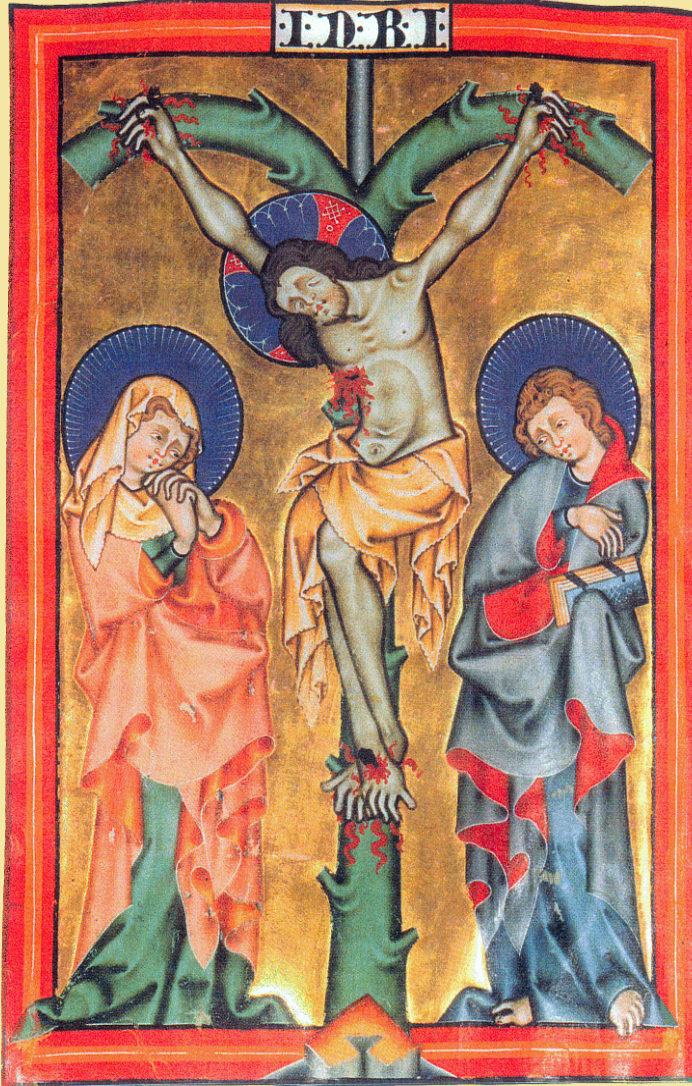


LORD, HAVE MERCY

LORD, HAVE MERCY



LORD, HAVE MERCY

Lord, Have Mercy

[Sample Packet]

LORD, HAVE MERCY

[Sample Packet]

A Vacation Bible School Program written and published by Pax Domini Press

Customer Service and Ordering Information - (419) 475-6140

www.pax-domini.com

Who is Pax Domini Press?

Pax Domini Press is a small but growing publishing company which aims to provide an alternative to the highly commercialized products of the leading Christian publishing houses.

What are some Pax Domini Press Products?

Pax Domini Press has published nine Vacation Bible School programs, each available for purchase at \$150. These programs include: *Lord, Have Mercy* (on Law and Gospel), *In the Name* (on the Holy Trinity), *I Am* (on the 7 I Am's in the Gospel of John), *According to the Scriptures* (on Christ in the Old Testament), *Take up the Cross* (on the baptismal life), *The Remission of Sins* (on Holy Absolution), *Fervent Love for One Another* (on Christian charity), *Five Words of Understanding* (on the ICHTHUS), and introducing *A New Song* (on the songs of Scripture).

Finally, *Pax Domini Press* has available three Sunday School curricula. Like the VBS program, this curriculum is produced for self-publication. One curriculum is entitled, *Teaching them to observe all things*, which takes the student through the entire Gospel of Matthew. Another curriculum is entitled, *A.D. The Acceptable Year of the Lord*. It follows the Gospels of the Historic Lectionary. Finally, a new curriculum, *The New Song*, teaches Scriptural backgrounds for the texts of the liturgy.

What is included in this sample packet?

Included in this sample packet are a picture of the front cover, brief explanations of the materials given in the kit, a look at the craft, lessons from each level (1-4), a sample from the daily prayer bulletin, including the hymn, and a sample from the puppet show.

How does Pax Domini Press's Vacation Bible School program work?

Pax Domini Press produces a CD with all the files needed for a congregation to publish a VBS program. Included on the CD are the following:

1. PDF files of a Program Manual with guidance on program implementation, instructions for the craft, and ideas for recreation time.
2. PDF files of teachers editions of each student workbook.
3. PDF files of workbook pages for the student workbooks.
4. PDF file of chapel bulletin with prayer service for each day of the program.
5. PDF file of puppet show script for use with Level 1 material.
6. PDF files of advertising materials (door hangings, bulletins, bulletin headers)
7. Extra electronic images and PDF files to be used with Level 1 material (coloring pages, activity pages, etc.) or for the craft (patterns, verses, etc.)

With these resources, the congregation simply assembles the workbooks, bulletins, and craft materials. The cost of the VBS can cost anywhere from \$10/child to \$20/child (pending on whether the craft kit is purchased or not, also pending on how the workbooks are assembled).

How do the workbooks work?

