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Loving God

CATECHIST RESOURCE CENTER

CHECK THE CATECHISM

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states in paragraph 2077 that the commandments are a gift bestowed in the covenant God made with his people, yet they remain valid in the New Law (2076). Jesus summed up our duties toward God and others in the teaching that we call the Great Commandment (2083, 2196).

Faith Formation

Law and Love

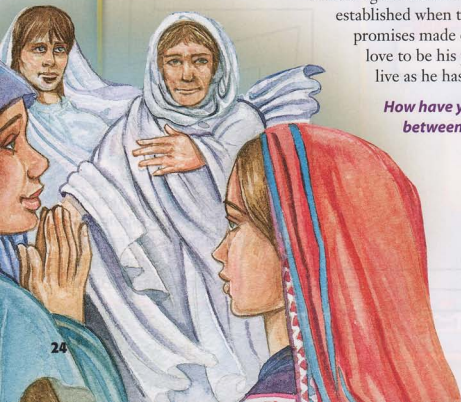
Most of us try to obey the laws of the land, because we know that misery and chaos would result if we didn't. God's Law of Love, however, calls us to move beyond avoiding chaos. When we act morally out of love, we are living out the command of Jesus to "love one another, as I have loved you" (*John 15:12*). When we love we choose to consider the rights, needs, and welfare of others over our own. Laws provide the minimum requirements for a moral life. Loving God, ourselves, and others as God has loved us causes us to stretch our capacity for holiness. We obey laws, of course, but we also look into our hearts to find a fuller response to God's love for us.

Which of the Ten Commandments is most challenging to you? Why?

A Covenant with God

Contracts are legally binding, but can be broken through mutual agreement or litigation. Covenants, however, are established when two people voluntarily agree to keep promises made out of love. God has chosen us out of love to be his people, and we respond by choosing to live as he has commanded us.

How have you chosen to live out the covenant between you and God?



Faith Summary

- In our covenant with God we follow the Ten Commandments.
- God's Law requires us to love God and others.
- Following God's Law leads to eternal life.

Teaching about Loving God

Morality is rooted in love. Build on the work done in the first lesson, where the young people reflected on how much God loves them. God made us out of love. God knows what is best for us, and he wants what is best for us. That is how we know that God's commands are based on love for us. Living according to his rule shows our love for him, for others, and for ourselves.

Growth and Development

It is helpful to remember two characteristics of middle-grade young people as you teach this lesson:

- *Young people at this age take a concrete approach to rules.* They are comfortable when the rules are clear and they know exactly what is expected of them.
- *Young people at this age need to know why the rules are important.* Focus on why we follow rules rather than on strict adherence to them.

A CATECHIST'S PRAYER

*Lord, what must I do? I know the answer:
Show my love for you in my love for others.
Give me your light, that I might walk the
way of love.*

Vocabulary Preview

**Great Commandment
covenant**

**Ten Commandments
eternal life**

Scripture

Psalm 143:10: Ask for guidance.

*Luke 10:25–28: The Great
Commandment.*

Psalm 119:165: God gives peace.

*Leviticus 26:12: A covenant with
Israel.*

Luke 10:29–37: The Good Samaritan.

Psalm 19:7,8,14: God gives us light.

Related Resources

Video

"The Good Samaritan." *The Storykeepers*, #2 (RCL Benziger, 877-275-4725; www.RCLBenziger.com). A retelling of the parable of the Good Samaritan. (Children)

Book

Brown, Margaret Wise. The Runaway Bunny (HarperCollins). A mother bunny reassures her little one that her love is present wherever the bunny goes. (Children)

CATECHIST ORGANIZER

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the young people should be able to

- identify ways to show love for God and love for others
- recite the Great Commandment
- relate their understanding of covenant to following God's Law

Materials Needed for Basic Lesson Plan

Page 13	Mom's Rule	Poster of Psalm 143:10 found on page 13
Pages 14–15	What Must I Do?	Let's Talk questions; poster, markers
Pages 16	Loving Promises	Poster, markers
Page 18	Way of Love	
Page 19	Give Us Light	Prayer, paper flames, markers, candle, poster, tape or stapler
Page 20	Home and Family	

Materials Needed for Additional Activities

Catechist Edition		
Page 27	Making Rules	Bible
Page 28	Jesus' Teaching Methods	
Page 29	Including Everyone	Copies of page 35
Page 30	Resource Master	
Page 31	A Little Catechism	Student pages 71, 72
Page 32	Learning by Heart	
Page 33	Learning by Doing	Slips of paper, small basket



Quick Check

I'll do this evaluation as soon as I finish this week's lesson.

