

Contents

1	Pastoral Vision	3
2	How to Use <i>Together in Jesus</i>	6
3	Getting Organized	7
	First Reconciliation Registration	10
4	Nurturing a Spirit of Conversion	11
5	Lesson Plans	
	Lesson 1: I Belong to a Loving Community	12
	Prayer Ritual 1: I Can Love	17
	Lesson 2: We Keep God's Commandments	18
	Prayer Ritual 2: Commandments	23
	Lesson 3: We Can Act Like Jesus	24
	Prayer Ritual 3: Jesus	29
	Lesson 4: Jesus Teaches Us to Forgive	30
	Prayer Ritual 4: I Can Forgive	35
	Lesson 5: Jesus Gives Us the Holy Spirit	36
	Prayer Ritual 5: Peace	41
	Lesson 6: I Prepare for First Reconciliation	42
6	Act of Contrition	47
7	Family Reconciliation Prayer	48

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We Keep God's Commandments

Objectives

1. The children will recognize that rules can help people be more loving.
2. The children will recognize that God's Ten Commandments help the people of Israel live together.
3. The children will identify ways we keep the Commandments today.
4. The children will celebrate the "Commandments" Prayer Ritual.

Overview

The Ten Commandments are the terms of God's covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai. The covenant of the Commandments is the culmination of the Hebrews' journey out of slavery in Egypt and establishes them as the people of God.

In the covenant the God who led the Hebrews to freedom on a dry path through the sea agrees to be their God. The former slaves agree to be God's people, who keep the Ten Commandments that will form them into a community that reveals among the nations what their God is like. They agree to worship only Yahweh, their God, to keep the Sabbath, to honor their parents, to tell the truth, and to respect others' lives, property, and spouses.

In the Commandments, Christians inherit much more than some of the world's best known do's and don'ts. The Commandments are a gift for forming community. The Commandments show us today, as they

showed the ancient Israelites, how to be human according to God's purpose.

People who keep these laws recognize God loves them and wants them to respond in love. People who keep the Commandments will honor the lives of others rather than take them in revenge. One can count on another person who keeps the Commandments to tell the truth, rather than a self-serving lie. The Commandments create a community of people who share one another's values and expectations. Their way of living makes God visible in the world and reveals who human beings are meant to be.

This lesson emphasizes the Commandments most important to young children's living together in peace at home and school.

Preparation, Materials

1. Have a chalkboard, chalk, and eraser or newsprint and markers available.
2. Display a Bible on a beautiful piece of cloth.
3. If you have a printed set of classroom rules, have that on display.
4. Make copies of Prayer Ritual 2, "Commandments," one for each child.

Opening Prayer

5 minutes

1. Gather the children in the prayer section of the classroom where the Bible is displayed. Take a moment for the children to be quiet. Use the following prayer or something similar to begin today's session.

We are gathered here in your presence, God. Please guide us to listen to the message you are giving to us. Help us see how we can keep the Commandments in our lives. Give us the strength and courage always to follow your way. Amen.

2. Conclude by singing the song from last week, "The More We Get Together," with the children doing the gestures they learned.

The More We Get Together

*The more we get together,
together, together,
The more we get together,
the happier we'll be.
For your friends are my friends
and my friends are your friends.
The more we get together,
the happier we'll be.*



We Keep God's Commandments

First Reconciliation,
page 1, 10 minutes

Objective

The children will recognize that rules can help people be more loving.

1. Have the children gather in a circle in the open space and recall the previous lesson. Remember with them the question someone asked Jesus in the last lesson, "Who am I supposed to love?" Ask the children to remember what Jesus' answer to that question was. *He told the story of the good Samaritan.* What does that story tell us? *We are to show love to everyone.* Ask the children whom they love. Conclude by asking them if it is easy to love everyone. *No, it is not easy, not even here in our class.*

2. Distribute the copies of Lesson 2.

Guide the children in exploring the cover illustration. Where is this taking place? How is the activity in the illustration different from our classroom?

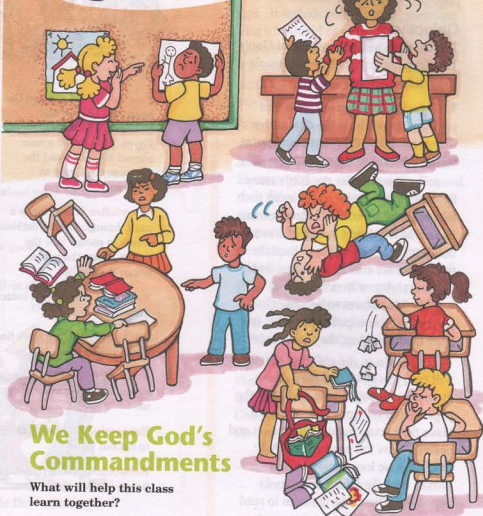
a. Then discuss:

- What unloving actions are taking place in this classroom?
- What problems do these children have because they have no rules?

b. Direct the children's attention to the question at the bottom of the page: What will help this class learn together? Discuss what rules might help the children be more loving. List suggestions on the chalkboard or on newsprint.

