

# RESPECT

A Fresh Look at the Ten Commandments

*Teacher's Guide*

# RESPECT

## INTRODUCTION

### *Objectives*

1. Help students see that *respect* is at the heart of the 10 Commandments: respect for God (1-3) and respect for others (4-10).
2. Teach students what the 10 Commandments accomplish as well as what they are unable to accomplish (salvation).
3. Get at the deeper meanings of each of the Ten Commandments.
4. Help make students more aware of their sin and moral failure so they can better appreciate the grace God offers in Christ Jesus.

## OVERVIEW

A healthy understanding of one's moral failure and sinful nature is imperative for the non-believer and the believer alike. Teaching the 10 Commandments can help bring this about if accompanied by the Holy Spirit. He alone brings true conviction of sin. For the non-believer, acknowledgement of and then repentance for personal sin is the start of the Christian life. It is coupled with the faith that Jesus Christ forgives all sin and that His death and resurrection has opened the way to life with God. This discernment of our sin and separation from God and faith in Jesus Christ as our only Savior are truths only the Holy Spirit can reveal as the law and Gospel are presented by the church.

You may have students in your class who are not Christians. There may be some who have unchurched parents and have no real background in faith. It is essential to realize that simply teaching information about the Christian faith does not in itself accomplish anything significant in the Kingdom of God. Students who are not Christians could actually come to believe in the things being taught and still not be Christians. They need the conviction of sin that only the Holy Spirit can bring and also faith in Christ Jesus and His redemptive work, which only the Spirit can bring.

Your job as teacher to unbelieving students is to love them, faithfully teach the material, and then constantly pray that the Spirit of God would convince them of their separation and need for God in order to work faith in them. Your prayers are essential since only God's activity through the Spirit can accomplish the work of salvation.

Your objective for the believing students is to help them see the depths of their moral failure. This needs to be done for two reasons. One is so self-righteousness does not find a place in your students' hearts. If your students believe they are good enough to merit life with God because of their own goodness, then they will spurn God's grace in Christ and lose the humility that keeps them in faith. The second reason is to groom students to live a life of ongoing repentance. In infant baptism, Jesus lays hold of the children and claims them as His own. The problem is that as a baby becomes an adult, it is possible to lose the faith. This is a Lutheran belief. Infant baptism (a death of self) saves a child, but ongoing repentance (death of self) and faith keep the adult in saving grace. Consequently, we need to teach our children that repentance is the way in which the waters of baptism remain alive and effective. We also should teach them how to repent.

A class on the 10 Commandments can help satisfy both reasons of your objective. An honest look at the 10 Commandments cannot but destroy a person's self-righteousness. The Commandments also remind Christians how they continue to fail their Lord and draws them to renewed repentance.

Teachers are encouraged to go through the 10 Commandments with the students at the beginning of every class. It would also be enriching to regularly incorporate a time of confession and absolution during class, probably at the close. It could be very simple, or it could incorporate your congregation's liturgy from your hymnbook. The goal of this class is not just to teach the 10 Commandments but also to teach repentance for not obeying them. If your congregation uses the *Lutheran Book of Worship*, you may want to use the general confession on page 56.

## **DYNAMICS OF THIS CURRICULUM**

### **PREFACE TO THE LESSON**

#### ***Opening***

Take time to greet students as they arrive and visit a while before beginning the lesson. Consider starting each session with prayer. At times there is an *Opening* section in the lessons. It would be a good idea to go through the Ten Commandments as a class every week at this time.

## ***Objectives and Background***

These sections of the *Teacher's Guide* prepare you for the lesson. Look at these carefully.

## **LESSON**

### ***Object Lessons***

This section is optional. Its purpose is to help reinforce the meaning of the particular Commandment addressed in the lesson or the meaning of the Ten Commandments as a whole. Before class, look at this section in the *Teacher's Guide* to see what items you will need.

### ***Bible Study***

You can do the Bible Study either as a class, in small groups before gathering to go over the answers, or a combination of the two. It often helps break up the routine of doing everything as a class by having students discuss the questions in small groups first.

### ***About the Commandments***

The purpose of this section is to teach students about the history of the Ten Commandments as well as their value in life. If you don't have time, you could omit this part.

### ***Closing***

As suggested earlier, it may be of great value to close all or most lessons with some sort of confession and absolution. This could be general or relate to sins committed having to do with that lesson's Commandment. You can do this on your own or use printed resources (such as the *LBW* which has several beautiful confessions of sin).

Conclude the class with a prayer. You can pray your own or use the prayer in the *Teacher's Guide*. The best option would be if students would volunteer to lead the prayer time.

### ***Pray, Pray, Pray***

Pray regularly for your class. Pray that the Holy Spirit would convince your students of their sin and of their need for Christ. Pray that God would increase their faith by His Spirit. Pray for their protection and for strength to meet the problems they face. Pray that your students would encounter Jesus Christ in the Word they read and hear during the lessons, in the lessons themselves, and through your love and example.

# **The Teacher's Guide**

## **1<sup>st</sup> Commandment: Respecting Only One God**

Exodus 20:3— *“You shall have no other gods before me.”*

### **PREFACE TO THE LESSON**

#### ***Objectives***

1. Remind students there is only one true God, but humans are naturally drawn to idols.
2. Help students understand they can break the Ten Commandments either by deliberately doing something or by failing to do something.

#### ***Background***

There is a universal hunger for God in every human heart. All peoples throughout history in all parts of the world have sought religious fulfillment. Since the dawn of the Enlightenment, however, many rationalists have prophesied that with the rise of reason, religion would die out. Centuries later, the search for God is as strong as ever.

