

# LESSON 11: AN IDOL BOWS TO GOD'S ARK

Leader Guide for Grades 5 & 6

Classroom: Deeply Rooted

 1 Samuel 5:1-5

11/10/2019

## Teachers Dig In

### Dig In to the Bible

- Read: 1 Samuel 5:1-5
- In This Passage: The Philistines capture the Ark of God, a holy box that represents God's presence. They put the Ark in a temple with an idol named Dagon, and Dagon keeps falling before the Ark! This demonstrates that God is real and the idol isn't.
- Bible Point: God is real...
- Application: ...so we believe he's the one true God.
- Summary Verse: "So don't be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows" (Matthew 10:31).

### Dig Deeper

- You'll Be Teaching: *God is real.* This lesson will help kids explore modern-day idols. They're probably not statues like Dagon, but they may be things kids put before God. Help kids understand that because God is real, we believe in and worship only him as the one true God.
- Think About: Ask God to show you what might be an idol in your life—anyone or anything that becomes more important than God.

### Dig In to Prayer

- Pray that your kids will recognize God as the real, true God, regardless of what our society might tell them.

### Quick Tip

- Sunday school teachers must maintain a delicate balance. We need to prepare our kids for the things of this world they must face, but we don't want to take away their innocence in the process. That's why it's so important for you to know your kids. As you discuss today's point, some kids may stick to talking about idols such as sports or celebrities. Older kids might ask questions about other religions or scientific theories. Allow kids to grapple with this point on their level, but draw them back to the same conclusion: God is real, and we believe he's the one true God.

## This Lesson at a Glance



### OPENING

Kids share about a topic related to the lesson.

#### Supplies

- Bible



### OBJECT LESSON

Kids perform a taste test to determine name-brand products.

#### Supplies

- name-brand lemon-lime soda
- off-brand lemon-lime soda
- name-brand cheese crackers
- off-brand cheese crackers
- chocolate Oreos
- off-brand chocolate sandwich cookies
- small cups
- napkins
- paper
- pens
- masking tape

#### Easy Prep

- Set up 3 stations on 3 different tables in your room, and assign an adult or teen helper to each station.
- Use tape to make a line down the center of each station's table. Label each side "1" or "2."
- Place soda at the first station, crackers at the second, and cookies at the third.
- Place cups of each soda on the first table, separating the name-brand soda from the off-brand soda. Keep track of which side is which.
- Prepare the crackers and cookies the same way, placing napkins with name-brand items on one side and off-brands on the other.
- Dispose of any packaging.



### CORE BIBLE DISCOVERY

Kids make paper arks and idols and then destroy the idols as they make them fall before the arks.

#### Supplies

- Bible
- various fake items, such as a toy phone, toy keys, and plastic food
- "Ark Template" handout (1 per child) ([download here](#))
- paper
- markers
- scissors
- tape



### HIGH-ENERGY GAME

Kids race to fill a cup with marbles, trying not to topple the cup.

#### Supplies

- 12-ounce plastic cups (1 for every 3 kids)
- marbles (about 15 for every 3 kids)
- jumbo craft sticks (10 for every 3 kids)
- bowls (1 for every 3 kids)
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

#### Easy Prep

- Put about 15 marbles in each bowl, and place the bowls in a line on the floor spaced a few feet apart.
- Roughly 10 feet directly across from each bowl of marbles, lay 2 stacks of 5 craft sticks beside each other. Balance a cup on top of each paired stack of craft sticks, as shown.



## LOW-ENERGY GAME

Kids try to blow a cup from one cup into another.

### Supplies

- 12-ounce plastic cups (3 per child)
- cotton balls (3 per child)
- a few large bowls or boxes
- table(s) with a chair for each child
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)



## LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

Kids bow before God and pray.



## CRAFT

Kids make domino sets.

### Supplies

- “Domino Set” handout, printed on card stock (2 per child) (download [here](#))
- assembled arks from Core Bible Discovery
- scissors
- transparent tape
- markers
- paper lunch bag

### Easy Prep

- Make a sample craft to show kids.