3. Review with the children some of the classroom rules you have. If they are printed on a chart, have a child point to one of the rules and explain why we have that rule. How does it help us? If the rules are not printed, have the children recall a rule and then explain why we have that rule and how it helps us.

Together in Jesus



We Keep God's Commandments

What will help this class learn together?

Slaves Become God's Own People

First Reconciliation 2,
page 2, 15 minutes

Objective

The children will recognize that God's Ten Commandments help the people of Israel live together.

1. Remain in the open space and prepare the children to dramatize the story. Have them put their lesson on the floor in front of them.

a. Set the tone for the Bible story by explaining that long ago, even before Jesus' time, God helped a man named Moses lead a group of slaves out of a land called Egypt. Explain that slaves are owned by others and have no rights or freedom. God wanted these slaves to become God's people and live together happily. But, from the beginning, they had trouble.

b. Explain to the children that they will read this story as a play. Have them open to page 2 and fold back the page so that only page 2 is showing. Have them examine the illustration and describe how the people feel. Ask: Does anyone look happy? *Even Moses, with the folded arms, looks impatient.* Direct the children to read the page to find out why everyone looks so grumpy. Assign the parts of Storyteller 1, Storyteller 2, Reuben, Rachel, Benjamin, Moses, Rebecca, Dan, and Abner to nine different children. To give everyone a part, consider having all the other children read the part of Moses together. Give the children a short time to silently read their assigned part, then have them read the story aloud, using their voices to show how the people felt.

It is very important not to elaborate on details of the story such as the quail, the manna, the water from the rock. At this stage, these details must remain impressions that the children will learn more about later. The point of this story at this time is the lack of rules.

Slaves Become God's Own People



Storyteller 1: Long ago God heard the cries of the Hebrews, who were slaves in Egypt. God called a man named Moses to lead the slaves out of Egypt to freedom.

Storyteller 2: God made a path through the sea for the slaves to escape into the desert. Soon the people began to grumble.

Reuben: I liked Egypt better than this desert.

Rachel: What if we can't find water to drink?

Moses: You didn't like being slaves. God will keep helping us.

Benjamin: We have nothing to eat but birds.

Rebecca: Yes, and this sticky honey stuff on the bushes.

Moses: But you are no longer slaves. God will care for us.

Rebecca: Moses, make Dan give me my goat back.

Reuben: Moses, you have to stop Abner. He said he will kill me the next time I walk past his tent.

Rachel: Rebecca is lying so she can get one of Dan's goats. Her goat died.

Dan: Come near my goats, and you'll be sorry.

Abner: Where's Reuben? I'm going to pay him back.

Moses: What am I going to do with these people?

What do you think Moses should do?



c. When the children have finished the reading, ask:

- What worries and troubles do the people have? *They are worried about food, water, their animals; they are quarreling, lying, stealing, getting even.*
- What problems does Moses have with the people? *They don't trust God; they fight; they all come to him with their problems.*
- What rules could help the people to live happily together? As the children make suggestions, write them on the

chalkboard or newsprint. These suggestions will lead into the Commandments part of this lesson.

d. To conclude, read the question on the bottom of page 2 and give the children time to come up with some possibilities. *Moses could punish the people, threaten them, split them up, go away himself.*

Storyteller 1: Moses climbed a mountain to talk to God.

God: Moses, I see these slaves don't know how to live together. I will teach them to be my special people, if they will listen.

Storyteller 1: Three days later a cloud covered the mountain.

Storyteller 2: Thunder cracked and lightning flashed.

Moses: Listen to all God says.

God: I am the Lord, your God; you shall have no other gods before me.

You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain.

Keep holy the Sabbath day.

Honor your father and your mother.

You shall not kill.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.

You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.

Moses: These are the Ten Commandments that God gives us. If we keep them, we will be God's own holy people, and God will be our God.

People: We will do all that God has told us.

Exodus 16-20



How will the Commandments help God's people live together?

Slaves Become God's Own People

First Reconciliation 2,
page 3, 10 minutes

Objective

The children will recognize that God's Ten Commandments helped the people of Israel live together.

