

LESSON AIM:

To teach the students about the Ten Commandments (sometimes referred to as "the law"), what they say, and how each commandment applies to their lives. This lesson will help the students understand that they have broken God's law and are thus under the penalty of the law.

- This lesson gives Biblical, historical background of the law and then briefly goes over each commandment. It is recommended that you teach the first four commandments one week and the following six the second week. (You might want to offer a small incentive for doing this, like 10 Hershey kisses, etc.)

KEY SCRIPTURE: Exodus 20: 1-17**REVIEW QUESTIONS:**

- 1) Where was Jesus born?
- 2) Who was Jesus' Mother and Father?
- 3) Who were the first people to hear about the birth of Jesus?
- 4) Review last week's verse; have students explain it in their own words.

INTRODUCTION:

- The Apostle Paul says that the law is a school master that brings us to repentance. If someone comes to Christ without true repentance, the result is a false conversion.
- God uses the law to convict us of our sin. The Ten Commandments are also the foundation of our legal system and our own laws today (although this foundation is under serious attack!)

LESSON:

God's people have been delivered from the hand of Pharaoh and have safely escaped the Egyptian army after God's miraculous deliverance at the Red Sea. But soon the children of Israel were grumbling and complaining. Even though God had promised to lead them to a beautiful land He had first promised to Abraham centuries before, it was becoming very apparent that the people had not forgotten the wicked ways of Egypt. They stilled sometimes even hungered after the Egyptian food and were very unthankful for the special food called manna that God provided for them each day. As they journeyed through the wilderness to Canaan land, they needed to be taught God's law for living.

About three months after the children of Israel left Egypt, they reached Mt. Sinai. During the year they camped there, God gave them detailed instructions about how to worship. God also gave them ten special laws to show them how holy He is, how sinful human beings are, and how He wants His people to live. To show how important the Ten Commandments are, God sent dark clouds, heavy thunder, and sharp flashes of lightning. Mt. Sinai was covered with smoke; it shook as in an earthquake. The people trembled with fear. A trumpet blast from heaven grew louder and louder. Then God spoke (Exodus 20:1-17)

- 1) "I am the Lord your God...You shall have no other God's before me."

This is the first commandment because if you obey it by truly loving God and putting Him first, you will find your self obeying the other nine commandments. By honoring and loving, you learn to honor and love others. The one true God, Creator of heaven and earth, deserves your love, worship and obedience far above anything or anyone else. Money, school, play, sports heroes, singers, TV and movie stars, friends—none of these should be as important to you as God.

- 2) Because people do not always keep the first commandment, God gave the second: “You shall not make for yourself a carved image.” A carved image is an idol made from wood or stone or metal. It may be a huge statue or even a tiny good luck charm. It may look like something God has made—an animal, bird, fish or human form. God cannot be reduced to an idol. And people who make idols come to believe that the idol itself is a god. (Read Psalm 115:3-8) They trust the idol rather than looking to God.

- 3) “You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God” This refers to using God’s name in an empty way. When you or I use the name of God or His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, in a thoughtless way or as a swear word, we dishonor God. Simply pretending to pray or praise when you are with others can also be using God’s name in vain. Say God’s name only in ways that show your love and respect. Ask God to help you honor His name and to protect it, too. When you hear someone else using God’s name in wrongly, why not say, “Please don’t use God’s name that way,” or show your disapproval by walking away.

- 4) “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” Sabbath comes from a Hebrew word meaning to stop or to rest from work. Holy means set apart. God was telling the people to set aside a special day each week for rest and worship. Israel observed the Sabbath on the seventh day of the week, our Saturday. Because Jesus rose on the first day of the week, His followers began to set aside Sunday as their special day of worship. Most Christians still keep Sundays special. As a day of rest, the Sabbath is God’s gift to His people. God knew that doing ordinary work seven days a week would be too tiring for us. When we use one day in seven as a day of worship, we make it our gift to God. We may honor God by attending church to spend time with Him and with other Christians (Hebrews 10:25). What do you do on Sundays to keep it special for God?

