



## FAMILIES FORMING DISCIPLES

A FAMILY-FOCUSED APPROACH TO FAITH FORMATION

### CALLED TO LOVE: THE ADVENTURE OF LIFE IN CHRIST

#### TOPIC: The Call to Love of Neighbor

#### REFERENCES:

CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH  
no. 2196

#### SACRED SCRIPTURE

MT 22:36-40;

DT 6:5; LV 19:18

#### CREED

nos.

27-50,  
62,  
405,  
577-  
82

#### LITURGY

nos.

1266,  
1393-  
95,  
1468-  
69

#### LIFE

nos.

1954-  
64,  
2152-  
2557

#### PRAYER

nos.

2634-  
36,  
2822-  
27

#### GOAL(S):

- Families will learn about: The Ten Commandments and the Natural Law.
- Families reflect on their identity and how it is displayed in their homes.
- Families will list items in their homes that show that God has first place in their family life.

#### OPENING PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ,  
We entrust our family to You and  
ask for Your blessing and protection.  
We love You Lord Jesus with all our  
hearts and we ask that You help our  
family become more like the Holy  
Family. Help us to be kind, loving, and  
patient with one another. Give us all  
the grace we need to become saints  
and Your faithful disciples.  
Amen.

#### ICE BREAKER

##### *Bucket List*

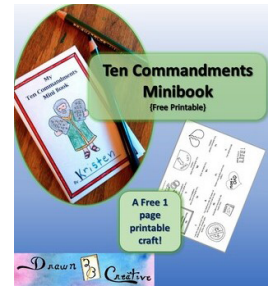
1. Each family member gets a slip of paper and writes one or two activities that he/she would like to do this year.
2. Then he/she crumples it up and throws it into the bucket.
3. One person takes a crumpled paper out of the bucket, reads it to the group.
4. Everyone guesses who wrote the idea.
5. Repeat until all the bucket list ideas have been shared.
6. Families discuss which activities they will do together this year!

Adapted from [www.weareteachers.com](http://www.weareteachers.com)



## MATERIALS

- Bibles
  - Ice Breaker: Bucket List, large bucket, slips of paper and pens
- Family Activities:
- 10 Commandments Poster for reference & games/  
Weeks 1 & 3 [free printable](#)
  - Ten Commandments Minibook [free printable](#) from Teachers Pay Teachers



## CONTENT

**Explain:** Last month, we learned that because of the long time that the Israelites had spent as slaves, they no longer knew fully how to be God’s children. They struggled to love God and one another. In many ways they were an unruly society of people without any laws. The Israelites needed to be taught how to follow God, how to be His family. God’s laws or commandments would bring order and freedom that were necessary if they were going to become a new nation, a holy nation that was special to God, a nation that was His own family!

### Introduce the Topic:

God would start by teaching His children the basics of love. He would do this by giving them laws to follow based on the natural moral law. Laws or precepts based on the natural law are ones that all people can understand if we use our reason (i.e., right reason). Because human beings are made in the image and likeness of God, destined to be His children, we have the ability to use reason to discern right and wrong, which is the basis for morality. Because of sin, we often need the help of God’s mercy and grace to align our reason with what is true, good, and beautiful.

Natural law is universal, immutable, and applies to all people:

- **Universal:** Natural law applies to all people, and is the same for everyone who can use reason (i.e. seven years of age & older, and cognitively able)
- **Immutable:** Natural law is founded in human nature and the eternal law and cannot cease to exist as long as human nature does.
- **Based on reason:** Natural law is established by reason and is the basis for fundamental rights and duties.

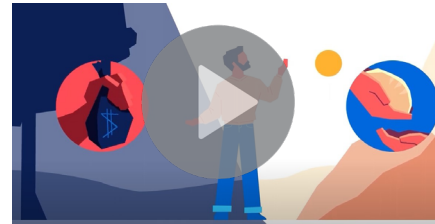
God the Father wanted His children to know how to love Him and one another. We see this in the Ten Commandments which are the first stage of God's revealed Law, expressing the basic precepts or rules of the natural law, teaching us how to love.

(Because of sin and the fall from grace, we needed God's revealed Law to understand precepts that are knowable by reason (see CCC, no. 2071).)

The first three commandments are all about the ways in which we should show our love for God.

