



Loving God

(based on Exodus 20:1-11)

After God led the Hebrew people out of slavery, they camped near a mountain. God called Moses to climb the mountain. Moses told all the people that God had a message for them. A thick cloud of smoke came down and rested on the top of the mountain. Thunder boomed and lightning flashed. God was on the mountain, waiting for Moses.

God spoke to Moses in the thunder. “Climb the mountain, Moses.”

The people saw Moses climb into the cloud of smoke. He disappeared from view.

Inside the cloud, Moses met God. The LORD God, the great I AM, gave Moses ten important rules called *commandments* to help the people live together in peace and grace.

The first four rules were about how people ought to love God:

1. There is only one God.
2. Remember I am your God. Worship only me.
3. When you say my name, I AM WHO I AM, speak with love and respect.
4. Remember the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week. Work on the other six days and rest on the seventh. Make the Sabbath a special day of worship and rest.

Moses thought about how these rules would help the people stay connected to the LORD God, the great I AM. He knew that they had come from a land, and would soon be in a land, where people had many different gods, making statues of them and worshiping them. Moses knew that it would be important to say, “There is only one God,” remembering to worship only God.

Moses believed the third rule was a good one too. God had shared God’s name—I AM WHO I AM—with Moses and the people. God wanted them to love and respect that name because that meant the people were loving and respecting God.

Finally, Moses thought it was a really good idea to take time each week, especially when daily life could get so busy, just to worship God. That would always give the people a chance to stop, remember, and thank God for all God’s goodness.

These four rules would help the people love God with all their hearts, minds, and souls.



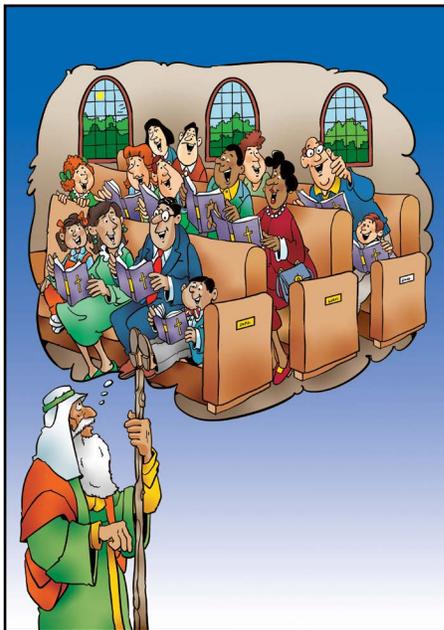
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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story with your children—imagine and wonder.
- Invite “I wonder” statements by beginning with some of your own, such as: I wonder, “What it would be like if everybody lived by these commandments?” I wonder, “If God were to give commandments today, what might be different?”



Responding to God's Grace

- Talk about ways your family shows love to God. Some examples are by going to church, singing songs to God, praying, taking care of God's creation, and reading the Bible together.
- Make a tent by draping blankets over a table. Set up camp for the night.
- Talk about the difference between work and rest. Ask:
 - What is work?
 - Even God rested—do we rest?
 - What might Sabbath/Sunday look like if we followed this commandment?
- Describe your ideal Sabbath/Sunday celebration.
- Visit a Jewish synagogue. Before you go, develop some questions to ask the rabbi, such as: When do you read the scrolls to the people? Are the laws the same as in our Bibles? Ask the rabbi or other person in charge to show you where the scrolls of the Law are kept and explain how the scrolls are used during the Sabbath worship.

Celebrating in Gratitude

- Invite each member of the family to think of one activity that can be done to keep each of the commandments this week. Make a promise to God and to one another to follow through on at least one of the ideas you share.
- Pray this way before meals this week:

Dear God, your love for us is so great. Thank you for teaching us how to love you and others. Amen.