



10

The Ten Commandments

Key Themes

- God demands obedience and trust.
- God sees all men as sinners in need of salvation.

Key Passages

- Exodus 20:1–19; Galatians 3:24

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- List the Ten Commandments.
- Describe what the Ten Commandments show us.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

page 5

Students will put together the Memory Verse puzzle for Exodus 20:1–5a. (Save the puzzles for use in Lessons 11 and 12.)



Studying God's Word

page 5

God gave the Ten Commandments to the Israelites at Mt. Sinai. These commandments show us God's standard for righteous living. The Law was given to point us to the only one who did obey the Law perfectly—the only one who could make atonement for sins—Jesus Christ.



Activity 1: Keep Up the Commandments

page 7

Students will attempt to keep 10 balloons in the air as an illustration that we cannot keep the Law—the Ten Commandments.



Activity 2: Get on the Right Path

page 9

Students will answer questions and solve a puzzle that reveals the only way to get to heaven.

Lesson Preparation

WHAT YOU WILL DO

WHAT YOU WILL NEED



COME ON IN

- Print one Exodus 20 Memory Verse puzzle from the Resource DVD-ROM onto cardstock for each student.
- Cut out the pieces according to the template and put each set into a bag or envelope for each student.

- Exodus 20 Memory Verse puzzle in a bag or envelope for each student



STUDYING GOD'S WORD

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.
- Print and cut apart one set of the Ten Commandments tags from the Resource DVD-ROM.

- Student Take Home Sheets
- Ten Commandments tags



KEEP UP THE COMMANDMENTS

- Inflate and tie off 10 balloons. Number them from 1–10 to represent the Ten Command-

- ments. Inflated balloons numbered 1–10



GET ON THE RIGHT PATH

- Print one Get on the Right Path activity sheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student and one answer key for your use.

- Get on the Right Path activity sheet for each student
- Get on the Right Path answer key
- Pencils



Memory Verse

Exodus 20:1–5a God spoke all these words, saying: “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them.”

► **Pace your lesson!** You can use the provided clocks to indicate the time each section should be completed to keep the lesson on schedule. While teaching, you can compare your anticipated times with the actual time and shorten or drop sections as necessary.





Prepare to Share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

As you prepare your heart to teach this week, read Exodus 19–20, 24, 34; Galatians 3:24; Romans 3:19–26.

Within three months of leaving Egypt, the Israelites came to Mount Sinai in the wilderness of the Sinai Peninsula. It was here that God called to Moses and declared His covenant to His people (Exodus 19:1–5).

The Israelites' encounter with God here in the wilderness was a time of terror for them. The thick cloud that accompanied Him (Exodus 19:9), the warning and severe consequence—even death—to anyone who would touch the mountain (Exodus 19:12–13), the thunderings and lightnings, the cloud, the sound of the trumpet (Exodus 19:16), smoke and fire at the mountain as it quaked greatly (Exodus 19:18) all caused the people to tremble with the fear of the Lord. They were content to allow Moses to serve as mediator and spokesperson, “Let not God speak with us, lest we die” (Exodus 20:19).

Amidst all of this commotion, as God revealed His holiness, anger, and justice, He delivered the Ten Commandments to the people (Exodus 20). God also spoke the Ten Commandments and other laws to Moses (Exodus 24:3) and later they were written down and read to the people (Exodus 24:4) who affirmed them.

God then summoned Moses to the mountain—the first of two 40-day trips Moses was to make. Here Moses was confronted with the astounding glory of the Lord (Exodus 24:16–18). What an experience for Moses, communing with the Holy God, and receiving instructions for the Tabernacle that would soon house the glory Moses was witnessing. At the culmination of this meeting Moses was given the two stone tablets of the Testimony, containing the Ten Commandments written with the finger of God (Exodus 31:18).

Moses returned from the mountaintop experience of God's glory to a devastating display of pagan idolatry. In 40 short days, the Israelites turned from the Creator God who had demonstrated His power so vividly to the worship of idols in the form of a golden calf (Exodus 32:4).

