

16. Ruler



BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

Exodus 20:1-17

God gives Moses the Ten Commandments



AIMS

To help the children reflect on the rules God gave his people and that he gave them these rules because he wanted what was best for them

To help them to understand that following God's instructions is the best way to live

Now that God had rescued the Israelites from slavery and was leading them to their own land, he gave them instructions about how they should live as his people. He gave them these rules because he loved them and wanted them to live in the best way.



PREP FOR LEADERS

Read through the Bible passages for this session and reflect:

- Why do we sometimes dislike the idea of following rules?
- Why did God give the people these commandments?
- How would the world be different if everyone followed these commandments?

Take some time to pray for your group.



GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Choose one of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

▶ Human Bop It

You will need: equipment to play music

Play some music with a strong beat and call out a series of actions telling the children to respond in the following ways:

Kick it - children kick in front of them (ensure they're all in a space first!)

Twist it - twist their bodies half way around then back,

feet remaining in same place on the floor

Spin it - children turn around

Pull it - pretend they are pulling two levers down from above their heads

Bop it - put their hands on their head and jump in the air

Call the actions out fairly slowly at first and gradually increase the speed. See if the children can keep up.

Once they have got used to the game, you could eliminate those who do the wrong actions until you have a winner.

▶ Rule-Breaker

Play a game the children are familiar with, but have one of

(continued overleaf)

the leaders breaking all the rules. Discuss why having rules are important for a game to go well. Then play again with everyone keeping the rules to illustrate the difference it makes.

► Rules for a better world

You will need: pens and paper

You can do this activity as one group or split into smaller groups depending in your numbers. Get the children to come up with five rules which they think would make the world a better place if everyone followed them. What would those rules be, and why?



EXPLORING THE BIBLE

► Recap

Remind the children of the story so far. God had rescued his people from being slaves in Egypt and he was leading them to a land of their own. He had shown his power in Egypt by sending plagues when Pharaoh refused to let the Israelites go free, and when he opened up a path through the middle of the Red Sea so they could escape.

► 10 Commandments

You will need: cards (from additional document 10 Commandments cards)

The next thing God did was give his people some rules, or commandments.

Why do you think God wanted to give them rules? He had called them to be his own people, he had promised them their own land which he was leading them to, he had rescued them from slavery and from their enemies, he had provided everything they needed along the way. Now he wanted to tell them how they should live as his people.

There were lots of rules God gave but we are going to look at the most famous ones, which are called the 10 Commandments.

Talk through the commandments with the children, briefly explaining each one. Some text is provided below to help you do this. Keep it brief - don't get into the technicalities of each commandment and exactly what commandments like observing the Sabbath mean today. Focus on the instructions God was giving the Israelites and his motivation behind giving them this set of rules.

There are two options provided for explaining the commandments. Depending on the time available, you may choose to use one or both.

Option 1: Use a set of cards with illustrations relating to each commandment: see additional document: 10 Commandments cards. If you print the document double-sided, you will have the text below on the reverse side of the picture it relates to so that you can refer to it as you talk about that commandment with the children.

Option 2: This video demonstrates a way of teaching the children the commandments using finger signs: youtu.be/B3MZnOPmWVY

This is not a video to show to the children, but one to watch yourself so that you are familiar with the finger signs and able to teach them to the children.

Don't worship other gods. Make God number one. The Israelites were being asked to put God first in everything.

Don't bow down to idols. An idol was something they made themselves that they worshipped, for example, a statue of silver or gold. They were told not to do this, but to worship only God.

This ties in with commandment number one.

Show respect when you use God's name. It was not something to use carelessly or in a way that was disrespectful.

Observe the Sabbath and keep it holy. The Sabbath was a day of rest. For one day each week, the people were to rest from their usual work. It was a time to focus on God.

Honour your parents. Children were told to have respect for their parents and show them honour.

Don't murder.

Be faithful in marriage. They were told to be faithful to their husband or wife.

Don't steal.

Don't lie or bear false witness. Telling the truth is something God says is very important.

Don't want what other people have. Don't look at what others have and be jealous and want it for yourself.



REFLECT & RESPOND

► Reflection

Ask the children what they think of the commandments.

- Are any of them surprising?
- Which ones do they think would have been especially hard to follow?
- What would the world be like if everyone followed these commandments? How would it be different?

We don't always like following rules. Sometimes it can seem like rules are just there to spoil

our fun, but actually God was giving the people rules because he cared about them and wanted the best for them. If God is the one who created everyone and everything surely it makes sense that he knows best.

Often when our parents or teachers give us rules it is for the same reason - they want what is best for us and the rules are often to keep us safe or so that we can get along well with others.

One example is on the roads: what would happen if there were no rules and we could just drive or cycle wherever we liked at whatever speed we wanted to? It would be chaotic and dangerous.

When we don't understand a rule, it helps if we can trust the person giving us the rule. Moses knew that he could trust God and that his rules were to help him and the people live well.

Give the children a moment to think about any rules they are struggling to follow, and lead them in prayer, asking God to help them with this.



ADDITIONAL IDEAS

▶ Song – 10 Rules, 1 God

You will need: equipment to play music

This song links with the theme and could be used to remind the children of the Ten Commandments.

It can be found on Dave Godfrey's CD "Zoom" and there is also a version on YouTube:
youtu.be/o3-YhjKWBGm