

#1. Have No Other Gods but Me

(Exodus 20:2-3)

Pre-Session Warm Up

What are some things that are more important to people than God?
[Teacher, let the children discuss this.]

We can allow many things to become more important to us than God – money, school, play, sports heroes, singers, TV and movie stars, friends.

No one sets out with the idea of letting these things replace God in their lives. But by spending a lot of time on these things, they can start controlling our thoughts and energies. They start stealing time away from the things of the Lord. Whatever you spend the most time and money on, is your “god.”

None of these *things* should be as important to you as God. If you let God hold the central place in your life, He will keep these things from turning into gods.

Today we are going to learn that it is important for us to have no other gods but God alone.

Opening Prayer

Dear Lord, today as we learn that we should have no other God but You, open our eyes and ears for things, people, and ideas that steal Your place in our lives. Please help us to worship You alone. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

I am the Lord your God, who rescued you from the land of Egypt, the place of your slavery. You must not have any other god but me. (Exodus 20:2-3)

Lesson

When Moses led the children of Israel through the Red Sea and out into the wilderness, He had to establish His authority with the people. The Israelites had been living in Egypt for over 400 years. Egypt was a land of many idols and many gods. They worshipped the sun god, the god of the air, the goddess of the sky and many, many others. They worshipped every god they heard about just to be sure they wouldn't miss out on any blessings.

Then out of the whirlwind, God spoke. The Earth shook and lightning struck and thunder roared because God wanted the people to listen. And, what was the first thing He said? *“I am the Lord your God...”*

The people probably didn't really think too deeply about that at first. They had been living in Egypt where the people were used to worshipping many gods — He was just one more god to add to the list. But when He said, *“You must not have any other gods but me,”* this might have been difficult for the people to accept.

But if they didn't learn that the God who led them out of Egypt was the *only* true God, they could not be His special people — no matter how faithfully they kept the other nine commandments.

I think that God made this commandment the *first* one because He knew that if you perfectly obeyed the first commandment, you would automatically obey all the other nine commandments. Because to obey it – to have no other gods but Him alone – you would have to truly love Him and put Him first in every thought you have, in every word you speak and in everything that you did.

The first four commandments teach us to love God with all of our hearts. And the other six commandments teach us to love others with that same kind of perfect love. By honoring and loving God, you learn to honor and love others.

Jesus said, *“Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.”* (Matthew 4:10) The one true God, Creator of heaven and earth, deserves your love, worship, and obedience far above anything or anyone else.

Red Light/Green Light

Has anyone ever asked you to worship something that isn't God?

Other gods come in many forms. Sometimes we don't even recognize them. What would you do if you found yourself in situation in which someone or something besides God was worshipped?

Let's decide if God is being worshipped or if another god is being worshipped in some situations.

[Teacher, give each child a red, yellow, and a green 3" x 5" "flag" made of colored construction paper. Have one child at a time come to the front of the class, pick a situation card to read to the rest of the class and have the class vote by raising one of their "flags", as follows:]

If the situation would help you to worship God, raise the green flag. If the situation would encourage you to worship someone or something besides God, raise the red flag. But if it's a situation you aren't sure if it's wrong, raise your yellow flag.

Situations:

- Your friend plays a CD. You like the music. When you listen to the words, they are praising God. (green flag)

Read aloud Psalm 149:3

- In studying about American Indians, you learned about the shamans, or medicine men. Your teacher asks you to make a drum to beat while a medicine man chants to cure a sickness. (red flag)

Read aloud Exodus 15:26

- You are swimming in your Muslim friend's new pool, telling her how great it is. She says her family praises Allah for it. (yellow flag)

Read aloud Deuteronomy 4:39

- You are at a slumber party. After midnight the kids gather around a candle to talk to ghosts. (red flag)

Read aloud Deuteronomy 18:12

- The movie you've just seen was awesome. The hero, a little boy, was called the Chosen One and had the power of the Force. (yellow flag)

Read aloud Matthew 12:18

- Your gym teacher is making you run a mile, and you aren't sure you can finish. You ask your grandma in heaven to give you the strength to finish. (red flag)

Read aloud Isaiah 8:19

- Just for fun, you let your cousin read your horoscope for today. (yellow flag)

Read aloud Isaiah 47:13-14

- Your class is studying the gods of ancient Egypt. Some kids think it's cool that the Egyptians believed a cat was a god. (red flag)

Read aloud Isaiah 19:1

Have you ever found yourself in a situation like one of these? God is serious about asking us to worship Him alone. God chose you to be His special treasures and to worship only Him. He wants you to be good examples to your friends. He wants you to show others what it means to live a life that is pleasing to Him.