Moses's anger was aroused at the sight and he broke the precious tablets at the foot of the mountain (Exodus 32:19). This led to Moses's second

40-day encounter with God where new tablets were made—inscribed with the Law of the Lord. Here we are presented with a testimony that reveals the mercy, grace, patience, goodness, truth, forgiveness, and faithfulness of God (Exodus 34:6–7).

What an account! God revealed His holiness which terrified the people, His commandments which displayed His moral will for them, and His amazing character which gave them hope in the face of their sin.

We are reminded of all of these revelations as we read the book of Exodus. This law, given in the center of God's glory, is a revelation to all men that God demands perfection. This law works to reveal to us that we fall desperately short of the standard God must demand because of who He is. This law acts as a tutor, a school master to bring us to Christ (Galatians 3:24).

As sinners we are set on proclaiming our own goodness (Proverbs 20:6). We attempt to justify our sin by claiming to be better than others. This thinking can only lead to death and destruction. Our own deeds will never make us righteous before a holy God—they are as filthy rags to Him (Isaiah 64:6). That is the bad news.

But there is good news! God has provided a way of salvation through Christ (John 3:16). It is by grace through faith received as a gift from God—not by works—that we receive forgiveness for our sins and eternal life (Ephesians 2:8–9).

APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

Mount Sinai is mentioned several times in the Bible and given two different names. It is referred to as Mount Sinai and Mount Horeb, but its actual location is not known for sure. We certainly know it is a peak in the southern part of the Sinai Peninsula. Based on what we know from Scripture and history—there are several places it could be. Some suggest it is at Jebel Musa. Although we aren't sure of the exact location, we know that it was the mountain where God's glory and holiness were revealed to Moses. We can be sure of this because we trust the historical record found in Exodus and the rest of the Bible.

Many deny the truth of the Bible because of the lack of “evidence” regarding the exact locations of biblical places and events. However, God has allowed us to make numerous archaeological discoveries that do confirm the history recorded in His Word. As Chris-

tians, we do not depend on “proof” but we walk by faith in God. Because we know He is perfect, true, and faithful we know we can confidently trust the record He has given us.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Throughout history, mankind has been made righteous in the eyes of God by one means—Christ’s atoning sacrifice (John 14:6). Many ask about the Old Testament saints. How could they have been saved? The answer is the same. They were saved through faith in Jesus Christ, but their faith wasn’t the same as ours. Their faith was based on the future—knowing that the promised Messiah would come to redeem His people.

As early as the Garden of Eden, when sin first entered the world, God promised freedom from the Curse through the Seed that was to come from the woman (Genesis 3:15). Jesus Christ is that Seed, the promised Messiah. In speaking of the Old Testament saints, the author of Hebrews explains, “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (Hebrews 11:13). These saints had hope in what was to come. They looked to the future for their salvation while we look to the past to find ours.

We know that Christ has accomplished His finished work on the Cross to give us our hope of salvation. Unfortunately, people throughout history have looked to their own works in the hopes of pleasing the gods and meriting life after death. From the Garden of Eden, to the pagan cultures that were flourishing across the globe at the time of the Exodus, to the work-righteous religious systems of today, man has tried to get himself into heaven. Proud man is convinced

that he can work his way to God, and he believes that his works are good, pure, and worthy enough to reach and satisfy the eternal, holy, omniscient, Creator of the Universe. But that is not the truth according to God’s Word. The truth is that it is only through Jesus Christ that we can be saved and declared the children of God (John 1:12).

For more information on this topic, see the Online Resource Page.



