

# Ten Commandments

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## MEMORY VERSE:

*"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."*

Matthew 22:37

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Three months after leaving Egypt, the people arrived at a place called Sinai. The land was rocky and they stood at the foot of huge red granite mountains. Here they made camp.

Living in a tent and packing up to walk and walk whenever the pillar of cloud lifted was quite a different life from the life they had left in Egypt. While the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, they had obeyed the laws of Egypt. Now they were a free nation travelling through the wilderness to the land of promise. Several times the people had complained and grumbled to Moses, and God was not pleased with this. It was time to remind the people how great and powerful their God was, and time to give them some laws to help them live happily together.

Commandments or laws are very important. Every family has its own rules. We have rules at school. Every country has its own laws and when people abide by these rules, everyone is much safer and happier.

Moses went up into the mountain to talk to God. God told him to go back down to the people and get them ready to meet their God. God would come down upon the mountain in three days and talk to them so they would know God's awesome power and fear and reverence Him.

On the third day, the sky turned black. A huge cloud came down to cover the mountain, thunder and lightning crashed all around. The people were terrified. Moses led them to the base of the mountain as a noise like a trumpet blast sounded. Smoke billowed into the sky and the whole mountain shook with an earthquake. As the trumpet blast grew louder and louder, God called Moses up to the top of the mountain and spoke these words:

You shall worship no other God but me.

You shall not make yourselves any idols.

You shall not use the name of your God irreverently.

Remember to observe the sabbath as a holy day.

Honour your father and mother.

You must not murder.

You must not commit adultery.

You must not steal.

You must not lie.

You must not covet.

The people shook with fear. They called to Moses and asked him to bring them the words of God and not let God talk to them. But Moses told them not to be afraid, but to remember how wonderful and powerful their God was and keep His commandments. For God loved them and if they would obey His voice and keep His commandments, then they would be a special treasure to Him above all people, a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.

### **Things to Remember**

- God is powerful and great and deserves our respect and honour.
- Jesus sums up the ten commandments into two: to love God with all our heart, soul and mind and to love our neighbour as ourselves.

### **Discussion**

We live in a world very different from the one the people of Israel lived in, but the ten commandments are still ones we can use in our lives today. The first five deal with respect for authority and as well as learning to respect the ultimate authority in our lives, God, He asks us to give honour to our parents. This is how we first learn to love and respect God. The last five deal with respect for other people and each of them remains valid today.

1. Why do we need rules?
2. What happened when God came down to talk to the people?
3. What would happen if the people kept God's commandments?

### **Activity Suggestions**

Draw a picture of the mountain. Perhaps you could colour over the mountain with fire colours (orange, red, yellow) and then press hard with a black crayon to completely cover it. Use something sharp to scrape away the black crayon for lightning, fire and an outline of the mountain.

Use plasticine or clay to make a tablet like what God may have written the ten commandments on. Inscribe a heart or the word LOVE on it as the essence of the commandments.