

DO NOT ENVY

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

LOVE ENVY HARMONY

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Exodus 20:17; Matthew 6:19-21, 24-31; Philippians 4:10-13, 19; Hebrews 13:5

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help students understand that it is important to avoid envy.

MEMORY VERSE

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’” (Mark 12:30-31a, NIV*).

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

It only takes one look around our surroundings or through our smart phones to remind us that we live in a materialistic society. Our success is not measured by our spirituality, intelligence or integrity, but by our material possessions and our economic position. Neighbors and peers compete with one another to see who can have the better house, the most expensive car, more clothes, more jewels, etc.

Wanting to have things is not bad, but wanting others’ things, envying their material prosperity or doing everything you can to gain material things is dangerous and turns into envy.

Preadolescents are aware of this. Even school can become a place where they want to bring and show off their most special belongings. In this lesson they will learn that God’s commandments tell us to not covet or envy the things that belong to others. Envy is another sin that separates us from God.

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

Read Exodus 20:17. God gave this commandment to the Israelites to help them live in harmony in their community. The commandment prohibits the desire to want things that others possess. It is important to know that many times, envy causes us to violate other commandments.

The Hebrew word for envy means “want” or “want for yourself.” Wanting something you do not have is not bad, but when it becomes an obsession, we fall into the trap that is envy.

If we envy something, we become unsatisfied with what we have, and we begin to look all over for something that will satisfy our “need”.

In the New Testament, God reminds us to stay away from envy: “Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have.” (Hebrews 13:5a)

But the most important thing to understand is that possessions do not make us happy, but joy comes from knowing that God promises to never leave or forsake us.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

I want everything!

For this activity, you will need sheets of paper, glue, scissors and old newspapers or magazines.

Put the materials on the table and give a piece of paper to each student. Ask them to look through the newspaper/ magazines for pictures of things they want to own, then cut them out and glue them to the paper. We suggest that you have enough newspapers/ magazines for everyone.

Do not be surprised if one sheet of paper is not enough for all the things the students want that are materialistic. Remember, many live in a society where a person’s value depends on what they own.

Then ask them why they chose those items, why they need them, and what they would use them for. More likely than not, they will respond with a simple, “Because I want them” and not have a logical reason.

Use this activity to help them understand that wanting something is not bad. But, when we begin to obsess about things and will do whatever we must to get them, that is when envy sets in and that is when we get into trouble. Tell them, “A lot of times we say we need something, but in reality we just want it. The Bible tells us what happens when we want things that others have: it is called envying or coveting. Today we’ll study what envy is and why God prohibits it.”

TEACH THE LESSON

I want what you have.

Separate into six smaller groups so they can answer the six suggested questions, in a biblical way.

1. Define the word “greed”.
2. What did God say about greed in the Ten Commandments? (Exodus 20:17)
3. Why would coveting be rejecting God? (Philippians 4:10-13, 19)
4. What did Jesus say about possessions? (Matthew 6: 19-21)
5. Why aren’t the following ideas about possessions correct?
 - A. Everyone has the right to enjoy all the good things in life equally.
 - B. We all have the right to enjoy equally what others have.
 - C. The more possessions we have, the happier we will be.
6. What is the remedy for greed? (Hebrews 13:5)

Once the students are finished, talk about each answer and emphasize the teachings from the Old and New Testaments about envy.

CONNECT THE LESSON

Slaves to envy

Have the students refer to Student Activity Sheet #322. Give them time to write in the spaces, next to the chain, the stages a person goes through from wanting something until she/ he commits a crime to get it.

Some of the stages can be, 1) See and want an object that someone else owns; 2) Decide to take the object; 3) Plan out how to take it; and take it.

Make sure to emphasize that envying or coveting something is what breaks the commandments, like do not steal, do not kill or do not lie.

Antidote for envy

In advance, ask the students' parents to help bring in soda-like bottles that are clean and empty for class. You will need one for each student.

Cut pieces of paper and give several out to each student along with a bottle. Tell them that on each piece of paper they should write something that they are thankful to God for. (Example: "I give thanks to God for my parents," "I give thanks to God for my house," "I am thankful for my toys," "I'm thankful for the flowers," etc.)

And have them write on one of the slips of paper "Antidote for envy." Then ask that they glue it to the outside of the bottle. Then they can put all the things that they are thankful for inside the bottle.

Tell them that when they are discontent and feeling a strong desire to possess something that does not belong to them, open the bottle and remove the slips of paper. Then they can read all of the blessings that they receive daily from God and they will learn to be happy with what they have.

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

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It is the last day for the children to memorize the verse for this unit. Ask some of them to say it aloud from memory. Remind them that this verse can help them when they have decisions to make about loving God and our neighbors, so they should not forget it.

WRAP-UP

Pray

pray, giving thanks to God for giving us his laws that help us live correctly and obey his will. Be sensitive to the students' spiritual needs, and pray for those indicate their need to repent of ways they have disobeyed the Ten Commandments.

Encourage

Be sure to allocate sufficient time for this part of the session. Open the Bible and have everyone read Exodus 20:1-17 together as a final review. Then distribute all of the work they completed during these nine sessions and have them take them home. Challenge them to obey and respect God's commandments in their daily lives.

Invite

Tell the group that in the next session they will begin a new unit of lessons. Tell them some things about it to interest them to attend and to invite others.