

3

Feel Regret and Do Better

PSALM 119:105; EXODUS 20:1-17;
MATTHEW 22:36-40



GOAL

By hearing the stories of God's commandments, children learn what it means to follow God's path and when behaviors need to change to turn back to follow God.

- A** Art
- AM** Active/Movement
- C** Conversation
- D** Drama
- F** Food
- G** Game
- M** Music
- NS** Nature/Science
- QC** Quiet/Contemplative
- S** Service
- T** Technology
- X** Extra Prep

Note: bit.ly addresses are case-sensitive.



PRAYER

God, remind me of my own need for repentance so that I may feel regret, turn back, and do better in following your path for me. Amen.

THIS SESSION

When we have made mistakes or done something wrong, we can apologize, but there's more. If we truly feel sorry, then we regret the action and want to change our behavior. This is called *repentance*, and it means changing direction or turning back, trying our best not to make the same mistake again. Poet and author Maya Angelou is credited with saying, "Now that I know better, I do better." This is the heart of repentance.

THE BIBLE STORY

We can know when we've strayed from God's path only if we know what God's path is. The Bible and Jesus are both called God's Word, one a written text and the other a living example. In the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20:1-17, God gives God's people rules for living, both as individuals and in community. Jesus summarizes these and all commandments when asked which is the greatest. His reply is simply to love God and to love others. Both the Bible and the life of Jesus show us this path by which to live.

CONNECTIONS WITH CHILDREN

Young children learn some Bible basics, the Ten Commandments and the "greatest commandments," so that they may begin to understand what behaviors follow God's path and when they have strayed from it. They explore times when they feel regret and can try to do better.

SESSION PREPARATION

- "Walking God's Path" (p. 32): Using Resource Page 1 from session 1 (p. 13), practice the motions for the opening ritual, which is used in each session of this unit. Also: Use the path created in session 1 or set up a path in your room that you can walk along with the children. This could be walking between a row of chairs; on a sheet, a blanket, or papers on the floor; or along a piece of tape on the floor.
- "No Rules" (p. 32): Obtain *Bedtime Is Canceled* by Cece Meng (Clarion Books, 2012) or use the YouTube video "Bedtime Is Cancelled!" with Ms. Melena" (bit.ly/FMBedtime, 5:53).



GETTING STARTED

- Items that can be grouped by tens and twos, such as crayons, pencils, paper clips, books, blocks, and so forth
- Paper, crayons, and/or markers

TEN AND TWO

A G

As children arrive, greet them by name. Tell them that they may choose to group items or draw pictures. To group items, show them the items you have provided and ask them to put the items in groups of ten or two. To draw a picture, have them draw ten of one thing and two of another, such as ten circles and two squares or ten turtles and two rainbows. Comment that the pictures may be anything of their choosing. When everyone has arrived, invite the children to show their groupings or pictures. Tell the children that they are going to hear about ten important rules God gave people long ago and what Jesus thought were the most important, the greatest two.

- Bible
- Prepared path
- Resource Page 1 from session 1 (p. 13)

WALKING GOD'S PATH

AM X

Gather by the path you have set up in your space. Read Psalm 119:105. Tell the children that loving God and loving others is like walking on God's path. Invite the children to follow you as you walk slowly along the path. Explain that, when we do something we know we shouldn't do, that is like stumbling along the path, getting stuck in the mud, or turning off God's path. (*Stop and move off the path.*) Tell the children that to find our way back to God's path is to admit what we've done wrong. (*Brush yourself off and move back on to the path.*)

Using Resource Page 1 from session 1, invite the children to repeat after you and follow your motions.



Keep the path and Resource Page 1 from session 1 for session 4.



INTRODUCING THE PRACTICE

- Bedtime Is Canceled* by Cece Meng (Clarion Books, 2012) or internet-connected device

NO RULES

C T

Wonder together what rules the children need to follow and what rules they would like to cancel. Read *Bedtime Is Canceled* by Cece Meng or show the YouTube video "Bedtime Is Canceled!" (bit.ly/FMBedtime, 5:52). After the story, wonder together:

- ➔ What happened when there were no bedtimes for anyone?
- ➔ What would happen if we had no rules?

