

## SUB TOPIC THEME: Isolating Idols

### Lesson Objective:

*Helping students who are struggling with idols in their lives. Taking time to dissect and understand what idols are, how to recognize their presence and influence in our lives, how to address them, and what the Lord has to say about them. Focus on speaking God's love and forgiveness into the situation. This should be a time of openness and rawness and it is important that the students feel safe and confident with sharing their faults. Struggling through this can be very helpful in a group or very harmful without the proper level of trust and relational security. Know your group.*



### Set Up Info:

#### *Supplies Needed:*

1. A ball or other item to pass as students speak
2. Copies of the Student Response sheet (printed below)
3. Bibles so you can look up the Scripture story (or copy the ones below)
4. A passion to see students transformed in their understanding of God's ability to forgive and guide them!

#### *Instructive Prep:*

*This subtopic is geared towards unraveling the defenses and coping mechanisms in our lives. It is important to gauge fearlessly how much we honor God as the Lord of our life. Understand idols in the context as anything, whether originally healthy or unhealthy, which is elevated and takes the position of a god in our lives. These are the things, places, and people that we derive our value and life direction from. We look to them, instead of Creator God, for our help and guidance. It may be common vices such as overeating or excessive gaming, or it may go to darker areas like drugs, sexual activity, and violence. Encourage students to investigate the big and small idols in their lives, and be aware of the ones they struggle with more often. Framing their faith in God as a daily decision can be helpful in getting them to understand that life is a series of choices, not reactions.*

The progression of these studies is four-fold: learn, feel, do and what next. The goals are for students to (1) learn something new, (2) connect at an emotional level to some degree, and (3) participate in doing something during the study (like creating a checklist or strategy.) Finally, (4) the what next focuses on a change in attitude and/or behavior, which you will find in the challenge of the Life Application section. Remember, the movement is toward spiritual and emotional transformation in kids' lives, so the application section based on God's truth is really the crux of the time together! Have fun and lead well.

## INTRO:

*Idols are an active part of our world. The secular part of society (which, let's face it, is the dominant part of society) acknowledges, promotes, and celebrates nearly every idol out there. Most things, according to them, are "ok to a certain degree." There never seems to be much talk about the consequences of the sin they encourage or the long-term effects of giving in to certain temptations. This has created an environment where nearly anything, whether it starts off as originally good or bad, can become an idol in our life. When we call something an idol, what we mean is anything that takes the place of God in our life. It influences how we act and what we think of our self and others. When we are upset or need help, we turn to these things instead of the God who created us and truly loves us.*

## INTRO STORY:

Nothing we idolize now is new under the sun. People have been seeking after fulfillment from earthly things since Eve first bit that forbidden fruit. Let's take a look now at the story of the return of the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. It had a long journey back and all along the way people, both Israelites and Gentiles, just couldn't seem to grasp the vastness and supremacy of the Lord Most High. As you read, pay attention to which characters seem to be placing something other than God in charge.

## 2 Samuel 6

"Once more David called together the best soldiers in Israel, a total of thirty thousand men,<sup>2</sup> and led them to Baalah in Judah, in order to bring from there God's Covenant Box, bearing the name of the LORD Almighty, whose throne is above the winged creatures.<sup>3</sup> They took it from Abinadab's home on the hill and placed it on a new cart. Uzzah and Ahio, sons of Abinadab, were guiding the cart,<sup>4</sup> with Ahio walking in front.<sup>5</sup> David and all the Israelites were dancing and singing with all their might to honor the LORD. They were playing harps, lyres, drums, rattles, and cymbals.

<sup>6</sup> As they came to the threshing place of Nacon, the oxen stumbled, and Uzzah reached out and took hold of the Covenant Box. <sup>7</sup> At once the LORD God became angry with

Uzzah and killed him because of his irreverence. Uzzah died there beside the Covenant Box, <sup>8</sup> and so that place has been called Perez Uzzah ever since. David was furious because the LORD had punished Uzzah in anger.

