

Lesson Plans that Work
Year A – Season After Pentecost, Proper 22
Lesson Plans for Older Children
Revised Common Lectionary Old Testament Readings – Track One

Scripture: Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20

The Season After Pentecost is the longest season of the church year, spanning almost half the calendar year. The weeks after Pentecost are called Ordinary Time coming from the word “ordinal” which means counted time. This time is not ordinary as in common or regular, but it is the time of counted weeks between Pentecost and Advent. The liturgical color of the season is green. It is often thought of as a season of growth both in our personal faith and in the life of the church. Common themes to focus on throughout the season are:

- Our relationship with God.
- Our relationship with Jesus Christ and with one another through our prayers, the sacraments and life in the body of Christ.
- The presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives.
- The Church and its work for God’s mission.

Notation for this Scripture

Prior to God giving the Israelites the commandments, the people of Israel reached Mount Sinai where God tells Moses how to prepare the people for what is to come. The people are consecrated and waiting to hear God’s word, when the voice of God comes to them.

The Ten Commandments are straightforward instructions given to the Israelites by God for how to be in relationship with God and with each other. The first commandment sets the tone for the rest as it is telling the people, I am your God, there will be no other. It is calling all of Israel to give their life, every part of their being to God, and to put away all other gods that they may have known in the past. This is a radical restructuring of their lives.

All of the commandments are about how we are to be in community and relationship with one another in this new way. The first four are about how we are to be in relationship with God, how we are to interact with God and how we are to structure our lives around God. The final six are about how we are to interact, honor and treat one another.

Theme: God’s Instructions to Live and Love

Before: You will need copies of today’s scripture, the Rules of the Road Intro, Print off the signs found below (enlarging them if you can), copies of the words for Pictionary/charades, a hat or bucket to draw the words from, The Ten Commandments posted somewhere in the room, paper, pre-cut paper hearts or paper for making hearts, pencils, markers.

Beginning: Welcome the children into the room and have them sit in your gathering area. Ask how their week was and if they have any rules at home or school that they have to follow.

Opening Prayer: Gracious and Loving God, we gather today to learn more about you and how we are to become people of God. Be with us as we hear your word, open our hearts and minds that we may discover more about you. Amen.

The Story: Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20

In the Bible we hear stories of many people. These people are just like us, they eat and sleep, go to school and work. God has a plan for each of them, and in hearing the stories we learn that God's plan is for each of us too.

Read the passage, or invite each child to read one of the sentences and go around the room. If a child does not want to read, they can simply pass.

Reflection Questions:

- I wonder what it was like to hear these commandments?
- I wonder how they felt as they heard all these rules for them to live by?
- I wonder what it was like to witness the thunder and lightning, the trumpet and the mountain smoking?
- What would this be like if it happened to us today?

Opening Activity: Rules of the Road Game *(see below for signs to go with the game)*

Note: Mark out a start and finish line. Have the signs ready to go, you may want to enlarge them. It is a good idea to repeat signs so that the children have time to really work with the "Rules of the Road," so you can either print multiple signs or reuse them as you play the game.

Hold up each of the signs and have the children tell you what they mean. Then explain the rules. They have to get from the start line to the finish line by following the road signs that you hold up. If they don't follow the signs, they have to go back and start over. (you may want to make the signs bigger if you have a larger group so everyone can see.)

Stop Sign = stop

Green Sign = Go

Yield Sign = stop and then go if roadway is clear

Left Turn = turn left

Right Turn = turn right

Curves Sign = walk curvy

Slow = Go slow

Speed Bump = have to hop in the air to get over the bump.

Rules Reflection Time:

We just played a game where we followed the rules for the road. That was a fun game, but when our parents are driving us around, why do you think that we have to obey the road signs? *Give the children time to respond.*

That's right, we follow the signs to keep everyone safe, so we know where to go, and so that we don't get lost.

Today we heard a story about the Ten Commandments. I wonder what a commandment is? *Give the children time to respond.*

A commandment is a divine rule, or one that comes from God. It is a rule that is to be observed strictly. They are kind of like the road signs because they help us to know what is right and wrong. They let us know how to behave.

This story of God giving Moses the Ten Commandments and Moses bringing them to the Israelites is a story about God giving us rules to live by and trying to teach us how to be the people of God.

The Ten Commandments are split into two kinds of rules: Rules about how we treat God and rules about how we treat one another. I'm going to read each of them and I want you to tell me if you think this is a rule about how we treat God or how we treat one another.

Have the Ten Commandments written up either on a white board or printed (one each) on a sheet of paper so the children get the idea that there are 10 of them. Read them and allow the children to decide what kind of rule that is – about God or about each other.

The Ten Commandments (simplified)

1. I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me.
2. You shall not make for yourself an idol.
3. You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God.
4. Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy.
5. Honor your father and your mother.
6. You shall not murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

I wonder why God gave us these rules? *Allow the children to respond.*

God gave us these commandments or rules to live by so that we would have a guide for how to treat one another and God. God loves us and wants us to know how to be respectful, responsible, safe and loving toward one another.

We all know that rules can sometimes be hard to live by. When Jesus came, he simplified the Ten Commandments by reminding us to Love the Lord our God and love our neighbor as ourselves. This is about being loving toward God and others as we live together.

Activity: Modern Day Ten Commandments

This is a great exercise for children to figure out what the Ten Commandments really say and how it impacts their lives.

Post up the Ten Commandments and have the children reword, rethink, reimagine each one so that it speaks to their current context. What would the Ten Commandments sound like if God came today?

You can do this as a whole class or have the children work in smaller groups. It might be a good idea to post what they come up with so everyone can remember what these rules might sound like for us today.

Activity: Ten Commandments Pictionary or Charades

Invite the children act out (charades) or draw (Pictionary style) the Ten Commandments. You can simply use the 10 or you can use words to make the game a little longer, and possibly more complicated. Below is a list of words *that is not exhaustive*: (you can also have the children come up with words or phrases for the game.

Activity: Love Notes

Note: Have the paper ready, or if you want to/feel you need to for your group, you can cut out the hearts ahead of time.

God gave us these commandments or rules to help us love one another and God. You each have ten hearts. On each one, I want you to draw or write a way that you can love one another and God like the Ten Commandments tell us.

Closure: Invite the children to share what they have created or one thing they learned today.

Closing Prayer: Loving God, we thank you for our time together as we discovered more about the rules that you gave us so we can live better with one another and with you. Be with us as we leave this place and help us to remember to love you and love each other. Amen.

Lord	Honor
God	Mother
Egypt	Father
No other gods	No Murder
No idols	No adultery/No cheating on spouse
No wrongful use of God's name	No stealing
Sabbath	No Lying
Holy	No Coveting

Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20

Then God spoke all these words:

I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me.

You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.

You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.

Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work.

Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

When all the people witnessed the thunder and lightning, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking, they were afraid and trembled and stood at a distance, and said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, or we will die." Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid; for God has come only to test you and to put the fear of him upon you so that you do not sin."

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