Explain that God's rules, like those we have at home or school, are there to keep us safe and healthy, and to help us get along with others. Ask the children what rules God gives us and how they are helpful to us. Tell the children that it is important that we know God's rules because that helps us know if we turn away from following God and what we need to do to get back on God's path.



FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE

GOD'S GOOD RULES

C AM

Remind the children that following God means living in God's ways. Hand out copies of Resource Page 2 and invite the children to trace each number as you read it in the story. Read the Bible story on Resource Page 1, based on Exodus 20:1–17 and Matthew 22:36–40, which tells us about how God wants us to live. Pause after each commandment and have the children repeat it after you. After the Ten Commandments part of the story, pause and engage the children in conversation using the following questions:

- What rules did God give the people long ago?
- Why are these good rules to follow?
- What might happen if we didn't have these rules?

Continue reading the Jesus part of the story. Have the children circle the two commandments Jesus says are most important as you read them. Have the children repeat the two commandments after you.

Invite the children to repeat each line after you and follow your motions. Sing to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat":

(Sing)

Up, up, up the hill, *(walk fingers up one arm) /*
Moses heard God's call. *(put hands to mouth, as if calling) /*
Down, down, down he came *(walk fingers down one arm) /*
with God's rules for all. *(hold hands, palms up) /*

(Say) How many rules did God give? *(count fingers)*

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10! Ten!

Then . . .

(Sing)

Two, two, two good rules *(hold up 2 fingers) /*
to follow in God's way. *(walk fingers away from you) /*
We love God and one another, *(point up and then to each other) /*
love them every day. *(hug yourself) /*

- Resource Page 1
- Copies of Resource Page 2
- Crayons



A note about *sin* and *repentance*: they are both individual and corporate. Developmentally, however, young children see and experience the world through their own, individual perspective. Corporate or communal sin is beyond their grasp at this age. As they grow, they will begin to understand the wrongdoing of people and institutions, both of which they are, and are not, a part. There are cultural and historical realities, however, in which a communal story is one of knowing oppression or wrongdoing against them as a people. Even at a young age, these stories and experiences are woven into a child's development.



FINDING THE PRACTICE ALL AROUND US

Choose one or both options.

THY WORD

M AM T

Teach the children a song to remind them that God's Word, the Bible, is what helps us follow God's path for us. Invite the children to sing along with the YouTube video "Thy Word Is a Lamp unto My Feet" ([bit.ly /FMThyWordSong](https://bit.ly/FMThyWordSong), 3:14), stopping at 1:25 (or *Glory to God*, #458). As an alternative to singing, have the children repeat the lines after you. Lead them in the motions they know for the refrain (from "Walking God's Path," p. 32):

- Glory to God* hymnal or internet-connected device (optional)

Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet (*point upward; move hands to form an open book; rest right elbow on back of left hand, make a fist with right hand and open fingers like light bulb turning on; then point to feet*) /
and a light unto my path. (*move hands, palms open and fingers spread wide, in an outward motion in front of face; then move both hands in a parallel motion, about the width of your body, back and forth, creating a path*) /

(Repeat)

When I feel afraid, /
think I've lost my way, /
still you're there right beside me. /
Nothing will I fear, /
as long as you are near. /
Please be near me to the end. /

(Refrain)

- Copies of Resource Page 3
- Crayons

ADULTS MAKE MISTAKES TOO

A C

Hand out copies of Resource Page 3 and read the top two panels aloud to the children and then pause. Wonder together:

- ➔ What did the teacher do wrong?
- ➔ What did the teacher do next?
- ➔ When have you seen or heard adults making a mistake or doing something wrong?
- ➔ When have you heard an adult say they are sorry for a mistake they made?

Continue reading the lower two panels. Wonder together:

- ➔ How can you tell Mr. B. felt bad about his mistake?
- ➔ How do you think Mr. B. is going to do better?



PRACTICING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or more options.



