



+ Generations Together

## Living the Commandments

Here is an intergenerational session for all members of the congregation exploring how to live the Ten Commandments—as individuals, families, and as a community. This session is designed to be conducted in about 90 minutes, and can be adapted for a shorter or longer timeframe.

### Introduction

This session will help children, teens, and adults understand that the Commandments are not simply a list of do's and don'ts, but a gift from God that shows us how to live in relationship with God and with one another.

### I. Gather

[use the following adaptation of the activity Teamwork Tic Tac Toe]

#### Needed

Teamwork Tic Tac Toe worksheet—one per person, pen or pencil—one person, Bible

#### Activity Plan

1. Ask participants to form family groups or small groups of no more than six persons.
2. Say this prayer aloud to begin.  
*O God, help us follow your two greatest commandments—loving you and loving others—by remembering to do good deeds every day. Thank you for showing us that when we share with others, we show our love for you. Amen.*
3. Designate someone to read Matthew 22:34-40 aloud, someone who is comfortable reading from the Bible to the whole group.
4. Say to the group: In this story, Jesus relays which commandments are most important: first, to love God with all your heart, and secondly, to love your neighbor as yourself. Discuss these questions:
  - In what ways can we show God our love by loving our neighbor?
  - What does God mean by “neighbor”? Is that limited to the people who live in the house, apartment, or building next door?
  - Can loving our neighbor start within our own family? What are some ways we can show others in our family that we love them?
  - Do small, every-day tasks show love? What are some examples?

Invite at least one person from each age group (child, teen, adult) to share a response to one of these questions with the whole group.

5. Give each person a copy of the Teamwork Tic Tac Toe worksheet and a pen or pencil.

6. Instruct them put an “X” on each good deed they have completed recently; perhaps they will have more than one Tic Tac Toe. If they do not complete a Tic Tac Toe, review the choices (or make up some of your own) to see how quickly a Tic Tac Toe can be completed.
7. Again, invite one person from each age group (child, teen, adult) to share their Tic Tac Toe with the whole group.

## **II. Grow**

[use the following adaptation of the activity Ten Commandment Magnet]

### **Needed:**

Ten Commandments Worksheet, cardboard, index cards or other heavy paper cut into rectangles; glue; magnets or a roll of magnetic adhesive; crayons, markers or colored pencil to decorate. Gather enough of these supplies so that each family or small group can make one set of ten magnet cards.

### **Activity Plan**

1. Ask participants to form family groups or small groups of no more than six persons.
2. Explain to the group that God delivered the Ten Commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai after Moses had spent 40 days and 40 nights with God on the mountain. God told Moses that the Israelites were God’s favored, chosen people, and so were given the Ten Commandments so they would know how to live. God promised that if they kept this covenant, they would always be protected and cared for by God.
3. Ask one person in each group to read each commandment, one at a time, from the Ten Commandments Worksheet. After each commandment is read, the family or small group should agree on a “translation” that all in the group can understand. Young families will likely have simple translations, while teen families and adult group may come up with creative and catchy translations.
4. Write one translated commandment on each card. Illustrate each with a drawing that demonstrates the importance of relationship (with God or one another) expressed in that commandment
5. Adhere a magnet to the back of each card.
6. Invite a few groups to share one of their translated commandments with the whole group.
7. Tell participants to take their commandments home and place them on the refrigerator.

## **III. Go Forth**

### **Activity Plan**

1. Invite participants to gather in a large group. Invite general discussion on these questions:
  - What have you learned about the Commandments today?
  - What are you going to do differently from now on?
2. Read aloud Matthew 22:34-40. Remind everyone that living the Ten Commandments means loving God and loving one another all the time, 24/7/365.
3. Give all participants another copy of the Teamwork Tic Tac Toe worksheet. Tell them that their “homework” for the next week is to complete a blackout of the worksheet, that is, complete not just three in a row, but all items on the sheet.
4. And for adults and teens, give them a copy of the activity No Other Gods. Challenge them to do this simple, but important, reflection on the first commandment.
5. Close with this prayer:

*O God, thank you for giving us your commandments and for always keeping your promise to protect us. With your help, I want to follow your rules because they keep us in relationship with you. Amen.*

# Teamwork Tic Tac Toe

By Julie Filby

Teach your children the two most important commandments—love God with all your heart and love your neighbor as yourself—by completing any three good deeds in a row (across, down or diagonally) on a Tic Tac Toe board.

## For

Young Family

## Season

Fall

## Needed

Teamwork Tic Tac Toe template, pen or pencil, Bible

## Prepare in Advance

- Print a Tic Tac Toe sheet for each child.



