

**Exod. 20:1–17**

**Ps. 19**

**1 Cor. 1:18–25**

**John 2:13–22**

# The Ten Commandments

**Goal for the Session**      *Children will discover God’s loving ways through the Ten Commandments.*

## ■ P R E P A R I N G   F O R   T H E   S E S S I O N

### Focus on Exodus 20:1–17

#### WHAT is important to know?

— From “Exegetical Perspective,” W. Sibley Towner

The setting in Exodus places the Decalogue (meaning the “Ten Words”) at the beginning of the lengthy covenant passage known as the Sinai pericope (Exodus 20:1–Numbers 10:10). Its position in the text bespeaks its primary importance. This is categorical law, setting forward the principles essential for the viability of a community. It comes to us almost as a kind of legal credo, fundamental to what individual Israelites understood was expected of them as people of God. The Decalogue begins with four commandments aimed at establishing a right relationship between God and the elect people. The remaining verses regulate relationships between persons.

#### WHERE is God in these words?

— From “Theological Perspective,” George W. Stroup

One of the central convictions of Jewish and Christian faith is that human life is to be lived before God and that such life has an order and structure, constituted by God’s commandments. It is important to remember that the Ten Commandments presuppose Israel’s history and its understanding of covenantal life before God. They guide us as we journey in our life before God and our life with our neighbors. They do not show us what we must do or how we must live in order to receive God’s covenantal grace. They light our way and show us how we should live as people who have already been freely given God’s grace in Jesus Christ.

#### SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

— From “Pastoral Perspective,” Craig Kocher

The Commandments come as a gift from God to the people of Israel to structure their common life, and to shape individual lives that are worthy of the God who has rescued them and with whom they are in covenant. To be bound in covenant with God is to be set free to live as God’s people. There is an internal logic to the Commandments that is both compelling and beautiful: The way we attend to God shapes the way we attend to our neighbor. In other words, faithful worship of God leads to proper love of neighbor.

#### NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do?

— From “Homiletical Perspective,” Barbara Brown Taylor

These practices are not kindly suggestions. They express the purposeful will of God for God’s people. Those who ignore the divine teachings do so at their own peril—not because God is standing over them with a hammer, but because the teachings describe the way of life. To ignore them is to wander into the ways of death instead. The Ten Teachings also constitute a kind of trust exercise about the nature of reality; they challenge all other readings of reality. *Trust me, God says. Those other teachings are not good for you. The life you think they bring you is not real life.*

**FOCUS SCRIPTURE**

***Exodus 20:1–17***

## Focus on Your Teaching

Children generally think that rules keep them from doing what they want to do. They have to go to bed at a certain time. They can play outdoors at school only during recess. They can hardly wait to be grown-up so they can do what they want. While one session on the Ten Commandments may not change their minds, they have the opportunity to see how these rules from God can help us be more faithful to God and to care for one another.

*Caring God, I pray that as I prepare this session I might also come to a better understanding of how the Ten Commandments show us your love. Amen.*

### YOU WILL NEED

- purple cloth
- battery-powered tall white candle and 6 battery-powered votive candles
- offering basket
- Bible, bookmarks
- newsprint, marker
- Singing the Feast, 2023–2024*; CD player
- Resource Sheet 1, 3
- copies of Resource Sheet 2
- Color Pack 1, 2, 3, 4, 29, 30
- index cards

### For Responding

- option 1: copies of Resource Sheet 2, current newspapers, scissors
- option 2: paper, marker, tape, beanbag or small object to toss
- option 3: copies of Resource Sheet 2, colored construction paper, markers
- option 4: Color Pack 30; *Singing the Feast, 2023–2024*; CD player; copies of Resource Sheet 2

## LEADING THE SESSION

### GATHERING

*Before the session*, print each of the Ten Commandments on a separate index card, including the number. Use the shortened version of the commandments on Resource Sheet 2 (The Ten Commandments). Be sure to use the numbering used by your church. If you have more than ten children in the group, make additional sets. Make a copy of Resource Sheet 2 for each child, cut out the list you need, and recycle the rest of the page. If you are using option 2 in Responding, prepare the game as described in the activity.

Welcome each child. When you are ready to begin, have the group arrange the purple cloth in the middle of your learning space. Place on it Color Pack 1 and 2, the offering basket, the Christ candle and votive candles as described on Resource Sheet 3 (Lenten Rituals), and the Bible. Have the children sit down. Receive the offering. Point out the purple cloth, signifying the season of Lent. Ask:

✠ What do you know about the season of Lent?

Supplement what they recall with the information on Resource Sheet 3. Ask a child to find Lent on Color Pack 1. Notice that Lent ends on Easter.

Follow the Gathering Ritual on Resource Sheet 3.

To help the children focus on the theme for this session, ask:

✠ What rules are necessary for things to go well at your school?

✠ What rules are important for our group to learn together?

As they suggest rules, write them on newsprint. Explain that the Bible story today is about rules from God.

### Jesus Loves Me

Jesus loves me! This I know,  
For the Bible tells me so.  
Little ones to Him belong;  
In his love we shall be  
strong.

#### Refrain:

Yes, Jesus loves me!  
Yes, Jesus loves me!  
Yes, Jesus loves me!  
The Bible tells me so.

Jesus loves me! This I know,  
As he loved so long ago,  
Taking children on His knee,  
Saying, "Let them come to  
me." (*Refrain*)

Jesus loves me, still today,  
Walking with me on my  
way,  
Wanting as a friend to give  
Light and love to all who  
live. (*Refrain*)

You may put a  
bookmark at the  
beginning of Mark and  
one of a different color  
at Exodus.

Option: Older  
children could make  
a display with these  
stories and their ideas  
about whether a  
commandment is being  
broken or kept to report  
to the rest of the group  
or to post in a place  
where the congregation  
will see it.

## EXPLORING

Ask a child to get the Bible from the worship table and open it to Mark, a Gospel in the New Testament. Ask:

✠ Who are the stories about in the Gospels of the New Testament?

Encourage the children to think of people mentioned in the Gospels in addition to Jesus. Recall with the group that the story in the previous session from Mark was about Jesus and the disciples. Then have a child turn to the Old Testament or Hebrew Scriptures. Ask:

✠ What stories do you remember from the Old Testament part of the Bible?

Some children may recall the story of Noah and the flood from the First Sunday in Lent. Explain that the stories of the Old Testament were stories that Jesus would have heard as a boy. The story today is from the second book of the Old Testament, Exodus. Have a child find Exodus 20. Have Color Pack 3 and 4 and Resource Sheet 2 (The Ten Commandments) ready. Tell the story from Resource Sheet 1 (A Family Story). After the story, ask:

✠ Why do you think this is an important story for God's people?

Review the Ten Commandments with the group. Distribute the cards with the Ten Commandments prepared earlier. Have learners stand in a line in order of the commandments. Have the children read aloud their commandments, one at a time, in order. For fun, have them read aloud their commandments at the same time. Ask the children to trade their cards and line up in order again. Have them read the commandments in order. Trade the cards and read the commandments two or three more times, asking the children to always get a new commandment.

If you have fewer than ten children, include leaders or give some children more than one commandment. Conclude Exploring by asking:

✠ Why do you think the Ten Commandments are important for us today?

## RESPONDING

Offer at least two options so children have a choice.

- 1. In the News** One way to answer the concluding question in Exploring is to look at current events. Provide several recent newspapers for the children to look through. Encourage them to find stories that illustrate how people are keeping or breaking one of the commandments. Give them copies of the Ten Commandments from Resource Sheet 2 (The Ten Commandments). Ask each child to select one news story and be prepared to tell which commandment is being kept or broken. Gather the group and have each child report with a sentence or two about the news event and the corresponding commandment.

**EASY  
 PREP**

2. **Ten Commandments Game** This game combines learning the Ten Commandments and helping the children relate them to their lives. Use the list of commandments from Resource Sheet 2 to create a large floor game board. Write each commandment on a sheet of paper and tape the sheets in a grid (design of your choice) on the floor. Have the children take turns tossing a beanbag or other small item onto the grid. Wherever it lands, the child who tossed it reads the commandment and names a time when he or she would need to follow that commandment. For example, for “Do not tell lies about other people,” the child might say, “Don’t text untrue things about someone.”
3. **Commandment Signs** Ask the learners to recall signs they have seen in public places that tell what we can or cannot do, such as a sign on a restaurant door that says *No bare feet*. Some signs use symbols or shapes to give the message, such as a stop sign, which is recognized by shape and color without reading the word on it. Have the learners create signs for commandments. Provide markers, colored construction paper, scissors, and copies of the Ten Commandments from Resource Sheet 2. A sign might simply say *Worship God* on a church shape or a stop-sign shape might have the word *Stealing* on it. Post their signs around the learning area and look at them together.
4. **Song** The song “I’m Gonna Live So God Can Use Me” (Color Pack 30; track 11 on *Singing the Feast, 2023–2024*) can be seen as telling about living according to the Ten Commandments. Sing it together. Have the children read the Ten Commandments from Resource Sheet 2 in unison and discuss which commandments are implied in each stanza. Work as a group to compose new stanzas that reflect other commandments, and then sing the song with the added stanzas.

