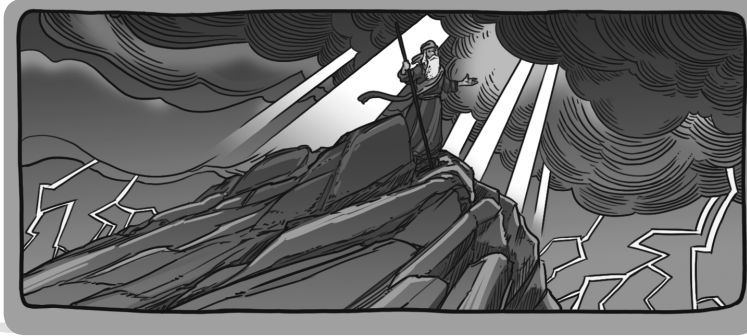


We Follow the Ten Commandments



Background Focus

In the last session, we learned that Jesus expects that his disciples will keep his commandment of love. This commandment of love also includes following the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments, given to us by God out of love, articulate what is called “natural law”: an innate and universal understanding within human beings of what is right or wrong. God’s gift of the Ten Commandments codifies these innate human understandings. Saint Thomas Aquinas summarized the first principle of the natural law as: “Good is to be done and pursued, and evil is to be avoided” (*Summa Theologiae*, I-II, 94).

The Ten Commandments formed the basis of the governance of God’s people as they wandered in the desert and in the more than three thousand years since. The Ten Commandments are the backbone of society as we know it. This session helps the children understand that God’s rules are given out of love, to help us live safe and happy lives as his children and as loving brothers and sisters to one another.

GO (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 in their chapter 4 activity booklets and locate the prayer on the page.
- Begin prayer by leading the group in the Sign of the Cross, then saying, “Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.” Allow about 10 seconds of silence.
- Ask the children to read the prayer together. Invite them to say “Amen,” and then close with another Sign of the Cross. Have the children put their activity booklets away for now.

Engage Activity

- Arrange the children in groups of three. Ask them to write down three good rules for this sacrament preparation group. Explain that these may be rules that are already followed (like raising hands before speaking) or they might be new rules.

Chapter 4




Featured Story

God Gives His People the Ten Commandments
(Exodus 19:16–20:17)

Lesson Goals

- to express that God gave us rules to keep his people safe and happy
- to recognize that the Ten Commandments are rooted in God’s love for us
- to explain the difference between a sin and an accident

Lesson at a Glance

-  **Go** (10 minutes)
Opening Prayer
Engage Activity
-  **Seek** (30 minutes)
Featured Story
Core Learning Activity
-  **Find** (20 minutes)
God’s Treasure of Forgiveness
Lesson Wrap-Up
Closing Prayer

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children’s Bible* and chapter 4 activity booklet
- ten scrolls (rolled-up construction paper, but not tied)
- a prize, such as a holy card or a prayer card, for each child
- Saint Mary’s Press® Big Book *Moses and the Ten Commandments* (optional)
- materials for any of the optional activities you choose

Music Suggestions

- “Lord, I Lift Your Name on High,” by Cedarment Kids (Cedarment Music, LLC)
- “The Ten Commandments Song,” by The River’s Voice (The River’s Voice)

- Ask the groups to share the rules. Write them on the board. If there are duplicates, put a check mark next to the rule that was mentioned more than once.
- Conclude with the following or similar words:
 - We have rules for school and rules for home. God has rules too! God has rules for us because he wants to keep us safe and happy. Today we will learn more about some of the rules from God.

