

# SABBATH SCHOOL

## Preteen Sabbath Instruction Program — Teacher's Outline

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Level 3 • Unit 4 • Week 3

### THE FIRST AND SECOND COMMANDMENTS

#### OBJECTIVE:

To help the students learn more about developing a relationship with God by understanding the meaning of the First and Second Commandments and what they teach us about who God is. The story of the golden calf shows how easy it can be to forget what God has done for us, and why every day we must make God a part of everything we do and say.

#### ATTENTION GETTER:

- Say: Have you ever thought what it would be like to be a robot? Let's stand up and pretend to be robots. What's the first thing you must do to a robot to make it work? [Let students respond.] You must turn it on.
- Do: Teacher should walk around to each student and pretend to turn on a switch at the back of their neck, while continuing to talk.
- Say: It doesn't work unless you flip the switch on. Then the robot will do what it was programmed to do, but nothing more. It can't think on it's own, or make decisions.
- Do: Teacher should assign a task to each "robot"—"You were programmed to wash the dishes." Or "...mow the lawn." Or "...vacuum the living room." Or "...repair the car." Let them act out their assignment.
- Say: If we had been created as robots, we would need a lot of robots to get everything done around our house. [Have students sit down.]
- Say: But God didn't create us like that. In Genesis 1:26 God said: "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...." We were made to have the likeness of God, but we are not exactly like Him yet. We must learn to love and think like God before we will be truly like Him. If we are to be like God, we must first learn more about what He is like. A good

place to start learning is to understand what the First and Second Commandments tell us about Him. Let's read them and see what we can learn.

### **BIBLE LESSON:**

Teacher: First, let's open our Bibles and read the First Commandment. It is found in Exodus 20:1-3. [Have one student read.] God was speaking to the children of Israel only three months after He brought them out of slavery from the land of Egypt. In this First Commandment God tells the people, "You shall have no other gods before Me." What does this tell us about how we are to worship God? If we are to have nothing else before or in place of God, then God must come first in our lives.

Ask: Why do you think God wants us to put Him first in our lives? [Let students respond.] Could it be because He is our Creator and the One who gives us everything we have?

Say: God wants to be first in our lives because of His love for us. When we put our trust in God only, we learn to look to Him for protection, healing and for the things we need every day like food and a place to live. In the land of Egypt, where the Israelites had lived for more than 100 years, the people worshiped many gods and had many idols. Each of their gods represented something different in their lives. They had a sun god, a rain god, a god they thought could heal them, another god for protection, a god for fire, and the list goes on and on. It was like having to have many robots around in order to do things every day. If you needed the sun or rain to make your crops grow, you had to "turn on" that god by worshiping it to get it to show you favor. For healing you went to another god and worshiped it to get well. They were really worshiping the things God created and not the One who created them. The Egyptian way rubbed off onto the Israelites.

The God we worship is different. In Matthew 4:10 Jesus, Himself, tells us how to keep the First Commandment. [Read the last part of Matthew 4:10.] We have no need for many gods, because our God is all-powerful and can do all the things for us. Because He created us, He knows how our bodies work and can make us well when we are sick or injured. He created the earth and the weather to provide us with a place to live and food to eat. He can control them and make them do what He thinks is best.

Ask: What else has God given us that we need? [Let students respond. Examples: sun for heat, animals to help us work or for food, the air we breathe, the Bible, family, the Sabbath.] When we make God first in our lives, we show Him we are thankful for all these things He does for us and gives us.

Ask: We don't bow down to and worship other gods or idols as the Egyptians did. But are there ways in our lives we can disobey this First Commandment? [Discuss any examples the students bring up.]

Say: We have to choose to put God first in our lives. If you choose to play lots of video games

instead of taking time to read about God's way in your Bible, you are not putting God first in your life. Playing video games part of the time is not wrong, but we must make time to learn more about God, too. If we choose to play soccer or basketball on the Sabbath, we are telling God that these things are more important to us than worshiping Him. Using bad words at school or lying or cheating on a test to be like the other kids is also a way of disrespecting God and not worshiping Him and serving Him only. It is much more important to please God than to try to look good to your friends.

So always remember, choose to put God first in your life, for He is the one who created you and can do everything you need. He is the one and only all-powerful God.

Now let's see what we can learn about God from the Second Commandment. Look up Exodus 20:4-6. [Have one or two students read.] This commandment teaches us how we are to think about God. It is telling us that we should not think about God as looking like anything that we see here on the earth or in the universe.

The Egyptians had gods that looked like the sun, the moon and sometimes animals. They made statues of some of these so they could see them. They didn't think they could believe in anything they couldn't see.

But as we learned from the First Commandment, God is all-powerful. So there is not any one thing or one way in which we can describe or represent Him. We would not see God as the living God that He is if we represent Him in the form of a statue or a picture. This commandment reminds us that God is far greater than anything we can see or imagine.