The congregation receives a CD with color PDF files of workbooks for Levels 1-4. The congregation has permission to do whatever it wants with these files. They may do the following:

- (1) Simply print them off for the children (files may print in black and white as well)
- (2) Take them to a printing professional to make booklets for the children
- (3) Advanced copiers/printers may have capabilities to produce booklets from PDF files

Workbooks can also be ordered through Pax Domini Press for \$6/booklet.

Call (419) 475-6140 or go to the website, pax-domini.com.

What is the age range for this program?

Level 1	Ages 4-5
Level 2	Ages 6-7
Level 3	Ages 8-9
Level 4	Ages 10-12

What is the theme of *Lord, Have Mercy*?

The historic Christian liturgy is one of the greatest treasures we have. It so beautifully confesses a Gospel that is rooted in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and the doctrine of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. It also teaches the central mission of Jesus Christ, to save us from our sins by His death on the cross. Yet, many people are unaware of its many sublime facets. And being unaware, many Christians are willing to trade this awesome historic gift for modern services that are light in content.

A New Song is a small attempt to help remedy this problem, to help children learn some of the foundations for the liturgy. This program will introduce the children to a few of the songs of Scripture that lay down the theology that undergird the liturgy.

Here is a summary of the lessons for the five days:

Lesson	Theme	Account	Text
One	The Law as Curb	The Giving of the Ten Commandments	Exodus 20: 1-18
Two	The Law as Mirror	The Sermon on the Mount	Matt. 5: 6-48
Three	Repentance and Humility	The Pharisee and the Tax Collector	Luke 18: 10-14
Four	Christ's Death for Forgiveness	The Woman Caught in Adultery	John 8: 2-11
Five	Baptism Delivers Forgiveness	Peter's First Sermon	Acts 2: 37-42

What is the craft like?

Typical *Pax Domini Press* crafts meet a high standard of materials, meaning, and craftsmanship, requiring strong oversight by craft supervisors. The goal is a craft that engages the child artistically as well as theologically. The craft for *Lord, Have Mercy* fits these qualification

Three panels hang on a decorated ribbon. The top panel shows the Law as mirror, demonstrating how the Law shows us our sins and need for a Savior. The second panel shows Jesus Christ on the cross, showing us that He has taken upon Himself the curse for our sins. The bottom panel shows the Holy Spirit bringing life by Holy Baptism, represented by the three pearls.

A picture is given on the following page next to the hymn for the week.

What about worship?

Pax Domini Press provides a worship folder which has a simplified Matins service for each day of the week. In the service are the Matins versicle, a Psalm, a hymn, a reading, a message, the Lord's Prayer, and the Apostle's Creed. The hymn uses original words – five verses summarizing

the five lessons of the week – and puts them to the tune of several hymns which may be found in the hymnal. (A sample is given with the chapel service near the end of this packet.)

What about the pre-schoolers?

The Level 1 material includes a puppet show (which older children may also enjoy) and a story booklet written in simple language. Also included is a teacher's book with suggestions and ideas for songs, games, and activities which will emphasize the theme for the day.

Congregations interested in expanding their program to include 3 year olds may also purchase *Let the Little Children Come unto Me*. This is a "catechism kit" with coloring books and a mini-VBS that teaches the Holy Trinity. See website for more details.

What else does the kit come with?

The kit also comes with recreation ideas. These recreation ideas are activities which incorporate the theme of the VBS. The kit also includes masters for canvassing, posters, and bulletin inserts. Finally, the kit gives some guidance and advice on running a VBS; it includes a checklist of things which must be done 3-4 months prior, 3-4 weeks prior, 3-4 days prior, during the VBS, and after the VBS.

What does the motto "Give children something to grow into, not out of" mean?

So often we assume we have to "teach down" to children. We think that unless we make something fun and exciting, they will not like it. When we do this with food, sugar coating everything, it leads to obesity. When we do this with their faith, it leads to a view of faith that will not last. Children will believe that faith must be entertaining and exciting at all times. However, as adult Christians well know, we must weather many storms in our lives, and faith is called to be the most firm precisely when life is not easy, exciting, or entertaining. If children are always taught that faith is entertainment, they will very quickly grow out of the faith.

Empirical proof is bearing this out. In a recent book entitled *Already Gone*, Ken Ham analyses why many young Christians leave the faith by the time of their 20's. He concluded that they are "already gone" at quite a young age, say 10-12. His most surprising discovery was that the kids who attended Sunday School most faithfully were most likely to leave the church. Why? Because Christianity was presented to them in cartoons and entertainment, something not to be taken seriously. For them Christianity was something to grow out of.

When we "teach down" to our children, we underestimate what they are able to learn. Often a child will read an adult's demeanor and react accordingly. So, for example, if an adult acts like something is challenging, boring, or complex, the child will act accordingly. On the other hand, if the adult teaches the material in an engaging way, the child will "step up" to the challenge.

Pax Domini Press material is by no means rocket science. It has all been child-tested. But



it does use content and images that are not typical of children’s educational material. (Yet, a child does not know what is “typical” and what is not. He simply receives the material in itself.) The material presents the faith with content and images that transcend their own little world; it gives them something they will grow into.

For this reason, Pax Domini Press invites you to try the material and see what others are saying about it (on the first page of our website). Take the dive into materials that do not turn Jesus into a pop entertainment figure. You will begin the process of establishing a firm foundation for their faith, which they will in time see as something they are growing into, not out of.