*\*Marked supplies are also used in Core Bible Discovery*

Let's keep kids safe! You can help by using supplies as instructed for only ages 3+, purchasing child-safe items, and being aware of allergy concerns.



### Supplies

- Bible

### Welcome

- Thank kids for coming.
- Just for fun, have kids give a side hug to two friends.
- Make announcements.
- Introduce new kids.
- Celebrate birthdays by having kids hop on one foot while they sing “Happy Birthday.”
- Collect the offering.

### Introduce the Lesson

Say: **Today we’re going to learn that God is real, so we believe he’s the one true God. God is real, but some other things aren’t.**

### Share

- Tell kids about a story from a movie or book that *you* wish were real.
- Have kids form pairs. Ask kids to share about a story *they* wish were real.
- After partners have discussed, ask two or three kids to share with the whole group what they talked about with their partners.

### Summarize

Open a Bible to 1 Samuel 5, and say: **It’s fun to think about those stories becoming real, but we know the difference between real and fake. In our Bible story, people acted like a pretend god—a statue—was real! Let’s look in the Bible to see how God proved to them he’s the only real God. The Bible isn’t like other books; it’s special. The Bible is one way God talks to us. God is real, and he’s here right now, ready to talk to you. Let’s talk with him now.**

Pray, praising God for being the one real God.



## OBJECT LESSON

[10 min]

### Taste Test

---

#### Supplies

- name-brand lemon-lime soda
- off-brand lemon-lime soda
- name-brand cheese crackers
- off-brand cheese crackers
- chocolate Oreos
- off-brand chocolate sandwich cookies
- small cups
- napkins
- paper
- pens
- masking tape

#### Easy Prep

- Set up 3 stations on 3 different tables in your room, and assign an adult or teen helper to each station.
- Use tape to make a line down the center of each station's table. Label each side "1" or "2."
- Place soda at the first station, crackers at the second, and cookies at the third.
- Place cups of each soda on the first table, separating the name-brand soda from the off-brand soda. Keep track of which side is which.
- Prepare the crackers and cookies the same way, placing napkins with name-brand items on one side and off-brands on the other.
- Dispose of any packaging.

#### Taste to Determine "Real" Food

Say: **If you walk down any aisle at a grocery store, you'll see a name-brand item like Sprite, Cheez-Its, or Oreos. You'll also notice a less expensive off-brand item nearby that doesn't have a fancy logo, but its packaging leads you to believe it's just like the name-brand. It's not *really* Sprite, but it's similar. Here's the question: Can people taste the difference? Can you eat an Oreo or Cheez-It and know that it's the real thing and not a less expensive substitute? Let's put our taste buds to the test and see!**

- Form three groups, and have each group begin at a different station.
- Be aware of any allergies, and don't let kids participate in a station with an item they're allergic to.
- Tell kids they'll taste two different foods at each station. It will be their job to determine which is the "real" soda, cracker, and cookie and which is the off-brand.
- Distribute paper and pens, and have kids make three columns: Soda, Cracker, and Cookie. Tell them to write the number they think is the "real" item in each column.
- At the cookie station, kids will need to close their eyes to avoid seeing the word "Oreo" on the real cookies.
- Give kids about two minutes at each station, and then call out that it's time to rotate to a new one. Adult or teen helpers will help serve the food items.
- After they've tasted items at each station, have kids return to their seats with their papers. Ask your adult or teen helpers to each reveal which side featured name-brand items, and ask how many kids guessed correctly for each taste test.

#### Talk About It

Ask: • **How confident were you that you could tell the difference between the off-brand and name-brand foods?**

- **Were you surprised by the results? Explain.**
- **How can you tell that God is the only real God?**

Say: **We tasted the items and tried to use our past experiences to determine the "real" snack**

food. Perhaps you thought of a time you ate Oreos and tried to match what you were tasting with that memory. Sometimes it's tricky to figure out what's real and what's fake in our world today. But one thing is for sure—God is real, and he's the one true God. Nothing or no one else even comes close to comparing to him.



