

# The Top 10!

## Lenten Series 2013

### Lesson #1.

#### Materials needed: Play Doh, worksheets

1. Introduction to the 10 Commandments: Small Groups (10 minutes)
  - a. Divide into three small groups. Hold a contest to see which group can write down all 10 Commandments the quickest.
  - b. After declaring a winner of the first contest, see which group can find them in the Bible the quickest. (Exodus 20)
  - c. Keep the youth in the small groups, but ask the following two questions to the whole group to introduce the 10 Commandments:
    - i. **What are the 10 Commandments?**
    - ii. **How did we get them?**
    - iii. **Why are they important today?**
  - d. Show Video #1: <http://vimeo.com/8439038>
  - e. Over the next five weeks (throughout the season of Lent), we'll be studying the 10 Commandments. We do two very different things with the 10 Commandments, in general. On the one hand, we revere them, memorize them, put them outside our courthouses, regard them as our moral standards. On the other hand, we break them constantly in little ways without even acknowledging that we are doing it. So this series aims to help us both understand them and live them out a little bit better!
  - f. Have everyone open their Bible to Exodus 20 (and have them keep their Bibles open!). Read Commandments 1 & 2 out loud (Exodus 20:1-6). Teach hand motions!
    - i. 1 finger up: 1 God
    - ii. Make scissors with two fingers: Cut out idols.
2. Small Group Discussion (30 minutes): Pass out handouts!!!
  - a. Say something like: **Jewish tradition divides the first commandments up a little bit differently. They say that verse 2 is the first commandment, and verses 3-6 is the second commandment. What do you think of this arrangement? How could verse 2 be a commandment by itself?**
  - b. Invite someone to read the Louis Giglio quote on the worksheet: *“Worship is our response to what we value most. That’s why worship is that thing we all do. It’s what we’re about on any given day. Because worship is about saying, “This person, this thing, this experience (this whatever) is what matters most to me...it’s the thing I put first in my life. The “thing” might be a relationship. A dream. Friends. Status. Stuff. A name. Some kind of pleasure. Whatever name you put on it, this thing or person is what you’ve concluded in your heart is worth most to you. Worship tells us what we value most. As a result, worship determines our actions, becoming the driving force for all you do.”*
    - i. Ask: **What do you see people around you worshipping?**

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- ii. **Ask: If someone looked at your life, what three things would they conclude you value most? Shape them out of Play Doh, and share your creations with your group.** (*A good way to think about this: what are the things that you plan your life around?*)
- iii. **Ask: Using the definition of worship that we just read...can you think of anyone who truly values God most, worships God and puts God first? What does that look like???**
- c. **Ask: What is the difference between the first commandment (you shall have no other gods before me) and the second commandment (you shall not make an idol)?**
  - i. *Ed Young: Many of us mistakenly see this command simply as a reiteration of the first commandment. But we need to take a second look at this. Yes, God had already said, 'You shall have no other gods before me.' But here He goes a step further: "You can't make representations of Me, either.' As fallible humans, we take objects, thoughts, or things and try to make ourselves a picture of God. It is time to put away our presuppositions and images because these will always fall short of the true image and character of God.*
- d. **Say: Look at the images on your worksheet. Circle the image of God that comes closest to reflecting the way you understand God.** (After everyone has done this, invite them to share their answers)
  - i. *Grandpa God:* popular, forgiving, and benign. When we do something wrong, he just smiles and says, "That's okay, I understand. Don't worry about it; I love you." He gives us all kinds of blessings. He wants us to be rich and happy.
  - ii. *Man Upstairs God:* he lets us do our own thing when we don't need him, but will come running down when we call for help
  - iii. *Supreme Court God:* he can't wait to judge us and send down lightning from heaven to punish us
  - iv. *Dear Lord Baby Jesus:* he's approachable, innocent, and small enough to hold.
  - v. *Other:* \_\_\_\_\_
- e. **Ask: What is wrong with relying too heavily on any one of these images?**
- f. **Ask: What can we do to keep our understanding of God fresh and worship the true God instead of our own "graven images"?**

Some background information, in case it comes up (and/or questions to ask if you have extra time):

1. **What does it mean for God to be a jealous God?** What this means is that "God is supreme over all, and He will not share the number one spot with anyone or anything in the world. For God to willingly step down and give up His place to something else would be for God to acknowledge that he is not jealous at all."