<sup>9</sup> Then David was afraid of the LORD and said, “How can I take the Covenant Box with me now?” <sup>10</sup> So he decided not to take it with him to Jerusalem; instead, he turned off the road and took it to the house of Obed Edom, a native of the city of Gath. <sup>11</sup> It stayed there three months, and the LORD blessed Obed Edom and his family.

<sup>12</sup> King David heard that because of the Covenant Box the LORD had blessed Obed Edom's family and all that he had; so he got the Covenant Box from Obed's house to take it to Jerusalem with a great celebration. <sup>13</sup> After the men carrying the Covenant Box had gone six steps, David had them stop while he offered the LORD a sacrifice of a bull and a fattened calf. <sup>14</sup> David, wearing only a linen cloth around his waist, danced with all his might to honor the LORD. <sup>15</sup> And so he and all the Israelites took the Covenant Box up to Jerusalem with shouts of joy and the sound of trumpets.

<sup>16</sup> As the Box was being brought into the city, Michal, Saul's daughter, looked out of the window and saw King David dancing and jumping around in the sacred dance, and she was disgusted with him. <sup>17</sup> They brought the Box and put it in its place in the Tent that David had set up for it. Then he offered sacrifices and fellowship offerings to the LORD. <sup>18</sup> When he had finished offering the sacrifices, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD Almighty <sup>19</sup> and distributed food to them all. He gave each man and woman in Israel a loaf of bread, a piece of roasted meat, and some raisins. Then everyone went home.

<sup>20</sup> Afterward, when David went home to greet his family, Michal came out to meet him. “The king of Israel made a big name for himself today!” she said. “He exposed himself like a fool in the sight of the servant women of his officials!”

<sup>21</sup> David answered, “I was dancing to honor the LORD, who chose me instead of your father and his family to make me the leader of his people Israel. And I will go on dancing to honor the LORD, <sup>22</sup> and will disgrace myself even more. You may think I am nothing, but those women will think highly of me!”

<sup>23</sup> Michal, Saul's daughter, never had any children.”

### PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

*Today we are going to have the oldest person go first. So compare birthday dates and, yes, hours count!*

1. Without speaking, list the person or people in the story who had an idol influencing their behavior and what you think the idol is.
2. Why do you think Uzzah was struck down by God? Is there anything you know or your leader might now about the history of the Ark of the Covenant which might shed some light on that weird part of the story?
3. Do you see any changes in behavior or attitude on David's part? Why do you think that is?
4. Take a second and consider who in the story you think you are most like and write a sentence or two about why that is.

### CENTRAL BIBLE PASSAGES

#### Romans 1:18-25

God's anger is revealed from heaven against all the sin and evil of the people whose evil ways prevent the truth from being known. <sup>19</sup> God punishes them, because what can be known about God is plain to them, for God himself made it plain. <sup>20</sup> Ever since God created the world, his invisible qualities, both his eternal power and his divine nature, have been clearly seen; they are perceived in the things that God has made. So those people have no excuse at all! <sup>21</sup> They know God, but they do not give him the honor that belongs to him, nor do they thank him. Instead, their thoughts have become complete nonsense, and their empty minds are filled with darkness. <sup>22</sup> They say they are wise, but they are fools; <sup>23</sup> instead of worshiping the immortal God, they worship images made to look like mortals or birds or animals or reptiles.

<sup>24</sup> And so God has given those people over to do the filthy things their hearts desire, and they do shameful things with each other. <sup>25</sup> They exchange the truth about God for a lie; they worship and serve what God has created instead of the Creator himself, who is to be praised forever! Amen.

**Deuteronomy 8:17-20**

So then, you must never think that you have made yourselves wealthy by your own power and strength. <sup>18</sup> Remember that it is the LORD your God who gives you the power to become rich. He does this because he is still faithful today to the covenant that he made with your ancestors. <sup>19</sup> Never forget the LORD your God or turn to other gods to worship and serve them. If you do, then I warn you today that you will certainly be destroyed. <sup>20</sup> If you do not obey the LORD, then you will be destroyed just like those nations that he is going to destroy as you advance.

