

DIVINE LAWS FROM THE LORD

The Ten Commandments were given from Mount Sinai by Jehovah Himself in a miraculous way to make known that these laws are not only civil and moral laws, but also Divine laws (see *True Christian Religion* 282).

The Lord gives us the Ten Commandments to help us find the lasting happiness that comes from His spiritual laws or rules.

FAMILY WORSHIP: Giving the Ten Commandments

Read the story from Exodus 19:16-25, 20:1-18, 24:12,15-18, 31:18

Ideas for discussion:

- What sights and sounds helped the children of Israel know that the Ten Commandments were from Jehovah God Himself? (loud thunder, lightening flashes, Mount Sinai quaking, loud trumpet sounds, smoke covering Mount Sinai, a cloud covering the mountain, fire)
- “When He had made an end of speaking with him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses two tablets of stone, written with the finger of God” (Exodus 31:18). Why did God write the Commandments on tablets of stone? (Stones symbolize fundamental truths of the Word, and the Ten Commandments give us fundamental truths for religious life. They are an excellent rock or foundation for our lives.)
- Just as the Lord wrote the commandments on the tablets of stone, we should try to let the Lord write these commandments upon our minds and hearts. We do this when we learn the Ten Commandments and seek the Lord’s help to apply them in our lives.
- The first three commandments teach us what we should do for the Lord:
You shall have no other gods before My face.
You shall not take the name of the Lord Your God in vain.
Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.
- The last six commandments teach us what we should do for the neighbor—for other people:
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, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s.
- The fourth commandment is partly on the first table and partly on the second, because by “father” is also meant our Heavenly Father and by “mother” is also meant our spiritual mother, the Church.
- We should obey the commandments, both literally and spiritually. The Heavenly Doctrine of the New Church can show us deeper levels of meaning to help us better follow the Lord’s rules.

READ: “The Lord on Mount Sinai” a family talk by the Rev. B. David Holm

SING: Moses Went to Sinai’s Peak

READ: “The Importance of the Ten Commandments” a sermon by the Rev. Patrick A. Rose
“The Ten Commandments are the summary of how we must live if the Lord is to give us happiness. To order our lives according to these commandments should be of the greatest importance to us. These ten rules should be at the center of our lives.”

READ: “The Lord Gives Moses the Ten Commandments” by the Rev. Kurt Horigan Asplundh
This a lovely talk with color illustrations for preschool children.

PROJECT: Mount Sinai Diorama (ages 6-8)
Level 2 of the family lesson includes directions for making a diorama as well as suggestions for illustrating this story.

ACTIVITY: Mount Sinai Journal Page (ages 8-10)

COLORING PAGE: Moses Goes Up to Sinai’s Peak

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS ON TWO TABLES

*The Ten Commandments contain everything concerning doctrine and life....
That is why the law was written on two tablets, one dealing with God, the other with people.
(True Christian Religion 287:2)*

The two tables of the Ten Commandments show us the covenant the Lord would like to establish with us. The first table shows us how to love the Lord, looking to Him as our source of good and truth. And the second table helps us see how to love the neighbor. Because these commandments have many layers of deeper meaning, there is endless opportunity to learn how to apply these Divine laws.

READ: “The Ten Commandments” by the Rev. Ormond Odhner
“God demands morality in life, and the fulfillment of man’s covenant with God is moral living from a spiritual motive.”

READ: “Why We Need Rules” a family talk by the Rev. Willard L. D. Heinrichs
“Those who keep the Commandments of the Lord have peace inside of them and in their homes. And when they come into the life after death, they have peace and happiness there, too.”

JACOB’S LADDER LESSON: The Ten Commandments (ages 7-9)
This lesson retells the story of the Lord giving us the Ten Commandments and then explains what each commandment means. This lesson is from Level One of the [Jacob’s Ladder Program](#)—a book of lessons for home-based learning which can also be adapted for use in Sunday Schools. You may order the entire lesson book from the New Church bookstore.

COLORING PAGE: Moses Carries the Commandments

PROJECT: Receiving the Ten Commandments (ages 10-14)

PROJECT: The Lord Gave the Ten Commandments (*ages 8-12*)

Level 3 of the family lesson includes a project with the Ten Commandments in Hebrew.

