. He defeated Pharaoh      b. He talked to God like a friend

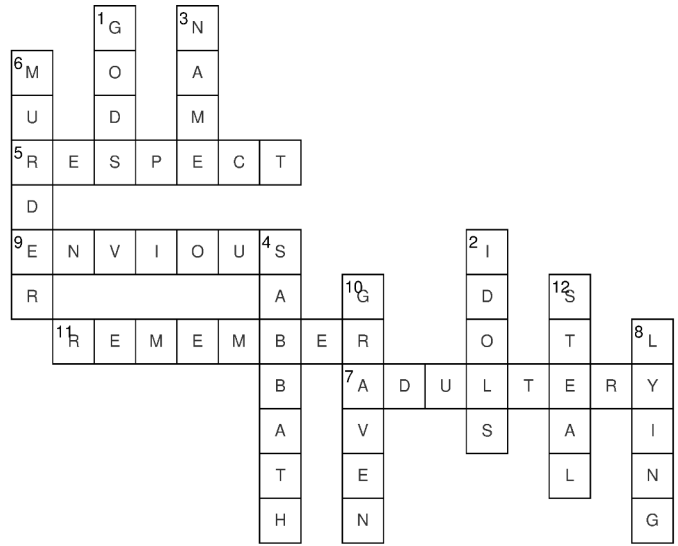
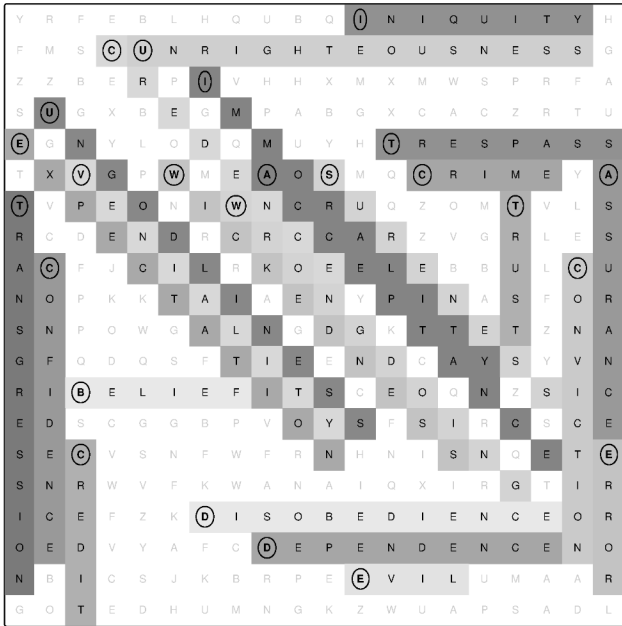
7. "Do not be angry, my lord," Aaron answered [Moses]. "You know how prone these people are to evil. They said to me, 'Make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what has \_\_\_\_\_'."

**8. Understanding:** What's the most important message we can get from the people's behavior?

- A. Don't make golden calf idols      b. Wait patiently for God's timing.

# MOSES & THE GOLDEN CALF IDOL

## ANSWER KEY



### ANSWERS:

1. EARRINGS (c. Both),
2. CORRUPT (a. They refused to trust him);
3. EVIL INTENT (b. He talked to God like a friend),
4. HAPPENED TO HIM (b. wait patiently for God's timing)

# MOSES & THE GOLDEN CALF IDOL

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION



NAME:

DATE: