

Moses Receives the Ten Commandments (Exodus 19–20)

Pathway Point: 🌟 God gave us loving laws to keep us safe.

In-Focus Verse: “Obey carefully all the words of this law. They are not just idle words for you—they are your life” (Deuteronomy 32:46b-47a).

Travel Itinerary

Children want and need boundaries. A life without rules is chaotic and frightening. Like adults, children need to know the perimeters they are free to function within. In *Dr. Dobson Answers Your Questions*, Dr. James Dobson tells a story about a “progressive” educator who wanted to give the children more freedom. He had the chain-link fence taken down around their playground. Rather than feeling independent, the children huddled together near the center of the playground. Their freedom was inhibited by an absence of boundaries.

Rules give us security. In this lesson, the children will discover that it is God’s love that motivates him to lay down laws for his people. They’ll learn that God is the ultimate parent, putting loving limits on their behavior. As we see from God’s words in Deuteronomy 30 and 32, God’s laws are not idle words—they are our life!

DEPARTURE PRAYER (up to 5 minutes)

Like any new practice, prayer requires a safety zone. Tell the children that you will pray first, then ask if anyone else wants to pray.

Say: Dear Lord, you are our Father and maker. You created us, so you know how we need to act. Thank you for giving us loving laws to keep us safe. Thank you for caring enough about us that you didn’t leave us in a free-for-all world. Giving us rules proves you love us. Help us to learn what your rules are, why you gave them to us, and how we can make them work in our lives. We love you. Amen.

1st STOP DISCOVERY (10 minutes) **Stop-Sign Safety**

Let the children experience life without rules with this active game.

Preparation: Use the materials listed above to make a stop sign. Cut the poster board into an octagon, and cut out white letters that read STOP. Glue the letters to the octagon, and glue or tape the craft stick to the back of the sign. Remove chairs and tables from the room.

Line up half the children (Team A) against one wall and the other half (Team B) against a wall parallel to it. Stand in the middle and say: **When I say “go,” I want each team to walk slowly to the opposite wall.** Say “go,” and let each group walk to the opposite wall and then back again.



The activities in this book have been designed for multi-age groups. Select from the activities, or adapt them as needed for your class.



Starting a lesson without prayer is like building a tower on sand. Without a solid foundation, it will topple and will have to be rebuilt properly. If you don’t have enough time to pray, you don’t have enough time to teach! Fight the temptation to dive into the lesson without asking God for his wisdom. Spending a few minutes in prayer can make the difference between wasting your time and watching it produce much fruit. God will give you wisdom to teach as you ask him for it (James 1:5).





If your class is small or meets in a very large room, you might want to modify this activity by creating a masking tape square on the floor to define the boundaries. Allow twelve inches of space for each child on each team.

Items to Pack: box of baby wipes, thunder-maker (2 lids to bang together), trumpet or substitute for a trumpet

Ask:

- How many of you got bumped?

Bring out the stop sign. Say: **This time I'm setting up a rule for you. When I say "go," the team that doesn't face a stop sign (Team B) can walk across the room.** Hold the stop sign up for Team A to obey while Team B crosses to the other side. Then hold up the sign for Team B to obey while Team A crosses the room. Have the kids sit down.

Ask:

- How many of you got bumped this time?
- What made the difference?
- How is this stop sign like God's commandments or rules?
- Why do we have rules?

Say: God gave us many rules in his Word, the Bible. We're going to learn about ten special rules called the Ten Commandments. 🎯 God gave us loving laws to keep us safe. Let's listen to the Bible story to find out how God gave us his top-ten rules.

STORY EXCURSION

(15 minutes)

Moses Receives the Ten Commandments (Exodus 19–20)

The class will re-enact the first time God gave his commandments.

Preparation: Think about what you can use to represent Mount Sinai. For example, you can draw a mountain on a chalkboard or throw a blanket over a ladder. To pose as Moses, use a simple costume or a headpiece.

Open your Bible to Exodus 19 and say: **We're going to read our Bible story together. Thousands of years ago, God chose the Israelites to be his special people. They had been slaves in Egypt and cried out to God for help. His loving ears heard their sad cries. With a mighty hand, God led his children—about two million people—out of Egypt. They were free! Moses led the Israelites as they began their journey to a new home.**

Pretend to be Moses, leading the children around the room and ending your "journey" at "Mount Sinai." Say: **Before the Israelites got to their land flowing with milk and honey, God had to teach them what it meant to be his special people. They had to learn how God wanted them to live so they could be safe and happy. He led them out into the desert. They camped next to towering Mount Sinai.**

If the group is small, you can have the kids sit or lie down on carpeting.