The reason for this is simply that there is a God. As the body cannot live without water, we cannot live without Him. If we do not have a relationship with God, we have an emptiness needing to be filled. Although only God can satisfactorily fill this void, we often try to fill it ourselves by embracing other things in an attempt to find meaning, purpose and security. It is idolatry if we allow other things to compete with our devotion to and worship of God.

Adults often have a difficult time with the realities of discerning this thirst for God and of comprehending how they make gods of created objects; for young people, it is especially difficult. It is enough if this lesson is an introduction, making students aware of these realities.

### **THE LESSON**

#### ***Items Needed***

- ✓ Bibles for students who did not bring their own
- ✓ A small piece of paper for every student
- ✓ A can of caffeinated pop
- ✓ A glass of water
- ✓ A ball of any size

## ***Bible Object Lesson—The Caffeine Craving***

Put a glass of water and a can or bottle of caffeinated pop on the table. Inform the class you will ask a question, but you don't want them to answer out loud. Hand each student a piece of paper and tell them to write either "pop" or "water" after you ask the question.

Ask: "If you were dying of thirst, what would you rather drink, the pop or the water?" Allow a few moments for students to think about the question and to write down their answer. Collect the answers and read them out loud.

Tell students that if they were dying of thirst, they would need water to live. Even though the pop contains much water for satisfying their thirst, the caffeine present actually steals water from the body as it is absorbed. Those who chose the pop would be losers.

Remind students that although the pop might taste better and actually feel like it is filling their stomachs (technically, it is), the pop will actually do more harm than good.

Compare this to the spiritual thirst all people have. Humans have a longing for something they can trust completely and to which they can give their lives. Often people seek to quench their internal, spiritual thirst through created objects instead of through God. Those objects may seem to satisfy the spiritual thirst at first, but because they are not the True God, in reality they accomplish nothing of spiritual value. In fact, trusting objects instead of God will create an even more profound emptiness.

## ***Bible Study***

Read the Bible Study, look up the Bible verses, and answer the questions.

### **Answers:**

1. There is only One True God.
2. In Isaiah 44:6, God is called King, Redeemer, the Lord Almighty, and the First and the Last.
3. Since God made us, we belong to Him. We owe Him gratitude and respect.
4. Isaiah 44:9-11 states that those who either make or have idols are nothing, blind, and ignorant.
5. God calls Himself "The spring of living waters."
6. Serving and worshipping a false god is like someone who has dug their own cistern in order to get water to drink, but because it is broken, it holds no water.
7. The man was seeking "eternal life," which could also be called "spiritual life."

8. Jesus only used Commandments from the second half (4-10) that have to do with loving one's neighbor.
9. When Jesus told the rich man to sell all he had, He got to the heart of that particular man's idolatry: his wealth. People need not sell all they have to faithfully follow Christ, but must abandon anything that steals their devotion to and worship of God. For the man in this story, his wealth kept his heart from God.
10. The man's wealth was his idol.
11. Answers will vary. Common idols are self, popularity, girlfriends/boyfriends, celebrities, success in school or sports, etc.

### ***About the Commandments***

Read this section and discuss the students' responses.

#### **Answers:**

1. Answers will vary.
2. Answers will vary.
3. Answers will vary.
4. Answers will vary.

### ***Prayer***

Creator God, help us to understand what things in our lives compete with our allegiance to You. Expose the gods we serve so we may repent of our idolatry and more wholly devote ourselves to following You. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Commandment: Respecting God's Name**

Exodus 20:7 — *“You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.”*

### **PREFACE TO THE LESSON**

#### ***Objectives***

1. Help students understand they can dishonor God's name through both words and actions.
2. Emphasize to students that nobody can keep the 10 Commandments perfectly, and no one is made right with God (justified/saved) through his/her own obedience and goodness. Instead, we are made right with God by our faith in Jesus who offers us salvation as a gift because of His loving grace.

5. Proverbs 10:19 – It is easy to sin when we use words so much. It is wise to use words sparingly.  
 Proverbs 11:9 – Words can destroy people.  
 Proverbs 11:12-13 – A wise man is careful with his words and can keep a secret.  
 Proverbs 12:18 – Words can either harm or heal.  
 Proverbs 15:4 – Words can either destroy or heal.  
 Proverbs 18:21 – Words have great power for good or ill.  
 Proverbs 19:9 – Those who lie will be punished.  
 Proverbs 20:19 – It is good to stay away from those who gossip.
6. Our words should be used to encourage and benefit others.
7. Gossip = Sharing negative things about someone with others, whether they are true or not. Harm: Answers will vary.  
 Slander = Harming the reputation of another by saying negative things.  
 Harm: Answers will vary.  
 Lying = Relating an untruth to another. Harm: Answers will vary.  
 Name-calling = Calling someone a derogatory name with the purpose of hurting them. Harm: Answers will vary.
8. Answers will vary.

### ***About the Commandments***

#### *Prayer*

## **9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Commandments: Respecting the Power of Our Desires**

Exodus 20:17—*”You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”*

## **Oher Books by Kent Groethe**

*Hearing God*

*Miracles and Milestones*

### **Old Places, New Faces Adult Bible Studies**

*Genesis*

*Exodus*

### **Family Devotionals**

*Personalities of Faith*

### **Spiritual Growth Resources**

*Prayer Guide*

*Guide to Reading the Bible...Epistles*

### **Sunday School/Confirmation Materials**

*Personalities of Faith Student Book*

*Personalities of Faith Teacher's Guide*

*A Lamp Unto My Feet: A Survey of the Bible*

*A Lamp Unto My Feet Teacher's Guide*

*Respect: A Fresh Look at the Ten Commandments*

*Respect Teacher's Guide*