**I’m Gonna Live  
 So God Can Use Me**

1. I’m gonna *\*live* so God  
 can use me  
 anywhere, Lord,  
 anytime!  
 I’m gonna *\*live* so God  
 can use me  
 anywhere, Lord,  
 anytime!
2. *\* work*
3. *\* share*
4. *\* care*

**CLOSING**

Gather around the candles. Light the Christ candle and the votive candles, if necessary. Follow the Closing Ritual on Resource Sheet 3 (Lenten Rituals). Sing “I’m Gonna Live So God Can Use Me” (Color Pack 30; track 11 on *Singing the Feast, 2023–2024*).

Extinguish the candle.

As you say good-bye, give each child a copy of the Ten Commandments from Resource Sheet 2 and encourage them to talk about the commandments with their families. Encourage them to return for the next session.

Save Resource Sheet 3 (Lenten Rituals) to use each Sunday in March.

## A Family Story

The children were delighted to find Granddad Micah sitting under the big tree. They knew when he sat there he would tell stories to them. They sat on the soft grass next to him.

“We’re ready,” said Sarah. “Tell us a story about the people of God.”

Granddad Micah cleared his throat and began:

“This is one of the most important stories about God and our people. It happened long ago when our people had left Egypt. Who remembers why they left Egypt?”

The children shouted, “We were slaves in Egypt and God rescued us. Moses led our people across the hot and dusty desert.”

“You are so right,” he said. “That is an important story, too, and this story took place as they were in the desert. One more question before I tell the story. What is this long journey from Egypt called?”

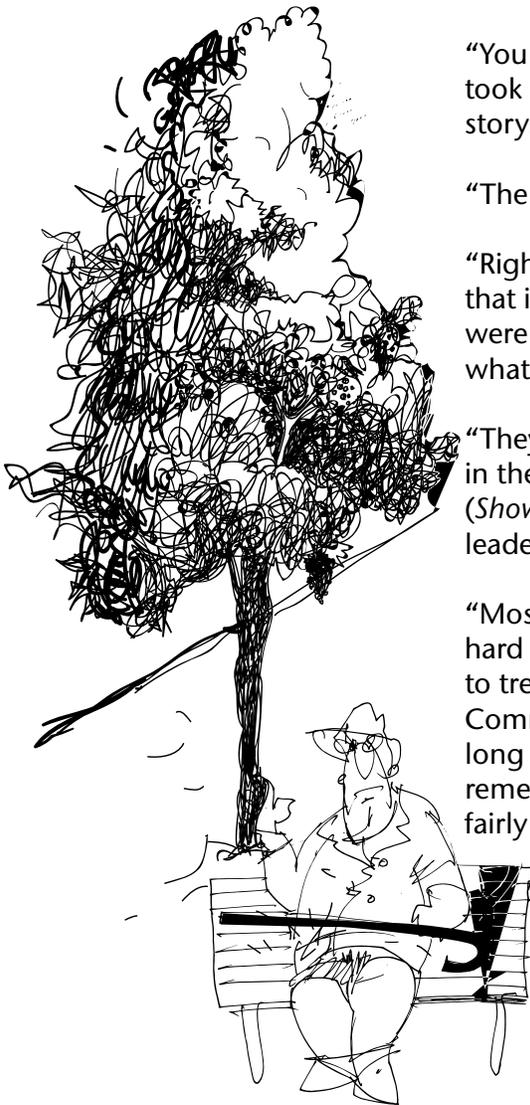
“The Exodus!”

“Right again. I think you are ready for the story. You probably remember that it was a very hard journey. The people lived in tents. Sometimes they were hot and thirsty and often they were hungry. But God always provided what they needed.

“They had been traveling for three months when they came to a mountain in the desert and camped there. Today we call that mountain Mount Sinai. (Show Color Pack 3.) It was on that mountain, Mount Sinai, that Moses, the leader of the people, met with God.

“Moses brought messages from God to the people. God knew it was hard for the people to remember that they belonged to God and how to treat one another on such a hard trip. So God gave Moses the Ten Commandments written on two flat pieces of stone. (Show Color Pack 4.) As long as they remembered to follow the Ten Commandments, they would remember that they belonged to God and they would treat each other fairly and lovingly. You can remember what they are by these words: (Read the commandments consistent with your denomination from Resource Sheet 2.)”

God told Moses many more things and you can read about them and the long journey from Egypt in Exodus, the second book of the Old Testament.



## The Ten Commandments

*Note to leaders:* The heading in the Bible for Exodus 20:1–17 specifies “The Ten Commandments,” but not how to number them. For example, do verses 2–6 contain one or two commandments? There are slight differences in the ways that denominations list the Ten Commandments. Make a photocopy of this page for each learner. Use the list that matches the list in your church catechism or worship book most closely. Recycle the other list.

