

A LOVING LAW

Ten
Commandments
Exodus 20:1–21
1446 BC

OVERVIEW

BIBLE TRUTH

God guides and protects us.

BIBLE VERSE

Love the LORD your God, and . . . serve Him with all your heart. Deuteronomy 11:13

LEARNER GOAL

I can cite examples of how God guides and protects us.

LAW & GOSPEL

We reject God's Law as we go our own way, failing to love God and to love others before ourselves.

Jesus Christ kept the Law perfectly on our behalf, and He guides us to love Him and our neighbor.

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

Months into their wilderness wanderings, the Israelites arrive in the wilderness of Sinai. God comes to the mountain in clouds and thunder—fire and smoke—as He establishes His covenant with His people through Moses, His chosen intermediary. There on the mountain, God gives Moses His Ten Commandments.

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read Exodus 20:1–21 and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

MORE TIME Read “Apologetics Helps” on the back page in preparation for the “Live” section. Read the larger context of this account in Exodus 19.

IN-DEPTH Read the Close of the Commandments and its explanation in *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation* (2017).

SUPPLY LIST

FOR THIS LESSON

- Copies of Luther's Small Catechism or a poster of the Ten Commandments

FOR EVERY LESSON

- Student copies of *Defend Journal*
- Bibles
- Pens
- Shareable images from digital resource center
- Supplies for bonus activities



LEADER NOTE

Optional question: What is your pet peeve? Why?



DEFEND JOURNAL

Hand out journals and turn to Lesson 9.



BONUS ACTIVITY

Dig deeper with “A Good Law.”



LEADER NOTE

Struggling to get youth to discuss? Try Think, Pair, Share. Give students time to read and think on their own. Then ask them to discuss ideas with a partner. Finally, have willing pairs share with the group.

LAUNCH

WALK-IN QUESTION

If you could make a rule that everyone would follow, what would it be?

PLAYING BY THE RULES

Option 1: Invite everyone to play a common game. It can be a card game, tag, Simon Says, or anything that is familiar to your group. Several times, do something that is against the rules. When accused of cheating, explain that you’re changing the rules or that the rules don’t apply to you.

Option 2: Ask a volunteer or two to name a favorite game. Ask each person to explain it. Most likely, they will begin to list the rules. Ask questions such as, “But what if someone doesn’t do that?” or “What if I don’t like that rule?” or “How about if I do this instead?” Help everyone see that a list of rules defines any game.

SAY Do you like rules? In what situations might rules be important? What is your least favorite rule right now? What’s your favorite?

PRAY Lord, we don’t always like it when there are rules, but we know that You use them to guide and protect us. Help us learn about Your will for our lives. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

LEARN

READ “THE BIG PICTURE” AND TALK IT OUT

- ▷ Think about a rule you needed to follow when you were three years old. How about when you were six years old? How about now?
- ▷ Do you have “family rules”?

DISCUSSION POINTS

- The key for this discussion is for youth to wrestle with the concept of “rules.” In their current developmental level, independence is an important topic. Does the presence of rules mean the absence of independence?
- Really, the Israelites struggled with similar questions. As believers, we waver between a sense of belonging to God the Father and a resentment toward the Law He lovingly gives.

LEARN ABOUT “GOD’S TOP TEN”

Hand out Small Catechisms (or use a poster of the Ten Commandments).

The account in **Exodus 20:1–21** is fairly straightforward. Read it out loud together, and pause as you go to point to the commandments in the Small Catechism. If you have a poster of the commandments, you could ask a volunteer to point for everyone.

Then discuss this question:

- ▷ Reflect on each commandment. What is one benefit to keeping each commandment? Pick three commandments to serve as examples.

DISCUSSION POINTS

- The point here is not to dwell on covering every commandment. Instead of focusing on content coverage, help youth make connections to see how God’s Law can be good.

LIVE

DISCUSS “MORE THAN A GAME”

Turn to the journal section “More Than a Game.” Give time for learners to consider the question there and below. Learners may want to write their own questions, thoughts, or concerns prompted by the lesson. See the back page of this guide for tips to help equip the youth for some frequently asked questions.

► **If the Ten Commandments are rules for life, how can we see them as a gift?**

DISCUSSION POINTS

- A game without rules is chaos. The same is true for a family, a government, and life itself. God created order, which helps protect us and all of His creation.
- These rules are timeless. They stand true now, just as they did in Moses’ day.
- We are all sinful. We cannot be trusted to make the best decisions. God’s Law keeps us mindful of His will for us and for all of His creation.