The Lord called to Moses from the mountain. If you listen closely, God is about to tell us the dream in his heart. He said, *(use a deep voice)* "You yourselves have seen how I protected you from the Egyptians and how I carried you as though on eagles' wings and brought you to myself."

The people responded: "We will do everything the Lord has said." *(Have the kids repeat after you.)*

🎯 God was about to give his people loving laws to keep them safe. To get the people ready, Moses had them wash their clothes. *(Give children each a baby wipe, and let them wipe off their clothes.)* God told Moses that anyone who touched the holy mountain

would die, so Moses built a fence around the mountain. The fence would keep the people safe, just as God's loving laws would keep them safe. *(Let the children line up some chairs in front of your Mount Sinai.)* God wanted the people to know that he was serious. These were not just to be ten good ideas; they were and are today ten holy commandments from the God who made us. Because he made us, he knows what we need to do to be safe and happy.

On the morning of the third day, there was thunder *(bang lids)* and lightning *(flash room lights)*. A thick cloud covered the mountain, and there came a very loud trumpet blast. *(Blow trumpet.)* Everyone in the camp trembled. *(Have all the kids tremble.)* Mount Sinai was covered with smoke. The whole mountain shook violently, and the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder. *(Blow trumpet.)*

The Lord called to Moses. Moses went up to the top of the mountain, and 🎒 God gave him ten loving laws to keep the Israelites safe. God spoke these words: *(Read Exodus 20:1-17, or read this simpler version.)*

I am the Lord your God.

1. You shall have no other gods before me.
2. You shall not make any idols.
3. Speak God's name with respect.
4. Set aside a special day for God.
5. Honor your father and mother.
6. You shall not kill.
7. Be true to your husband or wife.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not lie.
10. You shall not want what others have.

The people then understood that 🎒 God gave them loving laws for their own good and safety. He gives us the same laws and the same love today.

Ask:

- Why did God give the Israelites the Ten Commandments?
- Why does he give the same commandments to us?
- What do God's laws do for you?

Say: 🎒 God gave the Israelites the Ten Commandments to keep them safe and to create a special people for himself—a family who would love, honor, obey, and respect him.

SCENIC ROUTE

You can make this story as dramatic as you like. Have someone standing behind a partition speaking God's words in a deep voice. Another option is to let the older kids take turns reading the Ten Commandments.

Dry ice "smoke" rolling off the top of Mount Sinai makes this story unforgettable. You can get dry ice at some grocery stores.

(Be sure to use thick gloves when handling dry ice. Make sure children do not touch it.)

If you make Mount Sinai out of a blanket and ladder, you can hide a smaller stepladder behind it so "Moses" can climb to the top.

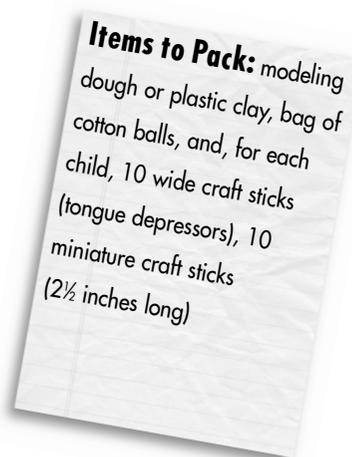


(15 minutes)

A Flock and Fences

Children will build fences to show how God's laws protect them.

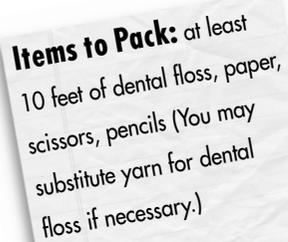
Open your Bible to Exodus 19 and say: **Just before he gave the commandments, God said, "Now if you will obey me and keep your part of my contract with you, you shall be my own little flock" (Exodus 19:5, *The Living Bible*). Let's make fences for our flock.**





**TOUR
GUIDE
TIP**

If you can't find miniature craft sticks, you can use regular-sized craft sticks. Before class, break the regular craft sticks in half yourself, and use a nail file to smooth the jagged edges. You may want to cover each stick with a cloth or paper towel before you break it so you don't cut your fingers on the broken pieces. You can choose to do this as a class project and let teams work together for a total of ten fences or they can each make a full set of their own and take them home.