This activity will be repeated in each session of this unit because it builds on the steps involved in confession, just the way the sessions do. Repetition is an important way that young children learn.

FOUR STEPS

AM

Tell the children that there are four steps to take when they have made a mistake or done something wrong. Use the following directions, inviting the children to repeat your words and motions:

The first step is SEE, (*hold up the pointer finger*) /

seeing I did something wrong. (*point finger toward eye*) /

The second step is SAY, (*hold up 2 fingers*) /

saying, "I'm sorry" to another person or God. (*move fingers from mouth outward*) /

The third step is FEEL, (*hold up 3 fingers*) /

feeling sorry and trying my best to do better. (*place 3 fingers over heart*) /

The fourth step is FIX, (*hold up 4 fingers*) /

doing what I can to fix what is hurt or broken. (*lace fingers on both hands together*) /

Encourage the children to use the four steps when they need to confess a mistake or something they have done wrong. Suggest that they share the four steps with family members.

DOING BETTER ACTIONS

D C

Invite the children to look at the pictures cut apart from Resource Page 4. Wonder what scenes they imagined happened when you looked at them in the previous session. If children weren't present or don't remember, have them make up stories about what might have happened in each picture where someone did something wrong (it could be the child or the adult in some pictures).

Form groups of two or three children and have them take turns acting out the scene they remember or made up for each picture, including having the person who did something wrong say they are sorry for what they did. Then ask each group what the next step is for that person. Wonder together how that person could do better the next time.

- Pictures cut apart from Resource Page 4

DOING BETTER TAGS

QC A

Invite the children to think quietly about some things that cause them to stray from God's path, remembering Jesus' two rules. Encourage them to think about ways that they have not loved God or loved others, such as not talking with God, choosing other things before time with God, being unkind to a friend or family member, telling a lie, hitting or pushing, and so forth.

Ask the children to choose two things, one way they have not loved God and one way they have not loved others, and think about how they could do better in the next week.

Give each child a card-stock tag from copies of Resource Page 5. Have them write their name in the space provided. Help them write the two things they would like to do better in the spaces provided. Read the rest of the tag to the children and invite them to color their tag. Encourage them to hang their tag where they can see it each day and ask themselves the questions in the morning and at bedtime. Remind the children that, no matter what, God loves them all the time!

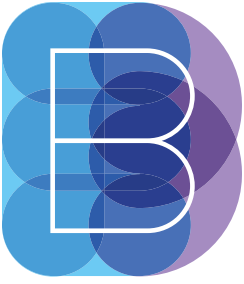
- Tags cut apart from card-stock copies of Resource Page 5
- Crayons
- String



FOLLOWING JESUS

Gather the children in a circle. Pray the following prayer, inviting the children to repeat after you:

Dear God, /
we want to love you and love others, /
but sometimes we make mistakes /
or do something wrong. /
Help us to say, "I'm sorry," /
to you and to others. /
We feel bad. /
Help us to do better. /
Thank you for loving us always! /
Amen. /



BIBLE STORY

BASED ON EXODUS 20:1–17 AND MATTHEW 22:36–40

Long, long ago, Moses led God’s people out of slavery in Egypt. They were going to the land God promised them. Along the way, the people grumbled about the long journey, griped about food and water, and doubted, at times, God’s plan for them. God told Moses to stop at a big mountain. Moses went up the mountain, and God gave Moses some rules that would help the people remember who God was and how to treat one another.

For many, many years, people called these rules, these ten words from God, the Ten Commandments. Here they are, in a way we might talk about them today:

1. Love God more than anything else.
2. Worship only God.
3. Speak God’s name with love and respect.
4. Have a day each week to rest and thank God.
5. Love and respect your parents and those who care for you.
6. Never hurt anyone with your words or actions.
7. Be faithful to your husband or wife. Keep your promises.
8. Don’t take anything that isn’t yours.
9. Always tell the truth.
10. Be happy with what you have. Don’t want what others have.

God’s people tried to follow the rules but sometimes, as we all do, they broke them. They would confess and try to do better, fixing what they could fix.