BEFORE THE THRONE

Dear Lord, as I begin to prepare this lesson, I am reminded of the wonder of the gospel. I thank you for your Law. I thank you that in your wisdom you knew that showing me the Law—your standard for excellence—would reveal how sinful my heart really is. And that would drive me to discover the wonder of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on my behalf. Help me this week, Lord, to teach these truths clearly to the children. And please open their hearts to see that you are a God to be feared—one who must punish all sin. But you are also gracious and merciful. And because of that you made a way of salvation through Jesus Christ—the only one who could obey all the law perfectly—the one who was willing to die to take the punishment of the sin of those who would turn to Him in repentance and faith. Open their hearts, Lord, to this truth and bring them to everlasting life in you.



COME ON IN

As students arrive . . .

- They will put together the Memory Verse puzzle for Exodus 20:1–5a, and then recite the verse.



After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.



REVIEW

Using the Lesson Theme Posters provided with each lesson, quickly review the previous lesson(s) with your students. Take 5 to 10 minutes to reinforce the important truths the students have heard so far in your class.

Ask the children questions about the previous lessons as you display the Lesson Theme Posters. Reflect briefly on the passages you read, bringing the objectives and themes back into focus. This will refresh the truths in your students' minds and maintain continuity as you teach through the lessons



Studying God's Word

READ THE WORD

After the Israelites had traveled for three months, they came to Mt. Sinai. Moses told the people to gather at the foot of the mountain because God was going to speak to them. God reminded them that He had delivered them from the Egyptians and had taken care of them as they journeyed to the mountain. Because of all that He had done for them, He was calling them to worship Him and obey the laws that He was about to give them.

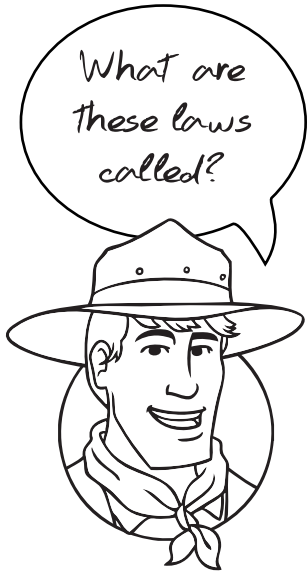
Pass out the Ten Commandments tags you printed from the Resource DVD-ROM. Have the students read them in order as you call out the Scripture references.

As I call out the Bible verse, I want you to stand up and read the commandment. Exodus 20:3, Exodus 20:4, Exodus 20:7, Exodus 20:8, Exodus 20:12, Exodus 20:13, Exodus 20:14, Exodus 20:15, Exodus 20:16, Exodus 20:17.

Exodus 20:1–19

EXAMINE THE WORD

Very good! Now let's see if we can figure out what God is trying to show us through all of these commandments—the Ten Commandments. *Refer to The Ten Commandments poster as you discuss the commands, pointing out each command as it is discussed.*



Observe the Text

- ? What are these laws called? *The Ten Commandments.*

Point to *The Ten Commandments* poster. Each of these laws we just read is a command that God expects us to obey. God gave the Israelites these commandments and many other laws to govern their lives. The laws told them how to honor Him and how to treat others.

- ? What is God telling us in the first command? *Do not have any other gods. Do not make anything more important than Him. Do not worship anything but Him.*

- ? What about the second command? It relates to the first one. *We should not make any idol. We should not bow down or pray to statues.*

- ? And the third? *Be careful how we use God's name.*

We aren't to use His name as an exclamation or like a swear word, but rather say His name with love and respect.

The fourth commandment instructs us to make time each week to worship and honor God.

Each of these first four commandments tells us something about how we are to relate to and honor God. The rest of the commandments give instructions on how to treat other people.

- ? I'm sure your parents have reminded you of the fifth commandment from time to time. What are some ways you can honor your parents? *Obey them, speak respectfully, help with chores, etc.*

- ? What about this sixth commandment? What is that? *You shall not murder.*

This commandment tells us that God places a very high value on human life. In fact, Jesus said that if we are even angry with our brother, sister, or friend, we are guilty of breaking this commandment.

- ? And what of the seventh commandment? *You shall not commit adultery.*

This command tells us that once we are married, we must stay married. Husbands and wives must love each other—and only each other—for the rest of their lives. God thinks marriage is very important.