### The Ten Commandments

(Found in Exodus 20:1–17)

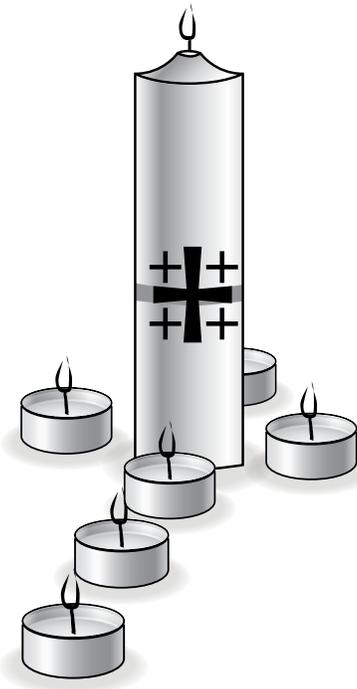
1. Worship only God.
2. Do not make idols and worship them.
3. Do not use the name of God in disrespectful ways.
4. Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.
5. Respect your mother and your father.
6. Do not murder.
7. Be faithful in marriage.
8. Do not steal.
9. Do not tell lies about other people.
10. Do not long to have anything that belongs to someone else.

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7. Do not steal.
8. Do not tell lies about other people.
9. Do not long for things that belong to other people.
10. Do not tempt people to be unfaithful to their families.

## Lenten Rituals



### Setup

Place six battery-powered votive candles around the Christ candle to form a cross shape. Place Color Pack 2 next to the candle cross as a reminder to be Jesus' followers. Just as we add light to candles as we wait for the Christ child during Advent, during Lent we extinguish candles to show we are aware of the approaching death of Jesus.

### What is Lent?

The season of Lent marks the forty days before Easter, but Sundays are not counted as part of the forty days. The Lenten journey is a time to recall Jesus' journey to the cross. Traditionally, Lent is a season of reflecting on God's relationship with us and how following God's Son, Jesus, might change the way we live each day. The color of Lent is purple, the color of repentance (turning toward God) and fresh beginnings.

### Gathering Ritual

1. *Light* the Christ candle and the six votives, recalling that it is the season of Lent.
2. *Sing* "Jesus Loves Me" (Color Pack 29; track 14 on *Singing the Feast, 2023–2024*).
3. *Pray aloud*: Faithful God, open our minds to hear your word and let it change our hearts. Amen.

### Closing Ritual

1. *Light* the Christ candle and the six votives, if necessary. Then, extinguish votive candles as a way of marking the Sundays of Lent. For example, on the Third Sunday in Lent, extinguish three votives; on the Fourth Sunday in Lent, extinguish four votives; and so forth. On Palm Sunday, extinguish all six votive candles and the Christ candle as a symbol of Jesus' death on Good Friday.
2. *Say*: Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12). We will follow Jesus (*complete statement with correct phrase for the date*).  
March 3: By obeying God's Law.  
March 10: By learning about God's grace.  
March 17: By having the covenant of love in our hearts.  
March 24: By following our King, Jesus.
3. *Sing* the song given in the Closing section of the session plan.
4. *Bless*:  
**Teacher**: May God bless us, and be with us this week as we follow Jesus.  
**All**: Amen!

Save this sheet to use each Sunday in March.

**Exod. 20:1–17**

**Ps. 19**

**1 Cor. 1:18–25**

**John 2:13–22**

# Covenant Living

**Goal for the Session**      *Adults will remember with Israel at Sinai the God we serve and the disciplines of living as God’s covenanted community.*

## ■ PREPARING FOR THE SESSION

### Focus on Exodus 20:1–17

#### WHAT is important to know?

— From “Exegetical Perspective,” W. Sibley Towner

The setting in Exodus places the Decalogue (meaning the “Ten Words”) at the beginning of the lengthy covenant passage known as the Sinai pericope (Exodus 20:1–Numbers 10:10). Its position in the text bespeaks its primary importance. This is categorical law, setting forward the principles essential for the viability of a community. It comes to us almost as a kind of legal credo, fundamental to what individual Israelites understood was expected of them as people of God. The Decalogue begins with four commandments aimed at establishing a right relationship between God and the elect people. The remaining verses regulate relationships between persons.

#### WHERE is God in these words?

— From “Theological Perspective,” George W. Stroup

One of the central convictions of Jewish and Christian faith is that human life is to be lived before God and that such life has an order and structure, constituted by God’s commandments. It is important to remember that the Ten Commandments presuppose Israel’s history and its understanding of covenantal life before God. They guide us as we journey in our life before God and our life with our neighbors. They do not show us what we must do or how we must live in order to receive God’s covenantal grace. They light our way and show us how we should live as people who have already been freely given God’s grace in Jesus Christ.

#### SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

— From “Pastoral Perspective,” Craig Kocher

The Commandments come as a gift from God to the people of Israel to structure their common life, and to shape individual lives that are worthy of the God who has rescued them and with whom they are in covenant. To be bound in covenant with God is to be set free to live as God’s people. There is an internal logic to the Commandments that is both compelling and beautiful: The way we attend to God shapes the way we attend to our neighbor. In other words, faithful worship of God leads to proper love of neighbor.

#### NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do?

— From “Homiletical Perspective,” Barbara Brown Taylor

These practices are not kindly suggestions. They express the purposeful will of God for God’s people. Those who ignore the divine teachings do so at their own peril—not because God is standing over them with a hammer, but because the teachings describe the way of life. To ignore them is to wander into the ways of death instead. The Ten Teachings also constitute a kind of trust exercise about the nature of reality; they challenge all other readings of reality. *Trust me, God says. Those other teachings are not good for you. The life you think they bring you is not real life.*

**FOCUS SCRIPTURE**

*Exodus 20:1–17*

## Focus on Your Teaching

Adults will likely be familiar with today's passage. Part of your teaching task will be to help the participants hear this passage in fresh ways for the sake of faithful practice of its commands. Young adults may be more apt to challenge or question rules that seek to order life and community. That spirit might help in digging deeper into the values these commands reflect and the community they seek to fashion, rather than a simple list of do's and don'ts.

*Holy God, help me to listen to these words anew, and to your vision for community reflected in them. And in so listening, to then lead others in their fresh hearing and faithful practice. Amen.*

### YOU WILL NEED

- ❑ Bibles
- ❑ cross
- ❑ purple fabric
- ❑ six votive candles and lighter or battery-powered votives
- ❑ copies of your congregation's or denomination's constitution or covenant
- ❑ copies of Resource Sheets 1 and 2
- ❑ copies of Resource Sheet 1 for March 10, 2024, unless it will be e-mailed to participants during the coming week

### For Responding

- ❑ option 2: one or more large sheets of newsprint, magazines, scissors, markers, glue sticks, and other collage materials

## LEADING THE SESSION

### GATHERING

*Before the session*, arrange the purple fabric in the center of your learning space and place the cross and votive candles on it. Place the constitution/covenant from your denomination or congregation on the fabric.

Welcome adults by name. Introduce any visitors or guests. Point out the constitution or covenant that you have displayed. Briefly discuss:

✠ How does such a document shape what we do as individuals and as a congregation?

Ask one participant to light three votive candles. As they are lit, say that today is the Third Sunday in Lent—and that today's text and theme remember a covenant shared by Jews and Christians that is an affirmation of who God is and how we live in covenant with God.

Offer this or a similar prayer:

*You are our God, and we are your people. You call us into covenant, teaching us what it means to be your people. Open our minds and hearts on this day, and open our lives and practices in days to come, to the ways you would have us live. Amen.*

### EXPLORING

Extinguish the candles, then read aloud Exodus 20:1–2. Have participants identify what these two verses reveal about the actions and thus character of God. Ask:

✠ Why is it important to begin a covenant statement with these assertions about God, even before getting to any of the commandments?

Read Exodus 20:3–11. Name the four commandments identified here. Ask:

✠ How are these words about keeping covenant with God grounded in the assertions about God in verses 1–2? For example, how do the affirmations of who God is (“I am

Some adults bring theologies that draw strong distinctions between “law” and “grace,” with undertones that New Testament “grace” replaces Old Testament “law.” This week’s text shows that both law and grace are bound together by God.

the LORD”) and what God does (“who brought you out of the land of Egypt”) lay the foundations for keeping Sabbath or not taking God’s name in vain?

Read Exodus 20:12–17. Again, discuss how these words about living in covenant are grounded in verses 1–2. For example, how does God as deliverer lay the foundation for not committing murder or not bearing false witness against one’s neighbor?

Invite participants to read the four excerpts on Resource Sheet 1 (Focus on Exodus 20:1–17). Invite general questions or insights triggered by the excerpts regarding the passage. Look more closely at the final two sentences of the “What?” perspective that speak of the division of commandments regarding relationship with God and relationship with others. Discuss the significance of having four commandments that treat our relationship with God and six commandments that treat our relationship with one another. Ask:

- ✧ Why might more commandments guide our relationship with others than with God?
- ✧ What does that say about God’s valuing of social conduct and matters of justice?

Review the concluding two sentences of the “So What?” perspective to provide a concluding affirmation to this conversation.

Ask participants to listen as you read the following statements regarding the commandments from Resource Sheet 1. Ask them to choose which statement most represents their own thoughts.

“They do not show us what we must do or how we must live in order to receive God’s covenantal grace. They light our way and show us how we should live as people who have already been freely given God’s grace in Jesus Christ.” (“Where?” perspective)

“These practices are not kindly suggestions. . . . Those who ignore the divine teachings do so at their own peril—not because God is standing over them with a hammer, but because the teachings describe the way of life.” (“Now What?” perspective)

Form two groups, based on which statement participants most identify with. Have each group discuss what they see as most important in the statement with which they most identified, and why, and then have the groups offer brief summary statements to one another. Ask: Where is the common ground between the groups and these insights into the grace and command reflected in this covenant?