Items to Pack: at least 10 feet of dental floss, paper, scissors, pencils (You may substitute yarn for dental floss if necessary.)

Show the children how to make fences. To make one fence section, glue two wide craft sticks to two miniature craft sticks. Have each child make five fence sections. Have the older children write one commandment on each of the horizontal sections. Let the kids stick the fence posts into pieces of modeling dough so they stand upright. Have each child move his or her fence sections together to form a circle. Scatter the cotton balls on the table outside the fence.

Say: **God chose the Israelites and us to be his special treasure, his very own flock. This is God's dream—to have a special family set apart for himself, safe and happy. Let's pretend that these cotton balls lying outside the fence represent the Israelites. God told them that if they obeyed him, they would be God's special flock. He made a way for us to be part of his special flock by sending Jesus.**

Let each child put a few cotton balls inside the fence to represent the Israelites.

Ask:

- What keeps the flock protected?
- How are God's commandments like these fences?

Say: 🎯 God gave the Israelites loving laws to keep them safe. Unfortunately, they didn't always keep all of God's commandments, just as we don't always follow God's loving laws. God knows that we can't keep all of his commands. That's why Jesus came to pay the price for our sins and become our good shepherd. We become one of God's sheep by believing in Jesus. Following God's loving laws does not make us part of God's flock, but following those laws does keep us safe and happy. It also shows God how much we love him when we try to obey his commands.

(15 minutes)

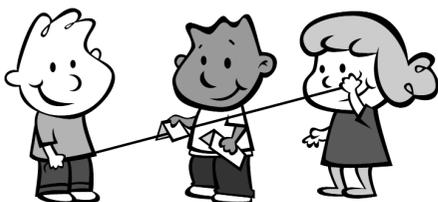
On Eagle's Wings

The children will compare a mother eagle to God and watch a "baby eagle fly."

Have each child write on a sheet of paper, 🎯 "Like a mother eagle, God's loving laws keep me safe." Older kids can help the younger ones write, or the younger children can each draw a picture of an eagle. This paper will represent a mother eagle. Then have each child cut out a 2x5-inch piece from another sheet of paper and fold it in the middle. (Have a sample available for the children to look at.) This will represent the baby eagle.

Gather the children and say: **Before God gave us his loving laws, he said, "You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself" (Exodus 19:4). This verse refers to an eagle's wings. When a mother eagle teaches her baby to fly, she doesn't just push him out of the nest—she flies beneath her baby to catch him if he falls. Isn't that beautiful? God is like a loving parent, teaching us how to live by giving us loving laws. Let's teach our eaglet to fly while his mother flies below to catch him when he falls.**

Let the children take turns. Two kids will hold either end of the dental floss. One child will place an eaglet (the small folded paper) on the floss and gently guide the eaglet from one end of the floss to the other. Another child will hold the mother (the large piece of paper) and "fly" beneath the baby to catch it if it falls.



After each child has had a turn, ask:

- How would you describe this mother eagle?
- How do God's loving laws remind you of a mother eagle?
- How are you like the baby eaglet?

Say: God is like a loving mother eagle, teaching us how to fly by giving us rules to live by. He doesn't just give us rules; he's there to catch us when we fall (break one of his rules). So 🕒 God makes us, gives us loving laws to keep us safe, stays near us, and forgives us when we fail. Isn't God amazing?

SOUVENIRS (15 minutes)



Safety Gear? Never Fear!

The children will color, cut, and paste the commandments to an illustration of a child to demonstrate that the commandments are meant for our protection.

Hold up the helmet and say: Sometimes it's a drag to wear a helmet. You have to adjust the straps just right. Sometimes they push into your throat. Sometimes the helmet is hot.

Ask:

- Why do we bother wearing helmets?
- What would happen if we didn't wear them?
- Why did God bother to give us laws?
- What things do God's laws protect us from?

Give everyone a copy of the "Safety Gear? Never Fear!" handout (page 17), scissors, glue, and crayons. Have the kids cut out the safety gear and glue the helmet, chin strap, and the elbow, knee, and wrist pads to the illustration of the child on the skateboard. The children may also color the pages and add them to their notebooks.