## Supplies

- Bible
- various fake items, such as a toy phone, toy keys, and plastic food
- "Ark Template" handout (1 per child) (download [here](#))
- paper
- markers
- scissors
- tape

## Use Fake Items

As you introduce this Bible story, try to act as if you're unaware the items you're offering kids aren't real. We've included some ways to ask kids to interact with the suggested fake items, but feel free to modify them to the fake items that are easiest for you to find. At a glance, this may seem a little juvenile, but the point is for kids to think you're being silly! Ham it up, and the kids will love correcting you.

Say: **Let's start today's Bible lesson with a snack! I brought you all some delicious food.**

Distribute fake food, and allow kids to respond. They'll likely complain that they can't eat the food because it's not real.

Collect the food as you say: **Fine! If you're not going to appreciate my food, I'll put you to work!**

**Can one of you lock the classroom door for me?** Hold up fake keys, and wait until you get a child to pretend to use them to lock the door.

Say: **One last job...will one of you call my cellphone to make sure it's working? You can use this phone.** Hold out the toy phone.

Ask: • **Why can't you eat this food, use these keys to lock a door, or make a call on this phone?**

• **What would you think of someone who genuinely tried to use these fake items to do real things?**

Say: **I was just joking with you earlier. But if there were an adult who truly thought these fake items were real, you'd probably wonder about that person. In today's Bible story we're going to learn that God is real, but some people worshipped fake gods called *idols*. Worshipping an idol and believing it's a real god are as silly as trying to eat plastic food! Let's see what happened when our real God and the fake idol had a standoff.**

## Use Paper to Re-enact the Story

Say: **Today's story involves the Ark of the Lord. That's not a boat-kind of ark like Noah had; it was a special box that contained the Ten Commandments, a staff, and a jar of manna. Those were all things that reminded God's people that he's real and he was always with them. And the Ark was so *holy*—so perfect, pure, and special—no one was even supposed to touch it! Let's make our own arks to help us explore this story.**

Give each child an "Ark Template" handout and a pair of scissors. Set out markers and tape to share. Have kids color the ark templates, cut them out, and fold them into box shapes. Before kids tape them together, they can draw a staff, a jar, and two tablets inside the arks.

Say: **Okay, so we have our arks. The problem in the Bible was, some people called Philistines stole the Ark and put it in a temple made for an idol named Dagon (DAY-gon)! If we're going to have a standoff, we'll need a statue, so let's make Dagon.**

Give each child a piece of paper. Have kids fold their papers in half and then draw an idol on the front of their "cards." Explain that this idol would have looked like a statue of a person and should include hands and a head. Have kids set the Dagon "idols" next to their arks.

Say: **Now...let's see what happened to Dagon when the Philistines placed the Ark, which represented the real God, next to the idol.**

Read 1 Samuel 5:1-3.

Have kids blow their idols over so they fall in front of their arks. Then have kids set the idols upright again.

Ask: • **Why do you think Dagon fell with his face to the ground in front of the Ark?**

Say: **When we respect someone or recognize that someone else is better than we are, sometimes we bow to that person. Bowing was even more customary in Bible times. So when the idol fell before the Ark, it was like it bowed to God!**

**Of course, God is real and the idol wasn't, so it couldn't move on its own. God's power must've been so real and so strong, it made the idol fall over! Let's see what happened next.**

Read 1 Samuel 5:4-5.

Have kids blow their idols over again and then tear off the heads and hands and set them by their cards.

Ask: • **What do you think this story shows about God?**

Say: **This story is kind of funny, but it's in the Bible so we know it's true.**

Ask: • **Why do you think this story is in the Bible?**

Say: **This story is a funny way to see that God is real, and fake gods can't stand up against God's real power. God is real, so we believe he's the one true God.**

### **Think About Today's Idols**

Say: **Let's think about what this story means for us. Most people don't worship statues today, but we *do* worship other "idols." An idol doesn't have to be something you can touch; it can be anything or anyone that people pay too much attention to.**

Have kids name things that people value or focus on or praise and write those idols on the back of their Dagon cards.