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The Hebrew word being used here is “qanna,” which means “demanding exclusive service,” not “envious” (which is how we often use the word today). God is not envious of anything that he has created! He simply wants to be recognized for who he is.

2. **And what is up with the punishing of children for their parents’ sins (verses 5-6)?**

Here are a few things to consider as you decide how to interpret this:

- i. While God says he punishes sins for a few generations, he says he will show steadfast love for *thousands* of generations! Perhaps we’re supposed to notice that contrast.
- ii. Deuteronomy 24:16 and Ezekiel 18:20 both affirm that children will not be punished for their parents’ sins, but only for their own (a seeming contradiction of this verse)
- iii. It is true, though, that parents’ sins sometimes have an impact on their children and grandchildren’s lives. Even though **God** may not be punishing the children and grandchildren, they still may be suffering because of their ancestors’ sins. Perhaps this statement is descriptive of how the world works.

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### Lesson #2.

1. Introduction to the 10 Commandments: Big Group (10 minutes or so)
  - a. Lesson Review: **What were our two commandments from last week?** (Practice hand motions)
    - i. 1 finger up: 1 God
    - ii. Make scissors with two fingers: Cut out idols
  - g. Ask: **Where were the Israelites when they received the 10 Commandments?** (Mt. Sinai; in the wilderness after leaving Egypt on their way to the Promised Land).
  - h. **Listen carefully to what happened:** (Read Exodus 19:1-13, 16-19). **God didn't just casually give his people a copy of his "10 Suggestions" and suggest that Moses read them to the people the next time he thought about it. This was a big deal!**
    - i. **What picture does this give you about who God is?**
    - ii. **What does this account tell you about the Commandments themselves?**
  - i. We're going to study Commandments 3 & 4 today. (*Teach hand motions!*)
    - i. Place 3 fingers over your mouth: Don't take God's name in vain
    - ii. Place 4 fingers next to your cheek, miming going to sleep: Keep the Sabbath holy. (Rest on the Sabbath)
3. Small Group Discussion (40 minutes or so): Pass out handouts!

### COMMANDMENT #3: DO NOT TAKE THE LORD'S NAME IN VAIN.

- a. Have someone read Exodus 20:7. *Note that one translation of this verse is: "Do not misuse my name."*
  - i. **What would be some GOOD uses of God's name?**
  - ii. **What about some BAD uses of God's name?**
  - iii. **Does this commandment affect any of the choices you make in speaking or writing??**
- b. Read or paraphrase: **Ancient Jews did not ever pronounce the "real" name of God (YHWH), because they did not want to violate this commandment. When they prayed, for example, they called God "Adonai" instead of YHWH. At other times, they simply referred to God as "Ha Shem" (The Name). What do you think about this? Is this a good idea, or overkill?** (Discuss)
- c. **In what situations are you most likely to lose control over your words or curse??** *Encourage your group member to think about & brainstorm ways they can transform their remember to treat God's name with respect...even if they are stressed or stuck in traffic or surrounded by people who use profanity.*

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- d. Have someone read the following quote by Ed Young (on their handout).  
**Do you agree or disagree? Why?**  
*We all have violated the third commandment. Not only do we empty the name of God with our words, we empty it with our lifestyle. When we call ourselves Christians or Christ-followers, we are wearing His name. If you have given your life to Christ, God has pasted that label on you. When you sin in any way, you have profaned the name of God. You have proclaimed to the world that God's name is irrelevant.*

