

LESSON 11: AN IDOL BOWS TO GOD'S ARK

Leader Guide for Grades 1 & 2

Classroom: Greenhouse Kids

 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 talk about real versus fake and use paper to re-enact the story.

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



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.



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)



HIGH-ENERGY GAME

Kids run to find photos of real things.

Supplies

- “Real Versus Fake Photos” handout (1 per child)
(download [here](#))

Easy Prep

- Cut apart the pictures on the handouts.
- Spread all the photos facedown around the perimeter of the room.



LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

Kids bow as they pray.

Supplies

- Bible

**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: **The Bible says that God is real. He's not a fake character we watch in a movie or read about in a book. God is real and living today. God is with us all the time. He's the only true God. We don't have to make-believe with God because he really is real. Let's begin by talking about some toys we have that *aren't* real but we wish they were.**

Share

- Share about a toy *you* would've liked to see come to life when you were a child. Maybe you had a doll or a stuffed animal that you took everywhere or there was a make-believe character you would've enjoyed talking with.
- In small groups, have kids share about a toy *they* would like to see come to life.
- After small groups have discussed, have a few kids share with the whole group what they talked about in their small groups.

Summarize

Open a Bible, and say: **It's fun to think about our favorite toys coming to life. But we don't have to pretend with God, because God is real and he's alive today. He's always with us! The Bible tells us how God showed he's real to many different people. The people in the Bible saw that God is the one true God, and we can be sure of that, too. We can be friends with God and trust him because he's real!**

Pray, asking God to help you and the children see that he's real and he's the one true God. Thank God for wanting to be friends with everyone.



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 sure 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.

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 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 draw 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.

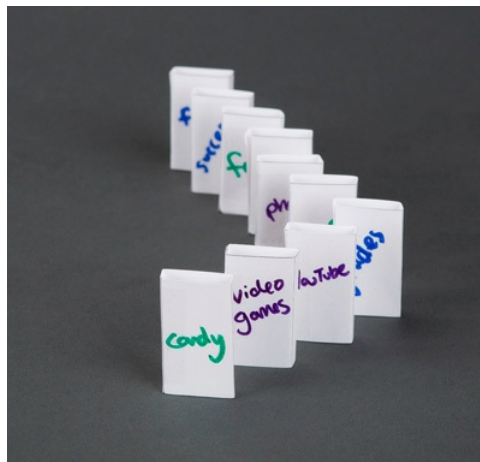
Pray: **God, help us recognize that you are real and that no fake god or idol will ever have your power or love. Help us put you first and not worship any fake gods. Help us believe that *you* are the only true God. In Jesus' name, amen.**

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



- “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 tile 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.



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.**



HIGH-ENERGY GAME

Is It Real?

[10 min]

Supplies

- “Real Versus Fake Photos” handout (1 per child) (download [here](#))

Easy Prep

- Cut apart the pictures on the handouts.
- Spread all the photos facedown around the perimeter of the room.

Run to Find Real Photos

Have all the kids gather in the middle of the room. Say: **God is real, and he’s the only real and true God. Let’s play a game where we’ll run to find real things.** Point out all the photos around the room. Tell kids that some photos are of real things and others are of fake things. Lead kids to play using these steps:

- Tell kids to run to find the real car and bring it back to you. Have them turn cards back over if they’re not the real car. Keep all the photos of real cars they hand you.
- Tell kids to run to find the real bear and bring it back to you. Have them turn cards back over if they’re not the real bear. Keep all the photos of real bears.
- Tell kids to run to find the real hair and bring it back to you. Have them turn the cards back over if they’re not the real hair. Keep all the photos of hair.
- Tell kids to run to find the photo of real food and bring it back to you. Have them turn cards back over if they’re not the real food. Keep all the photos of food.
- If time allows, have kids spread out all the photos and play again.
- Have kids pick up all the photos, and set them aside.

Talk About It

Have kids gather in a circle. Say: **Sometimes it’s hard to tell what’s real and what’s fake.**

Tell about a time *you* thought something was real but was really fake. Perhaps it was a Christmas tree, flowers in a vase at the doctor’s office, or a toy gerbil.

Ask: • **When did you see something that seemed real but was really fake?** Kids might mention plants in a store, hair on a baby doll, or a plastic baseball.

Say: **In our game, there was photos of real things right next to photos of fake things. We looked carefully to find the real things. That’s like in the Bible story. The Philistines’ fake god Dagon was right next to the Ark of God. They found out who the real God is. Our God is real. He’s the one true God.**



Bow and Pray

Supplies

- Bible

Practice Bowing

Say: **Today we found out that God is real and he's the only true God. We heard how there was a make-believe god that kept falling over next to the Ark of God. God made the fake god fall over to show everyone it was fake. And when it fell over, it looked like it was bowing down to the one true God.**

Show kids what it looks like to bow. Say: **Sometimes we kneel or bow to God to show him that we believe he's the one true God. When we bow like that, we can remember that God is real, he made us, and he's the most important one in the whole world.** Lead kids to practice bowing.

Bow and Pray

Say: **Let's bow while we talk to God today. We'll bow to show God we know he's the one true God and he's the most important one.**

Lead children in a short prayer as you all bow together. Pray: **God, we know you're real. We know you're here with us now and that you're our good friend. You made us and you take care of us. We believe you're the only true God. In Jesus' name, amen.**

Say: **There is no other God besides our God. We can trust him and know he's real. We can be sure he's always with us because he loves us! I hope you'll come back next week so we can all learn more about our one true God together.**