Say: **We don't have the Ark of the Lord anymore to remind us that God is real and he is with us. But other things can remind us of God.**

Have kids share things that remind them of God, such as the Bible, crosses, nature, Christian music, Christian community, or answers to prayer. Kids can write or draw their ideas on the outside of their arks.

Say: **Dagon, a fake god, fell before the Ark that represented God, the real God. And in the same way, none of today's idols can stand up against God. When we recognize that God is real, we'll believe he's the one true God, and all of these other idols will become much less important to us than God is. To symbolize that, knock over your idols.**

Have kids knock over their idol cards before their arks.

Pray: **God, help us recognize that you are real and that no fake god or idol will ever have your power or love. Help us put you first and not worship any fake gods. Help us believe that *you* are the only true God. In Jesus' name, amen.**

If you're using the craft activity block, kids will need to save their arks.





## HIGH-ENERGY GAME

### Marble Topple

[10 min]

### Supplies

- 12-ounce plastic cups (1 for every 3 kids)
- marbles (about 15 for every 3 kids)
- jumbo craft sticks (10 for every 3 kids)
- bowls (1 for every 3 kids)
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

### Easy Prep

- Put about 15 marbles in each bowl, and place the bowls in a line on the floor spaced a few feet apart.
- Roughly 10 feet directly across from each bowl of marbles, lay 2 stacks of 5 craft sticks beside each other. Balance a cup on top of each paired stack of craft sticks, as shown.



### Tip

- If you used the Music Video block, consider repeating the songs from today's lesson during the game. You can find the album [here](#).

### Play a Relay-Style Version of Don't Spill the Beans

Say: **We read today about an idol toppling over to bow in front of God's Ark. Actually, it toppled over *twice* and showed that God is the only true God—the idol wasn't a real god.**

**Let's celebrate how God toppled the idol by playing a toppling game.**

- Form teams of three.
- Have each team choose a starting place near a bowl of marbles.
- Team members will take turns running one marble at a time to their cup and dropping it in.
- Team members will continue to take turns running and adding marbles to their cup, with the goal of adding all the marbles from their bowl to their cup without knocking it over.
- If a cup topples, the team shouts "God is real" and can reset their marbles and cup to try again.
- If you'd like, play upbeat music while kids play. Play as many rounds as time allows.

### Talk About It

Ask: • **What strategies did you discover for adding marbles without making the cup topple over?**

Say: **You toppled the cups—or didn't topple them—in the game because you're real and have the power to move the marbles to the cup. God is real, too, and has amazing power. *God* toppled the idol and made the symbol of the fake god bow to his Ark, because God is the only true God.**

Ask: • **What are ways we can we show we believe God is the only true God?** Share an example of your own to help kids get started, such as talking to God and trusting him with your prayers because you know he's real.

Say: **When others see that we believe in God, we can help them know that God is real.**



## LOW-ENERGY GAME

[10 min]

### Cup Hop

#### Supplies

- 12-ounce plastic cups (3 per child)
- cotton balls (3 per child)
- a few large bowls or boxes
- table(s) with a chair for each child
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

#### Tip

- If you used the Music Video block, consider repeating the songs from today's lesson during the game. You can find the album [here](#).

#### Make a Cup Hop Into Another

Say: **The Bible story we read today was about a surprising way God showed he's real. Some people in the Bible had been worshipping a statue—an idol—thinking it was a god, but *the one true God* caused the statue to bow to God's Ark. It was a clear message for the people that God is real!**

**Sometimes we may wonder if God is real when we can't see him or we don't have other proof that he's real. But did you know there are other things in our world we can't see but that everyone believes are real? I'll show you what I mean.**

- Give each child three cups and three cotton balls.
- Have kids start by each placing a cotton ball in one cup and then putting another cup inside the first cup, on top of the cotton ball.
- Kids will then hold the stacked cups in one hand, resting the cups on the table in front of them where they can lean forward and blow on the cups easily.
- Have kids place the third cup an inch or so behind the stacked cups.
- At your cue, kids will blow on the stacked cups from the front, trying to make the top cup "hop" out of the first cup and land in the next cup.



