**FIRST STEPS TOGETHER:** FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

Session 3 of 4

# The Ten Commandments

### MEETING AIM

To consider why God gave rules to his people and how they still help us today.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

Exodus 19-20 (Exodus 14)

### BACKGROUND

This session plan is intended for use either in-person or online, depending on how you’re meeting. Adapt the activities to fit your particular situation.

The Israelites must have the reputation for the grumpiest, grumbliest people in history. For us, reading their story, we see a faithful God and a faithless people who failed to trust him. In truth, we find it as difficult to follow God’s way today.

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### STARTING OUT – 5 mins

Start your time together with some simple refreshments (if you can). Ask the children about their week. Talk about the guidelines you have in your group – something like sharing toys when you’re playing, being kind to each other.

### PLAY – 10 mins

**You will need:** equipment for your chosen game

Begin the session by playing a game together which has easy-to-follow rules. This could be a game like snakes and ladders, follow the leader or Simon says. Share the rules at the beginning to ensure everyone understands what they are allowed to do.

As you play the game, talk about the rules as the opportunities arise. Don’t interrupt the flow of the game, but take little opportunities to remind the children why they need to follow the rules and why they matter, as you play together.

### BIBLE STORY – 10 mins

**You will need:** ten large white cards; paint and paintbrushes

Begin the story by reminding children of the previous story, where God had set his people free. Explain to the children that God’s people had to travel through the desert to the special new home that he had prepared for them. Then tell the story:

God’s people had been travelling through the desert and God was looking after them. He gave them food to eat and safe places to stay. Then God gave his people another gift – ten special rules to follow that would keep them safe.

God called Moses to climb up a mountain to meet him there. He told Moses the special rules. God wrote them on a block of stone.

*As you share the following ten rules, paint a simple symbol on each card, as described below, and put on display. These should be done as simple line drawings to continue the flow of the story, but don’t rush through the retelling. Children could count on their fingers, to show the ten rules.*

1. Put God first in your life. Nothing is more important than him. *Paint a large number 1.*

2. Only worship God. *Paint a heart.*

3. Treat God’s name with respect. Don’t say it as a bad word. *Paint a speech bubble.*

4. Keep the Sabbath day special. You can work for six days but on the seventh day, you need to rest. *Paint someone sleeping, perhaps with ‘zzz’s.*

5. Respect your parents. *Paint a family.*

6. Never hurt anyone. *Paint a sad face, perhaps someone crying.*

7. Keep wedding promises. *Paint a bride and groom.*

8. Don’t take things that don’t belong to you. *Paint someone holding something in their hand.*

9. Always tell the truth. *Paint two people talking – each with a speech bubble.*

10. Don’t be jealous of other people’s things. *Paint two people; one looking unhappily at the other.*

When Moses came down from the mountain, he shared God’s rules with the people. I wonder how easy it was to keep God’s rules.

### CHATTING TOGETHER – 5 mins

Ask the children these questions, making sure everyone has the chance to contribute:

* What is your favourite part of this story?
* When is it easy to follow rules?
* When is it more difficult?
* Why do you think God gave these rules to people?
* Do you want to say anything to God?

### CREATIVE TIME – 10 mins

**You will need:** playdough

Give each child a small lump of playdough and invite the children to create a model that either shows somebody following a rule, or breaking one. It may be obvious how this relates to the Ten Commandments or it may relate more to the rules that children are given in their homes, within the group or their care setting.

As they create their models, encourage them to talk about the different scenarios they think of. Where appropriate, talk about how these rules relate to the Ten Commandments, but the purpose of the exercise is not to learn the ten rules, but rather to see how they relate to children’s own lives and why they still matter to us today.

### PRAYER – 5 mins

Explain to the children that as much as God wants us to follow these rules, he knows that as human beings we all do things wrong and find it hard to always do the right thing. God has promised us that he will forgive us and give us another chance to try again, when we say sorry to him. Invite the children to think of something they want to say sorry to God for, either aloud, or simply to say sorry silently in their own minds as you pray for them all.

**BECKY MAY**

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