God wants us to worship Him in our hearts and minds and believe in faith. Faith is believing in something that you cannot see. Later in chapter 20, God tells again how important it is to Him that we not make gods that we can see. He tells us nothing can stand equal to Him. [Teacher read verses 22-23.] He is very specific. God wants us to worship Him and talk to Him directly, not look to or talk to a statue or a picture of what we think He might be like. When we get to know God directly by choosing to obey Him, He will show us who He is by the things He does for us.

Ask: Now you know what God's first two commandments mean. Do you think you will ever forget what you have learned about God? Right now you may think you won't, but let's see how quickly the ancient Israelites forgot all that God commanded them and all the miracles that He had performed for them.

Teacher: When the children of Israel were camped at the bottom of Mt. Sinai, God spoke His commandments to all the people. Moses then went up the mountain, closer to the thick dark cloud where God was, so he could learn more. God instructed him on how to make an altar for worship, and gave him more rules and judgments to help the people live safe and happy lives. When Moses came back down from the mountain, he told the people all the words of the Lord and all the judgments. And all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words, which the Lord has said, we will do." They agreed to obey and serve God. Moses

then built an altar and they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings to the Lord to confirm the agreement or covenant they had made with God.

Then the Lord asked Moses again to come up the mountain so He could give Moses tablets of stone on which God would write the Ten Commandments. Joshua went with him, and they waited for six days before God spoke to them again. On the seventh day, God called to Moses and told him to come up alone into the cloud that covered the mountain. Moses obeyed and was on the mountain for 40 days and 40 nights. That's a long time.

Down at the foot of the mountain the children of Israel waited and waited for their leader, Moses, to come back down out of the thick cloud. But days turned into weeks and they began to feel that Moses was lost and would not be coming back.

Ask: What would have been the right thing for the people to do at this time? [Let students respond—trust in God and pray; have faith that God would take care of them.] After all, hadn't God already performed many miracles and protected them many times since they left Egypt?

What were some of the miracles God had performed to bring them out of Egypt? [Let students respond—plagues, spoils from the Egyptians, parting of the Red Sea.]

Say: But when they could not see their leader, they forgot all God had done for them. They did not understand at this time what faith meant. They wanted to see something to worship as they saw the Egyptians do.

So the people went to Aaron and asked him to make them a god that they could see. Aaron gave in to their request and had the people bring him all the gold earrings they could find. In Exodus 32:4 we read what he did with the gold. [Have one student read.] Aaron built an altar to this false god and proclaimed the next day a feast day. They ate and had a party before the idol.

Meanwhile, up on the mountain, God saw everything that was going on. He was angry that these stubborn people had so soon forgotten all that He had done for them and the promise they had made to obey His laws. He sent Moses back down the mountain to take care of the problem. Moses was angry when he saw the people dancing and worshiping around the golden calf. He knew this was directly breaking the First and Second Commandments that God had spoken to the people just weeks before. The Israelites failed to trust in God only, and they made a statue of one of God's creations to represent Him. Those who disobeyed God were severely punished that day.

God wants us to learn to trust in Him even though we can not see Him. When we choose to obey Him, He will show us His love by the things He does for us.

## **LESSON APPLICATION:**

Make a memory verse wall hanging.

Supplies: 9x12 inch construction paper (selection of colors)  
Copy of memory verse for each student (see end of lesson)  
Crayons or markers  
Stickers (optional)  
Yarn  
Tape (regular and double-stick)

Have children color and decorate the memory verse page (see end of lesson). Mount decorated memory verse onto construction paper using double-stick tape. Attach yarn so it can be hung.

## **Music:**

Sing to the tune of "My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean."

God taught us His great Ten Commandments.  
Let's remember the first two again.  
Trust only in God have no others,  
And don't make any likeness of Him.

God is first, God is first!  
Oh, choose to obey and be blessed.  
God is first, God is first!  
He's all-powerful; He'll teach us the rest.

## **MEMORY VERSE:**

Matthew 22:37-38 "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment."

# *family activity*

## **THE POINT:**

We can learn more about developing a relationship with God by understanding the meaning of the First and Second Commandments. The First Commandment teaches us we must put God first in our lives. The Second Commandment teaches us God is far greater than anything we can see or imagine. The story of the golden calf shows how easy it can be to forget what God has done for us, and why every day we must make God a part of everything we do and say.

## **FAMILY TOGETHER TIME:**

Help your child find a place to display his memory verse hanging so he can be reminded how important it is to obey God and keep His commandments. Teach him to put God first by helping him learn to set aside time each day to pray and read about God.

## **ASK ME...**

- What is the first of the Ten Commandments? ("You shall have no other gods before Me.")
- Why does God want us to put Him first in our lives? (He loves us, is our Creator and gives us everything we have).
- What is the Second Commandment? (Do not make any image or likeness of God.)
- Why is this important? (God is greater than anything He created or that we can imagine. We don't have to see God to believe in Him.)
- If we can't see God, how do we know He is there? (By seeing the things He created for us, and the things He does for us when we obey His laws.)

## **MEMORY VERSE:**

Matthew 22:37-38 "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment."

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