### COMMANDMENT #4: KEEP THE SABBATH HOLY.

- e. Have everyone turn their worksheet over and doodle for 2-3 minutes, drawing pictures of everything they do in a typical week. The catch? They can't pick up their pencil!
- f. After a few minutes, call "time." **How did it feel to be doodling non-stop? What about when you finally get to stop?**
- g. Have someone in your group read the Sabbath commandment: Exodus 20:6-11.
- h. **Why do you think God gave us this commandment?** (*Look at the reasons explicitly given in the text. Also, look up Deuteronomy 5:12-15 for a different explanation. Then speculate about other reasons not given in the text. Once you've come up with a few possibilities, you can move on to the next question.*)
- i. **Does anybody in the group currently practice the Sabbath in any way??** (*If so, what do they do?? If not, why not??*)
- j. Have everyone look at their drawings and rate their lives on a scale of 1-10 in busyness. **Why do you look forward to the weekend each week? How would your life be different if you had to go to school 7 days a week, 365 days a year?**
- k. **When God gave the Israelites the 10 Commandments, most people had to work every single day of the week. He knew that we needed So the Sabbath commandment wasn't a burden...it was a blessing, because God established a rhythm for his people of working AND resting from work. But we tend to fill our lives with so many things – some good things, some bad things – that we forget that rest is important for both our physical and spiritual health.**
- l. **Imagine that you were given one full day to do nothing but rest and focus on God. What would you do in that day to nurture your soul and be refreshed?? What effect would that have on the rest of your life, do you think?**
- m. Have everyone in your group answer the questions on their handout about Sabbath-keeping. (Agree, Disagree, Not Sure). After everyone has completed these questions, discuss your answers. Note that many Christians disagree about some of these questions; there are no right answers.
- i. It doesn't matter what day of the week you practice the Sabbath, as long as you have one day per week set aside for it.

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*Some people have strong feelings about this one; i.e. 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventists are strict Saturday-Sabbath observers. The reason most Christians worship on Sundays is to commemorate Easter. Some people (i.e. those who work on weekends) pick a random weekday to observe as their Sabbath.*

- ii. Practicing the Sabbath was a good thing for the ancient Jews, but it's irrelevant today.

*It's still a good thing! We just tend to overlook it in our busy culture!*

- iii. I'm too busy to be able to keep the Sabbath.

- iv. The Sabbath is more about worship than it is about rest.

*Hmm...good question. It's about both! Sometimes we can get so caught up in the motions of worship that we are not actually refreshed through it; but on the other hand, it's easy to justify sleeping in and missing worship in the name of "keeping the Sabbath." Both miss the point!*

- n. Have everyone look at the "Sabbath-keeping" ideas, and pick one (or a few) to try this week. (Have everyone share what they intend to do) If you can't imagine setting aside an entire day...what about an hour? What about five minutes? Starting small is better than not starting at all!!!
- o. Close in prayer!!

Optional activity about the Sabbath, just in case you have lots of time left.

Say: "Jewish rabbis thought that "not doing work" on the Sabbath was pretty vague, so they came up with a list of specific activities that were prohibited. Orthodox Jews still maintain that list to this day! I'm going to read a list of activities. Stand up if you think it's allowed on the Sabbath. Stay seated if you think it's prohibited."

1. Doing the laundry (prohibited)
2. Turning lights on or off (prohibited)
3. Crock Pot Cooking (allowed – as long as it was started before the Sabbath started. You can't ordinarily cook on the Sabbath)
4. Shopping (prohibited)
5. Helping someone who is hurt (allowed!! Jesus was clear about this one!)
6. Weeding a garden by hand (prohibited)
7. Riding in a car (prohibited)
8. Watching TV (prohibited)
9. Gathering for worship (allowed, & encouraged!)
10. Writing a letter (prohibited)

*\*\*Methodists don't have specific rules about keeping the Sabbath, but we do think it's a good idea to find a rhythm of balance between work and rest. Remember, observing the Sabbath is not supposed to be a burden...it is supposed to bring refreshment, renewal, faith, and a deeper relationship with God.*

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### Lesson #3.