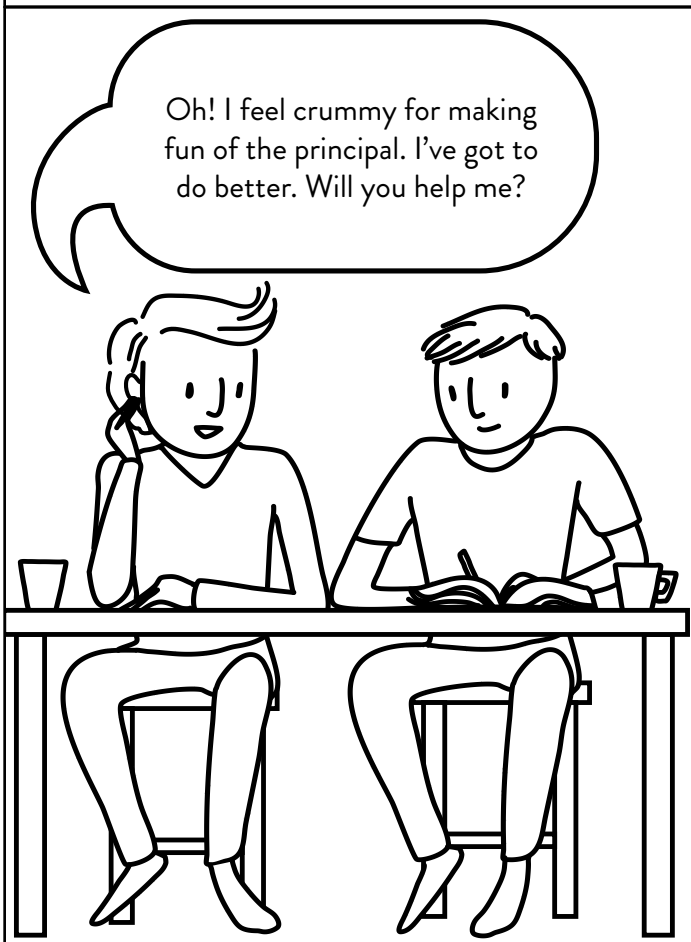
Many, many years after Moses, Jesus was asked what was the most important rule of all the rules. Jesus didn’t hesitate. He had grown up with the rules. He knew all the rules. Jesus said, “Love God with all your heart, soul, and mind. This is the greatest and first commandment.” But he didn’t stop there. He continued, “And a second is like it, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ Jesus knew that all the rules really were about these two things: loving God and loving others. These rules were important then and are still important today. They help us know how God wants us to live.