† Seek (30 minutes)

Featured Story

- Invite the children to find Exodus 20:1–17 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (pages 131 and 134).
- Direct them to turn the page to the Featured Story on page 132 and place an "I found it!" sticker on the page. Tell them that the words between the leaves on the page are a shortened version of the Scripture story on pages 131 and 134.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 132 and 133. Point out the man standing on the mountain. Tell the children that this is Moses. When God's people were slaves in Egypt, God chose Moses to lead them out of slavery.
- Invite a volunteer to read the title of the Featured Story. Explain that long before God sent his Son, Jesus, to teach us and help us, God was teaching his people the best way to live. Tell them that God gave us the rules we call the **Ten Commandments**.
- Before reading the Bible story on page 132 to the children, read aloud Exodus 19:16–24 on page 131. Ask the children to follow in their Bibles. These verses set the scene for the giving of the Ten Commandments to Moses. Then read the Bible story to the children and ask several questions to check for comprehension, such as these:
 - Who was Moses? (*Moses was the leader of God's people.*)
 - What did God give to Moses? (*the Ten Commandments*)
 - What are some of the commandments that God gave us? (*Worship no god but me. Do not use my name for evil purposes. Observe the Sabbath. Respect your father and your mother.*)

➤ Why did God give us the Ten Commandments? (*He wants us to love him and to love ourselves and others. He wants us to be happy and peaceful together.*)

- Have the children turn to page 2 in the activity booklet and complete the activity with their Bibles open. *Answers: 1. Worship, 2. generations, 3. evil, 4. Sabbath/holy, 5. Respect, 6. steal, 7. accuse, 8. house/donkeys*

Note: You may want to supplement this Featured Story with the Saint Mary's Press® Big Book *Moses and the Ten Commandments*.

Understand It!

- Read Understand It! on page 133 to the children, or invite a volunteer or volunteers to read.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review these key points with them:
 - Rules keep us safe and happy.
 - God gave Moses, and us, the Ten Commandments so that we could be safe and happy.
 - The first three commandments teach us how to love God.
 - The next seven commandments teach us how to love other people.
- Ask the children to turn to the Ten Commandments on page 1990 in the back of *The Catholic Children's Bible*. Ask volunteers to take turns reading each of the commandments. Point out the first three commandments about loving God and the next seven commandments about loving other people.

Live It!

- Invite a volunteer to read Live It! on page 133, or read it aloud to the group.
- Invite the children to pray with you: "Dear God, help us to follow your commandments today and every day. Help us to love and respect you, to love and respect ourselves, and to love and respect others. Amen."

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at and describe the images in Tell It! on page 133. (*The first frame is Moses on the mountain; the second is the people worshipping God alone; the third is a child respecting and helping his parent.*)

- Direct the children’s attention to the third frame and ask, “If you could put a picture of yourself in the third frame, respecting and helping your parent, what would it show?” (*Accept reasonable responses.*)
- Have the children use some of the smaller stickers to mark parts of the Featured Story pages that capture their interest. Remind them to save enough stickers to use on the remaining chapters.

Core Learning Activity

A Ten Commandments Relay

- Prepare by writing one of the Ten Commandments, found on page 1990 in *The Catholic Children’s Bible*, on each of the ten scrolls.
- Arrange the children into ten teams with the same number of children on each team, if possible. Line the teams up next to each other. Establish a starting line in front of each team and a finish line across the room.
- Give one scroll to the first team member in each line. If some teams are larger, give commandments with fewer words to those teams.
- Explain that the object of the race is not to finish first, but to learn the commandment by heart. When the leader says, “Ready, set, GO!” the team members will run to the finish line, open the scroll, read aloud the commandment, roll up the scroll, turn around, and run back to give the scroll to the next team member. That team member will do the same thing. When all team members have returned to their line, they are to raise their hands in the air and keep them up to show that they have completed the relay. The last person to return to the line will hold up the scroll.
- Ask each team—in commandment order—to share their commandment by reciting it from memory.
- Have a prize ready for each child—perhaps a child-friendly holy card or prayer card—because everyone who learned a commandment is a winner.

Note: If there are too few children to make ten teams, you can divide the group into five teams, distribute the first five commandments on scrolls, hear the recitations at the end, and then run the race again with the next five commandments. If time permits, you can scramble the teams and run

more races, thus allowing the children to run with and learn a different commandment.