Did I follow my session plan? Why or why not?

How can I tell that I met the learning objectives for this lesson?

What activities did the young people enjoy most?

How could I improve this lesson?

Lesson Plan

1 Mom's Rule

Before the session make a poster of the verse from Psalm 143 found on this page. Choose volunteers to read the parts of the narrator, Jessie, and the mom. Have the readers underline their lines. After reading the story, ask for other examples of safety rules. Be sure the young people understand the mom's motives. Then discuss the questions. Ask for examples of rules that are made out of love.

Talk about how keeping rules can be a sign of love. Be aware of including everyone in the discussion. Bring out the poster you made. Have the class read it aloud. Ask what they think God wanted Eric to do. (*obey his mom*) What did God want Eric's mom to do? (*keep her children safe*) What did God want Jessie to do? (*be patient with her little brother*)



Loving God

You are my God. Show me what you want me to do.
Psalm 143:10

Mom's Rule

Jessie drummed her fingers impatiently as she waited in the back seat of the car for her little brother. "Come on, Eric!" she yelled. "You're going to make me late!"

"We have to drop Eric at soccer practice first," Jessie's mom reminded her. Jessie sighed as Eric finally climbed into the car, still trying to put on his shin guards.

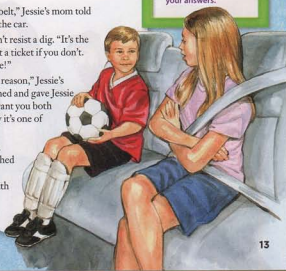
"Buckle your safety belt," Jessie's mom told Eric, before starting the car.

"Yeah," Jessie couldn't resist a dig. "It's the law, and mom will get a ticket if you don't. Then I'll really be late!"

"That's not the only reason," Jessie's mother said. She turned and gave Jessie and Eric a smile. "I want you both to be safe. That's why it's one of 'Mom's Rules.'"

Jessie and Eric both laughed as Jessie reached over and buckled her brother's safety belt with a loud click.

- Why are rules important?
- How can making a rule be a sign of love?
- How is keeping a rule a sign of love?
- Give examples for your answers.



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TEACHING TIP

Making Rules

Involve the young people in drawing up a list of rules for the class. Keep the rules to a minimum and be sure they are clearly stated. Sometimes young people get in trouble because they are not sure of the rules or exactly what is expected of them. Add a rule that involves a mutual promise or agreement, such as, "You follow the rules, and I give everyone a treat/free time at the end of class." You can cite this "rule" when you discuss covenant later in the lesson.

Lesson Plan

1 What Must I Do?

Ask the group if they think rules are only for kids. See if they can come up with some rules or laws that apply to adults. Explain that in the next story, a man is asking Jesus what God wants him to do. Call on volunteers to read pages 14–15. Ask the group what the man was concerned about. (*He wanted eternal life.*) Discuss what that means. (*living forever with God*)

Direct the young people to underline the Great Commandment. Help them to memorize it. Then invite someone to add it to the poster. Display the poster where it will be accessible throughout the lesson.

BIBLE BASICS

Jesus' Teaching Methods

Jesus often answers questions with a question. In some cases the question posed to Jesus is not the real question; Jesus asks the real question and then answers it. In this case the scribe is asking about the minimum requirement to attain salvation: What must I do? Keeping the Law is the minimum.

If you were to continue reading the Gospel, you would find that the man then asks Jesus another question: Who is my neighbor? He is wondering whom he can exclude. This time Jesus responds with a story, the parable of the Good Samaritan. Jesus calls him to go beyond the minimum, to expand his heart to include everyone.

Word of God

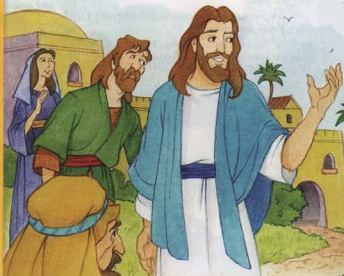
Lord, you give peace
of mind to all who love
your Law.

Psalms 119:165

What Must I Do?

Rules and laws are part of life. Whether you are school-age or the age of your parents, there will always be rules and laws to follow. They give you direction about what is the right thing to do. They help you to act in loving ways.