Do you know people who may not worship God alone? What can you do when you are invited to their homes?

It isn't easy to stand up for God. But He wants us to be His messengers out in the world. And, we need to learn to do that just like Jesus did it, with love and compassion. It would be wrong for us to be rude or hurtful to others that don't know Him. We need to love and respect every person we meet.

But we don't need to accept what they believe if it goes against the Bible. God said, "*I am the Lord, and there is no others*" (Isaiah 45:5a).

For example, what would you do if you were asked to come to a "sleep-over" party where the other kids were lighting candles and trying to talk to ghosts?

Step It Up

[Write one of the Ten Commandments on each of ten construction paper "stepping" stones. Place #1 as the first step. (Note: this exercise actually works better if you have a staircase available to you.)]

A lot of people think that the way to Heaven is to keep all of His commandments. Let's see how well we keep them.

- Commandment #1 — If you have never worshipped any other God besides the one true God, you may stand on this step.
- Commandment #2 — If you have never made an idol, you may stand on this step.
- Commandment #3 — If you have always kept God's name holy, (never used His name in a dishonorable way, never done anything that would bring dishonor to His name), you may stand on this step.
- Commandment #4 — If you have always set aside a special day for God each week, you may stand on this step.
- Commandment #5 — If you have always honored your father and mother, you may stand on this step.

- Commandment #6 — If you have never killed anyone, you may stand on this step.
- Commandment #8 — If you have never stolen anything, you may stand on this step.
- Commandment #9 — If you have never lied, you may stand on this step.
- Commandment #10 — If you have never wanted what others have, you may stand on this step.

[Teacher, when you get to the point no children are stepping forward, read the following verses:]

Romans 3:23

For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard.

Does this mean our situation is hopeless? No! Not at all, let's read on.

Romans 3:24-25a

Yet God, with undeserved kindness, declares that we are righteous. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. (25) For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood.

[Teacher, gather the ten "stepping stones," turn them over on the floor, shaping them into a cross—six down and four across.]

God uses his laws to show us our sin. This brings us to Jesus. At the cross of Jesus, we say, "*Help! I can't do this!*" and He will help us. His death on the cross paid for your sins. That's the kind of God we have—the only one worth worshipping.

Closing Prayer

Dear Lord, You alone are worthy to be worshipped. Help me to never worship anyone or anything but You. Give me the strength and courage to stand up for You. I praise You because You are the one true God. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Bookmarks: Ten Commandments

Game Center

Use the following questions in a game of your choice:

Review questions:

1. What are some things that are more important to people than God? (Money, school, play, sports heroes, singers, TV and movie stars, friends)
2. How do you let other things become "gods" in your life? (By spending a lot of time on these things, they can start controlling our thoughts and energies. They start stealing time away from the things of the Lord.)
3. How do you keep these things from turning into "gods" in your life? (If you let God hold the central place in your life, He will keep these things from turning into gods.)
4. Why might it have been difficult for the Israelites to be told that they were NOT to have any other god but God? (They had been living in Egypt where people worshipped lots of gods.)
5. Why was it important for the people to learn that the God who led them out of Egypt was the *only* true God? (If the people didn't learn that the God who led them out of Egypt was the *only* true God, they could not be His people — no matter how faithfully they kept the other nine commandments.)
6. Why do you think that God made this commandment the *first* commandment? (God made this commandment the *first* one because He knew that if you perfectly obeyed the first commandment, you would automatically obey all the other nine commandments.)
7. To get to Heaven you have to keep all of His commandments, true or false? How do you get to Heaven? (People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed His life, shedding His blood, for our sins.)
8. Why did God give us the Ten Commandments if He knew we wouldn't be able to keep them? (To show us our sin and to bring us to Jesus.)