Process the Activity

- Review the significance of the Ten Commandments by asking the children to share why God gave them to us. (*Responses might include: out of love; because God wants us to be safe and happy.*)
- Conclude by reminding the children that if we want to follow Jesus, we will love God, ourselves, and others as he taught us. The Ten Commandments were not just for Moses and God’s people long ago. They are still God’s rules today. They are the best way for us to love God, ourselves, and others.

Additional Activity Options

If the core activity would not work for your group for any reason, you may choose to use any of the Additional Activities on pages 39–40 in its place.

✕ Find (20 minutes)

God’s Treasure of Forgiveness

- Remind the children that Jesus wants us to love God, ourselves, and others, and that the Ten Commandments show us how to do this in ten different ways. Explain that when we fail to love as God calls us to and we sin, we can confess our sins in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Recall the steps covered so far in the Sacrament of Reconciliation: the priest greets us, we make the Sign of the Cross, the priest reminds us of God’s mercy, and we hear the Word of God. Explain to the children that the next step is to confess, or tell, our sins to the priest.
- Help the children understand that we confess our sins to the priest because Jesus gave the power to forgive sins to the Apostles. Tell them that the Pope and bishops are the successors to the Apostles, and they receive this same power to forgive sins. A priest receives the authority to forgive sins from his bishop.
- Explain that we confess sins, not accidents, in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
 - To commit a sin, you must *know* it is a sin (something against God’s Law and against love), you must *want to do it*, and you must *do it freely*.
 - An **accident** is something that you do by mistake, that you *did not intend* to happen.

- Give an example of the difference between sins and accidents.
 - If we break something in the house, like a lamp, while we are dusting the living room, that is an accident. But if we break the lamp because we are throwing a ball in the house, which a parent has told us we may not do, then we freely and deliberately disobeyed by throwing the ball.
 - We may not have wanted to break the lamp, but we did want to throw the ball. The broken lamp was a direct result of our decision to throw the ball. We may need to help replace the lamp. We always need to make up in some way for any damage we cause because of our sins, whether it is hurt feelings or damaged property.
- Invite the children to turn to page 3 in the activity booklet and complete the activity. *Answers: 1. Yes, Sam disobeyed. No, this was an accident, but it was a consequence of throwing the ball. Sam should confess the entire incident and will need to make up for the broken lamp in some way. 2. Yes, Crissie disobeyed. 3. No, this was an accident.*
- If time permits, you may want to discuss the following two situations with the children:
 1. After supper it was homework time. Lydia told her mom, "I don't have any homework." Even though Lydia had a spelling pretest tomorrow, she wanted to play video games instead of studying. Did Lydia commit a sin?
Answer: Yes, she lied to her mother.
 2. Jill walks home from school every day with her sixth-grade neighbor, Jason. Jason saw some flowers in a yard. Jason said, "Hey, Jill, go over there and pick those flowers so I can give them to my mom." Jill said, "I don't want to! That's stealing!" Jason said, "If you don't, I won't walk you home anymore and you will have to cross the highway by yourself." So Jill picked the flowers that Jason wanted. Did Jason commit a sin?
Answer: Yes, he bullied Jill and told her to do something wrong.

Did Jill commit a sin?
Answer: No, she was coerced by Jason. She told him it was wrong, but he threatened her. She did not make a free decision to pick the flowers.

Teacher Note: This content is presented in a child-friendly way in the *God's Treasure of Forgiveness Student Booklet*. You may wish to have the children read all or parts of chapter 4 to supplement your presentation. Or use the concluding points under "Things to Remember" to wrap up the lesson before prayer.