People in Jesus' time were concerned about rules and laws, too. They wanted to be faithful to God's Law in their everyday lives. One day Jesus was traveling to Jerusalem, teaching the people along the way. At one of the stops as Jesus was teaching a crowd that had gathered, a man stood up and asked Jesus an interesting question. The Gospel of Luke contains the following story:



Lesson Plan

2 Word of God

Read the Psalm verse aloud. Discuss how feelings differ when we do what is wrong and when we do what is right. Point out that these feelings are another sign of God's love. Following God's will for us gives us peace of mind and heart. Ask the group to read the verse as a prayer of praise and thanksgiving to God.

3 Let's Talk

Divide everyone into small discussion groups. Assign one question to each group. After they have had time to discuss the questions, call on each group to share their conclusions.

There was a scholar of the law who stood up to test him and said, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read it?" He said in reply, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." He replied to him, "You have answered correctly; do this and you will live."

Luke 10:25-28

The words of the scribe are the words of the **Great Commandment**:

Love God above all things,
And love others as you love yourself.

Let's Talk

- What do you think the words "love your neighbor as yourself" mean?
- Who is your neighbor?
- How can following the commandment to love God and love your neighbor help you live a good life?

SPECIAL NEEDS

Including Everyone

Take the lead in showing the young people how to treat everyone with love. Don't let them "pass by" those who are in need of acceptance and understanding. When forming small groups, use arbitrary methods such as drawing numbers or color-coding name tags to get the groupings you think will work best. Look for activities where those with special abilities can participate. Direct work or discussion groups so that everyone has to contribute. Focus on cooperation and teamwork rather than competition.



Lesson Plan

1 Loving Promises

Ask the young people if they have ever made a promise to do something loving for another person. Accept several examples. Read the first two paragraphs on page 16. Emphasize that God promised to be with the people always, and the people promised to follow the Ten Commandments.

Read the next paragraph. Make the point that God first made the covenant

with people long ago, but Jesus made a new and everlasting covenant with humanity. He told us to keep the covenant with God by following the Ten Commandments. Add *Obey the Ten Commandments* to the poster. Turn to page 85 in *A Little Catechism* to review the Ten Commandments.

RESOURCE MASTER

Use the Resource Master on page 35 to reinforce the main objectives of this lesson.

ANSWER KEY:

Answers will vary.

Loving Promises

God wants all people to be happy with him forever. Long ago God made a **covenant**, or holy promise, to be with his people always. God said, "I will be your God, and you shall be my people" (from *Leviticus 26:12*). God revealed himself fully by sending us his own Son to show us the Father.

God gave to his people special rules or laws to follow. According to the Book of Exodus in the Bible, God gave divine laws to Moses, the leader of the people of Israel. These divine laws are the Ten Commandments. They showed people in the time of Moses how to keep their covenant with God.

Jesus taught people to live up to the covenant with God. Jesus reminded people about the importance of obeying the **Ten Commandments**. When you obey the Ten Commandments, you are showing your love for God. You are on the road to loving God with all your heart, being, strength, and mind. You do what the Great Commandment tells you to do when you live the Ten Commandments. The first three commandments help you to love and respect God. The other seven commandments help you to love and respect others.

Turn to page 85 in *A Little Catechism* for a review of the Ten Commandments.



Lesson Plan

2 Law of Love

Call on volunteers to read the text. Write the headings *Love God* and *Love Your Neighbor* on the board. Invite volunteers to list ways they can show love of God and love of others every day. Then go on to the activity. Add ideas for being a Good Samaritan to your list on the board. Set a time limit for preparing the skits or examples.

3 This We Believe

Invite the young people to read the text, then look at the poster you have made. Use it to review the concept of covenant.

Law of Love

You also show your love for God when you love other people. Jesus told people that the way to **eternal life**, or happiness forever with God, is the way of love. As a follower of Jesus, you are called to remember everyday the words of the Great Commandment: "Love God above all things, and love your neighbor as you love yourself."

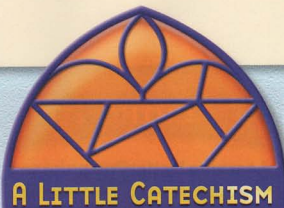
When you were baptized, you entered into the New Covenant made with humanity through Jesus Christ. God gave you the new life of grace and welcomed you as a member of his Church. Because God loves you, he asks for your love in return. He wants you to be faithful to him. He wants you to obey his laws. He wants you to love other people. He wants you to follow his Son, Jesus.

This We Believe

God has made a covenant with us. We show our love and thankfulness by following God's Law.



