

A COVENANT WITH MOSES

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

RESPONSIBILITY DIVINE MANIFESTATION YAHWEH CONSECRATED

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Exodus 19-20; 24:1-7

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To know the 10 Commandments form part of the covenant God made with the people of Israel, and to identify actual ways to obey God

MEMORY VERSE

“Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed,” says the Lord, who has compassion on you” (Isaiah 54:10, NIV*).

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

Your students know that there are rules that we must follow, but they will likely think they’re restrictive and even harsh. Many of them, when they can, will not comply with them, and try to see how far they can go without breaking the established law or getting caught. It is also common for them to resist when adults try to teach them to live according to those rules. That’s why it will be important for you to help them understand that God’s commandments are much more than rules to keep, ignore, or break. Divine laws are not designed to create difficulties for us. God, through them, wants to enable us to live in a proper relationship with him and with our neighbor.

When we decide to love the Lord and obey his commandments, we participate in a covenant with the Almighty God.

The basic laws he established apply today as much as in the time of Moses. God’s Word does not change. Jesus came to fulfill the law, not destroy it. In fact, Jesus’ teaching extended the scope of the law, clarifying and encompassing much more than it originally included. For example, Jesus said those who disobeyed the commandments of “Do not kill” or “Do not commit adultery” were not only those who did it, but also those who thought about it and planned doing it in their minds. He taught that our attitudes are as important to God as our actions.

Help your students understand that God never changes. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Since we know that he does not change, we can obey his laws with confidence.

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

Only three months after their escape from slavery in Egypt, the Israelites arrived in the Sinai desert. There they camped at the base of Mount Sinai. Through Moses, the Lord led his people to that place, Mount Sinai, with a special purpose. They would experience an encounter like never before with the Almighty God.

Moses followed the instructions of the Creator, preparing the people for that divine manifestation. They received directives on the way on how they should be in front of him, and the distance at which they could approach the mountain. If they disobeyed, they would die immediately. Those instructions would help the Israelites understand that they were serving a holy God. The appearance of God should not be taken lightly, since it would not be frequent.

On the third day, the people were trembling with fear as they watched the thunder, lightning, and thick smoke coming from the top of the mountain. The earth shook violently under their feet. That way they understood, frightened, that they were in the presence of God.

The way Yahweh related to the people of Israel would change dramatically. Abraham had received the promise of a great offspring and a homeland. Now, God was offering the children of Israel the continuation of that covenant in a way that would separate them from the rest of the nations. They would become a kingdom of priests, a holy nation. Through them, God would reveal his holy character to the entire world.

By giving them the commandments, he was telling them that their lifestyle should reflect his holiness. They must obey his laws fully, for they were his priests, that is, his representatives to the world. This was an obligation and responsibility, and at the same time, a privilege.

But as representatives of God, the people of Israel did not always live up to his expectations in some situations. They often failed to obey what he had taught them.

God gave his people the Ten Commandments along with other rules for worship and life. In response, the people promised: "We'll do everything the Lord has said; we'll obey" (Exodus 24:7). And although they tried, they did not always get it. They continually fell into bad habits and wrong behaviors.

As Christians, we also have a responsibility to keep his commandments and reflect God's holiness to the world. We should not fall into bad habits or behaviors that offend him and our neighbor. In the power of the Holy Spirit, we can live a life consecrated to the Father, through our relationship with his Son, Jesus.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

What is the problem?

Write the word "responsibility" on the blackboard or poster.

Ask: "How do you define the word 'responsibility?'" Allow students to express their ideas. Write what they say on the board or poster. One way to define responsibility is "a duty or requirement for which one has to respond." To carry out an action or decision is to be responsible. Help students understand that concept using examples of daily life responsibilities that they must carry out. Encourage them to think of other examples of responsibility.