LORD, HAVE MERCY ON ME

[Level 1 Sample]

Law as
Curb



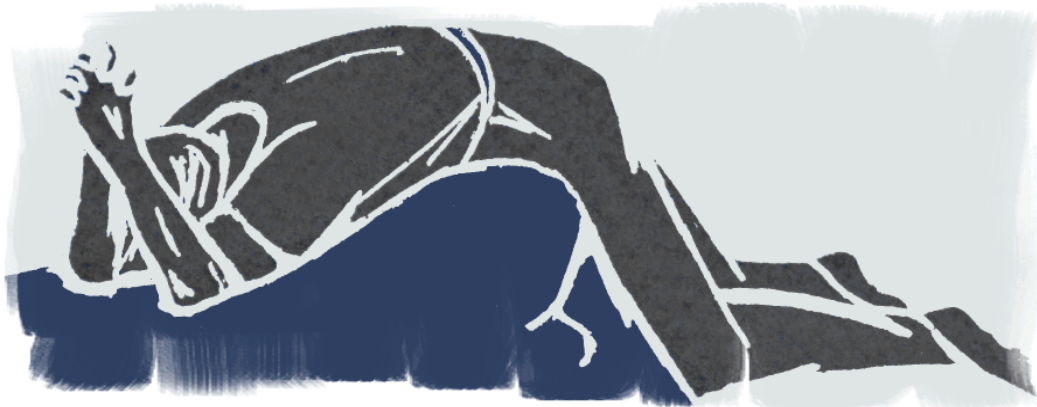
Law as
Mirror

Moses taught the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments are like a curb that keeps us from hurting ourselves.

Jesus taught the Ten Commandments also. Like a mirror, He showed us our sins, how far short we fall from keeping the commandments.

When we hear the Ten Commandments, and when we hear how Jesus teaches the Ten Commandments, we can do one of two things:

We can feel bad for our sins. We can say, "I have sinned against the commandments. Lord, have mercy on me and forgive me my sins!"





Or we can say, “I’m glad I’m perfect! I never sin like all those other sinners. I’m so glad that God made me so perfect.”

Jesus teaches that it is better to feel sorry for your sins and repent than it is to brag about being better than others.

One day He told this parable to teach this lesson. He said,

“Two men went to the temple to pray. One was a Pharisee and the other was a tax collector.

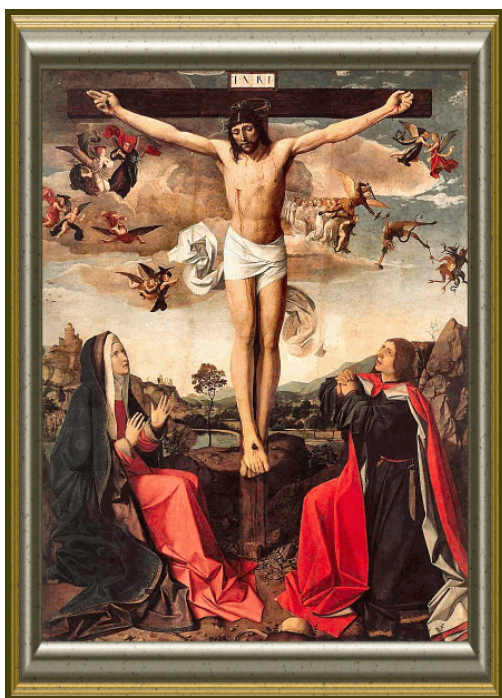
“The Pharisee stood proud and tall and prayed, ‘O God, how I thank you that I am not like that sinner over there, that tax collector. I keep the Ten



Commandments. I give my money to church.'

"But the tax collector stood far away. He was afraid to look up to God. He beat his breast and said, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner.'

Then Jesus said, "I tell you, this man was right, and he was forgiven all his sins rather than the other man. Everyone who thinks highly of himself will be brought low. Everyone who confesses his sins will be brought high."



We are forgiven not because of what we do. We are forgiven because Jesus died for our sins.

In baptism, God says, "You are my child! All your sins are forgiven!"



The Pharisee thought highly of himself...



The tax collector confessed his sins.

JESUS TEACHES ABOUT THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

[Level 2 Sample]

Introduction

Many years after the Lord gave the Ten Commandments to Israel, He sent His Son, Jesus to earth. Jesus is God, and He is also man.

We sin when we break the Ten Commandments. Jesus came to earth to save people from their sins against the Ten Commandments.

Jesus taught about the Ten Commandments in a sermon called "The Sermon on the Mount." The Lord gave the Ten Commandments from a mountain also! Jesus is like Moses, but much greater.