**Philippians 3:12-21**

I do not claim that I have already succeeded or have already become perfect. I keep striving to win the prize for which Christ Jesus has already won me to himself. <sup>13</sup> Of course, my friends, I really do not think that I have already won it; the one thing I do, however, is to forget what is behind me and do my best to reach what is ahead. <sup>14</sup> So I run straight toward the goal in order to win the prize, which is God's call through Christ Jesus to the life above.

<sup>15</sup> All of us who are spiritually mature should have this same attitude. But if some of you have a different attitude, God will make this clear to you. <sup>16</sup> However that may be, let us go forward according to the same rules we have followed until now.

<sup>17</sup> Keep on imitating me, my friends. Pay attention to those who follow the right example that we have set for you. <sup>18</sup> I have told you this many times before, and now I repeat it with tears: there are many whose lives make them enemies of Christ's death on the cross. <sup>19</sup> They are going to end up in hell, because their god is their bodily desires. They are proud of what they should be ashamed of, and they think only of things that belong to this world. <sup>20</sup> We, however, are citizens of heaven, and we eagerly wait for our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, to come from heaven. <sup>21</sup> He will change our weak mortal bodies and make them like his own glorious body, using that power by which he is able to bring all things under his rule.

**1 John 5:18-21**

We know that no children of God keep on sinning, for the Son of God keeps them safe, and the Evil One cannot harm them.

<sup>19</sup> We know that we belong to God even though the whole world is under the rule of the Evil One.

<sup>20</sup> We know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we know the true God. We live in union with the true God—in union with his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and this is eternal life.

<sup>21</sup> My children, keep yourselves safe from false gods!

**1 Samuel 12:21&22**

Don't go after false gods; they cannot help you or save you, for they are not real. <sup>22</sup> The LORD has made a solemn promise, and he will not abandon you, for he has decided to make you his own people.

**LIFE APPLICATION:**

1. What things in your life do you let take the place of God? What tells you what you should think, how you should act, and what to do with your life?
2. Think about when you get upset: angry, hurt, betrayed, or disappointed. What is your default reaction? What do you run to in times of trouble? Is it a cigarette? Or video games? Maybe going for a run or making out with your boy/girlfriend? Whether or not what you thought of is by the world's standards bad or good, the hard truth is that if you are running to something (and it's your default escape plan) then that is probably a pretty strong idol in your life; and, chances are, you turn to that rather than God most of the time.
3. Consider how running to things of this world rather than God influences the outcome of your day, year, life. Take some time to list some negative ways those idols have changed your life. Now list at least three ways they have isolated you from others and God (Use Student Response Sheets) Perhaps one way you have become isolated is that you don't even want to share what you're thinking right now. If that's the case, pray and ask God for the courage to share your struggle. At the very least, grab some time alone with your leader to tell them what idols have control in your life. This is not something to skip over or hope it goes away. That just gives the idol more time to sink in and keep you away from God that much longer.

**STUDENT RESPONSES:**

1. Without speaking, list the person or people in the story who had an idol influencing their behavior and what you think the idol is.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Why do you think Uzzah was struck down by God? Is there anything you know or your leader might now about the history of the Ark of the Covenant which might shed some light on that weird part of the story?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
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8. Talk together and consider ways to prevent idols from gaining control in your life. An accountability partner could be helpful (preferably someone who does not struggle with the same/similar idols) or perhaps mechanisms built into your life to help you keep God as the first one you turn to for help and guidance (STOP. BREATHE. PRAY. Works nicely, or writing down a verse about the height of God's love and wisdom and keeping that with you at all times so you can read it when you need it) Make a plan and stick to it! Don't leave without a way to put God back on the throne of your life.

**REMEMBER, LIFE IS A SERIES OF CHOICES, NOT A STRING OF REACTIONS.  
CHOOSE GOD.**