Form groups of three. Invite the participants to imagine they are standing among the people of Israel at Sinai, hearing these words spoken for the first time as Moses passes them on. Discuss:

- ✧ If you could ask God to be more specific on one commandment, which commandment would it be, and what would you be interested in learning?
- ✧ What would you tell your child about how God would have us live?
- ✧ How do these commandments translate to life today?

EASY  
PREP

Consider speaking with the pastor and/or worship committee the week prior, to see if there is interest in bringing the collage(s) into the worship service as part of the reading of the text.

## RESPONDING

Choose one or more of these activities, depending on the length of your session:

- 1. Ancient Commands and Contemporary Intersections** Have participants read Resource Sheet 2 (Ancient Commands and Contemporary Intersections) and then write their responses according to the instructions. Next, have individuals identify one commandment and its related issues on which they will focus special attention during Lent. Then form small groups of people who selected the same commandments. If some adults chose a commandment no one else did, have them work together as one group. Ask each group to identify one action they will take during Lent to engage that commandment's call to live in covenant with God and one another.
- 2. Create a "Covenant-Keeping" Collage** Discuss ways in which your congregation "lives" the commandments set forth in Exodus 20:1–17. Create a collage illustrating those specific practices using pictures, drawings, or words. If you have a large group, create two or more collages. Challenge adults to consider something missing that they would like to see on the collage, by way of a new or renewed practice of what it means to live in covenant with God or one another. Encourage adults to identify one particular action they will take this week to live out that calling to covenant.
- 3. The God We Serve by Serving One Another** Recall today's earlier conversation about the commandments that speak to our covenant life with God and those commandments that address our covenant life with one another. Covenant together as a group to take action this week on an issue related to one of the commandments regarding life with one another. For example, "You shall not murder" could evoke letters written in opposition to capital punishment. Or, not bearing false witness could evoke public stands taken against mudslinging in political campaigns.

## CLOSING

Gather in a circle around the candles and light them. Invite adults to call out words or phrases about practices of covenant keeping they will take with them from this session. Read Exodus 20:1–2. Affirm that these words spoken to Israel at Sinai are spoken to us as well. Close with this twofold commissioning as people face one another in the circle:

*Go now, people of the covenant,  
For to you God has spoken, and with you God has covenanted.*

Have participants now turn outward, as you offer the second half of the commissioning:

*Live now as the people of God, in faithful devotion and loving service;  
For to you God has spoken, and with you God has covenanted.*

Extinguish the candles. Distribute copies of Resource Sheet 1 for March 10, 2024, or e-mail it to participants during the week. Encourage adults to read all of the lectionary texts, with particular attention paid to the focus scripture, prior to reading the resource sheet.

## Focus on Exodus 20:1–17

### WHAT is important to know?

— From “*Exegetical Perspective*,” W. Sibley Towner

The setting in Exodus places the Decalogue (meaning the “Ten Words”) at the beginning of the lengthy covenant passage known as the Sinai pericope (Exodus 20:1—Numbers 10:10). Its position in the text bespeaks its primary importance. This is categorical law, setting forward the principles essential for the viability of a community. It comes to us almost as a kind of legal credo, fundamental to what individual Israelites understood was expected of them as people of God. The Decalogue begins with four commandments aimed at establishing a right relationship between God and the elect people. The remaining verses regulate relationships between persons.

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# Ancient Commands and Contemporary Intersections



It is one thing to read and hear the words of the Ten Commandments, whose traditional dating renders them nearly 3,300 years old. But how do these commands connect to contemporary issues and struggles faced by individuals and communities of faith (and the wider society today)?

On the left side of this page are brief summaries of each commandment. Across from them, please write a contemporary issue raised by this command (e.g., "Do not murder" might be identified with issues of capital punishment or war).

**ANCIENT COMMANDS**

**CONTEMPORARY INTERSECTIONS**

Have no other gods.

Do not make or worship idols.

Do not misuse God's name.

Keep the Sabbath.

Honor your mother and your father.

Do not murder.

Do not commit adultery.

Do not steal.

Do not lie about another.

Do not crave what others have.



# *Joining the Feast*

Year B  
Spring 2024  
Third Sunday in Lent—Trinity Sunday



# What you will find in *Joining the Feast!*

## The Church Year Calendar

Describes the important church festivals and special days for the coming season. It provides theological reflections on their importance for the church's life and our own lives.

## The Shape of the Season

Presents an overview of the focus scriptures for the weeks in the coming season. It discusses the biblical and theological significance of each of the passages.

