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Loving God

CATECHIST RESOURCE CENTER

Faith Formation

Law and Love

Most of us try to obey the law, because we know that misery and chaos would result if we did not. God's Law of Love, however, calls us to move beyond avoiding chaos. Laws provide the minimum requirements for a moral life. 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. Following God's Law of Love helps us to stretch our capacity for holiness.

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 to be his people, and we respond by choosing to live as he has commanded us. God has promised eternal life to those who participate in this relationship. God brings joy, peace, and holiness into our lives.

How have you chosen to live out the covenant with God?

CHECK THE CATECHISM

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



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.

Background

Teaching about Loving God

Morality is rooted in love. Build on the work done in the first lesson, in which the children 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 primary-age children as you teach this lesson:

- **Primary-age children take a concrete approach to rules.** They understand and expect rules to govern their behavior.
- **Primary-age children can get too caught up in the rules.** Kids commonly tattle on others who don't follow the rules. Focus on why we follow rules rather than on strict adherence.

A CATECHIST'S PRAYER

*Lord, what must I do? Help me to love others.
Give me your light, so that I might walk the
way of love. Amen.*

Vocabulary Preview

covenant
Ten Commandments
eternal life
Great Commandment

Scripture

Psalm 143:10: Ask for God's guidance.
Luke 10:25–28: Jesus tells us the Great Commandment.
Psalm 119:165: God gives peace of mind to all who love God's Law.
Leviticus 26:12: God makes a covenant with Israel.
Psalm 19:7,8,14: God's Law gives us light.

Related Resources

Video

The Blown-Around Room/God's Rules for Me (Pauline Books and Media, 1-800-876-4463). This video shows the consequences of not following rules. (Children, 25 minutes)

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 children 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 16–17	Loving God	Poster, markers
Page 18	Walking the Way of Love	Poster, markers, pencils
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	
Page 28	Jesus' Teaching Methods	Bible
Page 29	Including Every Child	
Page 30	Resource Master	Copies of page 35
Page 31	A Little Catechism	Student pages 71, 72
Page 32	Learning by Heart	
Page 33	For Visual and Auditory Learners	Flashlights or battery candles, music



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 children 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.

Invite the children to look at the illustration as you read the story in the text. Then discuss the questions. Be sure the children understand the mom's motives. Ask them to offer examples of other safety rules and to explain how

following these rules shows love for oneself and others. Then talk about family rules and how keeping them shows love. 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*)



Loving God

You are my God. Show me what you want me to do.

Psalm 143:10

Mom's Rule

Eric jumped into the back seat of his mom's car. He couldn't wait to get to his first soccer practice. Eric was so excited!

"You know the rule: Buckle your seat belt," Eric's mom said, before she started the car.

"Yeah," Eric's older sister, Jessie, said in a bossy voice. "It's the law. Mom will get a ticket if you don't!"

"That's not the only reason," said Eric's mother. She turned and gave Eric a smile. "I want you to be safe. That's why we have the rule."

Eric smiled back, buckling his seat belt with a loud click.

- Why did Eric's mom have a rule about safety belts?
- What are some rules that your family has?
- How do rules show our love for one another?



TEACHING TIP

Making Rules

Get the children involved in drawing up a list of rules for this class. Keep the rules to a minimum, and be sure they are clearly stated. Sometimes children misbehave because they are not sure of the rules or expectations. Add a rule that involves a mutual promise or agreement, such as, "You follow the rules, and I give everyone a treat/a sticker/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?

Direct the children's attention to the illustration. Invite volunteers to describe what they see happening. Explain that in this story a man is asking Jesus what God wants him to do. Invite the children to imagine that they are there with Jesus, too. Read the text with lots of expression. When you finish, ask what God wants the man to do. (*God wants*

the man to love him with all his heart, soul, strength, and mind and love others as he loves himself.) Write this answer on the poster. Tell the class that God wants the man to have eternal life. Discuss what that means. (*living forever with God*) Display the poster where the children will have access to it 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 Scripture story, 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.

What Must I Do?

WORD OF GOD

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

Psalms 119:165

Following rules is not always easy to do. Sometimes it seems like there are too many rules. A man who lived in the time of Jesus must have felt that way. One day, as Jesus was traveling to Jerusalem and teaching along the way, he met a man who asked him an interesting question. Read the story from the Bible to see what the question was.



Lesson Plan

2 Let's Talk

Discuss each of the questions as a class. Ask to whom your "neighbor" refers. Then ask for specific examples for the last question.

3 Word of God

Read the verse aloud. Ask the children how they feel when they break the rules

- o do not do what they know is right. Do they feel differently when they do what is right? Tell them that this is another sign of God's love. Following his plan for us gives us peace of mind and heart.

Read the verse again with the class as a prayer of praise and thanks to God.

An expert in the Law of Moses stood up and asked Jesus a question. "Teacher," he said. "What must I do to have eternal life?"

Jesus answered, "What is written in the Scriptures? How do you understand them?"

The man replied, "The Scriptures say 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind.' They also say, 'Love your neighbors as much as you love yourself.'"

Jesus said, "You have given the right answer. If you do this, you will have eternal life."

Luke 10:25-28

LET'S TALK

- What does the Scripture say about loving God?
- What does it say about loving your neighbor? Who is your neighbor?
- Give an example of how you can show love to your neighbor.