2. Introduction to the 10 Commandments: Big Group (10 minutes or so)
  - a. Lesson Review: **Who can remember the first four commandments?** (Practice hand motions. And ask for explanations about what each one means)
    - i. 1 finger up: 1 God
    - ii. Make scissors with two fingers: Cut out idols
    - iii. Cover mouth with 3 fingers: Don't take God's name in vain
    - iv. 4 fingers next to cheek: Rest on the Sabbath
  - b. How did Sabbath-keeping go this week? What about watching out for God's name?
  - c. And where can we find the 10 Commandments in the Bible?
  - d. Now when Jesus comes along, he gives us THE GREAT COMMANDMENT (Matthew 22). What was that? (Love God, love people).
    - i. So the first 4 commandments have to do with loving God. The last 6 have to do with loving people. So today, with commandments 5 & 6, we're going to start learning about the last set.
    - ii. 5 Finger Salute: Honor Your Mother & Father
    - iii. 1 Finger Killing the Other Hand: Don't murder
3. Small Group Discussion (40 minutes or so): Pass out handouts!

### COMMANDMENT #5: HONOR YOUR MOTHER AND FATHER.

1. Have everyone in your group find Exodus 20:12 in their Bibles, and ask for a volunteer to read this verse.
  - a. **What does it mean to honor your parents?** Ask someone to be the scribe as your group comes up with a list of at least 5 *specific* things that you can DO to honor your parents, and 5 *specific* things that you should NOT DO in order to honor your parents.
  - b. **Which ones of these do you currently do on a regular basis?** Pass out stickers to your group members, and instruct them to place a sticker next to those that are part of your regular routine or habit. (This includes the "Thou Shalt Nots" as well; if your group has "Talk Back" on your list, and that's something you do regularly, put a sticker next to it!)
  - c. **In what kinds of situations is it most difficult to honor your parents?**
  - d. **In general, do you think teenagers take this commandment seriously? Why or why not?**
  - e. **What is one thing you really appreciate and love about your parents or grandparents?** (Invite everyone to share)
  - f. Say something like: **All too often, we get in the habit of taking our families for granted. Even if we love them, it's easy to get into fights with them or forget to tell them that. So we're going to take a few**

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**minutes to write a card to our parents to thank them and tell them at least one very specific thing that we appreciate about them. You may be as creative as you wish!** Pass out cards and take a box of art supplies. Give everyone some time to spread out and create one or two cards. (Instruct everyone to write their own first name on the back of their envelope, as well as “Mom” or “Dad” or whatever...just in case they get mixed up!)

- g. Once everyone has finished, have them come back together in your group. What did you think about that assignment?**
- h. Sometime this week, find a time to give the card you made to your parents!**

#### COMMANDMENT #6: THOU SHALT NOT MURDER!

1. Have someone from your group look up and read Exodus 20:13.
2. Have your group vote: **Is this a commandment that is hard or easy to follow??**
3. **Is this a black-and-white commandment, or do you think there are ever any gray areas to this commandment?** (*i.e. is there ever a time when killing is justified? There are actually a lot of political issues associated with this: abortion, the death penalty, war, suicide. Don't bring these issues up for the sake of bringing them up...but if your group members bring them up, ask, "What does it look like to obey the sixth commandment in that situation?" As the facilitator, please don't take a particular political platform...but encourage discussion about what it means to be faithful in the midst of difficult situations.*)
4. Have the group look up Genesis 9:6. **Why does God say that murder is wrong?** (*because all people were created in God's image! So murder means that we are destroying an image of God*)
5. Say something like: **It can be easy to distance ourselves from this commandment, because we're generally not plotting murder, so we don't think it applies to us. But when Jesus came along, he reinterpreted this commandment.** Have a volunteer read Matthew 5:21-26.
6. As a group, try to match the following offenses mentioned with their definition:
  - a. Murder: taking a life for person reasons (not self-defense, accidents, etc.)
  - b. Anger: nurturing negative feelings towards another person (holding a grudge, bitterness, etc.)
  - c. Raca (Insult): Abusing a person with words (put downs, gossip)
  - d. Fool: Condemning a person's character (name calling)
7. **Looking at this list, do you think this commandment is easier or harder to follow than you originally thought? Which of the categories do you struggle with the most?**
8. **We just discovered the reason why God said murder was wrong. Using that same reasoning, why do you think Jesus takes all of the other offenses so seriously?? What impact do you think things like anger, bitterness, put-downs, gossip, and name-calling have on our relationship with God and others? (i.e. How does this break both the commandment to love God and the commandment to love people?)**

