



Love God, Love Others

(based on Deuteronomy 6:1-9; Leviticus 19:1-2, 9-18)

It had been a long journey for Moses and the people. For many years, they had trekked through the wilderness. It had been an incredible adventure.

Now at last their new home was in sight. Everyone was jubilant and excited. They talked about the long journey and dreamed about their new home. God had promised that it would be beautiful.

Moses called the people together. He wanted to talk to them before they went into their new home.

“Don’t forget!” Moses said. “Follow God’s rules so you will live in peace and have good lives. Teach them to your children and your grandchildren.”

The people nodded to each other. “We won’t forget God’s rules,” they replied.

“Listen carefully!” Moses continued. “Now I will tell you the most important thing of all.”

“God is our one and only God,” said Moses.

Leader: Love God with your whole heart, soul, and strength.

Children: Love your neighbor as yourself.

“What’s the most important thing?” asked Moses.

Leader: Love God with your whole heart, soul, and strength.

Children: Love your neighbor as yourself.

Moses told the people to repeat the words over and over.

“Say these words until they become a part of you,” instructed Moses. “Say them when you get up. Repeat them when you go to bed.”

Leader: Love God with your whole heart, soul, and strength.

Children: Love your neighbor as yourself.

That night, all through the camp, people said the same thing over and over.

Leader: Love God with your whole heart, soul, and strength.

Children: Love your neighbor as yourself.

The people did as Moses told them. They taught the words to their children and their grandchildren. They passed them down through the ages so no one would forget.



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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.
- Recall the story of the Exodus when Moses led the people out of Egypt and how they spent many years in the wilderness before they arrived at Israel, the land in which they would settle. Recall the story about how God gave the Hebrew people the Ten Commandments. The commandments were a guide for how to live as a community of God's people. Explain that the Hebrew people are getting ready to cross the Jordan River and enter a new land. Before they cross the river, Moses reminds them of a special commandment that God wants them to remember.



Responding to God's Grace

- Children are often eager to express their love for God by showing love to other people. Help them understand that they can also express their love for God by bringing about positive social change and caring for the environment. When children advocate for those who are poor, sick, or hungry, they are showing God's love. When they recycle, conserve, and advocate for pollution controls, they are showing God's love. Share other ideas about ways to love.
- Memorize Deuteronomy 6:5. Encourage your children to say it with you each time you have occasion to repeat it.
- Gather in a circle. Read together Deuteronomy 6:5 several times. The first person then says the first word of the verse, the second person says the second word, and so on. If someone cannot remember his or her word, have the group help him or her. The goal of the game is to have all work together to learn the verse.

Celebrating in Gratitude

- Jewish families sometimes place God's commandments on the outside doorframes of their homes. Make signs that you can hang on your doors to remind you of God's commands. Cut a heart out of paper and write, "Love God, Love Others" on it. Decorate the heart. Cut out cardboard squares and wrap with foil. Glue the heart on the square. Punch a hole at the top of the sign and thread ribbon through it and tie.
- Pray this way: Repeat Deuteronomy 6:5 as a cheer. Invite each person to select a word or phrase and to shout them out as you go around the circle. End by saying "Amen" in unison.