

LESSON 37

# God Has Mercy On Israel

EXODUS 33–34



BIBLE TRUTH

GOD FORGIVES ISRAEL'S SIN

LESSON SNAPSHOT

- 1. **OPENING REVIEW** ..... **5 MIN**  
Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.
- 2. **BIBLE STORY** ..... **10 MIN**  
Read Exodus 33:12–22 from the Scriptures or read story 37, “God Has Mercy on Israel,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.
- 3. **OBJECT LESSON 1** ..... **10 MIN**  
**Breaking Down the Idols**  
**SUPPLIES:**
  - ✓ twelve helium balloons with faces drawn on them
  - ✓ a long pin taped to an end of a dowel rod
- 4. **TEACHING/DISCUSSION** ..... **10 MIN**
- 5. **OBJECT LESSON 2** ..... **10 MIN**  
**Our Forgiving God**
- 6. **WORD BIBLE MEMORY** ..... **5 MIN**
- 7. **ACTIVITY TIME** ..... **15 MIN**  
**The Stone Tablets**  
**SUPPLIES:**
  - ✓ colored pencils, crayons, and paper
- 8. **CLOSING PRAYER** ..... **5 MIN**
- 9. **BONUS OBJECT LESSON** ..... **10 MIN**  
**What Is the Most Important Commandment?**

**TOTAL 80 MIN**

## PREPARING TO TEACH

## TEACHING POINTS

**God says he will no longer go with Israel**—The Lord has spared Israel from the destruction they deserved for making the golden calf, but he is still displeased with them. He commands that they go into the land of Canaan without his presence.

This makes the people sad and afraid. Seeing the pillar of cloud visit Moses when he goes to the tent (tabernacle) makes it worse because they know that God's presence will soon leave them. They now realize how foolish they were to worship the golden calf. They repent of their sin and obey God's command to take off their ornaments.

**Moses appeals to God again**—Again Moses appeals to God on behalf of Israel, saying, "Consider too that this nation is your people" (Exodus 33:13). Moses says that he would rather not go into Canaan at all if God will not go with them. Amazingly, in response to Moses, God extends mercy and forgiveness to Israel.

This makes Moses willing to ask God for another favor. So he says to God, "Please show me your glory." But Moses has no understanding of what he is asking for: God's glory is so great and pure no sinful man could live if he saw it.

**God makes a covenant with Moses**—Remember what happened when Moses came down from the mountain with the Ten Commandments written on stone tablets? The people were worshiping a golden calf, and Moses smashed the stone tablets in anger. Since then, the people have repented of their sin, and God is no longer angry with them.

So, in a way, God starts over again. He prepares to give Moses the Ten Commandments on a new set of stone tablets. He promises to go with the Israelites into the Promised Land. He renews his covenant with Moses and promises to do amazing things among the people. God warns Moses, however, against making a treaty with the peoples living in the Promised Land. He commands Moses to break down the pagan altars and not to worship any other god. He even reminds the Israelites one more time not to make gods of metal.

### A LITTLE BIT MORE

#### *Mercy*

Mercy is the characteristic of God by which he shows his compassion for our sinful state. God feels pity right alongside of his judgment and wrath. It is his mercy for us that moves him to heal the sick, blind, and lame as well as give up his life for our salvation.

### WHERE IS JESUS?

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Read Hebrews 12:18–25.

This passage begins by talking about the mountain that Moses went up on to receive the Ten Commandments. It reminds us how the people had to stay far away from God. Moses was a good mediator for the Israelites, but the perfect mediator is Jesus. Now we do not need to be afraid to come to God. Our mediator, Jesus, has made peace with God for us.

The only reason God accepted Moses as a mediator was because God knew that one day the promised Savior would come and be a perfect mediator.

## THE LESSON

### OPENING REVIEW ..... 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

### BIBLE STORY ..... 10 MIN

Read Exodus 33:12–22 from the Scriptures or read story 37, "God Has Mercy on Israel," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

**OBJECT LESSON 1** ..... **10 MIN**

**Breaking Down the Idols**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ twelve helium balloons with faces drawn on them
- ✓ a long pin taped to an end of a dowel rod

Use the balloons as an illustration of the powerlessness of idols.

Tell the class that the balloons are false gods. Tell them that since people invent false gods, they have no power—they can do nothing. Command the false gods to do something; for example, “Give me a pepperoni pizza.” When nothing happens, reinforce to the children they are false gods.

Read Exodus 34:10–17. Explain to the children that God has just forgiven Israel for making a false god and now he is again reminding them about the dangers of false gods.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- **What did God warn Israel would happen if they joined with the people who worshipped false gods?**  
*(God warned them that Israel would end up worshipping those same false gods.)*
- **What did God tell Israel to do with the false gods?**  
*(God told Israel to destroy them.)*
- **What do you think we ought to do with these false balloon gods?**  
*(When the children say destroy them or pop them ask for volunteers to do just that. Give them the dowel and watch them pop the false gods.)*

**TEACHING/DISCUSSION** ..... **10 MIN**

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

**OBJECT LESSON 2** ..... **10 MIN**

**Our Forgiving God**

Assign different children to look up and read aloud the following verses:

Exodus 34:6–7  
Numbers 14:18  
Nehemiah 9:17  
Psalm 86:15  
Psalm 103:8  
Psalm 145:8  
Joel 2:13  
Jonah 4:2  
Nahum 1:3

Ask the children to explain what we learn about God from these verses. Have them also explain how God demonstrated his forgiveness of Israel in the story. Explain that the only reason God could forgive the sins of Israel is by looking forward to Jesus. Jesus would die for the sins of God's people. God would demonstrate great mercy on behalf of Israel through the death of Jesus. It is because of that future act that God can have compassion on Israel in the midst of their idolatry.

**SWORD BIBLE MEMORY** ..... **5 MIN**

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

**ACTIVITY TIME** ..... **15 MIN**

**The Stone Tablets**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ colored pencils, crayons, and paper

Have the children draw a picture of the stone tablets upon which God wrote the Ten Commandments.

**CLOSING PRAYER** ..... **5 MIN**

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day's scripture passages.

**BONUS OBJECT LESSON** ..... **10 MIN**

**What Is the Most Important Commandment?**

Tell the class that we can often tell what is most important to someone by the words they repeat or by the things they say again in a different way.

Talk about how God has been repeating important instructions to his people during the time they were near the mountain of God. Have the class look up Exodus 20 and compare it with Exodus 34. Ask the following question:

What does God want his people to be sure to remember—what does he repeat? (God repeats that they should not worship other gods because he is a jealous God [Exodus 20:3–5 and 34:12–14].)

Talk as a class about why that commandment is the most important. Then ask the children to share about their own idols. (Remember, an idol is anything we love more than God.)