1. Turn to page 3 and fold it back so that only page 3 is visible. Explain that this part of the story explains what Moses did and what happened to the

people. Again, assign parts to specific children. Read the Commandments yourself so that they will be read in a solemn and impressive way. Give the children a brief time to review the part they will read. Then read the entire page aloud in parts.

2. Explain that the people of Israel never forgot what God did for them and told this story to their children through all the years until now. Read the question at the bottom of page 3. Ask the children to summarize in their own words what God did to help the

Find the sticker of Moses receiving the Ten Commandments. Put it here.

people live together. Make sure that they know that we call the rules God gave the Ten Commandments. If the children ask about adultery, explain that this Commandment is for grown-ups. It forbids people taking someone else's husband or wife. Help the children to relate particular Commandments to the particular troubles stated in the first part of the story.

3. Have the children dramatize the entire story by using the parts they have read or by taking different roles. Encourage them to use their bodies and their faces to show how the people felt and responded. Before concluding this part of the lesson, point out the illustration of the people carrying the ark of the covenant at the bottom of page 3. The ark is where the people kept the Ten Commandments. When they arrived in Israel and built the Temple, they put the ark there.

4. Have the children return to their work area, find the sticker that shows Moses with the Commandments, and apply it to the appropriate space.

God's Commandments Help Us Live Together

First Reconciliation 2,
page 4, 10 minutes

Objective

The children will identify ways we keep the Ten Commandments today.

1. Have the children turn to page 4 and read the headline and two sentences at the top of the page.

Have them describe what is happening in each of the three photos. Direct them to find the stickers in the shape of the Commandment tablets. Guide them in finding and applying the sticker that matches each photo. When they have completed this task, read again the title of the page and the text below it. Have all the children together read the text on the stickers that they have applied to their pages.

2. Guide the children in finding the sticker that is applied to the bottom of the page. As they complete the task, they can read these statements silently. This is remote preparation for the examination of conscience they will be making later.

3. Invite the children back to the open space when all have completed the task. Explain that you are going to use the portion following the question, "Do I keep God's Commandments?" as a preparation for the concluding prayer. With their pages on the floor in front of them, they can either follow along or close their eyes and listen.

a. Read each question slowly and give a few moments after each for the children to think about each in relation to his/her life.

b. Conclude by asking the children to relate these statements to the Commandments as they are found on page 3.

God's Commandments Help Us Live Together

We belong to the Church, a community that tries to keep the Commandments. The Ten Commandments ask us to obey God and respect one another.

Find the Commandment stickers that match the actions in each photo.



Find the sticker that names the Commandment the child in this photo is keeping. Put it here.



Find the sticker that names the Commandment the people in this photo are keeping. Put it here.



Find the sticker that names the Commandment the child in this photo is keeping. Put it here.

I Prepare for the Sacrament of Reconciliation

I examine my conscience, the voice within me that helps me to decide, "Do I keep God's Commandments?"

1. Do I try to love God with my whole heart?
2. Do I use God's name only for praying and not for swearing in anger or for fun?
3. Do I worship God at Mass on Sunday?
4. Do I show respect for my parents and other adults who take care of me?
5. Have I been mean to anyone?
6. Have I done anything to hurt my own or someone else's body?
7. Have I taken or destroyed things that belong to others?
8. Do I tell the truth?
9. Have I been jealous of what others have?
10. Have I been jealous of another person's family or lifestyle?

Find the sticker of children's faces that fits here.

Prayer Ritual 2 Commandments

10 minutes

Objective

The children will celebrate the "Commandments" Prayer Ritual.

1. Have the children gather in the prayer area. Explain that in our prayer celebration, children will be assigned particular parts to read. Everyone will read the parts marked "All." Show them the gestures they will use.

- We are sorry—cross hands over the chest, bow the head slightly.
- You are our God—extend arms upward full length, and raise eyes upward.
- We are your children—extend arms to the side, look straight ahead.

2. Have the children take home their lessons and prayer celebrations.

Encourage them to tell their parents about the pages and share the prayer celebration with their families.

Commandments

Leader: We are the community of Jesus' followers.
We gather together.

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Leader: We are children who love God with all our hearts.

All: We are children who ask forgiveness when we break God's
Commandments.

Leader: God, you are our God. All that you say, we will do.

Reader 1: For times we did not thank you, God,

All: We are sorry. You are our God. We are your children.

Reader 2: For times we did not respect other people,

All: We are sorry. You are our God. We are your children.

Reader 3: For times we did not respect people's belongings,

All: We are sorry. You are our God.
We are your children.

Reader 4: For times we
told lies,

All: We are sorry. You are
our God. We are your chil-
dren.

Leader: God, you are our
God. We want to do as you
teach us.

All: God, you are our God.
We love you.

