

# Chapter 4:

## We Follow the Ten Commandments



### Introduction

What rules do you follow in your family? Some family rules might be, "No phones at the table," or "Hang the towels back up after you use them." How do your family's rules help you keep safe and happy? You follow rules at school too. Some school rules might be, "Raise your hand before speaking," or "Walk, don't run, in the halls." How do your school rules help you keep safe and happy?

God has given us rules, sometimes called laws or commandments, too. God's rules also help all of his people to be safe and happy. Today we will learn more about the rules that God gave us in the Ten Commandments.

### Scripture Story: God Gives His People the Ten Commandments

God's people were once slaves in Egypt. God chose a man named Moses to lead them to freedom. Then God gave Moses Laws for the

people to follow. The short version of these Laws is called the Ten Commandments. Let's read them now:

"I am the LORD your God who brought you out of Egypt, where you were slaves.

**Worship** no god but me. . . .

I show my love to thousands of generations of those who love me and obey my laws.

Do not use my name for evil purposes. . . .

Observe the Sabbath and keep it holy. . . .

Respect your father and your mother. . . .

Do not commit murder.

Do not commit adultery.

Do not steal.

Do not accuse anyone falsely.

Do not desire another man's house; . . . his wife, his slaves, his cattle, his donkeys, or anything else that he owns."

(Exodus 20:2-3, 6-8, 12-17)

## The Ten Commandments Today

The Ten Commandments are still God's rules for us today. He gave us these rules because he loves us and wants us to be safe and happy. Do you remember that Jesus taught us that loving God and loving others is the most important commandment?

The Ten Commandments show us ten different ways to follow Jesus' commandment of love. The first three commandments teach us how to love God. The next seven commandments teach us how to love other people. Here is a list of the Ten Commandments:

1. I am the Lord your God, you shall not have other gods before me.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
3. Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.
4. Honor your father and your mother.
5. You shall not kill.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's possessions.

## God's Treasure of Forgiveness

Sometimes we fail to love God, others, or ourselves. Can you think of ways people can fail to love God? Can you think of ways people can fail to love others? Can you think of ways people can fail to love themselves? Here is one example: People who drive recklessly are not loving themselves or others, because they are risking their lives and the lives of others.

When we fail to love God, others, or ourselves, we can confess our sins in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. After the priest greets us and we hear the Word of God, we are ready to confess, or tell, our sins to the priest.

We confess our sins to the priest because Jesus gave the Apostles the power to forgive sins. The Pope and the bishops are successors to the Apostles. The bishops give the authority to forgive

sins to the priests. Only a priest who has received this power from the Church can forgive sins in the name of Christ.

It is important to remember 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 *choose* 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. Let's think about the difference between a sin and an accident. Here are two examples:

1. Johnny breaks a lamp while he is sweeping the floor. Is that a sin? No, it is an accident. Johnny was not doing something wrong, and he did not intend to break the lamp.
2. Sally's parents have a rule not to throw balls in the house. She throws a ball in the house anyway, and it breaks a lamp. Sally knew her parents did not want her to throw the ball in the house, so throwing the ball is a sin because she knew it was wrong and did it anyway.

Was breaking the lamp a sin? No, that was an accident, because Sally did not want to break the lamp. But the lamp broke because she threw the ball, so she needs to be sorry and make up for both actions: for throwing the ball and breaking 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 something that is broken or stolen.

## Things to Remember

- God gave us rules to keep his people safe and happy.
- The Ten Commandments show God's love for us.
- The first three commandments teach us about loving God, and the last seven commandments teach us about loving other people.
- There are differences between a sin and an accident.
- In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we confess our sins and are forgiven by the priest in the name of Christ.