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all of the different things they did in this lesson, and invite volunteers to share some of the key things they learned.
- Take some time to get input from the group, and write their answers on the board.
- Ensure that the following points are made, write them on the board, and circle them:
 - God gave us rules to keep his people safe and happy.
 - The Ten Commandments are rooted in God's love for us.
 - There are differences between a sin and an accident.
- Ask the children to place the chapter 4 sticker in the correct circle on their treasure maps.



Closing Prayer

- Begin the prayer by leading the group in the Sign of the Cross, then saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Invite the children to turn to page 1995 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* and pray the Act of Contrition together.
- You may want to play a piece of music, if you have time, on the theme of listening to God or the Ten Commandments.
- Close with a final Sign of the Cross.



Additional Activities

The Ten Commandments Tablets (15 minutes)

- Recall Jesus' teaching on the Greatest Commandment, to love God and to love others. Tell the children that the Ten Commandments are God's Laws that help us to love God and others. Explain that because we follow Jesus, we want to follow the Ten Commandments.
- Tell the children that they are going to make a reminder of the Ten Commandments to take home. Explain that this reminder will look like the tablets that Moses brought down from the mountain.
- Distribute the construction paper "tablets." On the left-hand tablet, have the children write LOVE GOD in capital letters at the top. Under this, have them write the numbers 1, 2, and 3 in a row down the tablet. On the right-hand tablet, have them write LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR in capital letters at the top. Under this, have them write the numbers 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 in a row down the tablet. If time permits, ask the children to turn to page 1990 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* to review each of the Ten Commandments. Read a number aloud and ask a volunteer to read the commandment; then read a commandment aloud and ask a volunteer to say what number it is.

Ten Commandments Puzzle Cards (15 minutes)

- Give each child ten half-pieces of paper. Ask the children to turn to page 1990 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* and copy the commandments onto the paper, one commandment on each piece. The printing should not stay only at the top, but should spread over the entire half-piece of paper.
- Ask the children to decorate each commandment with crayons or markers.
- Instruct the children to cut each commandment pieces into four or more pieces. Direct the children to cut larger rather than smaller pieces. They may cut them evenly or at odd angles. They should then scramble their set, and turn all the pieces upside down.
- Invite the children to turn all the pieces over when you say, "Ready, set, go!" and put them back together in order from one to ten. Both the words and the colors will help them find matches for their pieces.
- Conclude the activity by having the group recite the Ten Commandments together from their puzzles.
- Distribute a large plastic sandwich bag to each child so that puzzle pieces can be taken home.

Materials Needed

- black markers
- white construction paper, precut to look like two attached Ten Commandments tablets, one for each child (Fold each piece of paper lengthwise. At the top, cut an arc. When opened, this will look like two commandments tablets.)

Materials Needed

- enough pieces of plain white paper, cut in half, to make ten half-pieces for each child
- crayons or markers
- scissors
- large plastic sandwich bags

Materials Needed

- white drawing paper
- crayons

**Video Time: Moses The Ten Commandments
(15 minutes)**

- Show the video “Moses The Ten Commandments,” by Steve Chan, available on YouTube (3:04). The video illustrates only those commandments that have relevance for children, but it proclaims all of the commandments in child-friendly language.
- Explain the “manna from the sky” as a special food that God gave the Israelites. Tell the children that sometimes it is called “bread from heaven.” This reminds us of Jesus in the Eucharist. (See Exodus 16:13–15. This is the Featured Story, “God Feeds His People with Quail and Manna,” in *The Catholic Children’s Bible* on page 126.)
- Reshow the video, stopping the film after each commandment. Ask the children to explain what is happening in each scene. Ask them to share their answers to the following questions:
 - What is going on in this scene?
 - How are the people feeling?
 - Who is following the commandment?
 - What do you think will happen next?
- Distribute the drawing paper and crayons. Ask the children to think about one commandment and then illustrate that commandment, either in one main picture or in a row of pictures, as in video scenes. Suggest that they use the Tell It! frames on page 133 in their Bibles as an example of this kind of illustration.