

Action Scene 4: Where your heart is...

Action Scene 4 illustrates Exodus 32:1-20. Moses has received the law from God, but at the same time the people have made and are worshipping a golden calf. The illustration can be used in a variety of ways depending on the situation and age-range of participants. See [Using Action Scenes](#) for more advice. Choose from the following suggestions:

- Display the picture during a reading of Exodus 32:1-20 (or a retelling from a children's story Bible). Introduce the reading by explaining that the Israelites are now at Mount Sinai. Moses is on the mountain receiving God's instructions on how they are to live as his people and has been gone a long time.
- Colour or decorate a copy of the illustration. Stick small pieces of gold card or foil on the calf outline. On the stone tablets write the first and last Commandments from the Bible version you are using (Exodus 20:2-3,17). Comment on the contrast between them: God wanted his people to put him first. We cannot be in a right relationship with him if we make material things (made-up idols or possessions) our primary focus. The Israelites had lost confidence in God and were abusing his gifts to make a material object the focus of their lives.
- Point out three figures in the picture: Aaron, Moses and the dancing Israelites. How might these different people be feeling in the picture? Ask the group/congregation to give each one a score (out of 10) for how well they behaved in this story. This could be done as a congregational vote. Ask for reasons why people gave those scores and use this to explore the motivations and actions of those characters. Move on to share your own related experiences:
 - *The people:* What were they feeling when Moses was away a long time? Why did they worship the calf when they had experienced God's provision? Talk about times when you feel unsure about whether God is with you and caring for you. Why is it sometimes easier to centre our lives on things we can see than on God?
 - *Aaron:* Why did Aaron do it? What were his feelings when suddenly pushed into the leadership role? Talk about times when you feel pressured by others into using possessions or money in a way that God might not like.
 - *Moses:* What is Moses' reaction? Talk about times when you get angry because you see other people (including companies or governments) using wealth and possessions wrongly.
- Invite people to fill in the two blank areas of the scene, relating the story to their own situation:
 - On the golden calf 'Things' – everything we have comes from God. But some times we can put more value on the gifts ('things') than on the Giver. Write or draw some of the things you sometimes love more than God.
 - On the stone tablets 'Look at (or listen to) the first and last of God's Ten Commandments. Draw or write something on the tablets that will help you remember them this week.
- After they have heard the story, ask children or adults what they would like to say to each of three people in the picture (one of the dancers, Aaron (the figure bottom right) and Moses). Encourage a variety of suggestions. As a result of the story, do they want to say anything to God? Have a time for people to express these responses silently or aloud.