The last seven commandments are all about the ways in which we should show love for our neighbor. This is God's Order of Love which He calls us to live, because this is the order which will make us truly happy, no matter what happens in our lives.

**Watch:** The Ten Commandments: God's Law of Love (6 min)



## FAMILY ACTIVITIES

**Step 1:** Post the 10 Commandments Poster so all the families can see it (see Materials List).

**Step 2:** Invite families to open and read aloud [Exodus 20:1-17](#).

**Step 3:** Choose one of the activities below as a way for families to become more familiar with the Ten Commandments. Along with the poster encourage families to use their bibles.

- [Ten Commandments Minibook](#) (younger children) free printable from Teachers Pay Teachers, scissors, crayons, colored pencils
- [Ten Commandments Dice Roll Game](#), one pair of blank, wooden dice per family

## FAMILY CONVERSATION

I am the Lord your God; you shall not have strange gods before me.

Invite families to:

1. Make a list of special things you have displayed in your homes that show who you are. For example: Do you have sports posters, pictures of a family member(s) &/or friends?
2. What special or holy items do you have in your home that shows who your family is as children of God? What in your home shows that your family keeps the First Commandment by loving God who created us and loves us? What shows that God has first place in your family life?

Adapted from [www.catechist.com](http://www.catechist.com)

# MISSION ACTIVITY

## 1 First, Introduce Mission Activity

Mission Activities are to be done at home during Week 2 and to be shared at the gathering of families on Week 3.

## 2 Second, Explain Activity

Your Family At-Home Mission is to:

- i. Watch the videos about the Ten Commandments.
- ii. Choose a special or holy item from your home that shows who your family is as children of God and that your family keeps the First Commandment by loving God who created us and loves us. What shows that God has first place in your family life?
- iii. Bring that item or a picture of the item to share at the Week 3 gathering.
- iv. Consider going to the Sacrament of Reconciliation as a family to receive grace to live God's laws of love!
- v. Gather as a family around your home altar and thank God for loving your family by praying a decade of the Rosary.

## 3 Last, Model for Families:

- vi. Share a special or holy item from your home that shows who your family is as children of God and that your family keeps the First Commandment by loving God who created us and loves us.

### Valentine's Day Idea!

Since February 14 is St. Valentine's Day, consider asking each family to make a St. Valentine's Day Card for a widow or widower of your parish. Families could make the cards as simple or as ornate as they want and include a prayer for the person who would receive it. Collect the cards at the Week 3 gathering and send them to the parishioners who might be missing their loved one.

## REVIEW & PRAYER

Dear God,

Help us to put You first.

Remove all the distractions that stop us from focusing our attention upon You.

You are the One who has mercifully loved us and deserves our praise!

Remove the things that separate us from You, and help us to ensure that we are not making anything in our lives more important than You.

Allow us to keep You at the forefront of our minds.

Help us to recognize Your power and majesty in the world around us.

Amen.

Adapted from [www.arnoldprays.co.uk](http://www.arnoldprays.co.uk)

# REMIND

Remind families about the next meeting date and time.

## SUPPORTING QUOTES FROM CHURCH DOCUMENTS

*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 2070 & 2196:

The Ten Commandments belong to God's revelation. At the same time they teach us the true humanity of man. They bring to light the essential duties, and therefore, indirectly, the fundamental rights inherent in the nature of the human person. The Decalogue contains a privileged expression of the natural law...

In response to the question about the first of the commandments, Jesus says: "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

**Pope Benedict XVI, Encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* (2005), nos. 14, 16, & 18**

Union with Christ is also union with all those to whom he gives himself. I cannot possess Christ just for myself; I can belong to him only in union with all those who have become, or who will become, his own. Communion draws me out of myself towards him, and thus also towards unity with all Christians. We become "one body", completely joined in a single existence. Love of God and love of neighbor are now truly united: God incarnate draws us all to himself. [...]

"If anyone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen" (1 Jn 4:20)... The unbreakable bond between love of God and love of neighbor is emphasized. One is so closely connected to the other that to say that we love God becomes a lie if we are closed to our neighbor or hate him altogether. Saint John's words should rather be interpreted to mean that love of neighbor is a path that leads to the encounter with God, and that closing our eyes to our neighbor also blinds us to God. [...]

Love of God and love of neighbor are thus inseparable, they form a single commandment.