I'm sure that you understand the eighth commandment, "You shall not steal." That means not to take other people's things. Cheating at a game or on a test would also be considered stealing.

- ? Can anyone explain what the ninth commandment means? "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." *Not to lie about anyone; to tell the truth.*

The tenth commandment is about possessions. There are things we would like to have, but when we want them really badly or think we need them to make us happy, then we are coveting.

Discover the Truth

These were the commandments God gave the Israelites. These laws told them what God expected from them, and they still apply to us today. But no one can obey all these laws perfectly. These laws were given, both to the Israelites and to us, to show that no one could ever keep them perfectly. We can't keep them because we are sinners. And that is why we all need a Savior. We'll talk a little bit more about that later. But first, let's play a little game.



Keep Up the Commandments

MATERIALS

- Inflated balloons numbered 1 through 10

INSTRUCTIONS

Have the students get into a circle. Give each student an inflated balloon. Pick one student to go to the center of the circle. This child will be expected to keep all of the commandments in the air without them dropping to the floor.

These numbered balloons represent the Ten Commandments. When I say "Go," I want everyone who has a balloon to toss it into the center of the circle. The student in the middle will have to try to keep all the balloons in the air without letting them touch the floor. If any of the balloons touch the floor, you have sinned against God and you are out!

We'll play this for a few minutes. *Pick different children to go to the middle of the circle. You can even pick two or more students to attempt to keep the balloons in the air—just don't make it too easy for them!*

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

- ? Even though you worked very hard to keep your balloons in the air, could you keep them up forever without letting them fall? *No.*

The balloons quickly fell to the ground. It was impossible for one person to keep all the balloons in the air. And in the same way, it is impossible to think that we could ever keep all of the commandments all of our lives.

That's what happened to the Israelites and that's what happens to us when we try to keep God's Law—we fail. When we fail, that is called sin. And God hates all sin and must judge sin because He is holy. Remember, because God is holy, because He hates sin, He must be just and punish sin. *Refer to the Attributes of God poster and review Holy and Just.*

It seems kind of hopeless, doesn't it? God gave the Israelites and us the Ten Commandments, but we know we can't keep them. So we know we sin against God. And we know that God hates sin because He is holy. And He must punish sin because He is just.

But He provided a way for us to escape the punishment we deserve—through Jesus Christ, the Savior, God's only Son.



READ THE WORD

Some people ask, “Why did God give us the Ten Commandments if He knew we could never keep them? How can we be forgiven of our sins and get to heaven?” Well, these are very good questions. Let’s see what God’s Word says.

Galatians 3:24

We are going to read another verse from the New Testament. Turn to Galatians 3:24. *Assign a student to read the verse after the students find it in their Bibles.*



EXAMINE THE WORD

Let’s see what we can learn from this verse. Keep looking in your Bibles.

Observe the Text

Refer to the Bible Study poster to remind your students how to dig deeper into God’s Word by asking the right questions.

- ? What is a tutor? *Allow for answers. A teacher.*
- ? Keep looking at verse 24. What is our tutor? *The Law is our tutor.*
- ? Good. And what does the Law, our tutor, do for us? It is still in verse 24. *The Law brings us to Christ.*
- ? And what happens then—what happens to us when we allow the Law to bring us to Jesus Christ? *We are justified by faith.*
- ? Who knows what *justified* means? *Allow discussion.*

Justified means to be declared righteous. That means for those who believe in Jesus, the punishment for sins has been taken by Jesus’s sacrifice on the Cross. He was perfect—and when we believe in Him, God sees us as perfect, too.

Discover the Truth

What the Apostle Paul is trying to say here is that the Law—and that includes the Ten Commandments we are studying—helps us to realize that we really are terrible sinners. We know that we couldn’t possibly keep all of the laws that God demands. When we realize that we will never perfectly obey all of the laws, we see that we are hopeless to save ourselves from God’s punishment.