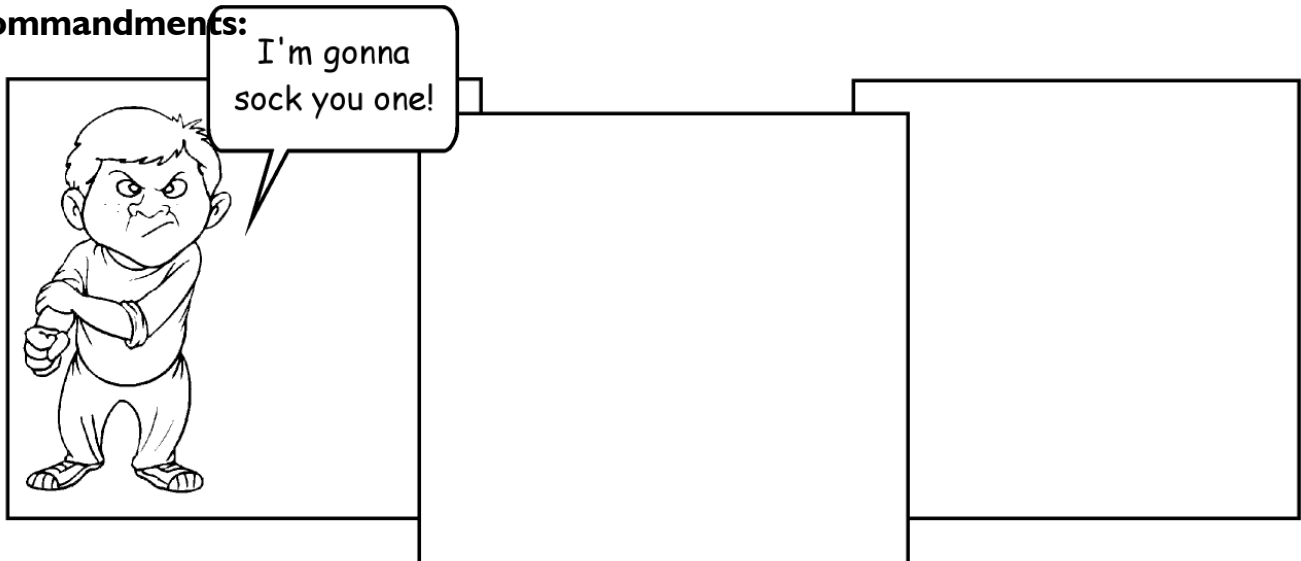
In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus did not teach against the Ten Commandments. He taught what the Ten Commandments really mean.

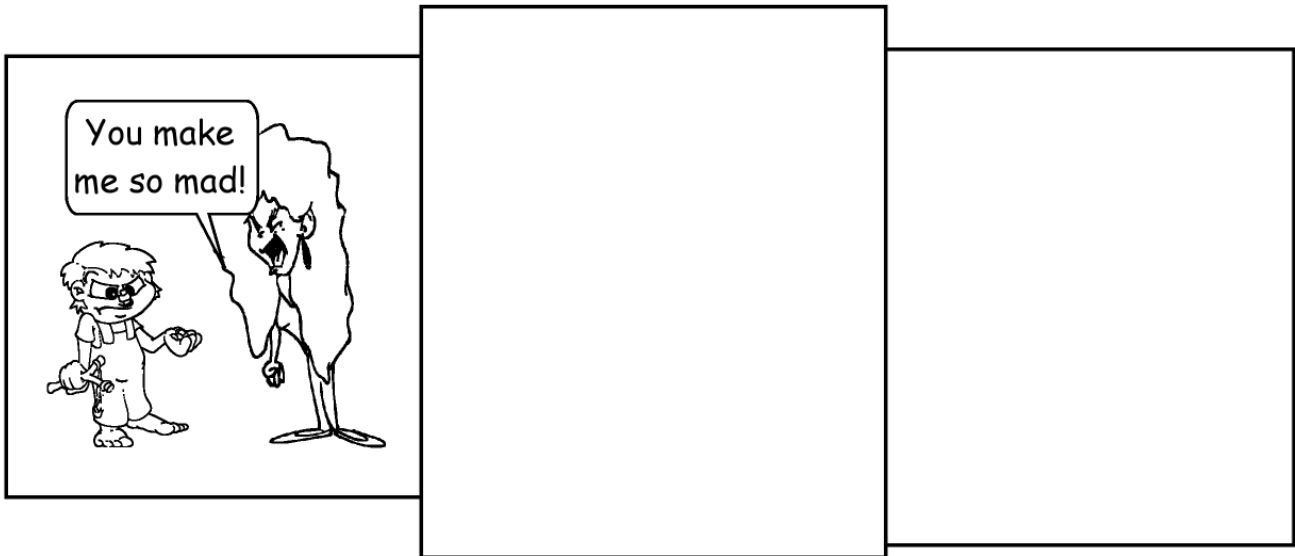


Listen to Matthew 5: 21-48 and discuss the questions that follow:

1. Did Jesus make the commandments harder or easier to follow?
2. Why do you suppose He made the commandments harder to follow?
3. Can anyone be perfect?

Draw a cartoon showing how Jesus teaches the true meaning of the Commandments:





The Law as a Mirror

The Law is a Curb. It tells us what is right and wrong. It keeps us from danger if we obey it.

Today, we learn about the Law as a Mirror. As a Mirror, the Law shows us that we have sins.

John thinks he's real cool...

John was a 6 year old boy. He thought he was so cool. He walked around like he was a king.

One day, John ate spaghetti for dinner. After dinner, he went to his friend Al's house. He was going to play baseball with Al and show off. He smiled at how good he was at baseball.

John knocked on Al's door. Al answered and laughed! John said, "Why are you laughing?"

Al said, "You have spaghetti sauce all over your face! Haha! You should look in a mirror!"

John did not feel cool anymore.