Read Luke 10:29–37 to find out what story Jesus told as an example of loving your neighbor. Then write one way you might be a Good Samaritan in school or in your neighborhood. With some friends act out a version of this story for the whole class.



Invite the young people to open their books to *A Little Catechism*. Choose one or more of the selections below for memory work or reinforcement. In this Catechist Edition, you will find the catechism on pages 107–127.

1. Read aloud Statement 18 about keeping God's commandments on page 71. Ask the young people to repeat the words after you.
2. Ask the young people to answer Important Question 3 about sin's effect on one's relationship with God, on page 72.

Lesson Plan

1 Way of Love

Remind the young people that as followers of Jesus, they must love others as he did. His way of love is more than just good feelings or good wishes. His way calls for real actions in their everyday lives. Then ask them to complete the activity. Have them add loving actions to the poster. Display the poster in your prayer space.

2 Catholic Practices

Invite the young people to try this: Pray the Hail Mary together, bowing at the name of Jesus.

TEACHING TIP

Learning by Heart

Emphasize the importance of memorizing the prayers and main teachings of the Church. For example, help the young people learn the Act of Contrition.

Have the young people repeat a commandment or prayer phrase together several times, first by looking at the words in the book, then by closing their eyes while saying it. Write the teaching on the board, leaving blanks for several important words. Have the group read it, filling in the correct words as they do so. Let them practice with a partner. Explain that when they learn something "by heart" they will always have it when they need it most.



Way of Love

On each road sign, write one way you can show your love.
Follow the directions on the signs.

Catholic Practices

Many Catholics bow their heads when they say the name of Jesus in prayer. This honors the second commandment.

For God

For People in My Parish

For People in MY Neighborhood

For My Family

Lesson Plan

3 Give Us Light

Distribute paper flame outlines. Have each person copy the prayer response on a flame, color it, and cut it out. Invite everyone to process with you. Raise a lighted candle as you lead the young people, carrying their paper flames, around the room. Lead the response

several times as you proceed. Consider singing “Christ Be Our Light” from the Reconciliation music CD as you process to prayer. When you arrive at the prayer table, invite the young people to attach their flames to the poster. Offer the prayer.

Give Us Light

All: Lord, give us light to walk the way of love.

Leader: The Law of the Lord is perfect;
it gives us new life.
His teachings last forever;
and they give wisdom to his people.

All: Lord, give us light to walk the way of love.

Leader: The Lord's Instruction is right;
it makes our hearts glad.
His commands shine brightly,
and they give us light.

All: Lord, give us light to walk the way of love.

Leader: Let our words and our thoughts
be pleasing to you, Lord,
because you are our mighty rock
and our protector.

All: Lord, give us light to walk the way of love.

Based on Psalm 119:8,9,15

OPTIONS

Learning by Doing

Divide everyone into small groups, with the number of groups divisible by four. Write on an equal number of slips of paper, *Love God, Love My Family, Love My Parish, and Love My Neighbors*. Fold the slips of paper and put them in a small basket. Have each group pick a slip and prepare a skit or pantomime. Let the others guess which way of love they are expressing.

Lesson Plan

1 Introduce the Family Page

The activities on this page provide ways for the young people to share what they have learned with their families. Review the various activities and encourage the young people to follow through with them. Answer any questions they may have.



Online for families

Remind the young people to check the Web site this week with their families. There is a section devoted to sacrament preparation.
www.RCLBenziger.com



Family Note

Dear Family,

I learned that long ago God made a covenant, or holy promise, to love his people. I learned that at my Baptism, God showed his love for me. In return God wants me to love him and to love other people. This is the Great Commandment. I can show my love by obeying the Ten Commandments and following the teachings of Jesus. In showing my love in this way, I am promised eternal life with God.

ON YOUR OWN

Make a calendar for the week. At the end of each day, draw one heart on the calendar for each loving action you did for God or for others.
Try to fill your calendar with hearts!

Family Chat

Talk about ways family members follow the Ten Commandments every day.

WITH YOUR FAMILY

Look in newspapers and magazines to find stories of people who show by their actions that they love God and keep his commandments. Bring the stories to class to share with your classmates.



20 www.RCLBenziger.com

Name _____

Ten Ways to Say "I Love You"

Review the Ten Commandments on page 85. The Ten Commandments are ways to show love for God and others.

Write one positive thing you will do to follow each of the commandments.

Ten Commandments

Commandment

Action

One

Two

Three

Four

Five

Six

Seven

Eight

Nine

Ten