

# I'm Number One!



**Theme:** Which is the greatest commandment? Proper 25 (30)

**Object:** A football, soccer ball, or basketball. (Choose a sports item that is very popular in your area.)

**Scripture:** "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' Matthew 22:36-39

How many of you like to play sports? What sport do you enjoy playing the most? Football? Soccer? Basketball? Maybe you are like I was when I was your age — my favorite sport was always whatever season we happened to be in at the time. Well, since we are right in the middle of football season, today I am going to teach you something about football. You will want to pay careful attention, because what I am going to teach you is the very most important part of the game of football.

Do you think I might be planning to teach you about kicking, passing, blocking, or tackling? No, those things are important, but what I want to teach you is even more important. I am going to teach you what to do after you score. Sooner or later, you are going to score, and when you do, you need to know how to celebrate!

Some players do a special dance. Others may jump up in the air giving "high fives" to their teammates. No matter how you celebrate, there is one thing that every good celebration must include. You must run around with your finger up in the air so that everyone will know that you are number one! Your team may be behind by a score of 40-7, but you are number one!

Do you know what I think? I think that is the biggest problem in our world today. We all think we are number one and the most important thing in life is our own happiness. Very few of us give much thought to the happiness of other people.

One day Jesus was asked which of the commandments was the greatest. He said that the most important thing was to love God with all your heart. He then added that the next most important thing was to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. Jesus didn't tell us to love ourselves, he knew that we would do that without being told. But he knew that the only way we could love others as we love ourselves was when our greatest love was for God. When we love God more than we love ourselves, then we will be able to love others as much as we love ourselves.

Dear Father, help us to love you with all our hearts and help us to love others as we love ourselves. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

**LOVE HOP SCOTCH:** Play this game with certain boxes with words from today's lesson, especially the word LOVE. Each time a child has a turn, the leader will tell the child which word to NOT jump on. Speed the game up as time goes on as children line up and take their turn.

**SCAVENGER HUNT:** Write the word LOVE on slips of paper or other items and hide them in a designated area. Tell the children the boundaries of the scavenger hunt area and give them a time limit as a team or as individuals as time and size of the group permits.

**LOVE RACE:** Divide the children into teams and each team will have a poster to run to, one team player at a time. When it is their turn, they will run to the poster and write the word LOVE with a marker that will be provided. Continue running back and forth until time is up. The team that writes the word LOVE on their poster the most times will be the winner!

**HEART LACING:** The children will trace two identical hearts, cut them out and use markers and stickers to decorate them. Write the word LOVE several times on the back and front of their heart in both large and small letters. Punch holes around the edge of the heart and lace in and out of the holes with colorful yarn. Before closing the final holes with yarn, stuff some tissues into the heart to make it puffy.

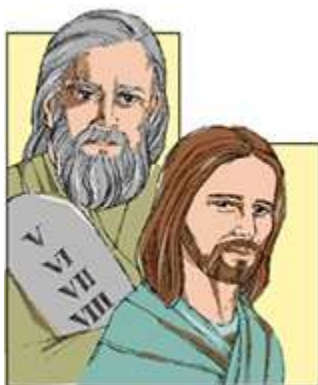
**LOVE PLATE:** Provide the children with a paper plate and construction paper to cut out mini hearts to tape or glue around the border of the paper plate. Color the plate and write GODS LOVE in the middle, and other words from today's lesson or Bible verse. Hang the plate by a yarn loop at the top.

**LOVE BALLOONS:** Blow up many balloons before class time and place a slip of paper in each balloon with words from today's Bible verse or prayer. As the children break their balloon, they will begin to put the words in order on a poster board or on the table.

**LOVE MEMORY:** Write today's Bible verse can on a chalk board. Have the children recite the verse several times together and then the leader will begin erasing a word here and there as the children try to recite the verse without those words. See if any children can recite the verse with all the words erased and give a small prize to those who can recite the entire verse.

**LOVE IN NOODLES:** Give the children construction paper and some type of small noodles to glue onto the paper to spell out GOD'S LOVE in noodles. As an alternative, a happy face made with noodles would be great on their paper as well!

## Loving God, Loving Each Other



**Theme:** Jesus tells us which is the greatest commandment. Proper 25 (30) Year A

**Object:** A poster with "Classroom Rules"

**Scripture:** "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' Matthew 22:36-39 (NIV)

Rules are very important, aren't they? Whether you are at school, at work, or play there are rules that you

are expected to follow. In just about every classroom that I have ever been in, there is a poster on the wall like this one with a list of rules that the teacher expects the students to follow. (Read the rules to the children.)