CONSIDER “LOVING LAW”

Ask a volunteer to read the paragraphs in this section. There is a lot to take in there! Take a moment to slow down or repeat key sentences.

DISCUSSION POINTS

- Help students realize that one reason we don’t like rules is because we know we can’t keep them. But Jesus did. And He paid the price for every time we break the commandments. That doesn’t mean we can ignore the commandments now. It means we can joyfully keep them, free in forgiveness and filled with the Spirit.
- Challenge the students to write two ideas of how keeping the commandments can be a witness of faith. If there’s hesitation, remind them that living out our faith can be a powerful way to work against the perception that Christians are hypocrites who do nothing to help anyone.
- To get started, give time to write and work alone. Be patient as learners think. If your group is large, invite them to discuss in pairs next. Finally, open the discussion to the group.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

To check for understanding, ask students how the Bible Verse relates to their “witness” ideas from the previous activity. Thank those who share.

LEAVE

Read the Bible Verse aloud together from the *Defend Journal*:

Love the LORD your God, and . . . serve Him with all your heart.

Deuteronomy 11:13

Ask for prayer requests. Offer to pray, or invite a student to pray for everyone.



CHRIST CONNECTION

God the Father gave us the Law. He also gave us Jesus, who fulfilled the Law in our place. We are now free to live according to God’s will, pointing to Jesus.



LEADER NOTE

Several psalms talk about the Law as a gift. See Psalm 1:1–2; 19:7; 119:97–105.



BONUS ACTIVITY

Let youth make their own rules with “Class Rules.”



SHAREABLE DOWNLOAD

Connect with youth before and after the lesson using shareable images from the digital resource center.

APOLOGETICS HELPS

DEFEND THE FAITH

Several decades ago, a shepherd made a huge discovery: the Dead Sea Scrolls. Because the scrolls used animal skins, scientists were able to date these Old Testament writings to three hundred years before Jesus was born!

Bible scholars compared the words of the scrolls to the Old Testament Bible we have today. The match was amazing! God's Word is the same today as it was thousands of years ago. And you only have to see the benefit of the commandments to realize that they still apply.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

► How do I know that the Bible is accurate?

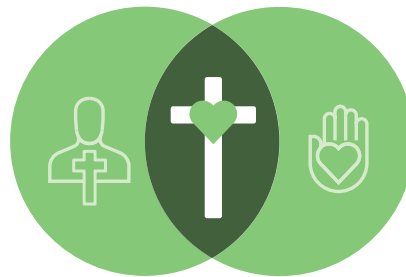
Evidence such as the Dead Sea Scrolls shows that the Bible is still accurate, even thousands of years later. A look around the world shows that the same realities are true: there is still sin in this world. There is still a need for a Savior. Jesus is that Savior who was born two thousand years ago for everyone of every generation.

► Some rules are outdated, right?

If you read the Old Testament, you see that the very same sins existed back then. People today are not smarter or somehow beyond God's Law. Just as God condemned sins of murder, sexual sins, disrespect, and jealousy thousands of years ago, He still condemns them today.

► Why would God make rules we can't keep?

That's kind of like saying, "Why play a game if we know people cheat?" Our sinfulness doesn't get rid of the need for the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments tell us what we should do and point us to our need for a Savior, who keeps all of God's Law perfectly.



CONNECTING IDENTITY & CALLING

IDENTITY: WHO AM I?

God has made me His creature, created to love Him and serve my neighbor.

CALLING: WHY AM I HERE?

I have been created to follow God's will: to love Him and serve my neighbor.

GROWING IN FAITH FOR LIFE

See how this lesson builds on learning for each age.

ADULT

I can paraphrase God's intent for how His human creatures should love Him and love one another.

YOUTH

I can cite examples of how God guides and protects us.

ELEMENTARY

I understand that God knows all that I need and that He guides and protects me.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

I know God's rules are good.

★ BONUS ACTIVITIES

SING

5–10 minutes

Is your group interested in music? Turn to the "Mission and Witness" section in *Lutheran Service Book*, or find a music video online that correlates with the following themes: loving Father, Holy Word, mission, and witness.

A GOOD LAW

10–15 minutes

Read **Psalm 119:97–100**. Why is the Law a good thing? The Law can be used as a mirror, a curb, and a guide. Where do the Ten Commandments fit into these three uses? Look at Question 18 in *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation* (2017).

CLASS RULES

15–20 minutes

Create rules for your classroom. Ask for ideas, and work together until you have rules that everyone agrees will work. How will these benefit your time together? Keep them posted every week.