SPECIAL NEEDS

Including Every Child

Take the lead in showing the children how to treat everyone with love. Do not let them "pass by" children who are in need of acceptance and understanding. When forming small groups, use arbitrary methods such as drawing numbers or color-coded name tags to get the groupings you think will work best. Look for activities in which 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 God

Read the first paragraph. Give an example of a mutual promise: "I will do this, and you will do that." Explain that God promised to be with the people always, and asked the people to follow the Ten Commandments. Read the next paragraph. Explain 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, as in the story on the previous pages. Ask the children what Jesus wants them to do. (*obey the Ten Commandments*) Have a volunteer add that to the poster.

Call on volunteers to read the rest of the text. Ask the children to underline the Great Commandment. Help them memorize it. Then have someone add it to the poster. 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. Then have each child complete the activity.

RESOURCE MASTER

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

ANSWER KEY:

Answers will vary.

Loving God

God wants all people to be happy forever. Long ago, God made a holy promise or **covenant** with his people. He promised to be with his people always. God said, "I will be your God, and you shall be my people." (From *Leviticus 26:12*)

God gave his people rules or laws to follow. These laws are the **Ten Commandments**. Jesus taught people how to live up to the promises made to God. Jesus reminded people about obeying the Ten Commandments. When you obey God's laws, you are showing your love for God and for one another.

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

The Great Commandment

You 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 to love other people as you love yourself.



Lesson Plan

2 This We Believe

Invite the children to look at the poster you made together. Use it to review the concept of covenant.

This teaching of Jesus about love is called the **Great Commandment**:

Love God above all things, and love your neighbor as you love yourself.

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.

THIS WE BELIEVE

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

Activity

You are a follower of Jesus Christ. You listen to his words. What is one thing you can do to show your love for God? What is one way you can show love for other people?

Draw or write your answers in the hearts.

GOD

LOVE



Invite the children to open their books to *A Little Catechism* on page 69. 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 children to repeat the words after you.
2. Ask the children to answer Important Question 2 about conscience on page 72.

Lesson Plan

1 Walking the Way of Love

Remind the children that as followers of Jesus, they must love others as he did. His way of love is not just feelings or good wishes. It amounts to real actions in their everyday lives. Then have them complete the activity. Ask them to add actions from the maze to the poster. Display the poster in your prayer space.

2 Parish Connection

Point out that we help others keep this commandment by gathering together for Sunday Mass.

3 Catholic Practices

Tell the children that they can try this: Pray the Hail Mary together, bowing at the name of Jesus.

TEACHING TIP

Learning by Heart

Help the children learn prayers or important teachings like the Great Commandment. Have them repeat it 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 class read it, filling in the correct words as they do so. Finally, have the children pair off and recite the Great Commandment to their partner.

Walking the Way of Love

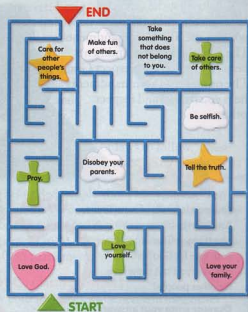
Remember the words of the Great Commandment:
Follow the path that takes you down the path of love.

PARISH CONNECTION

When you go to Mass on Sunday, you are obeying the third commandment.

CATHOLIC PRACTICES

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



What happens when you do not follow the way of love?

Lesson Plan

4 Give Us Light

Distribute flame outlines. Have each child copy the prayer response on a flame and color it. Carry a lighted candle as you lead the children, carrying their flames, around the room. Lead the response several times as you process. You may also consider using "Christ Be Our Light" from the RCL Benziger Reconciliation music CD. When you arrive at the prayer table, invite the children to pin the flames to the poster. Offer the prayer.

I know that God promises to love me and be with me always.

I promise to be faithful to my covenant with God.

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,
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 119:7, 8, 14

OPTIONS

For Visual and Auditory Learners

As an alternative, darken the classroom for the prayer. Give each child a small flashlight or battery-powered candle. First have them use their lights to read the prayer. Then invite them to let their lights dance to the music of a hymn or song, such as "We are Marching in the Light of God," a South African hymn, or "This Little Light of Mine," an African American spiritual.

Lesson Plan

1 Introduce the Family Page

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

Parish Connection
This week's theme is "Love and Service."
Read the story of the Good Samaritan and discuss how we can show love and service to others.
Catholic Prayer
Prayer is the heart of our faith. We can pray for ourselves and for others.
Prayer is a way to talk to God and to listen to His voice.
Prayer is a way to grow closer to God and to His people.
Prayer is a way to find peace and comfort in our lives.
Prayer is a way to share our faith with others and to help them grow closer to God.



Online for families

Remind the children to check the RCL Benziger Web site this week with their families. There is a section devoted to sacramental preparation.
www.RCLBenziger.com

HOME and Family



Family Note

Dear Family,

I learned that long ago God made a covenant, or holy promise. God gave his people the Ten Commandments. I learned that 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. If I show my love in this way, God promises I will be happy with him forever.

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 Great Commandment every day.

WITH YOUR FAMILY

Make up a list of family commandments that will help you show love for God and for one another. Decorate the list, and display it where family members can see it.



20 www.RCLBenziger.com

Background Information

Vocabulary Preview

I, _____,

(Your name)

know God's great love for me.

I know that God promises to love me and be with me always.

I promise to be faithful to my covenant with God.

I will love God by _____.

I will love others as I love myself by _____.

With God's help, I will be true to my covenant.

Signed _____

Date _____