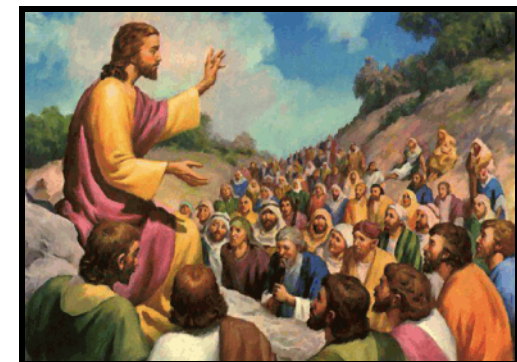


The Law is a Mirror. It shows us that we are sinners.

We might say, "I never have killed anyone." But Jesus says, "If you are angry for no reason, you have killed someone."

We might say, "I love all my friends and neighbors."

Jesus says, "You must also love your enemies and those you do not know."



When we see how perfect Jesus teaches the Ten Commandments, we know we are sinners.

Activities: Jesus Our Savior

Use the code to figure out the above word. Each symbol represents a missing letter. Figure out the missing letter based on what the word is, and place the letter in the above place according to the symbol. Each word below is an animal.

🔥nake

🏠nt

aard! ark

b+rd

m😊nkey

tige⚔

The Sermon on the Mount shows us our need for a...

🔥 🏠 ! + 😊 ⚔

Circle all the words or phrases that describe Who Jesus is or what He did:

God Perfect Holy

Lord

Just a man

Not a man

Died on a cross

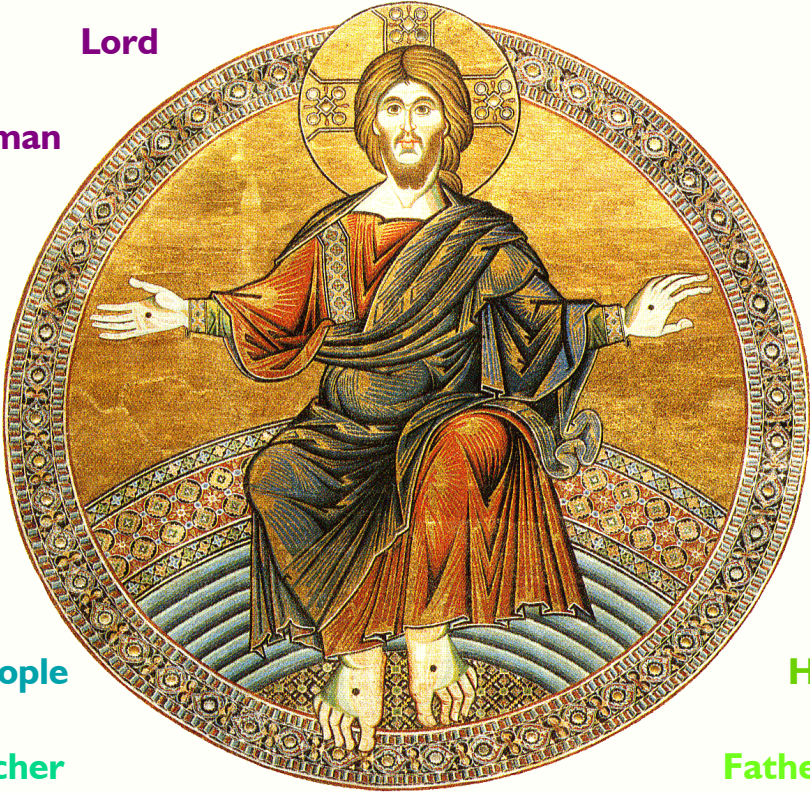
Son of God

Can do anything

Loves all people

Teacher

Holy Spirit



Sinner

Never sinned

Helped others

Tried to rule

Born of Mary

Healed people

Hates sin

Father

Suffered

Rose from the dead

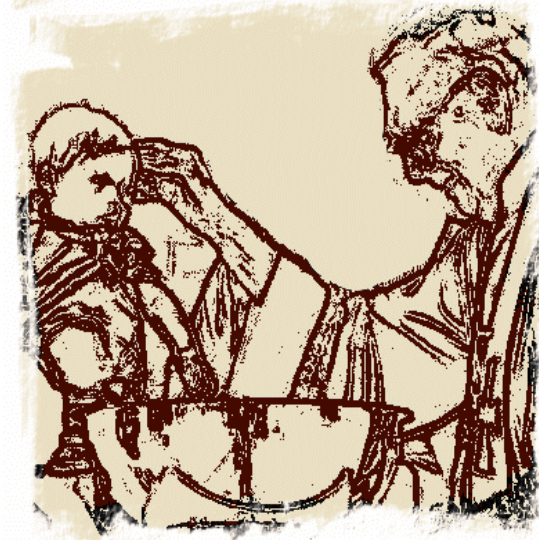
BAPTIZED INTO HIS DEATH

[Level 3 Sample]



Introduction

Last lesson, we learned that Jesus died on the cross for the forgiveness of all our sins and that He has lots of forgiveness to give out. Today, we learn something very special, or as the Bible says, something very holy: Holy Baptism. Holy Baptism gives us the forgiveness that



The Lord puts His name upon our foreheads

Jesus won for us on the cross.

Baptism is a very special and holy gift of the Lord. A pastor takes simple water, pours it on the head of a person, and he says the words, “In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

When the Lord puts His name upon us, that is a very special thing indeed! When we put our name in a new book, we are saying that this book belongs to us. When the Lord puts His name upon us, He is saying that we belong to Him as His dear children, holy and forgiven.