## Joining Worship and Learning: Making the Connections and Time with Children

A helpful feature in this section of *Joining the Feast* is the inclusion of the stories on the focus scriptures from the multi-age course. These stories can be used in the children's time during worship. Notice that some songs are used by several age levels but not in the same session. If you are interested in including a prayer, poetry, or artwork from an age level, speak with the leader in advance. May your congregational worship be enlivened by these suggestions to join worship and learning.

## Joining Mission and Learning

Help the participants in the *Feasting on the Word Curriculum* connect with existing service opportunities in your congregation. Review this list, and offer suggestions to the leaders. Give this chart to the chair of the mission or outreach committee so that the work of the committee can be strengthened through the church school.

## Litanies and Prayers

A selection of poetic prayers and responsive readings that helps worship leaders connect the church's educational and worship experiences to find fullness and blessing in the praise and service of God.

## Children's Bulletins

A fun activity page is provided weekly to give children a sense of belonging and help them feel welcome in the worship experience. These special children's bulletins connect their worship experience to the education themes.

## Joining the Feast

We invite you to “Join the Feast”!

Our exciting *Feasting on the Word Curriculum* offers great opportunities for the local church. Pastors, educators, and participants can experience the wonder of God’s nourishing word to us. For church schools, for study groups, and in preparation for teaching and preaching, the resources here will deepen and strengthen our faith. We have an amazing “feast” set before us! We desire and can find further understanding in our faith—of who God is and what God has done!

*Joining the Feast* helps pastors, educators, and worship leaders plan for education and worship. We want to assist in reflecting on how to incorporate scriptural and seasonal emphases across different parts of the church’s life.

*Joining the Feast* can be shared in education and worship committees. It enables important biblical themes to be integrated into the church’s study and worship experiences. A chart of suggestions for ways educational emphases can be used in worship is a feature of what follows here. Church school teachers can discuss these materials with each other to enhance education for all age levels in the church. Pastors who plan their lectionary preaching will find taking an overall look at this church season to be useful for their preparations. In all this, we want to join teaching and preaching. We want the church’s educational and worship experiences to find fullness and blessing in the praise and service of God!

An important goal for pastors and educators in the church is to connect or join the church’s educational experience with the church’s worship experience. People of all ages who participate in church school study can find their Christian faith enhanced when the Scriptures read and proclaimed in worship reinforce and expand what they have been considering in their educational time. Education and worship can be mutually supportive in helping God’s word in Scripture come alive in the Sunday morning experience. Consideration of the same lectionary reading in preaching can deepen the insights gained in church school.

Pastors who want to build on what has been done in education welcome this *Feasting on the Word Curriculum* as a way to prepare congregational members for directions into which the sermon can lead. Those who participate in the education time will find the insights gained there enhanced by preaching which considers the same passage and brings God’s word to bear in fresh and nourishing ways. So as we “Join the Feast,” joining the church’s educational and worship dimensions can bring to life the richness of God’s word in Scripture.

Donald K. McKim



## ***Feasting on the Word Curriculum: Teaching the Revised Common Lectionary***

*Feasting on the Word Curriculum* is an exciting, ecumenical, downloadable curriculum resource. It incorporates the uniqueness of the *Feasting on the Word: Preaching the Revised Common Lectionary* series (12 volumes; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008–11), which provides four different approaches to each of the biblical passages for each of the lectionary readings in the Revised Common Lectionary.

*Feasting on the Word Curriculum: Teaching the Revised Common Lectionary* is designed for classroom use in the church among various age levels, including children, youth, and adults. Adaptable to a variety of learning settings and teaching styles, this innovative curriculum resource integrates the *Feasting on the Word* commentary style to explore one of the lectionary passages in ways suitable for all participants. This approach connects worship and faith formation like no other lectionary curriculum ever has.

Each age level of *Feasting on the Word Curriculum* provides comprehensive, accessible, biblical background for teachers from four perspectives.

**What? (Exegetical)** Basic information about the backgrounds and meanings of Scripture is essential to understanding. This stream asks, “What?” What are the important things to know about the contexts, language, and settings of the biblical passage?

**Where? (Theological)** To understand the meanings of passages, we also need to ask, “Where?” Where is God in this passage? Where are God’s will and activities being expressed? Theological questions about where God’s word comes to us in the passage are significant.

**So What? (Pastoral)** The implications of the passage for our Christian lives make the biblical passage come alive. We ask, “So what?” What does this passage mean to me? What does it mean for my relationship with God and other people?

**Now What? (Homiletical)** Biblical passages shape our understandings and lives in the church. They connect us with needs in God’s world. So we ask, “Now what?” This prompts us to reflect on how our life and the church’s life can live out what the passage is saying.