- Kids can experiment with how they blow on the cups, how many cotton balls they use to elevate the "hopping" cup, and how near or far they place the third cup away from the stacked cups.
- The goal is to find a strategy where they can land the hopping cup into the next cup consistently.
- Kids can also take turns using the large bowls or boxes to see if they can successfully land the hopping cup inside them.
- If you'd like, play upbeat music while kids play.

#### Talk About It

Ask: • **What made the cup hop into the next cup?**

- **How do you know for sure that air is real and that air is what moved the cup?**

Say: **Air itself is invisible, and it wouldn't make a sound if it weren't moving things around. We only know that air exists because we can see how it moves things. Air does so much that we couldn't live without it, but we don't actually see air every day. We simply know it's there.**

Ask: • **What are some ways we can see God at work around us, even if we can't see him?** Share an example of your own, such as seeing a person's heart being changed as he or she gets to know God or witnessing miraculous healing and help.

Say: **Air gives us a little picture of what God is like because we can't see air, but we're always surrounded by it and we know it's real. God is real, and he's the one and only true God. If you ever need a reminder of that, take a deep breath; as you feel the air fill your lungs, remember that God is as real as the air you breathe.**



### Bow and Pray

---

#### Bow and Pray

Say: **In the Bible story, God caused the idol to fall, almost as if it were bowing to him. Bowing is a sign of respect. It's a physical way to show that we believe God is real.**

- Have kids spread out and get in a bowing position. This may be on their knees and bowing, standing and bowing, or any other way they feel comfortable.
- Have kids talk to God about what they learned today as they're bowing.
- Kids can ask God to remove any idols in their lives—anyone or anything that becomes more important to them than God.

#### Wrap Up

Pray: **God, you're real, and we believe you are the one true God. Thank you that we don't worship a fake god or a statue...we worship you, and you're real! In Jesus' name, amen.**

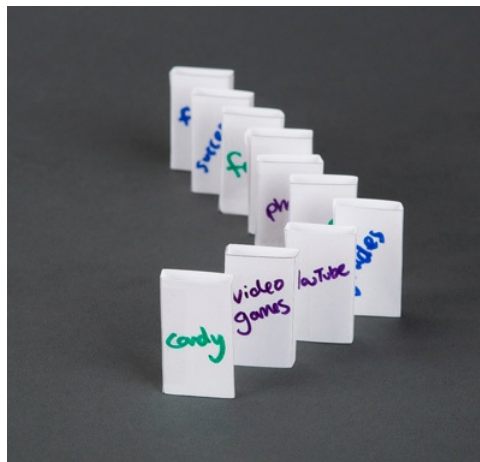
Thank kids for coming, and encourage them to come back next week.



**[20 min]**

- “Domino Set” handout, printed on card stock (2 per child) (download [here](#))
- assembled arks from Core Bible Discovery
- scissors
- transparent tape
- markers
- paper lunch bag

- Make a sample craft to show kids.



**Say: The idol in our Bible story kept falling down before the Ark of God. Let's make dominoes to remind us of the falling idol.**

- Cut out each of the domino templates on your handout.
- Decorate them with markers, and write on each domino something that could be an idol today. Examples could include sports, grades, money, success, celebrities, video games, electronics, fame, friends, or even worries.
- Fold your dominoes on the dotted lines, and tape them to hold the folds in place.

- Have kids arrange their dominoes in a line or curve so that knocking down one will result in knocking down the rest of them.
- Kids can place their paper arks from Core Bible Discovery at the end of the line.
- Kids may choose to work in groups to make a longer domino chain.
- Have kids knock over the first domino and watch the whole line of dominoes fall before their arks.

**Ask: • God made the idol in the Bible fall or bow before him. How does God show he's better than today's idols?**

Have kids put their domino sets in paper lunch bags to take home. Encourage kids to play with the dominoes with their friends and families, explaining how the dominoes represent the Bible story.