## Activity Plan

1. Say this prayer aloud to begin.  
*O God, help us follow your two greatest commandments—loving you and loving others—by remembering to do good deeds every day. Thank you for showing us that when we share with others, we show our love for you. Amen.*
2. Designate someone to read Matthew 22: 34-40 aloud, either a parent or a child who is comfortable reading from the Bible.
3. In this story, Jesus relays which commandments are most important: first, to love God with all your heart, and secondly, to love your neighbor as yourself. Discuss these questions:
  - In what ways can we show God our love by loving our neighbor?
  - What does God mean by “neighbor”? Is that limited to the people who live in the house, apartment, or building next door?
  - Can loving our neighbor start within our own family? What are some ways we can show others in our family that we love them?
  - Do small, every-day tasks show love? What are some examples?
4. Give each child a copy of the Teamwork Tic Tac Toe template and a pen or pencil.
5. Instruct them put an “X” on each good deed they have completed recently; perhaps they will have more than one Tic Tac Toe. If they do not complete a Tic Tac Toe, review the choices (or make up some of your own) to see how quickly a Tic Tac Toe can be completed.
6. Variation: Try to “X” out *all* good deeds listed on the sheet. Make it a competition. See who can fill up the sheet first.

## The Greatest Commandment

### Matthew 22: 34-40

When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them [a scholar of the law] tested him by asking, “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” He said to him, “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.”

## Teamwork Tic Tac Toe

Complete any three good deeds by either working across, down or diagonally.

<p>Set the dinner table and help wash the dishes.</p>	<p>Take out the trash.</p>	<p>Share your favorite toy, book or game with a friend, brother or sister, cousin or classmate. Or donate it.</p>
<p>Ask your teacher how you can help with something at school, then do it. Or ask a neighbor how you can help.</p>	<p>Free space (write in your own activity)</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>Make a new friend at school, church, in your neighborhood, at a park or other play area.</p>
<p>Fold and put away your clothes.</p>	<p>Take care of family pets, a family plant, or help in the garden or with other yard work.</p>	<p>Give up a favorite TV program, video game, computer game, or playing on the Internet for a week.</p>

# Ten Commandment Magnets

By Julie Filby



Introduce the Ten Commandments to children by making a magnet to illustrate the relationship described in each commandment. This can help children understand that the Commandments are not simply a list of do's and don'ts, but a gift from God that shows us how to live in relationship with God and one another.

## For

Young Family

## Season

Fall

## Needed

Cardboard, index cards or other heavy paper cut into rectangles; glue; magnets or a roll of magnetic adhesive; crayons, markers or colored pencil to decorate

## Prepare in Advance

- Review the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20:1-17 and the corresponding explanations for young children
- Gather supplies

## Activity Plan

1. Explain that God delivered the Ten Commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai after Moses had spent 40 days and 40 nights with God on the mountain. God told Moses that the Israelites were God's favored, chosen people, and so were given the Ten Commandments so they would know how to live. God promised that if they kept this covenant, they would always be protected and cared for by God.
2. Read each commandment and the corresponding children's translation. Write one commandment on each card. Illustrate each with a drawing that demonstrates the importance of relationship (with God or one another) expressed in that commandment.
3. Adhere a magnet to the back of each card.
4. Post the cards on the refrigerator for easy reference over the next several days or weeks.
5. Close with this prayer:

*O God, thank you for giving us your commandments and for always keeping your promise to protect us. With your help, I want to follow your rules because they keep us in relationship with you. Amen.*

# Ten Commandments

## Biblical and Kids' Version

Exodus 20:1-17

Then God spoke all these words:

	As quoted from the Bible	Kids' version
1	I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall not have other gods beside me.	Put God first.
2	You shall not make for yourself an idol or a likeness of anything in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters beneath the earth; you shall not bow down before them or serve them.	Have no other gods but the one true God.
3	You shall not invoke the name of the LORD, your God, in vain.	Be careful how you use God's name.
4	Remember the sabbath day—keep it holy. Six days you may labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God. . . . For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them; but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the LORD has blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.	Keep Sunday special.
5	Honor your father and your mother, that you may have a long life in the land the LORD your God is giving you.	Respect your parents.
6	You shall not kill.	Do not hurt other people.
7	You shall not commit adultery.	Keep your marriage promises.
8	You shall not steal.	Do not steal.
9	You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.	Do not lie.
10	You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, his mate or female slave, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.	Do not want things that don't belong to you.

