



The Great Commandment

(based on Mark 12:28–34)

One day, a religious leader came to ask Jesus a question. “Jesus,” he said, “I have a question for you. There are many books full of God’s laws. But what is the most important law?”

This was a tricky question. The law of God had been written down a long time ago. There were hundreds of different laws to remember. No one could agree which one was the most important. Religious leaders had argued about it for many years.

The crowd waited and wondered. How would Jesus answer the question? Which law would he choose? All the laws were important. How could Jesus choose just one?

Jesus thought about the laws that he learned when he was a boy. There was one law that was very special. He recited it every day. It was the law that Moses had asked the Jewish people to always remember.

Jesus answered, “Love God with all your heart. Love God with all your soul. Love God with your mind.”

The people nodded to each other. They knew the law by heart. Each one of them spoke the law every day.

Then Jesus said, “Wait. I haven’t finished.”

Everyone wanted to hear what else Jesus had to say. They listened carefully so they wouldn’t miss his words.

Jesus looked at everyone and said, “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

Jesus smiled at the religious teacher. “Remember these two things,” he said. “Love God with all your heart and love your neighbor as yourself. This is the most important law.”

The religious leader was impressed. Jesus had answered the question well. He was a wise and helpful teacher.



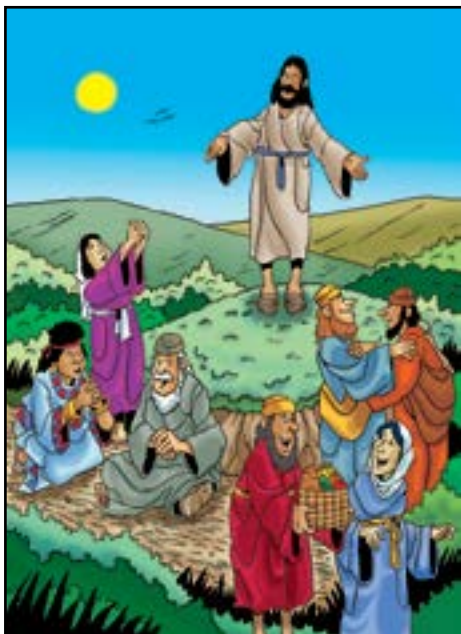
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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story together—imagine and wonder.
- Wonder together how loving God and loving your neighbor overlap.
- Watch the YouTube video “Lincoln Brewster—Love the Lord (Lyric Video)” (bit.ly/LoveTheLordVideo, 3:45). Sing along!



Responding to God's Grace

- Help someone draw a large heart on a sheet of paper. Offer old magazines and have everyone cut out pictures of people to glue on the heart. Write “Love God, Love Neighbor” in the margin.
- Draw pictures of some neighbors to love.
- Make a heart wreath. First, cut the middle out of a paper plate, leaving only the border. Fold a sheet of paper in half. Show how to draw half a heart along the fold of the paper and cut it out to form a heart when unfolded. Let them cut out many hearts in different sizes and colors. Help them arrange the hearts, overlapping them on the paper plate border to form a wreath.

Celebrating in Gratitude

- Read the four stories from *The Sneetches and Other Stories* by Dr. Seuss (Random House Books for Young Readers, 1961) or watch the YouTube video “The Sneetches and Other Stories” (bit.ly/4SeussStories, 16:55). Look for themes of diversity, tolerance, and compromise. Talk together about how to be a good neighbor.
- Pray this prayer:

God, help me to love you with all my heart, soul, and mind, and to love my neighbor as myself. Amen.

Note: bit.ly web addresses are case sensitive.