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## **Home Study Lesson 2**

### **First, Second, and Third Commandments**

#### **GOAL**

The goal of this lesson is to teach the youth about the first three commandments, how these are important to the rest of the commandments, and how these apply in their lives.

#### **MAIN IDEAS**

- The first commandment summons humankind to believe in God, to hope in Him, and to love Him above all else. (CCC 2134)
- We are called to respond to God's invitation in how we adore, pray, sacrifice, and make promises to Him.
- We were created to worship, so if we do not respond to God we will worship something or someone else.
- The second commandment tells us not to use the Lord's name in vain. When we use God's name in vain, we are belittling God and putting ourselves higher than Him, disregarding the true nature and holiness of God.
- The name of God should always be used reverently and respectfully. We should never use His name lightly, without thinking, or for any purpose other than to praise and adore Him.
- Our names also have great significance. This means we should respect our names, respect the names of others, and continually grow in holiness.
- The third commandment tells us to keep holy the Lord's day. This means going to mass and refraining from unnecessary work on Sundays.

## **TEACHING**

**FIRST COMMANDMENT: I am the Lord your God, you shall not have other gods before me.**

When we want to be friends with someone, we don't start the relationship by saying, "Hi, my name is Bob. Here are the rules for our friendship." Instead, we spend time with that person doing activities that we both enjoy and getting to know more about one another. In a similar way, God wants to spend time with us and invites us into a relationship with Him. It is always exciting when you have a great time with someone and create a life long friend, and it is hard when you want to be friends with someone, or with a group of people, and you get totally rejected, left out, or not invited to something.

In the first commandment, God is asking us all important questions: Will you be my people? Will you worship me alone and no other gods? And we must respond to Him. Are you willing to enter into this friendship with God? Or will you reject Him? The first commandment summons humankind to believe in God, to hope in Him, and to love Him above all else.

**Pause and read CCC 2134.**

We are called to love God above all else. We can trust Him, because He has first loved us and reveals to us that He wants only our best.

**Pause and read CCC 2093-2094.**

Because God is loving and trustworthy, we can have hope in Him and all the good things He promises His people. Faith, believing in God, is essential to following God. As we continue to learn more about God and respond to Him, we can grow in faith.

**Pause and read CCC 2084-2092.**

We can respond to God in a few specific ways in our daily lives.

**Adoration:** We adore God by worshiping Him. We acknowledge that God is God and we are not. He is the all-powerful, all-knowing, all-present, and all-loving God. We are His creatures, and He has chosen to love us. (CCC 2095-2097)

**Prayer:** We pray and enter into conversation with God. We pray in praise and thanksgiving, intercession, and petition. This should be a daily action.

Sacrifice: Saint Augustine once said that every action throughout our day should be done for God as a way to cling to Him — that we can offer all our actions as sacrifices. Do we offer our activities and day to God? (CCC 2098-2100)

Promises: At different points in our lives we will make promises to God through different sacraments like Baptism, Confirmation, Matrimony, and Holy Orders. Through these sacraments we make promises to God to be more faithful to Him and His will for our lives. (CCC 2102-2103)

Evangelize: Because we have been shown the great love of God, we are called to share about Him with others who may not know Him. In doing so though, we must always respect another's freedom of religion, or their freedom to choose how to respond to God's invitation. (CCC 2104-2109)

Humanity was created by God and for God; we were created for His love and to respond to His love. So if we do not respond to Him, we will worship something or someone else. We were created to worship. In our society, it may not always be as obvious that we are worshiping other Gods.

For example, any sort of magic, fortune telling, palm reading, or other practices that try to predict the future or manipulate things in our lives show a lack of trust in God's plan for our lives. (CCC 2110-2112). Sometimes, we don't mean to, but we let other things become more important than God — like money or being popular — or we prioritize sports on Sunday instead of going to Mass and worshipping God. We get lazy and do many other things instead of praying. (CCC 2112-2114). God has chosen us, and it is up to us to put God first. Not because we have to but because we want to.

God is for us; He has given Himself to us and is present with us! He is passionately in love with us and invites us into relationship with Him. This relationship leads to a full and happy life while a relationship with any other god leads to sin, darkness, and disappointment.

**SECOND COMMANDMENT: You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.**

Our tendency, often, is to speak before we think and to say a lot of things without thinking at all. But words *do* matter.

As we look at the second commandment it says, “You shall not take the name of the Lord God in vain.” This commandment is both about the name of God and how we should speak about things that are sacred.

**Pause and read CCC 2142.**

We use the word “vain” to mean a lot of things, but in this commandment the word vain means not respecting or valuing the name of God. But it’s not just God’s name that needs to be honored and used with respect; this also goes for any name for God, the name of Jesus Christ, the name of Mary, and the names of the saints.

**Pause and read CCC 2143-2146.**

The second commandment reminds us to think before we speak. When it comes to the sacred, we can’t just throw words around without any thought. We also can’t use God’s name to justify wrong actions. (CCC 2147). A specific misuse of God’s name is blasphemy. Blasphemy is saying something negative against God or about God. This can be either inward or outward. We can think badly about God or we can say bad things about Him to others. (CCC 2148)

God is the Father and that makes us sons and daughters. We should respect God, as sons and daughters, because He is our Father. That also means that we should never swear by God’s name or break an oath or promise that was made in His name.