Read the following story...

There was once a girl who had no mom or dad. She was alone and lived on the streets. She was dirty and had to beg for food. Her name was Sarah.

One day, Mr. Jones, a very important and wealthy man in the city saw poor Sarah. Mr. Jones wanted to be nice to her, so he took her with him and gave her a home to live in. So Sarah moved into Mr. Jones’ big house. She took a bath and washed herself clean. Mr. Jones gave her new clothes, and

he gave her a big dinner to eat.

Mr. Jones also said to Sarah, “Don’t call me ‘Mr. Jones’ anymore, Sarah, but call me ‘dad’.”

Sarah was so happy! No longer would she have to beg for food. No longer would she live out in the cold. No longer would she be dirty.

Sarah loved her new dad very much. She was proud to have his name. She was so proud of her new name that she tried to please her dad and make him happy. And when people saw how nice Sarah was, they said, “This little girl is credit to her father’s name!”

How is this story like baptism?

Peter Preaches and Baptizes

Peter, an apostle of Jesus, was sent by Jesus to preach forgiveness to all people. In the story we will read, Peter preaches that Jesus is Lord and sits at God's right hand. He preaches that Jesus is Lord and Christ. The story then continues...



Read Acts 2: 36-42 and answer the following questions:

1. What two things does Peter say the people would receive when they repented and were baptized?
1.) _____ 2.) _____
2. Were children baptized too or only adults?

Put the following events in order:

_____ The people repent of their sins.

_____ The people believe in Jesus and are baptized.

_____ Peter preaches them that they are sinners.

_____ The people are sorry for their sins.

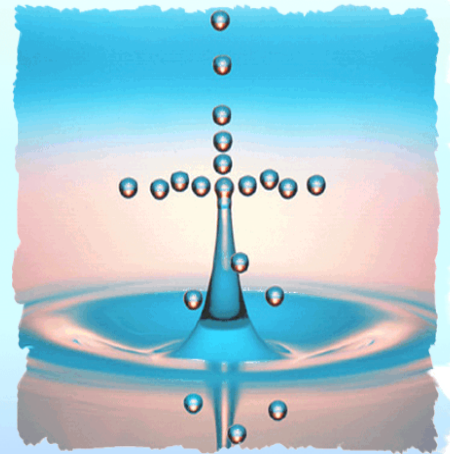
Baptized into His Death

Read the following verses:

“Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

“For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

“For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him.”



These verses teach that when we are baptized, we take part in Jesus' death and resurrection. When Jesus died on the cross, He bore all the sins of the world. But when He died and was buried, the sins stayed dead and buried. And when Jesus rose again from the dead three days later, He was free of all the sins again. They are gone forever.

Before we are baptized we have many sins, but when we are baptized those sins are washed away. We rise up from the water free of all sins forever. We take part in Jesus' death and resurrection.

Now, after we are baptized, every time we confess our sins, we start new without any sins at all. This is how we live out our baptisms each and every day.

Activity: Before and After

Draw a line from the following statements to one of the girls, either before or after baptism:

- Sinners
- Enemies of God
- Forgiven
- Children of God
- New Life
- Old Life
- Try to please God
- Rise again
- Dying to sin



THE GIVING OF THE LAW — THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

[Level 4 Sample]

Introduction

Long, long ago, over 3,000 years ago, a very special thing happened. The Lord God gave the Ten Commandments to His people.

Who were the Lord's people? At that time, the Lord had selected a group of people to be His own from all the peoples of the earth. They were called "Israelites," or "the people of Israel," or "Hebrews." The people of Israel have a very interesting story.

The people of Israel were slaves in the land of Egypt. They were forced to build pyramids and large buildings for the kings of Egypt, who were called Pharaohs. They made bricks, cut stone, and carried timber without being paid for it. And if they disobeyed or got out of line, their masters would punish them severely.

The people of Israel cried out to the Lord, and the Lord heard their cry. The Lord called Moses from amongst the people of Israel to lead them out of Egypt into a new land all of their own. So Moses did just this. He led the people of Israel out of Egypt.

But before the people of Israel would go to their new land, the Lord led them through a desert for 40 years. He did this so that Israel would learn to rely only on the Lord for their food and drink. It was at this time that the Lord gave His people the Ten Commandments.

One day, while the people of Israel were encamped in the desert, Moses went up high into a mountain, Mount Sinai, and the Lord God appeared to Moses. The Lord cut out two tablets of stone with the Ten Commandments written on them.