Hand out Student Activity Sheet #385-A (What's the Problem?). The picture shows us a park. Ask them to look at the figure. Explain to them: "Let's pretend that you're enjoying a day in the park. What does the sign say about the grass?" (Keep off the grass.) "What does the sign say about the path?" (Bicycle Path) "What should you do with the trash?" (Throw it in the bin that says trash.) Have them discuss the questions that appear at the bottom of the activity sheet.

Possible answers to question 1: Ride along the bicycle path; do not litter; do not ride the bike on the sidewalk; obey traffic rules.

Possible answers to question 2: You should not hurt yourself or hurt anyone else; the park should be a pleasant place to visit; and you should want to have the desire to return.

Continue: "If you ignore your responsibilities and break the rules, what could happen to you or other people?" (You could hurt yourself or others. They could ban you from the park.) "It is important that you follow the rules. They were generally made so that you and other people would be safe."

We all have responsibilities. In our Bible story today, people also learned about them. Let's find out what were the responsibilities

and rules that God established for the people of Israel.

TEACH THE LESSON

A meeting on the mountain

Give your students Student Activity Sheet #385-B and #385-C, and look at today's Bible story. Designate some to read the different parts (journalist, Israelites). Try to bring a microphone for the journalist and costumes for the Israelites. If there are not many students, they can read more than one part each.

After the presentation of the story, review what they learned the previous weeks. Say: "God continued to work throughout history offering his covenant, or promise, to everyone to give them the opportunity to live in a right relationship with him. What does it mean to live in a covenant relationship with God?" (We commit ourselves to love him and obey him. We decide to abide by his rules and do what he wants us to do. We'll talk about him to others. We'll always keep in mind that God does not change, and that he loves us.)

CONNECT THE LESSON

The covenant people today

Say: "Today's Christians are part of the covenant people. Do you think the covenant people are still responsible today for obeying God's commandments?" (Yes) "What do you think is our responsibility?" (Obey God) Give students a piece of paper and a pencil or pen. Ask them to work in pairs, making a list of some of the responsibilities that they believe God has given his people. When finished, ask them to share with the group what they wrote. Say: "God's commands for his people are serious. They were all made to protect us from evil and to help us have a right relationship with him and others."

Now direct their attention to Student Activity Sheet #385-D to continue the debate. Read the sentences found on the activity sheet. Then, examine the situations raised. Provide an opportunity for students to discuss and respond after you read each situation.

Possible responses to situations:

Do not steal the candy. Tell your friend that stealing is against the rules that God established to live properly, and that you're not going to do it because it will harm you and the store owner.

Clean your room first because God tells us to obey our parents. If you have plenty of time, you can watch television.

There is a time and a place for everything. If Sunday morning is the day you have to worship God and learn from him in your group, then you must respect him and keep the Lord's day. That means dedicating that special day to him alone. You can have fun with video games at another time. You can also invite your friend to come with you and enjoy worship with others.

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

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Before the session, write the memory verse in large print on a card. Skip some of the words (leaving free spaces), such as: "mountains," "hills," "removed," "covenant," "Lord," "compassion." Write those words on small cardboard cards and mix them well.

In the group, have different students, in turn, take out one of the cards at random and stick it with tape in the correct place of the verse. The rest of the group will decide if the word is placed in the right place. When all are in place, recite the verse together. Then let the students, in turn, take off one of the words and ask the group to say the verse. Continue playing as long as time permits or until the students can say the verse correctly without any of the words on the cards.

WRAP-UP

Pray

Finish with this prayer: "Lord, thank you for including us with your people with whom you made a covenant. Thank you, God, for loving and caring for us. Please help us obey your rules and commandments and do what you want us to do. Help us to be responsible so that other people can know and love you. In the name of Jesus. Amen."

Encourage

Tell students that for Christians, obeying the rules that God established in his Word is not difficult because he promised that he would be with us and guide us at every step.

Invite

Tell the students something interesting about the next session and encourage them to attend. Remind them that friends are welcome.