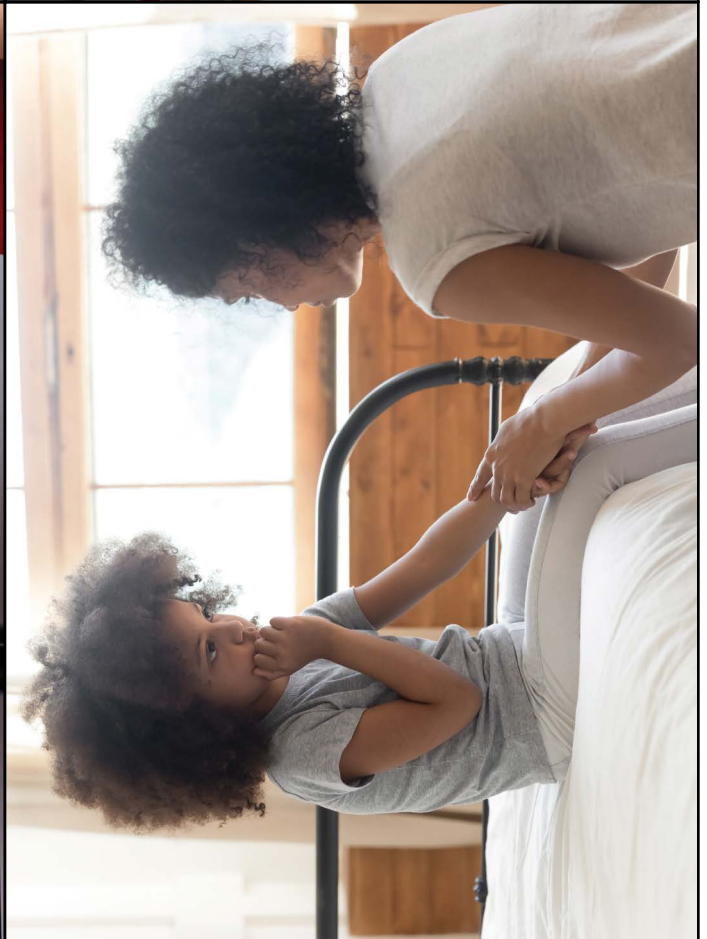
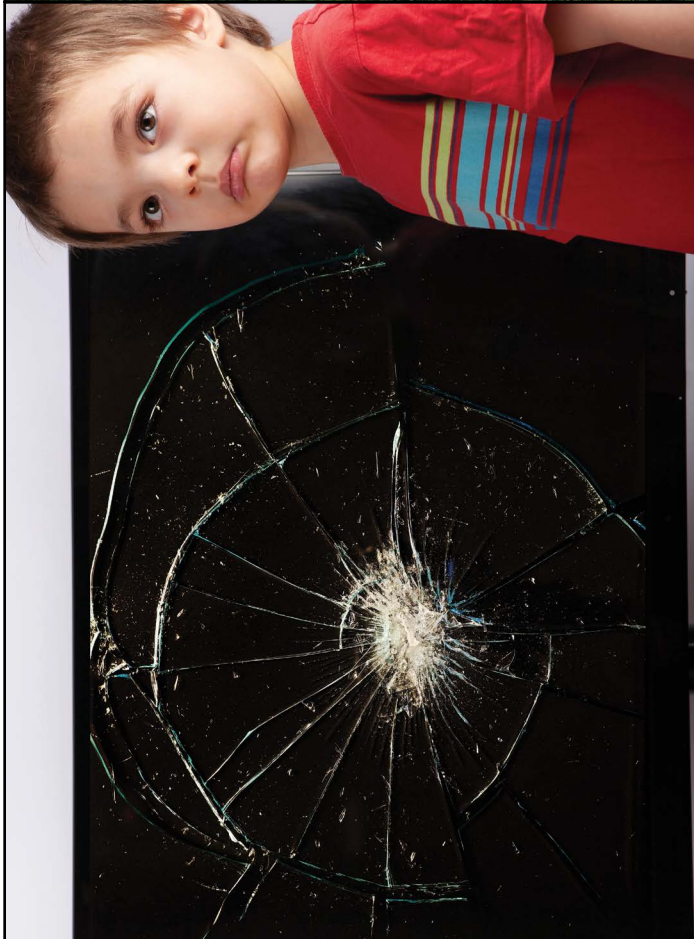
Love
others

6 8 0
5 7 9

Love
Good

2 4
1 3

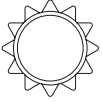




Name: _____

Two ways I can do better this week:

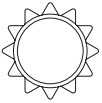
1. Loving God: _____
2. Loving others: _____



Morning:
How will I do better today?



Bedtime:
How did I do today?



How will I do better tomorrow?

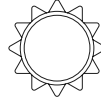


God loves me all the time!

Name: _____

Two ways I can do better this week:

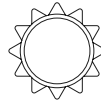
1. Loving God: _____
2. Loving others: _____



Morning:
How will I do better today?



Bedtime:
How did I do today?



How will I do better tomorrow?



God loves me all the time!

God loves me all the time!



How will I do better tomorrow?



How did I do today?

Bedtime:



How will I do better today?

Morning:



2. Loving others: _____

1. Loving God: _____

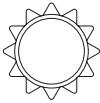
Two ways I can do better this week:

Name: _____

God loves me all the time!



How will I do better tomorrow?



How did I do today?

Bedtime:



How will I do better today?

Morning:



2. Loving others: _____

1. Loving God: _____

Two ways I can do better this week:

Name: _____