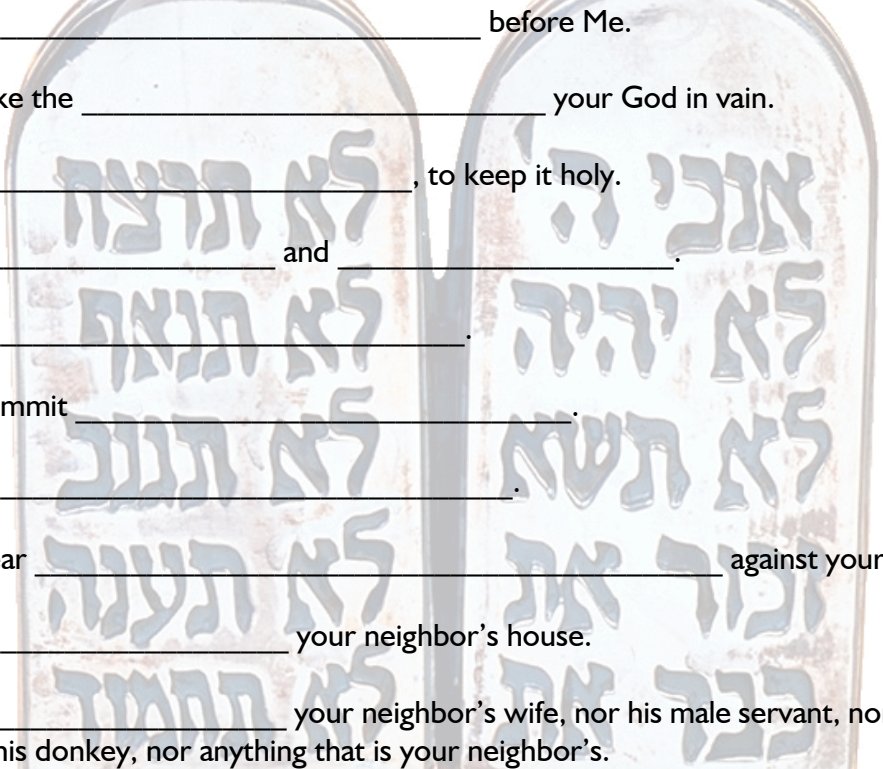
Read Exodus 20: 1-18 and answer the following questions:

1. Why is the Law good?
2. What would happen if no one kept the Law?



3. According to Romans 2: 14-15, how do some people know the Law, even if they have never seen the Ten Commandments? What is the word which means that all people have an idea of right and wrong in their hearts?
4. How did the people of Israel react when the Lord gave the Ten Commandments? Why do you suppose they acted this way?

Summarize the Ten Commandments by filling in the blanks:

- 
1. You shall have _____ before Me.
 2. You shall not take the _____ your God in vain.
 3. Remember the _____, to keep it holy.
 4. Honor your _____ and _____.
 5. You shall not _____.
 6. You shall not commit _____.
 7. You shall not _____.
 8. You shall not bear _____ against your neighbor.
 9. You shall not _____ your neighbor's house.
 10. You shall not _____ your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's.

Look at the following examples of sins. Write down which commandment is being broken:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. _____ Charlie sneaks a strawberry at the grocery store. | 6. _____ Rodney wants his friend's new car so bad he can't think of anything else. |
| 2. _____ The Smith family skips church. | 7. _____ The plumber says "Jesus," but not in a nice way. |
| 3. _____ A man cheats on his wife. | 8. _____ Kathy says that Allah, not Jesus, is God. |
| 4. _____ Mandy lies about another girl she doesn't like. | 9. _____ Thomas sasses a police officer. |
| 5. _____ Allie's mother gets more change than she should have, and she keeps it. | 10. _____ Shelby hates her cousin and gets so angry at her. |



The Law as Curb

In the picture to the left, the sign is a good thing. It warns the car that there is a cliff to the right, and it must go 10 miles an hour or it might fall off the cliff.

God gives us the Law for the same reason. He loves us and does not want us to get hurt. He knows that if we kill, steal, disobey our parents, lie about others, and get greedy for things that are not our's, we will be hurt. He wants us to have many blessings.

Also, the Law is good because it keeps our neighbors from stealing from us or from killing us. They must obey the Ten Commandments just as we must.

In the picture here, the curb keeps the car from going over the cliff. The Law does the same thing for us. Everyone has a conscience. Everyone knows what right and wrong is. Their hearts tell them what is right and wrong. That is their conscience.

Does everyone obey their consciences? Why or why not?

Activity

From the left column, write down the term from the Ten Commandments that is being defined. Gather all the letters in groupings according to the number underneath the letters. Then unscramble the letters to reveal a phrase.

When a husband is with a woman who is not his own wife, or vice versa.

_____ _____ 2 1 _____ 3 2 2

To respect or not bring shame to

_____ 1 _____ 2 3

The worship of these is forbidden

_____ _____ _____
3

The Seventh Day, when God rested

_____ _____ _____ 3 _____ _____ 3

To desire or want something that doesn't belong to you

_____ 3 _____ 1 _____

Carelessly, uselessly, or without respect

_____ _____ 3 3

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Grouping 1 Grouping 2 Grouping 3

**Hint: Read Matthew 22: 37-39 & Romans 13: 10.
What word summarizes the Ten Commandments**

Sample of a Chapel Service for a Day

Friday Prayer

Pastor: In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Children: Amen.

Pastor: O Lord, open my lips.

Children: And my mouth will declare your praise.

Psalm 32

Leader: Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered.

Children: Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit.

Leader: When I kept silent, my bones grew old Through my groaning all the day long.

Children: For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was turned into the drought of summer.

Leader: I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," And You forgave the iniquity of my sin.

Everybody: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end, amen.