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9. **Think about the last time you got angry with someone. How did you handle it? Was the situation resolved?**
10. **How does Jesus recommend that we handle conflicts?**
  - a. **Is there anyone you need to “go and be reconciled with” today?**
  - b. **What can you do to make things right?**
  - c. **Is there anything specific that you need to confess, apologize for, ask forgiveness for, or forgive?**
11. Close in prayer as a small group. Before you pray, ask for one volunteer to pray for the situations of conflict that have been mentioned; and for another volunteer to pray for all of the parents/guardians in the group. You may want to also offer a time of silent prayer so that everyone can pray for their own individual situation.

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### Lesson #4.

1. Introduction to the 10 Commandments: Big Group (10 minutes or so)
  - a. Lesson Review: **Who can remember the first six commandments?**  
(Practice hand motions. *And ask for explanations about what each one means*)
    - i. 1 finger up: 1 God
    - ii. Make scissors with two fingers: Cut out idols
    - iii. Cover mouth with 3 fingers: Don't take God's name in vain
    - iv. 4 fingers next to cheek: Rest on the Sabbath
    - v. 5-finger salute: Honor your parents
    - vi. 1 finger kills the other hand: Do not murder
  - b. And where can we find the 10 Commandments in the Bible?
  - c. Today we're going to learn about the next two commandments!
    - i. Hold up seven fingers. Explain that the two fingers on one hand are MARRIED, and they're not supposed to be coupling up with any of the five fingers. So this is "Don't commit adultery"
    - ii. Hold up 8 fingers (all but thumbs). Explain that under the Code of Hammurabi, you would get your thumbs cut off if you were caught stealing. "Do not steal"
4. Small Group Discussion (40 minutes or so): Pass out handouts!

### COMMANDMENT #7-8: DON'T COMMIT ADULTERY, DON'T STEAL.

2. Have everyone in your group find Exodus 20:13-14 in their Bibles, and ask for a volunteer to read these verses.
3. As a group, rank the following actions from 1 (most dishonest) to 10 (least dishonest):
  - a. Plagiarizing information off the Internet for your paper
  - b. Shoplifting a gift for someone
  - c. Keeping an iPod that you find on the ground
  - d. Goofing off when you are being paid to work
  - e. Cheating on your test
  - f. Making illegal copies of a video or CD
  - g. Ordering water from a restaurant and then filling your glass with soda
  - h. Keeping \$20 in change from the store when you were only supposed to get \$10
  - i. Robbing a bank
  - j. Not speaking up when one of your friends steals from a store
4. What criteria did you choose to determine which of these actions is "the worst?" How do you think God would rank these actions?
5. Which of these actions do you typically think of when you hear the commandment "Do not steal"? Why?