- 5) “Honor your father and your mother” To honor means to prize highly, show respect, treat as precious or valuable. Why are your parents valuable to you? They are God’s gift to you. Think of all they do for you and have done for you. They protect you from many dangers. They provide things you need like food and clothing. They even give you things you do not need but like to have—toys, bikes, special treats. You honor them by obeying them, by being kind to them, by speaking to them, and about them with respect. Perhaps you have substitute parents. God wants you to honor them, too. Even if you don’t live with your parents all the time, honor them in every way you can. People who honor their parents are people who please God and receive His promise of blessing. (Ephesians 6:1-3)

- 6) “You shall not murder” Murder is taking someone else’s life in an unlawful way. Life is precious. God breathed His life into the first man, Adam. So everyone’s life is important—your life, the lives of those you love, the lives of strangers, the lives of unborn babies. Life is God’s gift; and we are responsible not only to take another’s life, but to protect the lives of others. Jesus said if you have hatred in your heart, you have broken this commandment.

- 7) “You shall not commit adultery” This commandment shows how God looks at marriage. God planned the first marriage. He created Eve especially for Adam and planned that they should stay together (Genesis 2:24; Matt. 19:5-6) After you are married, you should be true to your husband or wife. People joined together in marriage must be careful not to “fall in love” with anyone else. Marriage vows say, “Til death do us part” or “As long as you both shall live” Committing adultery is breaking those vows by doing something with someone else’s husband or wife that only a married couple should do. Disobeying this command causes great unhappiness. While you are young, learn to turn from sinful things like listening to dirty stories, looking at evil pictures, watching films that cause wrong thoughts. Determine, with God’s help. To keep yourself pure. And begin praying now that at the

right time God will bring into your life the right person for you to marry. Then trust Him to do what's best for you. If you obey God's laws, He will help you to enjoy life, married or single.

- 8) "You shall not steal" Stealing is taking something that is not your own. Robbing a bank and shoplifting are not the only ways to steal. Borrowing something from a brother or sister or friend and failing to return it is stealing. Copying answers from somebody else's school paper is stealing. Cheating in a game is stealing another person's chance to win. The Bible says we should love our neighbors as ourselves. If we love others as we love ourselves, we will want the best for them and will not steal in any way. (I Peter 1:22)
- 9) "You shall not bear false witness" This commandment means that we should always tell the truth. God's Word also tells us to "put away lying" (Ephesians 4:25) What is a lie? It is anything that deceives or tricks someone into believing something that isn't true. You can tell a lie by the way you act as well as by what you say. Often gossip is lying—saying something unkind about someone when you aren't sure it is true. Exaggeration is lying—telling a story better than it really happened. It is lying to make a promise you know you cannot keep. The Devil is the "father of lies" (John 8:44), but Jesus said, "I am the...truth" (John 14:6). Ask the Lord to help you to tell the truth (Psalm 119:29)
- 10) "You shall not covet" Covet means to want something that you cannot afford to buy or something that belongs to someone else. When you feel you just have to have something and you will not be satisfied until you get it, that is coveting. When we do not let God control our wants, our coveting will lead us to break other commandments, too. God has promised to meet all your needs. Happiness won't come by getting what you want. Happiness comes by being content with what you have (Hebrews 13:5). Are you thanking God for all that He has given you?

Now you have all the commandments and what they really mean, is there anyone here who has never broken any of the commandments? The Bible says "all have sinned". Jesus knew that we were all condemned under the law. That is why He was obedient to His Father and came to earth to die for us. For every commandment we have broken, Jesus has already paid the penalty with His life. Jesus died for us because He loves us and doesn't want us to pay the penalty when He has already paid it. Ask Him to forgive you and come into your heart and to help you to do those things which make Him happy. He promises that whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved!

MEMORY VERSE: Exodus 20:1-17 (*worth 2 verses!*)

You shall have no other gods before Me.
You shall not make for yourself a carved image.
You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.
Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy.
Honor your Father and Mother.
You shall not murder.
You shall not commit adultery.
You shall not steal.
You shall not bear false witness. (Lie)
You shall not covet.