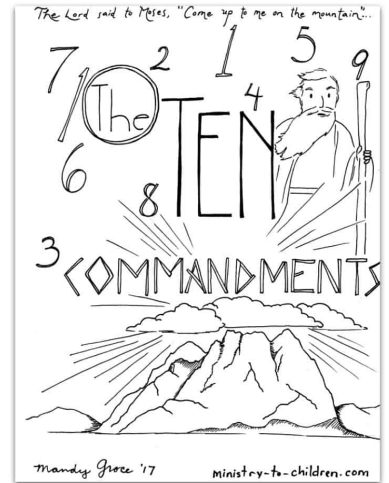


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# “Why We Have Rules”

The Ten Commandments for Kids Lesson #1

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[God's Good Rules Series](#): Lesson #1 Love Rules

**Main idea:** God's rules help us get along nicely with one another and to stay healthy, safe, and happy.

**Materials Needed:** Bible; dry erase markers or chart paper and markers; age appropriate board games; “cover page Ten Commandments” coloring page (included in this download); coloring supplies; (optional: construction paper, scissors, glue sticks, game board templates. See game instructions for more information.) For bonus ideas, see all our resources for teaching the [10 Commandments to Kids](#)

**Scripture references:**

- Exodus 20:1-17
- Galatians 2:16
- Ephesians 2:8-9
- Romans 13:8-10
- Psalm 119:1-2

**Memory Verses:** Psalm 119:1-2 “Joyful are people of integrity, who follow the instructions of the Lord. Joyful are those who obey his laws and search for him with all their hearts.”



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# Teacher Preparation / Devotion

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Read Scripture references, Psalm 19:7-14, James 2:8, Galatians 3:2-5, 19-24, Psalm 119. Take time to meditate on this week's Scripture and think about your own life. Have you made following the commandments a priority in your life? By no means should we allow the law to dominate our faith. The law of God calls not for legalism, but for love. As I studied to write this lesson, I spent many weeks wrestling with the place the law has in the life of the believer. One question I had was, why do we put so much emphasis on the Ten Commandments but not on all the other laws found in the Old Testament? (Like the Levitical laws?)

The short answer, I think, is that there are different uses of the law. Some laws were specific to Israel at that time, and how they should govern themselves as God's nation. Some laws had to do with Temple and worship therein. The Ten Commandments are moral laws, many of which even nonbelievers can agree with.

Jesus often referred to and affirmed the Ten Commandments, as we'll see in our last lesson. So, the Ten Commandments are a summary of how to show love to God and to one another. We do this not through our own strength and ability, but through our abiding trust in the God who rescued us from the land of Egypt and who rose Jesus from the dead. The natural outpouring of our faith in Christ is love, and love is displayed in the way we live our lives. When we faithfully love Jesus and love others, we will find that we naturally desire to follow his commands.



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# Lesson Introduction Game Activities

## “Board Games, or Ah So Go”

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Before class, set out a selection of age appropriate, quick-play board games and card games. Make sure the games’ rules are readily available! As students play, listen to their discussions and observe how they use the rules to help facilitate proper game play. When they are unsure how to play or get into an argument, remind them to refer to the rules.

Alternatively, play **Ah So Go** as a group. Have students sit in a circle facing inward. The first player shouts “Ah!” while saluting across their forehead with either their left or right hand, with their fingers pointing to the player next to them. That player then says, “So!” while placing their hand on their chin with their fingers pointing to the player next to them. The third player, who was just pointed to, says, “Go!” while clapping their hands together and pointing with hands together across the circle to any other player. This player then restarts the sequence with “Ah” and a salute. If a player makes a mistake and either says the wrong word or does the wrong motion, they are out. Start slowly, and build up the pace as you go. Remind the kids that they have to follow the rules and go in the proper order. The game ends when only two players remain.



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# Children's Bible Lesson

## “Why do we have rules?”

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Open in prayer, then say, you all did a good job following the rules to play the games! What would have happened if no one knew the rules to the game? Could you have played it properly? What if while I was playing, I decided I didn't want to follow the rules at all? When someone chooses not to follow the rules, it makes it a lot harder to have fun together, doesn't it?

In my home, we have rules that everyone is expected to follow. For example, we have a “no tech at the dinner table” rule. Raise your hand if you can tell me some of the rules that you have in your home. (Allow students to answer. You may write answers on the board if you wish.) It sounds like you all have certain rules in your home that help everyone to get along and be healthy and safe. Can you think of anywhere else we have rules? (Allow students to answer. Some examples include school, public pool, speed limits, or unstated social rules such as no cutting in line or not answering your phone during the church service.)

It seems like there are rules everywhere! Why do you think we have so many rules we have to follow? (Allow students to answer. Work on refining responses until you get something close to the following and write it on the board.) Rules help us get along nicely with one another and to stay healthy, safe, and happy.



Did you know God has rules too? The Bible is full of instructions on how to live our best, most loving lives. These instructions are often called laws. There are ten laws in particular that we are going to focus on for the next few months. You may know them better as the Ten Commandments. Let's take time to read them now. (Either read [Exodus 20:1-17](#) or have students take turns reading aloud a verse or two at a time.)

