**JOURNEYING TOGETHER:** FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Session 3 of 4

# The Ten Commandments

### MEETING AIM

To explore how to live God’s way.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

Exodus 19-20

### 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

As the young people arrive, break the ice by asking: “What would you do if you were prime minister for a day? What laws would you make?”

### INTRO ACTIVITY – 10 mins

**You will need:** whiteboard and marker or paper and pen

If you have any rules or guidelines for your group, review them now. Do you need to amend any guidelines to take into account following the experiences of lockdown?

If you don’t have any, ask the group if they can come up with no more than four guidelines for how to behave and treat other people when you are together.

Consider together what makes a good, supportive community, where everyone is treated well and valued.

### BIBLE EXPLORATION – 10 mins

**You will need:** Bibles; paper; felt-tip pens

Ask the group to recap on what you’ve already learned about Moses’ journey. So far, he’s been called at the burning bush, and led the Israelites out of Egypt after the Passover. Encourage them to go over what you’ve learned about the Israelites this month. Who are they and where did they come from?

Introduce that today you’re looking at the Ten Commandments and the moment when God was giving Moses instructions to give to the Israelites about how to live as God’s people.

Before you open up the Bible, ask the group if they can remember what the Ten Commandments are. They may have gone through these another time!

As a group, read Exodus 19:1-6 and then Exodus 20. You could break it up by asking different volunteers to read different verses.

Break into smaller groups and discuss how you might rephrase the Ten Commandments using modern-day language. Write down the new lists on paper, then draw everyone back together. Get some feedback and compare the young people’s rephrasings. Ask everyone why they chose to write what they did.

### CHATTING TOGETHER – 5 mins

Display your lists of commandments, so that everyone can see and refer back to them as you discuss these questions:

* Are these difficult laws to keep?
* Why do you think these are the laws that God chose?
* Why do you think God gave the Israelites laws? Was it helpful or unhelpful?
* Are there any laws that you think God missed out?
* What would the world be like if everyone kept all of these laws?

### CREATIVE RESPONSE – 10 mins

**You will need:** paper; felt-tip pens

Make sure everyone has a folded sheet of A4 (to make it look like a small booklet) and felt-tip pens. Ask the small groups to get creative and write a short manual on ‘How to be God’s chosen people’. It can include laws, suggestions or any kind of instructions. They could write it in a way that is applicable today. Give them five or ten minutes to get to work on these booklets and then come back together and ask them to share them with each other. Enjoy seeing their ideas and explanations as to why they came up with these different things.

### PRAYER – 5 mins

**You will need:** paper; pens

The Ten Commandments were God’s instructions to the Israelites so that they would be the best version of his holy community that they could be. Not only were they given to help them live with one another, but also to set them apart as God’s example to other people. In many ways, this is still what God asks of us today, as it says in Hebrews 12:14: “Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.”

Ask the group to consider how God might ask them to live set apart for him in their lives. Give each person a piece of paper and a pen and ask them to write two letters on each side of the paper. The first is a letter from them to God, saying sorry for how they have got it wrong, how they’ve been disobedient to the Ten Commandments or holy living, and asking for help with living obediently to God. You could play some quiet worship music to help them focus and give them space to write, and warn them that they have a few minutes before you ask them to do something else.

After a few minutes ask them to reread their letter and sit and listen to see if they get a sense of what God might say back to them. Then ask them to write a returning letter from God to them in response to their own letter.

After this they can keep their letters or throw them away, but make sure they know that their letters are private and they won’t be expected to share them, or be read by you.

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