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6. Which of these might present the most temptation for a teenager your age?
  - a. A recent survey found that 30 percent of U.S. high school students have stolen from a store and 64 percent have cheated on a test. Do these statistics surprise you?
  - b. Why do you think cheating in school is getting worse?
  - c. An interesting finding of that study was that 93% of students were satisfied with their personal ethics and character, and 77% affirmed that “when it comes to doing what is right, I am better than most people I know.” Why do you think this is the case?
7. Have you ever been the victim of theft? How did you feel? Why do you think that stealing violates the command to “love your neighbor?”
8. Have you ever broken this commandment before? How did you feel? What did you do, if anything, to make things right?
9. Have volunteers look up the following verses: Ephesians 4:28, Romans 13:7, Leviticus 6:1-7. What insights do each of these passages shed on the problem of stealing? How should we make things right? (Go back up to the list of scenarios in question 3. Talk about how to make things right in each of those situations).
10. As a group, rewrite Psalm 15. Use your paraphrase to close in prayer.

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### Lesson #5.

Introduction to the 10 Commandments: Big Group (10 minutes or so)

- a. Lesson Review: **Who can remember the first eight commandments?**  
(Practice hand motions. *And ask for explanations about what each one means*)
  - i. 1 finger up: 1 God
  - ii. Make scissors with two fingers: Cut out idols
  - iii. Cover mouth with 3 fingers: Don't take God's name in vain
  - iv. 4 fingers next to cheek: Rest on the Sabbath
  - v. 5-finger salute: Honor your parents
  - vi. 1 finger kills the other hand: Do not murder
  - vii. 2 fingers on one hand, 5 on the other: Don't commit adultery
  - viii. All but thumbs: Don't steal
- b. And where can we find the 10 Commandments in the Bible??
- c. And what are some of the things that Jesus said about the commandments we've talked about so far?
- d. Today we're going to learn about the last two commandments! Are you ready?
  - i. Hold up four fingers on your right hand, and place your left hand in front of you, as if you're swearing in court.
  - ii. Hold up all 10 fingers in front of you, and make a grabbing motion toward you. Do not covet!

II. Game about lying: (5-10 minutes)

- a. Instructions: Have the group face each other in two lines (or a circle). One side will have the opportunity to say something that is either true or false about themselves to their partner. Then everyone will take one step to the right. The other side will now have the chance to speak. If they think that the last thing that was said to them was TRUE, then they should say something true about themselves. If they think that the last thing that was said to them was FALSE, then they should say something false about themselves. Then, repeat several times. At no point should anyone reveal whether they are speaking truth or lies.
  - i. What were you thinking as you played the game? (Be looking for tie-ins about trust!)
  - ii. How was this similar or different to the interactions that you have in real life?
  - iii. Check your answers! What surprised you about these answers?

III. Study about lying...we lie on average 3 times in 10 minutes. (15 minutes)

- What do you think people lie about?
- What kind of lies do you think this commandment is talking about?
- What kind of lies do you think are most harmful to other people? (when you think about "loving your neighbor") – gossip, broken promises,

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- Read the commandment itself (Exodus 20:16) & then what Jesus had to say about this commandment. (Matthew 5:37)
  - On a scale of 1-10, how reliable do you think others would say you are? (Show with your fingers. Then, explain to your partner). Decide with your partner:
    - In what situations are you most likely to stretch the truth???
    - When have you said YES when you meant NO? When have you said NO when you meant YES?
    - Is honesty always the best policy?? Why or why not?
  - A simple yes or no would suffice! (Use fewer words, honestly!)

IV. What would be the OPPOSITE of these commandments? What are our best practices? (the opposite of bearing false witness? The opposite of coveting?)

Have someone read Philippians 4:11-13.

Show video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AW579icDRSA>

- What stood out to you from that video? (10 minutes)
- Though it sounds trite, it really is a valuable exercise to count our many blessings and be thankful for what God has given us (not because we have MORE than him, but because he has given us what we need, and he's given us a purpose & a plan)
- What is our action step? How do we apply this in our life? What is one thing you can do to be more intentional about being thankful? (Have them talk about this in pairs and then share with the rest of the group)

Prayer & Evaluations (5 minutes)