TRAVEL-ALONG COMMANDMENT SONG

Teach your children the first verse of the "Travel-Along Commandment Song." Sing the verse and refrain once yourself, showing kids the accompanying motions, then have the kids join you. Children will be learning a new verse in each ensuing lesson.

(The entire song is on pages 6-8.)

God gave us loving laws a long time ago. *(Hold hands out as though you're giving a gift.)*

He put them in the Bible so we all would know. *(Clap hands together, then open them as though you're reading a book.)*

If you take a finger and point it high *(point a finger, and raise it high),*
God's first commandment tells you why. *(Point forward.)*

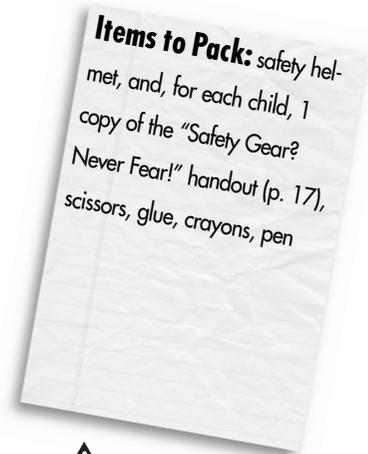
Gotta hear me, gotta, gotta, hear me.

Gotta hear me, gotta, gotta, hear me.



TOUR GUIDE TIP

Most children equate obedience with salvation. Take every opportunity to tell the children clearly that God wants us to obey his laws but sent Jesus to pay the penalty for our inevitable disobedience.



Items to Pack: safety helmet, and, for each child, 1 copy of the "Safety Gear? Never Fear!" handout (p. 17), scissors, glue, crayons, pen



TOUR GUIDE TIP

When the older children have finished, they can help the younger children cut out the safety gear. This accomplishes three things: It gives the older kids something constructive to do, it makes them feel useful, and it helps the younger kids complete their work with the group. Teach the older kids not to *do* the work for the younger kids but rather to help them with what they can't do on their own.



SCENIC ROUTE

Using a wipe-off crayon, write the point on the helmet: "God's loving laws keep us safe." Pass the helmet around for the children to read. (You can wipe off the crayon with a cloth or paper towel.)

Items to Pack: several copies of the "Stone Tablets" handout (p. 9), yarn, hole punch, scissors, paper, markers, picture of Jesus



(15 minutes)

A-Maze-ing Grace

The children will follow an obstacle course to Christ.

Preparation: Cut out the stone tablets. Punch two holes at the top, and run yarn through them so they can be worn as a necklace. Use classroom furniture to set up a maze. The children can wander between rows of chairs and crawl under tunnels of tables.

Place a picture of Jesus at the end of the maze. Next to it, lay a piece of paper that reads, "God gave us loving laws to keep us safe. They lead us to Jesus."

Gather the kids and ask:

- How many of you have obeyed all of God's commandments? How many of you have always obeyed your parents?

- Why did God give us laws if he knew we couldn't keep them?

Say: The Bible says, "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ" (Galatians 3:24a, King James Version). A schoolmaster is someone who watches over your safety.

Have the children work in teams of two. Child A will wear the Ten Commandments around his or her neck and will hold the hand of Child B, whose eyes will be closed. Child A will lead Child B safely through the maze to the picture of Jesus. Child A will read the paper that says, "God gave us loving laws to keep us safe. They lead us to Jesus." Give each child a chance to go through the maze.

Ask:

- Where did your guide lead you?
- Why can't we get to God by keeping his laws?

Read Galatians 3:24a again: "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ."

Ask:

- What does Jesus do when we come to him?

Say: "God gave us loving laws to keep us safe. His loving laws lead us to Jesus.

Only Jesus can forgive us for the times we do break God's laws.

SCENIC ROUTE

Photocopy the "Stone Tablets" handout (p. 9) for each child in your class.

The children can add the page to their notebooks or make their own Ten Commandments necklace.

Items to Pack: paper, pens

HOME AGAIN PRAYER

(5 minutes)

Have ten children each write a different one of the Ten Commandments on a sheet of paper. Tape the papers to the backs of ten chairs, and have the children use the chairs to form a rectangular "fence." Talk about being protected by God's loving laws. Gather the children inside the fence for this closing prayer.

Dear God, thank you for your loving laws that keep us safe. Thank you for using them to lead us to Jesus. We ask your help in keeping your commandments. When we do fail, please forgive us. Thank you for choosing us as your special people. Amen.

Safety Gear? Never Fear!



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