**Pause and read CCC 2150-2152, 2154 and Matthew 5:33-37.**

The reason why we have the second commandment is so that we are always aware of the greatness of God and the attitude we are supposed to have toward Him. That is also why Jesus gave us the Our Father as an example of how we are to address God.

**Read the Scripture verses Matthew 6:9-13.**

The Our Father gives us the true way we should use God’s name, proclaiming “hallowed be Thy name.” We are calling God’s name holy and offering Him praise and thanksgiving. When we are defiant of God by being prideful, not giving Him a place in our lives, and trying to make ourselves God, we are going against the second commandment. (CCC 2148). By praying the Our Father we call to mind the reality that God is a holy, loving Father. This great love and truth should compel us to proclaim God’s wonderful name to everyone. (CCC 2807-2815)

While the second commandment is primarily about God, it implies respect for all names. The first three commandments are about God, but we cannot separate the love of God from the love of others.

Jesus tells us that we are to love God and to love our neighbors.

**Pause and read Luke 10:27.**

One way that we can love our neighbors is by respecting their names. That means not making fun of someone's name, not gossiping about someone, and always addressing others respectfully. When we are baptized we are given a name, usually the same name we are given at birth. This is important because it sanctifies us and our name is received into the Church. The name we receive at Baptism is our name for all eternity. So, we must not only respect the name of each person around us, but our own name. (CCC 2156, 2159)

Our calling is to be the most true version of ourselves, the selves that our names will represent for all of eternity. The best version of Jamie or Chris or Monica or Mary defines the most true and authentic Jamie, Chris, Monica, or Mary. It is also important to note that we only find our true identities in being holy, in following Christ, and in living according to the plan and will of God the Father who created us.

We are called to reflect the love of God and see ourselves as a son or daughter of the heavenly Father. This is a unique and difficult task. We are invited to become our best selves by trusting in God and following His will, for He knows what is best for us and what will make us the best version of ourselves.

**Read CCC 2628.**

**THIRD COMMANDMENT: Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.**

We are all called to have rest in our lives. We need rest to be healthy, and according to the second commandment, we need rest to also be holy! For us, the Sabbath is Sunday, and it is the day of the week that God has called us to keep holy. But what does this mean in our daily lives? Where does this come from?

In Genesis, at the very beginning of creation, we read the story of God creating the heavens and the Earth, water and sky, fish, birds, animals, and man and woman in six days. After He finishes we read, "And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all his work which he had done in creation."

**You may pause and read Genesis 2:2-3.**

After the God of the universe works for six days, He takes a day off to rest, and He blesses that seventh day. Because God made that day different than all the rest and set it apart, He also calls us to do the same.

**Pause and read CCC 2168-2171.**

By observing the Sabbath, we are following in God's footsteps by taking a day for rest and to be refreshed.

**Pause and read CCC 2172.**

This commandment was given to the Israelites in the Old Testament, and Jesus also talked about the importance of keeping the Sabbath a couple of different times in the Gospels. Jesus spoke of the Sabbath as a time to focus on giving God glory and honor and to do good. (CCC 2173) Jesus also spoke of the importance of rest in our lives.

**Read Matthew 11:28-30.**

When we follow Jesus, He will lead us to rest.

So, in the midst of a busy and loud world, how can we keep the Sabbath holy? First and foremost, we keep the Sabbath holy by attending Sunday Mass.

**Pause and read CCC 2175-76.**

We have an obligation to attend Mass on Sunday and on holy days of obligation. If we miss Mass without a just reason, like illness, it is considered a grave sin. (CCC 2181) We were created for community, and, together as His people, we are called to give God "outward, visible, public, and regular worship" (CCC 2176). That is why we go to Mass at our parish with our community rather than praying at home by ourselves. (CCC 2179). When we attend Mass on Sunday, it shows that God is our primary focus on the Sabbath. When we receive the Eucharist at Mass, which is the bread of life, God gives us what we need to be sustained during the week. The celebration of the Eucharist is the primary way we keep the Lord's day holy, but the idea of keeping the Sabbath extends to our whole Sunday. (CCC 2184-2188) Our encounter with Christ at Sunday Mass should guide us in the rest of our Sunday and our week.

The pace of our day on Sunday should look different than the other six days of the week. That means that instead of working, we should spend time in prayer, resting, and with family and friends. It should be a day of leisure and refreshment.

Sometimes the thought of taking a day off can seem stressful. Taking a Sabbath is an act of faith.

By choosing to rest we are trusting that God is in control of our lives, that if we take time to honor Him that He will bless our time when we go back to our tasks the rest of the week.

**Close this lesson by spending 10 minutes in quiet prayer and think about your relationship with God.**

## **QUESTIONS**

1. How do these first three commandments show that we love God?
2. Why is the first commandment so critical? What things in our lives are we in danger of treating as gods?
3. Why do you think it is so easy to throw around words, especially names, lightly? Why do you think people throw around God's name lightly?

4. What is “the Lord’s day”?

5. What are some things you can do, or refrain from doing, that will help to keep holy the Lord’s day?

6. Why do you think rest is important?

7. What is one thing you can do on Sunday to make God more of your focus?

8. Why is going to Mass on Sunday so important?

9. What is one thing you can do personally to make your Sunday more restful or prayerful?