PROJECT: The Two Tablets

Use a modeling compound to make small tablets.

PROJECT: The Ten Commandments Book (*ages 4-7*)

For each commandment, there is a page with simplified text for young children to illustrate. Pictures of sample pages are included.

PROJECT: Make a Mobile of the Lord's Commandments (*ages 10-14*)

This complex project combines the two great commandments and the Ten Commandments.

SING: The Ten Commandments by John and Lori Odhner

KEEPING THE COVENANT

*“Keeping the covenant” means to live according to the commandments.
(see *Arcana Coelestia* 8767)*

The Lord and the angels are always with us, helping us obey the commandments. But we have to do our part in learning how to apply these commandments to our lives and reflecting on ways we need to change.

READ: “Gaining Meaning from the Word” by the Rev. Peter M. Buss, Jr.

PROJECT: The Ten Commandments in Our Hearts (*ages 5-9*)

A HELPFUL RESOURCE: Rise Above It!

Rise Above It, a book developed by Rev. Ray and Star Silverman from a series of seminars, leads you on a spiritual journey through the meaning of the Ten Commandments. Filled with candid and inspiring journal entries and enriched by the teachings of the great religions, this book invites you to enter into a life of ever increasing love, wisdom and service. As it is written in the gospel of Matthew, “If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.”

Read a sample chapter: “Do Not Murder, Be a Life Giver” (PDF) from *Rise Above It*.

Assignment (at the end of the chapter): “Say nothing critical to or about anyone. Let your words be kind, true, and useful. Use a journal to record your experience of keeping this commandment.” To help you with this assignment, the authors include suggestions for further reflection or application, including instant replay to correct your actions immediately and star charts to keep track of your progress for a week.

You may order **Rise Above It!** from the New Church Bookstore.

Children may want to read **“The Fifth Commandment: You Shall Not Kill”** by Rev. Kurt Horigan Asplundh, while teens may be interested in **“My Brother’s Keeper”** by Rev. Ormond Odhner.

PROJECT: All That the Lord Has Spoken... Calligraphy Project (ages 6-11)

Make a border for the quotation from Exodus 19:8.

ACTIVITY: Keeping the Covenant Each Day (teens and up)

Take 10 small stones and write a number from 1-10. Put these in a special bag (a velvet pouch perhaps), a beautiful bowl, or a small box. Without looking, draw one out each day. Then work on applying that commandment to your life.

READ: “You Shall Not Bear False Witness” by the Rev. Glenn Alden

This sermon explores how obeying this commandment can help us. “Personal spiritual growth is impossible without honesty. You cannot be changed by the Lord until you are willing to look at yourself honestly and see the things that need to be changed.”

SPIRITUAL TASKS: The Ten Commandments

The First Commandment	The Sixth Commandment
The Second Commandment	The Seventh Commandment
The Third Commandment	The Eighth Commandment
The Fourth Commandment	The Ninth and Tenth Commandments
The Fifth Commandment	

LOVING THE LORD

No one is in heaven or comes to it unless he acknowledges the Lord and loves Him.
To love the Lord is not to love Him in respect to person but to live according to His commandments.
(Apocalypse Explained 433)

The Lord tells us that to love Him and keep His covenant, we must do His commandments. In this way, we respond to His love with a life blessed with the peace and happiness that only the Lord can give us.

READ: “How to Love the Lord” a family talk by the Rt. Rev. George de Charms

No one can come into heaven who does not love the Lord above all things. People who have this love in their hearts, find the gates of heaven flung wide, with angels there to welcome them. It is by keeping the commandments that people can truly love the Lord.

SING: Love Him, Thank Him

READ: “Peace Like a River” by the Rev. Walter E. Orthwein

“Love and trust and peace will come to us as we are prepared to receive them. If the question arises as to how we can be prepared to receive them, the Lord has given us the answer: ‘If you love Me, keep My commandments’ (John 14:5). Here is the most basic, down-to-earth thing we can do to get on the path to peace: keep the commandments. Then the promise given in the Psalms will be fulfilled in us: ‘Great peace have those who love Your law’ (Psalm 119:165).”

READ: “Making the Lord Your God” by the Rev. Ormond Odhner

This chapel talk for teens explains how we can truly love and honor the Lord by controlling our external lives and allowing Him to work on our internals.