Hymn *Our Lord, in His Great Love for Us* (verses 1-5)

Scripture Reading

Acts 2: 36 - 42

Lord's Prayer

Prayers

Benediction

Hymn for the Week

Our Lord, in His Great Love for Us

(for other tunes, see back of hymnal: 8787887)

1. Our Lord, in His great love for us,
Has put in us His holy Law.
These Ten Commandments long ago
He gave to Moses in great awe.
Our troubled hearts would be at peace,
And righteousness would never cease,
If in His Law, the truth we saw.
2. But in our hearts we have embraced,
The sin that stains the human race.
And so we sit at Jesus' feet,
For in His Word, we see God's face.
He shows the Father's perfect heart
That righteousness He may impart,
And make us hungry for His grace.
3. As we approach His holy throne,
We dare not come in human pride.
For humbled we will always be,
If we in boastfulness abide.
But like the man who once confessed,
And for God's mercy beat his breast,
We see how we are justified.
4. The Law of God is true and wise,
Condemning us eternally.
God's finger carved its holy words,
And "judged to death!" is its decree.
But now Christ's finger has engraved,
A Word anew, by which we're saved:
"Forgiven you shall always be!"
5. For Christ has suffered for our sins,
And on the cross was crucified.
But risen now, He sits on high —
At God's right hand is glorified.
The Holy Spirit now He gives,
By whom the sinner ever lives.
In all His gifts we are baptized.

Sample of Puppet Show Script

Day One – The Giving of the Ten Commandments

Material needed: A small, cardboard stop sign. (A stop sign can be printed from the Activities folder in the file “Lesson 1 Signs.”)

[Jessie and Nickolai are walking down the street, humming or whistling. They see a stop sign. Jessie stops. Nickolai keeps on walking as if nothing is there.]

Jessie: Hey, ya furry freak! Don't you see the stop sign?

Nickolai: The stop who?

J: The stop sign! The big, red, 8 sided sign that says S - T - O - P!...STOP!

N: Oh yeah. That. Yeah, whatever. [Keeps walking.]

J: Y'know, they put those signs there for a reason, Nickolai.

N: Well I walk to the beat of a different drummer. I do my own thing. I make my own rules. I'm my own boss. I...

J: You're a moron! Don't you know that laws are made for our good?

N: For my own good? HA! Laws were made to be broken.

J: Yeah, you learned that one the night you spent at the dog pound. Remember Bubba, the big, mean German Shepherd?

N: umm, yeah...don't remind me...

J: Well there you go. You wanna spend a night with Bubba again? Then obey the laws and rules!

N: You go ahead and obey them, ya goody two shoes. I do my own thing.

J: OK, I'm sure Bubba will be real happy to see you, because guess who's coming up the street, walking right our way, he he he.

N: Who?

J: It's your favorite dog warden! Helga!

N: Oh no! Not Helga! She caught me without my registration tags a couple of months ago...

J: Yup! That's when you ended up with Bubba.

N: [anxious about Helga coming, talking quickly and nervously] : Don't say that name! I'm sure he's

found a home already. I'm sure some nice family picked him up. I'm sure he's terrorizing the house cat or someone else....

J: Nope. I hear he's still at the pound, madder than ever. Big, bad, Bubba! Bubba with the fangs! Bubba with the drool!

N: Shhhhhh! Helga will hear! Don't say that name! Not Bubba!

[pause as Helga goes by and doesn't notice the dogs]

J: It's your lucky day, fur ball, she passed.

N: Whew! OK, I'm not risking that again. You win, O wise one. I'll stop for stop signs. Sheeesh, nothing's fun anymore. You never know when Helga-with-the-one eye brow is coming. Just don't let it go to your head, Jessie.

J: To my head? You mean being right again? With you, Nicky, being right is a regular thing. Being right isn't even that special anymore I'm right so often.... But let me tell you something, Nickolai.

N: What?

J: There are better reasons for you to obey the law than just because you don't wanna get caught.

N: And what's that, O wise one?

J: Well, let's see if you can figure this one out, O "I walk to the beat of a different drummer" one.

N: Go ahead...

J: Think about it for a second. Why do you suppose that sign said "stop!"

N: Because some bureaucrat has extra time on his hands and likes to micro-manage every aspect of our daily existence?

J: Nickolai! Come on! Work with me here!

N: OK, because if there was no stop sign, then you wouldn't stop, and she wouldn't stop, and he wouldn't stop, and they wouldn't stop, and everybody in the whole world wouldn't stop, and soon everybody would be bumping into one another.

J: There you go! Now you're thinking! Now, one more question...

N: Shoot...

J: Let's say YOU'RE the one coming the other way, and Bubba the Shepherd decides not to stop at that stop sign.

N: Eeeeeew, he'd run right into me!

J: How do you like THAT idea?

N: OK, I get it. You're saying that this stop sign is not just there to keep me from doing what I want, but it's also there to protect ME.

J: That's right. And it's the same thing with all laws. Today, the kids here are going to learn about the Ten Commandments. Do you know what those are, Nickolai?

N: I know a few of them, like "Thou shalt..."

J: Wait! Let's see if any of the kids can think of a commandment. [Jessie addressing the children.] Do any of you here know any of the commandments?

[Wait for answers. Have a teacher talk with children, responding to their answers. Or the puppets can respond.]

J: That was pretty good! We have a smart group here!

N: That's for sure.

J: So, Nickolai, are these commandments good for you, like "Thou shalt not kill" or "Thou shalt not steal"? Because not only do they stop YOU from doing these things, but they stop...

N: I got it. They also stop Bubba from doing those things.

J: That's right. [Sigh] Y'know, Nickolai, it's not easy being the wise one.

N: Whatever, Jessie!