**GROWING TOGETHER:** FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Session 3 of 4

# The Ten Commandments

### MEETING AIM

To explore how to live God’s way.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

Exodus 20:1-17

### 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 Ten Commandments are part of our cultural consciousness, but it’s unlikely that people will be able to name more than three or four! Use this session to explore these rules for living together, with God and with other people. But try to help children see that these rules shouldn’t lead us to slavish obedience; rather, that they should come out of a love for God and of God’s love for us. God doesn’t give us these guides to restrict us and keep us down. He wants the best for us, both in our relationship with him and in our friendships with others.

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### STARTING OUT – 5 mins

Start your time together with some simple refreshments. Chat about the week just gone. What has been successful? What less so?

### INTRO ACTIVITY – 10 mins

**You will need:** any resources needed for your chosen game

Play a game with the children, one that they particularly enjoy playing. As a referee, start to favour one player over the others. Make up rules that restrict one player, make decisions that are obviously not fair. If you’re a player, try to cheat as much as possible without been detected.

At the end of the game, ask the children what they thought of the unfair rules or cheating that went on.

### BIBLE STORY – 10 mins

**You will need:** Bibles; each of the Ten Commandments written on slips of paper

Gather the children together and give some background to where the people of God are by telling this story:

God’s people were free! He had freed them from being slaves in Egypt and now Moses was leading them towards the land that God had promised would be their home.

It wasn’t easy. The Egyptian pharaoh had changed his mind and sent his army to chase God’s people. He wanted them as slaves again! God’s people came to the edge of a great sea and they were trapped! The water was in front of them and the chariots of Egypt were behind them. It seemed like there was no way out – had God rescued them from Egypt only to let them be captured again?

No! God told Moses to hold his stick out over the water. Suddenly a great wind started to blow across the water and the waves began to part. The sea backed up into great walls either side of a dry path through the water! The people hurried across, thousands and thousands of them, until finally they were on the other side. The pharaoh’s army tried to follow, but God made the walls of water crash down over the dry path – God’s people were free!

Now Moses and the people have arrived at a mountain called Sinai – it is a holy place where Moses is meeting with God. And God has some very special things to say to his people.

Give out the Bibles and read Exodus 20:1-17 together. Show the children the commandments written on paper and ask them to put them in order of importance. Help the children think about each one and how important it is. Why did they make those decisions? Try to think about how these commandments apply today.

Now ask them to group the commandments into ones that are similar to each other. How many ‘categories’ do they need? Again, chat about why they have grouped certain commandments together.

Finally, read out Jesus’ words from Matthew 22:34-40. Challenge the children to group the commandments together under ‘Love the Lord your God’ and ‘Love others as much as yourself’. Can they do it?

Jesus chose commandments that start with love. Why do the children think he did that? Chat about whether the Ten Commandments show us anything about God’s love.

### CHATTING TOGETHER – 5 mins

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

* What is your favourite commandment? Which is the least favourite?
* Do we need all of these commandments today?
* What do these commandments tell us about God? And us?
* What do you want to say to God after exploring the Ten Commandments?

### CREATIVE TIME – 10 mins

**You will need:** art and craft materials

Show the children the art and craft materials you have gathered and ask them to create something that represents what God has been speaking to them about during the session. They might wish to illustrate one of the commandments, or create something that helps them work through what these commandments tell them about God and his relationship with us. If you’re online, ask the children to find whatever materials they can (you might need to deliver a pack to children if they don’t have any).

Give the children time and space to reflect and create, but be ready to chat with any of the group who would like to. Once everyone has finished, if anyone wants to share what they have done, let them do so (but remember to affirm all the responses the children have made).

### PRAYER – 5 mins

**You will need:** liturgical confession or the prayer below

Explain than sometimes we don’t follow God’s way and need to say sorry, because we haven’t loved God or loved others. If your church has a set confessional prayer, say that with the children. Otherwise use this (or another) confessional prayer:

Father God, thank you for showing how to live the best way.

We are sorry for the times this week when we haven’t loved you. *Encourage the children to think about a time when they have put other things above God.*

We are sorry for the times when we haven’t loved other people. *Ask the children to think of a time when they have hurt someone else, been selfish or taken something that isn’t theirs.*

Thank you that you sent Jesus so that we could be friends with you, and be forgiven for all these things.

You are amazing! Thank you, God!

**ALEX TAYLOR**

is resources editor for *Premier Youth and Children’s Work*.