1. Don't talk when the teacher is talking.
2. Don't chew gum.
3. Stay in your seat.
4. Do your own work.
5. Keep your hands to yourself.
6. Follow directions.
7. Don't talk without permission.
8. Listen when someone is speaking.
9. Keep your desk neat and clean.
10. Be kind and respect one another.

I think that is a pretty good list of rules, don't you? Which one of these rules do you think is the most important? (Allow some feedback.) Which rule do you think your teacher would think is most important? Well, if you were to ask me, I would say that the most important rule is "be kind and respect one another."

The people in Jesus' day had to follow rules too. One day a lawyer asked Jesus, "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment?" How many commandments there are? There are ten, aren't there? Well, there were ten that Moses wrote on the tablets of stone and we call them the Ten Commandments, but the Jews actually had 613 laws. There were 248 dos and 365 don'ts. Wow! That is a lot of dos and don'ts isn't it? Can you imagine trying to remember all of them? Six hundred thirteen laws! Which one do you think Jesus said was the most important? Listen to what Jesus said to the lawyer.

Jesus answered him, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind,' this is the greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." In other words, Jesus was saying that if we could keep these two commandments, we would not have any trouble keeping the others.

It isn't easy to keep the commandments, is it? We need God's help each and every day. Let's pray and ask him to help us to love as he has commanded us.

Dear Father, help us to love you with all of our heart and to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. Amen.

**RULE GAME:** The teacher or leader of this game can have a large red, green and yellow card. Let children stand in a circle. When the green card is held up, the children can jump, twist, turn, hop, etc until the yellow or green card is held up. When children see the green card, they can GO again or if they see the yellow card, they move VERY slowly until another card is displayed!

**SIMON SAYS:** Let children play Simon says but the entire game has to be done in a circle and sitting on the floor. Another way to change the RULES and play the game would be to have children stand "facing" the wall and all "rules" by Simon are done facing that wall, such as wall push ups, ears to the wall, etc.

**PUMPKIN BIBLE VERSE:** Let children draw or cut out 10 pumpkins and glue onto another sheet of paper. Write today's Bible verse scripture on the first pumpkin and the rest of the verse in phrases on the other 9 pumpkins!

**"HEART" Bible verse:** Let children cut out a heart and decorate with sticker hearts and a heart border and LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD, etc. Tape or glue heart to the top of a craft stick!! Let children color the craft stick and hold up to wave like a mini flag!

**HEART NECKLACE:** Give children 3 colors of construction paper to draw and cut out 3 hearts, each one a little smaller than the other one. Hole punch the top of the 3 hearts that are glued on top of each other... and hang the heart like a necklace with yarn or string. Write LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART on the heart necklace!

**COMMANDMENT TREE:** Children can draw a large tree trunk and branches. Draw or cut out and glue Fall colored leaves to the tree with some of God's rules. Make sure that today's Bible verse is on at least one of the leaves to LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD, etc.

**LOVE PLACEMAT:** Give each child a piece of 8 1/2 x 11" piece of construction paper. Fold the paper in half crosswise. Make 1 inch slits on the folded side about 3 - 4 inches into the folded paper. Open the paper up and weave Fall colored strips of paper in and out of those slits. The children can write today's Bible verse or words from our lesson today around the border of the placemat, as desired, and then cover their placemats with clear contact paper.

**PINE CONE FEEDER:** Tell children that our story today is about God's rules. Tell children that they can make something special IF they follow each rule and listen carefully. Rule 1 - Pick out a pine cone and sit at the table with a paper towel under your pine cone. Rule 2 - Spread peanut butter on your pine cone. Rule 3 - Roll your pine cone in bird seed and lay on your paper towel. Rule 4 - Hang a piece of yarn on the cone to hang from a tree. Rule 5 - Wash your hands. Rule 6 - READ OR RECITE your Bible verse today about God's rule in Matthew 22:36-39.

**RULE BOOKLET:** Give children construction paper to make a cover and several pages for a little LOVE booklet. Children can decorate and color their front page for the booklet and each page can have our Bible verse today or other important lessons from today's story. Write the ending/closing prayer on the last page of their little RULE booklet!