Then God gave the people all these instructions:

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*<sup>2</sup> "I am the Lord your God, who rescued you from the land of Egypt, the place of your slavery.*

*<sup>3</sup> "You must not have any other god but me.*

*<sup>4</sup> "You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind or an image of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea. <sup>5</sup> You must not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God who will not tolerate your affection for any other gods. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children; the entire family is affected—even children in the third and fourth generations of those who reject me. <sup>6</sup> But I lavish unfailing love for a thousand generations on those who love me and obey my commands.*

*<sup>7</sup> "You must not misuse the name of the Lord your God. The Lord will not let you go unpunished if you misuse his name.*

*<sup>8</sup> "Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. <sup>9</sup> You have six days each week for your ordinary work, <sup>10</sup> but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the Lord your God. On that day no one in your household may do any work. This includes you,*



*your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, your livestock, and any foreigners living among you. <sup>11</sup> For in six days the Lord made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything in them; but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy.*

*<sup>12</sup> “Honor your father and mother. Then you will live a long, full life in the land the Lord your God is giving you.*

*<sup>13</sup> “You must not murder.*

*<sup>14</sup> “You must not commit adultery.*

*<sup>15</sup> “You must not steal.*

*<sup>16</sup> “You must not testify falsely against your neighbor.*

*<sup>17</sup> “You must not covet your neighbor’s house. You must not covet your neighbor’s wife, male or female servant, ox or donkey, or anything else that belongs to your neighbor.”*

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Wow! I don’t know about you, but reading through all that makes my head spin! Don’t worry though, today we’re just going to talk about the Ten Commandments in general, and over the next several weeks we’ll learn about the Commandments one by one.

Today I want to focus on the importance of following the rules. Can anyone remind me why we follow rules? (Allow students to answer, and refer to the board.) Because rules help us get along nicely with one another and to stay healthy, safe, and happy.

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There is one very important thing to remember, though. We are not saved by following the Ten Commandments. Following the law is not how we get to heaven. The only way to live forever in heaven with Jesus is by trusting him.

Let's have a sword drill to prove this. Take all bookmarks and fingers out of your Bibles and hold them above your heads. When I say go, look up Galatians 2:16. Go! (Read, or have a student read Galatians 2:16.)

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*“Yet we know that a person is made right with God by faith in Jesus Christ, not by obeying the law. And we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we might be made right with God because of our faith in Christ, not because we have obeyed the law. For no one will ever be made right with God by obeying the law.”*

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Isn't that GREAT news? I know I could never follow all the rules, just right, all the time, for my whole life. And thank God, I don't have to. All I have to do is believe that Jesus died on the cross for my sins and now lives in my heart. Ephesians 2:8-9 reminds us:

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*“God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.” I'm so glad that salvation is a gift from God, and not something I have to work to earn.*

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So that brings up a question. Do we have to follow the Ten Commandments, or not? (If your students are older and mature enough, —



you could have them briefly discuss their opinions in small groups. For younger students, skip this part.)

Well, to tell you the truth, this is something smart people have been discussing for a long, long time, and they don't always agree. Some people say yes, we must follow the law, and some people so no, we don't.

Here's what I think: yes, and no. As we learned from Galatians 2:6, the law cannot make us right with God. Only our faith in Jesus can do that. God won't love you more if you follow all the Ten Commandments, and we won't love you less if you don't. God's love for you will never, ever change. God will always, always, ALWAYS love you, no matter what you do.

So no, we don't have to follow the rules to be loved by God. But yes, following the Ten Commandments will help us live the life God has planned for us. Following God's commands helps us to love him better and love each other better. Let's look up one more passage. Turn with me to Romans 13:8-10. (Read, or have a student read, the following passage.)

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*“Owe nothing to anyone—except for your obligation to love one another. If you love your neighbor, you will fulfill the requirements of God’s law.”<sup>9</sup> For the commandments say, “You must not commit adultery. You must not murder. You must not steal. You must not covet.” These—and other such commandments—are summed up in this one commandment: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”<sup>10</sup> Love does no wrong to others, so love fulfills the requirements of God’s law.”*

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The whole point of God’s law is for people to show love to him and to one another. If you’re stealing from someone, you aren’t showing them love, are you? And if you disrespect God by worshiping something else, that isn’t showing God that you love him.

The Ten Commandments aren’t meant to help us get to heaven. The only way to get to live forever in heaven is to ask Jesus to live in your heart, and to do your best to follow him. We show Jesus we love and follow him by loving our neighbors, and the Ten Commandments show us some ways to do that. God’s rules help us get along nicely with one another and to stay healthy, safe, and happy. Over the next ten weeks, we will look at each commandment one by one, and then we will have a week to review everything we’ve learned.

We are also going to work on memorizing the first two verses of Psalm 119. This psalm is a long one, and it is all about how wonderful it is to obey God’s law. Let’s read the first two verses together and practice them a few times before our craft.