And that is where our Savior, Jesus Christ, comes in. The Law points us to Jesus. Jesus was the only human who could ever obey all of the commandments perfectly—because He is God. When we accept that we are sinners, and there is nothing we can do to help ourselves; when we realize that we must depend on Jesus—His life, His death, and His Resurrection—for salvation; when we finally believe by faith that it is only through Jesus that we can be accepted, justified, and made right with God—then we have hope, forgiveness, and the promise of heaven with God. That is the good news of the gospel!





Get on the Right Path

MATERIALS

- Get on the Right Path activity sheet for each student
- Pencils

INSTRUCTIONS

Pass out the Get on the Right Path activity sheets. Have the children answer the questions and solve the puzzle by filling in the stepping-stones with the appropriate letters and numbers. Then have them look up John 14:6 and copy it onto their activity sheet. If time is an issue, you may want your students to work together in teams or let the class do it all together.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

? **Who will read the verse for me?** *Have someone read the verse, John 14:6.*

Jesus is the only way to get to God. He is the way, the truth, and the life. And no one gets to the Father except through Him. The

Law—including the Ten Commandments—was given to us so we would realize that we are sinners and we just cannot live a perfect life no matter how we try. So, knowing that we can't live perfectly, knowing that God is holy and hates sin, knowing that because God is just He must punish sin, we come before God for His mercy.

And God has shown His love and mercy to us by sending Jesus, the only one who ever kept all of God's commands perfectly. Because Jesus lived, died on the Cross, and rose again, we can be saved from our own sins and punishment. The Bible tells us that we are declared righteous in God's eyes by our faith in Jesus—it is not by anything we do ourselves. It is only through Jesus, who is the way, the truth, and



Applying God's Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

This has been a great lesson. I want you to remember just a few things. First of all, God does want us to obey and trust Him. But God knows that we can't keep His commands perfectly—no one but Jesus has ever done that.

God has given us the Ten Commandments. The first four commandments deal with how we relate to God, and the last six commandments deal with how we relate to each other. *Refer to the Ten Commandments poster. Briefly review each commandment like you did earlier in the lesson.*

Although God demands our obedience, He knows that we have sinful hearts and that we cannot obey all of His commands perfectly. The Ten Commandments were given to us to show us that we can't be perfect. The Bible tells us that the Ten Commandments are our tutor—or teacher.

And that they were given to show us that we could never earn our way into heaven by anything we do—because we are sinners.

The Law was given to point us to the only way we will ever be able to be saved from the punishment we deserve. The Ten Commandments—or the Law—help us to realize that we need Jesus Christ. He was the only perfect one ever. He obeyed all the laws of God, and He died so that whoever would turn to Him in faith would be saved and would one day rejoice in heaven with God.

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

Some people don't believe that Moses ever received the Ten Commandments from God the way the Bible tells us he did. And many people think that even though they disobey many of the commandments, they are not sinning against God, and He will still accept them.

They use excuses like, "I'm not hurting anyone." Or, "If no one sees me, it's OK." Or, "No one will even notice what I'm doing, so it's OK." Don't listen to this. God wants us to obey and honor Him. And whenever we break His commands, we are sinning against Him. He sees everything we do, and He must punish sin.

These people do not believe the Bible. They don't believe that the Bible is really God's Word, and they don't believe that everything in the Bible is true.

But we do believe it. And we must stand on the foundation of God's Word. When others say they don't believe it, you can confidently say, "Well, I do. It is God's Word and every word is true."



► Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind the children to practice the memory verse this week.



MEMORY VERSE

Exodus 20:1–5a God spoke all these words, saying: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them."



GROUP PRAYER TIME

Be sure to pray with your class before you dismiss them.

- Ask forgiveness for the sins we commit each and every day.
- Thank God that His laws help us to see our need for Jesus.
- Ask God to reveal His truth of salvation through Jesus Christ to the children.