# Ten Commandments

## Biblical Version . . . Your Translation

Exodus 20:1-17

Then God spoke all these words:

	As quoted from the Bible	Your Translation
1	I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall not have other gods beside me.	
2	You shall not make for yourself an idol or a likeness of anything in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters beneath the earth; you shall not bow down before them or serve them.	
3	You shall not invoke the name of the LORD, your God, in vain.	
4	Remember the sabbath day—keep it holy. Six days you may labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God. . . . For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them; but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the LORD has blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.	
5	Honor your father and your mother, that you may have a long life in the land the LORD your God is giving you.	
6	You shall not kill.	
7	You shall not commit adultery.	
8	You shall not steal.	
9	You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.	
10	You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, his mate or female slave, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.	

# No Other Gods

By Jessica Harris Daum



The first commandment is, “Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.” Seems simple enough. We don’t worship other gods...do we? A half hour of television reveals a truth about how often we treat other things as gods. This activity will bring you a new awareness that will hopefully help you put God first more often.

## For

Adult, Couple

## Season

Summer

## Needed

Access to viewing a half an hour of television

## Prepare in Advance

Choose a time to watch television for 30 minutes as a part of this activity. You will want to begin the activity 5-10 minutes before the tv program starts.

## Activity Plan

1. Say this prayer aloud to begin.  
*Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, you are my God. Help me to put You alone first in my life. Amen.*
2. The reformer Martin Luther spent a lot of time thinking about the foundations of faith. He considered the Ten Commandments to be important in the life of a Christian. God’s Law is a gift that protects and orders life, as well as makes our need for a Savior clear to us. You don’t have to be Lutheran to read Martin Luther’s thoughts on the First Commandment and gain insights into what it means. Even with its old-fashioned language, it has a lot to say to us today.
3. Reflect on and discuss this explanation of the first commandment.
  - How does Martin Luther’s explanation compare to your own understanding of the commandment?
  - What do you disagree with or have questions about in the reading?
  - What do you find helpful in this explanation of the First Commandment?
4. Watch a half an hour of television. As you watch, look for examples of the First Commandment being broken or temptations to break the commandment. Be sure to watch the commercials as well. Talk about or reflect on your viewing experience.
  - What do you think about the experience you’ve just had?
  - Were you surprised by what you observed? Why or why not?
  - How will what you observed change you?
5. End with prayer. Thank God for what you’ve learned and ask for help in making any changes you’re hoping to make in order to put God first.

## The First Commandment

### Martin Luther

(from the [Book of Concord](#))

Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.

That is: Thou shalt have [and worship] Me alone as thy God. What is the force of this, and how is it to be understood? What does it mean to have a god? or, what is God? Answer: A god means that from which we are to expect all good and to which we are to take refuge in all distress, so that to have a God is nothing else than to trust and believe Him from the [whole] heart; as I have often said that the confidence and faith of the heart alone make both God and an idol. If your faith and trust be right, then is your god also true; and, on the other hand, if your trust be false and wrong, then you have not the true God; for these two belong together, faith and God. That now, I say, upon which you set your heart and put your trust is properly your god.

Therefore it is the intent of this commandment to require true faith and trust of the heart which settles upon the only true God, and clings to Him alone. That is as much as to say: "See to it that you let Me alone be your God, and never seek another," i.e.: Whatever you lack of good things, expect it of Me, and look to Me for it, and whenever you suffer misfortune and distress, creep and cling to Me. I, yes, I, will give you enough and help you out of every need; only let not your heart cleave to or rest in any other.

This I must unfold somewhat more plainly, that it may be understood and perceived by ordinary examples of the contrary. Many a one thinks that he has God and everything in abundance when he has money and, possessions; he trusts in them and boasts of them with such firmness and assurance as to care for no one. Lo, such a man also has a god, Mammon by name, i.e., money and possessions, on which he sets all his heart, and which is also the most common idol on earth. He who has money and possessions feels secure, and is joyful and undismayed as though he were sitting in the midst of Paradise. On the other hand, he who has none doubts and is despondent, as though he knew of no God. For very few are to be found who are of good cheer, and who neither mourn nor complain if they have not Mammon. This [care and desire for money] sticks and clings to our nature, even to the grave.

So, too, whoever trusts and boasts that he possesses great skill, prudence, power, favor, friendship, and honor has also a god, but not this true and only God. This appears again when you notice how presumptuous, secure, and proud people are because of such possessions, and how despondent when they no longer exist or are withdrawn. Therefore I repeat that the chief explanation of this point is that to have a god is to have something in which the heart entirely trusts.