

## RULES FOR LIVING WISELY

All Activity Sheets

### KEY WORDS

OBEY TEN COMMANDMENTS COMMAND DECREES

### BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Exodus 19:1 – 20:21

### LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help the students learn the importance of obeying the ten commandments that God gave to Moses so that his people would learn to live wisely.

### MEMORY VERSE

“Obey the Lord your God and follow his commands and decrees that I give you today” (Deuteronomy 27:10, NIV\*).

### PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

Children need to know the importance of the Ten Commandments. They must understand why God gave them to the Israelites, but the main thing is to realize the vital importance that these commandments have for their lives. The children in your group are growing up in a world very different from the world in which you grew up. For example, they hear that each person chooses what seems right for their life. They are told that it is essential to have tolerance - which means approval and acceptance - of all religions and creeds.

The Ten Commandments convey to children a different message, because they are told that God set rules to live righteously, that he expects to have the first place in their lives, and that they should treat others with respect, as he does himself.

When the children begin the study of the six lessons in this unit, which refer to the ten main rules that God established, they begin to understand that respect for God and for our fellow human beings does not come from a personal decision, but is born from a love relationship with the Creator. God does not want them to comply with His rules out of fear or as an end in themselves. On the contrary, children, like all of us, should obey the Ten Commandments because they love the Lord and want to live the way He teaches them to live.

## BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

When I was a child, I thought that my parents had established certain rules so that I would not do certain things, so I obeyed them. I did not want them to get mad at me. As I grew older, I came to understand that my parents did not impose such rules in order to control me, but to guide me and protect me. I understood that those rules reflected his love for me. Over time, I realized that they shaped the person I am and the relationship I have with them. Now as an adult, my mother is one of my best friends, and I know I can trust my father.

When God gave the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai, he was showing the love of a father who wants to lead his children. The Israelites had lived in slavery for hundreds of years. Therefore they had made almost no decisions on their own, but they had obeyed the laws and customs of their masters, the Egyptians. They were not yet ready to be the people with whom God would make his covenant, and therefore they needed to learn what it meant to live in relation to a holy God and be set apart for him.

The Ten Commandments were the product of love, part of a promise that God had made to his people. What promise was that? That he would be their God and they would be his obedient people. As long as the Israelites lived in a right relationship with him, obeying his rules, he would give them his love, guidance and protection, and make them into a great nation.

As Christians, we also are a people set apart and called to live a holy life, completely dedicated to God. The Ten Commandments served as a guide for the Israelites as they traveled through the desert, and then as they became a nation that had its own land. Those same commandments are what guide us Christians to live righteously in today's world. The first four tell us how to live in a correct relationship with God. The last six tell us the way to relate to those around us. In a world in which it is generally considered that abiding by the rules depends on the personal decision of each person, we have the security and freedom that gives us in knowing what God expects from us.

## INTRODUCE THE LESSON

In advance, prepare a large-sized poster or mural with the Ten Commandments. You will use it throughout this unit. You can write each commandment in a different color to make it more striking.

### What are the rules for?

Ask the children to join you in sitting or standing in a circle, and pass a small smooth stone from one person to another. When you say, "The Ten Commandments", the child who has the stone in his/ her hand will stop passing it, and you will say: "Tell us about a rule at your house." Let the child explain a rule they have in their home. Then, ask: "Why do you think your dad (or mom, or your parents, as the case may be) made that rule?" Let the little one respond. Then continue with the game, allowing each child to take a turn of holding the stone and talking about a rule established in their own home.

After the last child has shared, you will stop passing the stone when it reaches your hands and say: "Your parents have established rules for you to obey. With them, you will live more securely and learn about life. God has 10 special rules that He expects us to obey, because they help us know how He wants His people to live. Today's bible story is about these 10 important rules." Who knows what they are called?" (The Ten Commandments).

## TEACH THE LESSON

The Israelites saw the mountain in front of them, it was huge! They had traveled three full months to get to it. "Camp here," said Moses. "We're staying for a while." God had led the Israelites to that mountain. He loved them and had helped them escape from Egypt, where they had been slaves. He divided the Red Sea to help them escape from Pharaoh's army. He gave them food and water while they crossed the desert. Now, he was preparing to show his love to His people in a new way. While the people camped at the foot of the mountain, Moses spoke with God on the mountain. God told him, "Remind my people about how I brought them out of Egypt, and then tell them, 'if you obey me in everything, you will be my special people. I will show you how to live. All the other peoples will see that you follow me and love me. You will be my special treasure.'"