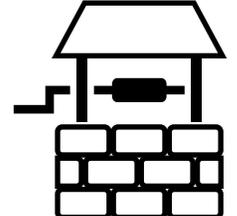
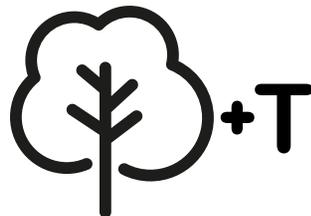
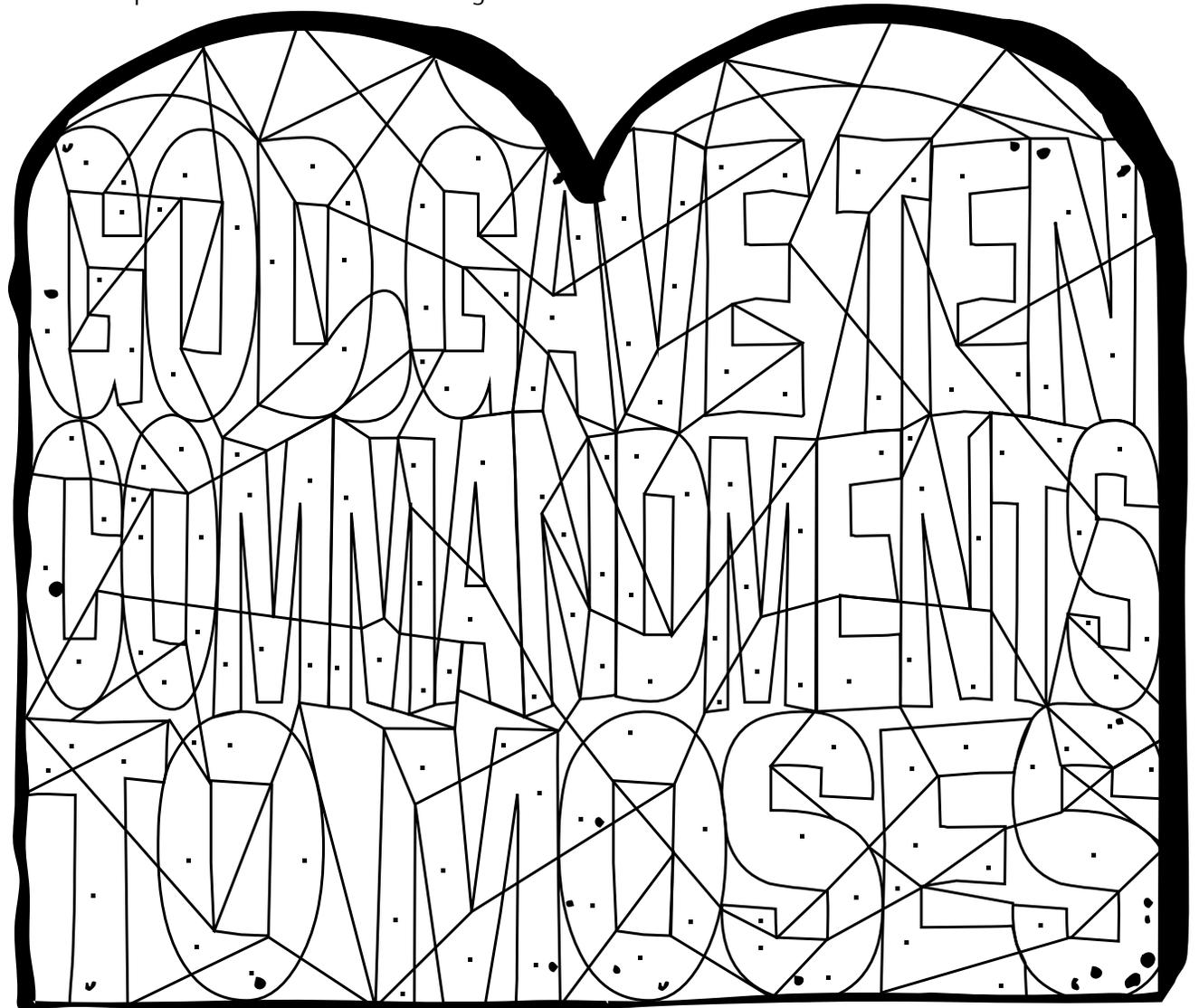
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## God Gives the Ten Commandments to Moses based on Exodus 20:1-17

God knew it was hard for God's people to remember that they belonged to the Lord and how to treat one another. So God gave Moses the Ten Commandments written on two flat pieces of stone. God told Moses to teach these words to the people. As long as the people remembered to follow the Commandments, they would remember that they belonged to the Lord and would treat each other well.

Here are the words God gave Moses for the people:

*Worship only God. Do not make idols and worship them. Do not use the name of God in disrespectful ways. Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. Respect your mother and your father. Do not murder. Be faithful in marriage. Do not steal. Do not tell lies about other people. Do not long for anything that belongs to someone else. Do not tempt people to be unfaithful to their families.*



Can you read this message?