

**BIG IDEA**

**God's rules are a gift. They show us how to love Him and love each other.**

**MEMORY VERSE**

**Deuteronomy 6:5**

*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.*

## SETTING THE SCENE

Last week God parted the Red Sea. He brought His people out of Egypt and through the water to safety. Israel is finally free. Now they are walking through a huge wilderness. Days go by. Then weeks. Then one morning they stop. Right in front of them is a mountain. Its name is Sinai. And God is about to do something none of them have ever seen before.

## THE STORY

Israel sets up camp at the foot of Mount Sinai.

God calls Moses up to the mountain. Moses climbs. He stands before God.

God gives Moses a message for the entire nation.

### Exodus 19:4

*You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles wings and brought you to myself.*

Can you picture that? God says He carried them like an eagle carries its young. Not dragged. Not pushed. Carried.

Then God makes them an offer.

He says they will be His treasured possession. A holy nation. A kingdom of priests.

The whole nation hears the message. They answer together: We will do everything God says.

God tells Moses to prepare the people for three days.

They wash their clothes. They get ready. Something big is coming.

On the third morning, everything changes.

Thunder shakes the sky. Lightning flashes across the mountain.

A thick cloud rolls over the peak. Then a trumpet blast rings out.

The sound is so loud the whole camp trembles.

The mountain is covered in smoke. God has come down in fire.

The ground shakes. The trumpet grows louder and louder.

Have you ever been startled by a really loud noise? Think of the loudest thing you have ever heard. Now make it ten times louder. That is close to what this felt like.

And then God speaks.

**Exodus 20:2**

*I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.*

God starts with a reminder. He is the One who rescued them.

He saved them first. Now He is telling them how to live.

That is important. The rescue came before the rules.

Then God gives them ten commands. We call them the Ten Commandments.

**The first four are about loving God:**

Do not worship any other god. God is the only true God.

Do not make or bow to idols. Only God deserves your worship.

Do not use God's name in a disrespectful way. His name is holy.

Remember the Sabbath day. Rest and worship on the seventh day.

The Sabbath was a special kind of rest. It was not just about sleeping. It was about stopping and saying: God is in charge. I trust Him. I do not have to keep striving on my own.

And here is the most amazing part. Jesus is our Sabbath. He is the rest God was always pointing to.

**Matthew 11:28 to 29**

*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*

**Hebrews 4:9 to 10**

*There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his.*

Every time Israel rested on the Sabbath, they were getting a preview of Jesus. When you trust Jesus, you stop trying to earn God's love. You rest in what He already did for you.

**The next six are about loving other people:**

Honor your father and your mother.

Do not murder.

Do not be unfaithful to your husband or your wife.

Do not steal.

Do not tell lies about other people.

Do not wish you had everything that belongs to someone else.

All the people see the smoke. They hear the thunder. They feel the ground shaking.

They are trembling. They step back from the mountain.

They say to Moses: You talk to God for us. We will listen to you.

Moses looks at them. He says something really important.

**Exodus 20:20**

*Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning.*

God was not trying to terrify them into obedience.

He wanted them to take Him seriously. There is a big difference.

God's rules were a gift. They showed Israel how to live well.

And He gave those rules because He loved them.

### GOOD QUESTION! ANSWERING WHAT KIDS WONDER

#### **Why was the mountain so scary? Was God upset?**

God was not angry. The fire and thunder were like a signal that something enormous was happening. Think about fireworks on the Fourth of July. They are loud and bright. But they are a celebration, not a threat. God was saying: pay close attention. What I am about to say matters.

#### **If God already saved Israel, why did He still give them rules?**

Rules from a parent who loves you are different from rules from someone who just wants to control you. God had already proved He loved Israel by rescuing them from Egypt. The rules came after the rescue. They were not the price of His love. They were the guide for living inside His love.

#### **What if following the rules is really hard?**

It is hard. Everyone struggles. That is exactly why Jesus came. He lived the perfect life and then gave us His Spirit to help us from the inside. We do not follow the rules to earn God's love. We follow them because we already have it.

### FAITH DEFENDERS: HOW TO TELL YOUR FRIENDS

**If someone says the Ten Commandments are just old rules nobody follows anymore, you can say:**

Jesus said the two most important things are to love God with everything you have and to love other people the way you love yourself. The Ten Commandments are exactly that, written out in ten ways. They are not out of date. They describe what love looks like in real life.

**If someone says the Bible is just a book of rules, you can say:**

The Bible actually starts with God saving people, not giving rules. God rescued Israel from Egypt before He gave them any commandments. The rescue always comes first. The rules are there to help people live in the freedom God already gave them.

**If someone asks how we know this really happened, you can say:**

The whole nation of Israel was there when God spoke from the mountain. It was not a private vision for one person. Thousands of people witnessed it. And historians have found that the way the Ten Commandments are written matches exactly how important agreements were written at that same time in history.

**LIFE APPLICATION**

In the Story	In My Life
Israel promised to do everything God said.	I can choose every day to follow what God says.
God told Israel not to put other gods first.	I can put God first instead of letting screens, sports, or anything else become the most important thing.
God said to honor your father and your mother.	I can respect my parents and listen to them even when I do not feel like it.
God said not to lie about other people.	I can tell the truth even when staying quiet or saying something false would be easier.
The people agreed together as a whole nation.	I can encourage my friends to do the right thing too.

**TALK ABOUT IT: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

**1. What is one of the Ten Commandments that you already knew? What does it mean in your everyday life?**

*Possible answer: Any of the ten is a great starting point. Encourage kids to name a real-life example, like "Do not steal means I should not take something from a classmate even if I want it." Celebrate any connection they make to daily life.*

**2. God saved Israel before He gave them the rules. What does that tell you about why God gives us guidelines to follow?**

*Possible answer: God gives us guidelines because He loves us and already decided we are His. The rules are not how we earn His love. They are how we live well inside a love that already exists. Like a parent who gives a child a bedtime not to be mean but because they love them.*

**3. Which commandment is the hardest for you personally? Why?**

*Possible answer: Accept any honest answer. This is a personal reflection question. A child might say "Do not covet" because they always want what their brother has, or "Honor your parents" because they argue sometimes. Affirm their honesty and remind them that God helps us grow.*

**4. If a friend asked you this week why Christians follow rules, what would you say?**

*Possible answer: Because God loved us and saved us first. We follow the rules not to earn His love but because we already have it. It is like how you follow your family's rules not because you are afraid of them but because you love them and want the family to be good.*

**LET'S DO IT: HANDS-ON ACTIVITY****The Two Sides of Love**

**Materials:** One blank sheet of paper and a pencil for each child.

**Step 1:** Fold the paper in half the long way. Write LOVE GOD on the left side. Write LOVE OTHERS on the right side.

**Step 2:** Under LOVE GOD, write two or three specific things you can do this week to show love to God. Examples: pray before meals, read one Bible verse, say thank you to God for something good that happened.

**Step 3:** Under LOVE OTHERS, write two or three names of people in your life and one kind thing you can do for each one this week.

**Step 4:** Take it home. Put it somewhere you will see it every day.

**Step 5:** Say it together out loud: The Ten Commandments are really about two things. Love God. Love people.

**MEMORY VERSE**

**Deuteronomy 6:5**

*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.*

**CLOSING PRAYER**

God, thank You for rescuing us before You ever asked anything from us. Thank You for giving us Your Word so we know how to live. Help us love You with everything we have and love the people around us the way You love us. Amen.