Moses returned to the camp and told them what God had told him. The people responded, "We will do everything Jehovah has told us." Moses went back to the mountain and said to God, "The people have promised to obey." God said, "Tell them to prepare themselves. Today and tomorrow, they are to bathe and wash their clothes. On the third day, I will come and talk to you. The people will hear me, and then they will know that they can trust you as their leader because I chose you. But make sure they stay away from the mountain because it is holy. They cannot touch it."

Moses and the people obeyed God and prepared themselves. On the third day, there was thunder and lightning on the mountain. There was a thick cloud, smoke, fire and loud noises. God was there, and the people were afraid! Everyone in the camp shuddered. Moses took the people out of the camp to meet with God and they stopped at the bottom of the mountain. Moses

climbed the mountain to meet with God. While the people waited, God spoke to Moses. He gave Moses 10 very important rules for them to fulfill. We call these rules The Ten Commandments, through which God would show his people how they should live.

The first four commandments showed the people how to honor and respect God. "You must not have others gods in front of me." God's people could not love or worship anyone but him, the only true God. They were to put God first.

"You must not make and worship any image." God told his people never to make pictures or sculptures (idols) to worship.

"You must not misuse the name of the Lord your God." God's people were to use his name only in a way that showed love and respect for him.

"Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy." This is the special day of the Lord, and the people had to put God first, using that day to worship and rest.

The following six commandments taught them how to treat other people. "Honor your father and your mother." God wanted his people to respect and obey their parents.

"You must not kill other people."

"You must not commit adultery." God's people must keep their marriage promises. Therefore, a woman who was married should not have a romantic relationship with another man. In the same way, no married man should have a romantic relationship with another woman who was not his wife. The spouses had to be faithful to each other.

"You must not steal."

"You must not tell lies about others."

"You must not covet." God did not want his people to want the things that belonged to other people. But the people were still afraid! God seemed to be so strong and powerful! Moses told the people, "Do not be afraid." He knew that God gave the people these rules because he loved them and wanted them in turn to love him back. The Ten Commandments would help the Israelites live as God's special people. These are 10 good ways to love and obey the Creator.

## CONNECT THE LESSON

### Ten Commandments mobile

Before the session, prepare your own mobile from Student Activity Sheet #226-A and #226-B so that you can guide the children to build theirs. This is a craft that takes several pieces. In the group, distribute the activity sheets to the children and explain how they are to assemble their mobiles. While they work under your direction, you can review why God gave the Israelites the Ten Commandments. Ask the children, "Why do you think it is important to obey the rules that God gave in his commandments?"

Suggest that the children take their mobiles home and use them to remind themselves that in order to live properly, they must obey God's commandments. Encourage them to learn the Ten Commandments from memory and to share them with their families and friends.

### Stone tablets

Have enough dough for each student (see the recipe in the Helps for the Teachers supplement). Give each child a handful of dough, a sheet of waxed paper and a toothpick. Explain that God wrote the Ten Commandments on two pieces of stone called "tablets." Have the children make two tablets with the dough and write the number 10 on each one using the toothpicks. You can show them a picture to show what the tablets were like. Use a permanent marker to write each child's name on the waxed paper. Put the tablets on the waxed paper with the name of each child, and place them in a safe place to dry. Tell the children that next week when their tablets are dry, they can take them home. In the remainder of the time, ask them questions about the Ten Commandments, such as:

- What did God expect the Israelites to do when he gave them the Ten Commandments? (Learn them and obey them.)
- Why is it so important that we obey God's commandments? (Because they help us live as God wants, and shows our love for him.)
- How can we keep the commandments this week?

## PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

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Write the memory verse on the board: "Obey the Lord your God and follow his commands and decrees that I give you today" (Deuteronomy 27:10). Then, practice it several times with your students so they can learn it by memory. When the study time is over, erase the verse and write it with the words in the incorrect order. Then, ask some volunteers who already know the verse to go to the board and write the words in the correct order.

Encourage the children to study the Ten Commandments. You can study and memorize two for each session during this unit. You can write them on paper or cards. Write two commandments on each card, for each child. You can give them every day of this unit is sessions. In that way, they will learn and have the Ten Commandments by the end of the unit.

## **WRAP-UP**

### **Pray**

We can pray asking God to help us obey the Ten Commandments, and he will. Pray that God will help the children to choose to obey him during the next week.

### **Encourage**

Have the group sing a song that speaks of obedience to God's law. Then ask them: "What does it mean to obey God?" (Do what he wants us to do.) Also ask: "How can you obey God this week at home, in your neighborhood or at school?" If you wish, you can invite them to sing the song again, and then say something like this: "We do not have to try to obey God's commandments by our own strength.

### **Invite**

Finally, encourage them to attend every session so they will continue to learn all 10 of God's special rules. Tell them that friends are also welcome.