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*“Joyful are people of integrity, who follow the instructions of the Lord.  
Joyful are those who obey his laws and search for him with all their hearts.”*

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(If you have a group who is well practiced in Scripture memory, or if these two verses simply aren’t enough, challenge your students (and yourself!) to memorize as much of Psalm 119 as they can. Consider making a contest out of it over the span of this unit, and offer prizes to those who memorize



more than the first two verses.) Also, consider memorizing the Ten Commandments.

End in prayer.

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## 10 Commandments Coloring Page

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**Craft:** Cover page [Ten Commandments Coloring Page](#) by Many Groce.

Have children write their name on the coloring page. As they color, discuss with them what they learned today. They may take the coloring pages home, or you may collect them to put together into a book to be sent home at the end of the unit.

Alternatively, have students invent their own board games with their own sets of rules. Remind them that rules are meant to be helpful, so their game rules should make the game fun for everyone. Provide scissors, glue sticks, stickers, coloring supplies and colorful paper for this activity. You can also find several blank game boards and dice templates for free online.

### Bible Study References:

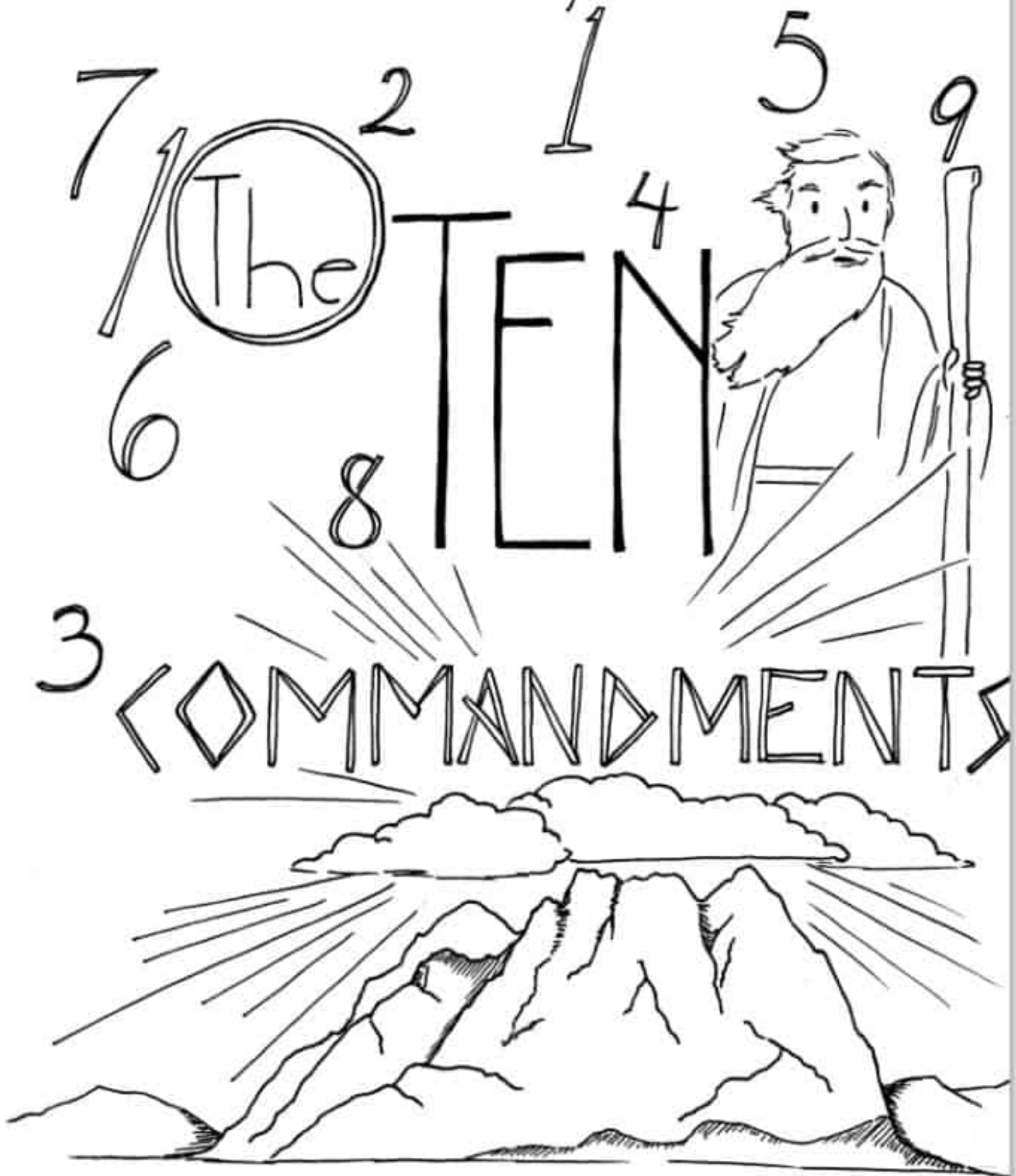
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<https://www.ligonier.org/blog/threefold-use-law/>



The Lord said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain"...



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