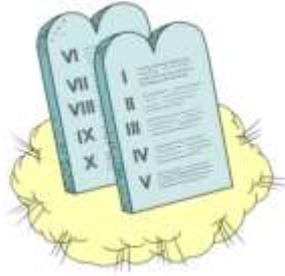


The Greatest Commandment



Loving God, loving each other. Proper 26/Ordinary 31 Year B

Object: A poster with "Classroom Rules"

Scripture: "'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: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." Mark 12:30-31 (NIV) who went ahead and those who followed shouted, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" Mark 11:9 (NIV)

I imagine that most of you have a list of rules like this in your classroom at school. If we walked through every classroom in your school, we would probably see a list of rules hanging on the wall. Even though there might be some slight differences, most of them would say pretty much the same thing. They would say things like:

- Listen Carefully
- Follow Directions
- Obey the Teacher
- Work Quietly
- Keep Your Hands to Yourself
- Be Kind to others

If you were to ask me which classroom rule is most important, I know what I would say. I would say that the most important rule is to respect and obey your teacher and the second is very much like it - be kind and show respect for your fellow students. If we would just follow those two rules, there really wouldn't be a need for any more.

The religious leaders of Jesus' day liked to sit around and discuss the law. They especially liked to ask Jesus questions about the law hoping to trick him into saying something that would cause people to turn against him. One day they were questioning Jesus and he answered them with one good answer right after another. One of the teachers of religious law was standing there listening to the debate. He realized that Jesus had answered well, so he asked, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"

Most of you know the ten commandments, don't you? How would you answer that question?

This is how Jesus answered. He said, "The most important commandment is this: 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.' The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment is greater than these."

After hearing Jesus' answer, no one else dared to ask him any more questions!

What a wise answer. If we could just keep those two commandments, we wouldn't have any trouble keeping the rest of them, would we? Let's go to the Father and ask him to help us.

Dear Father, help us to love you with all our heart, soul, and strength -- and to love one another as we love ourselves. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Activities

LISTEN/FOLLOW AND OBEY GAME PLAY: Let all the children stand in a circle or against a wall. This will be played similar to the SIMON SAYS game - but it will be the TEACHER SAYS (use

teacher's name if desired). Tell the children they are to LISTEN and then follow and obey the teacher's commands, but no other commands that are given if the TEACHER didn't say it!

WORK QUIETLY QUICKLY: Tell children to do whatever the teacher commands them to do, but to do it QUIETLY and QUICKLY -- such as pretend to mop the floor, hop QUIETLY, put away books (with no sound to be heard), put crayons away, etc. This is a great QUIET way to get the room picked up and organized!! :-)

HANDS TO YOURSELF RELAY: Let children play a quick game such as soccer and can use NO hands for the game! Other games could be kick ball, potato bag racing; balloon bopping, etc.

FALL LEAVES HEART: Let children find real fall leaves or cut out leaves and glue in the shape of a big heart! Write LOVING GOD - LOVING EACH OTHER in the middle of the heart shaped leaves.

MULTI COLORED HEART POSTER: Provide a poster sized cut out heart and hang on the classroom wall (red or pink poster board) and give each child a bright colored marker to write words from our Bible verse on the classroom heart. Have children repeat and take turns saying today's Bible verse while they are writing words together on the heart!

NEWSPAPER COMMANDS: Give each child or a group of children a newspaper page. Tell the children to find and circle words from today's lesson --- such as obey, listen, follow, work, kindness, commands, heart, love, etc. Children can be encouraged to circle other words that might have something to do with today's lesson and let children share their words and ideas!

PUMPKIN PATCH BIBLE VERSE: Provide each child with a large cut out pumpkin or a tracing of a pumpkin with the stem. A pile of various shapes and sizes of orange construction paper can be in a pile for each child to begin gluing to the tracing of a pumpkin until all of their pumpkin has been filled in with little pieces of orange paper. Tell children, then, to write today's Bible verse on the little pieces of orange paper and display all the pumpkins on a wall in the classroom as a PUMPKIN PATCH.

CIRCLE SITTING: Let children sit in a circle and ask MANY QUESTIONS of the teacher. Tell the children that the religious leaders of Jesus' day liked to sit around and ask questions of Jesus and let the children ask serious or silly questions as time allows. Then tell today's story to the children in the circle.

HEART HUNT: Write words from today's Bible verse and put a few hearts in each child's Bible or provide a Bible for each one and the children will hunt for the little hearts in their Bible and then put the verse together as a class. Repeat and take turn saying the Bible verse alone and together as a class.

HEART HANGING: Let children cut out several different sizes of heart and glue the hearts to a long piece of wide ribbon and hang on the wall with a wall hanger or yarn. Write words from our lesson on the hearts - such as love the Lord with my heart, my soul and strength, etc.