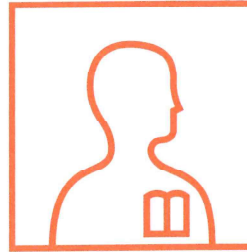


## Question 13

# Can anyone keep the law of God perfectly?



## Answer

Since the fall, no human has been able to keep the law of God perfectly.

### Big Idea

The law of God has been kept perfectly only by Jesus. No other human has, is, or will be able to keep God's law.

### Aim

To introduce the children to the concept of original sin.

### Bible Passage

Romans 3:9–20

### Memory Verse

“None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.” (Rom. 3:10–12)

### Virtue

Forgiveness





## Notes

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### Leader's Notes

The concept of sin is increasingly alien to modern society, and the belief in the doctrine of original sin will be offensive to many. The world is inclined to believe that children are born innocent and are corrupted only by the adult influences in their lives. This lesson aims to introduce the children to the doctrine of original sin. It will help the children to understand that no one has kept or will be able to keep God's law perfectly, except Jesus. The children will learn that sin affects their relationship with God and with other people. This lesson aims to help them see how sin corrupts everything and how Jesus can provide salvation because he lived the perfect life.

Things to remember when planning and teaching:

- This is a difficult concept for some children to understand. Exercise care and patience in your teaching.
- This can be a frightening topic for children, especially those from non-Christian homes. Be sensitive to those children who may come from non-Christian homes or who are not yet Christians themselves.
- Remember to mix and match the activities in the lesson to fit your time frame (see p. 12 for some sample outlines). You won't have time to do them all. Feel free to adapt each activity based on your class's strengths and weaknesses.

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### Leader's Prayer

Gracious God, I recognize that I am an unworthy sinner, but rejoice that you have shown me mercy and grace through salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ. May I ever remember your kindness and be aware

of what you have saved me from. Grant understanding to the children who will hear this lesson, and help them to recognize their need for a Savior. In Jesus's name. Amen.

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### Leader's Tool Kit

- Whiteboard
- Whiteboard markers
- Pictures or video of Evel Knievel
- Flashlight
- Smooth stones, one per child (available in craft store floral departments)
- Paint pens



## 10 Catechism Recap

Divide the children into small teams. Have a whiteboard at the front of the classroom, and give each team a whiteboard marker. Ask the teams to give themselves a team name. Write the team names on the board.

Tell the children that you will read either the question or the answer of one of the

catechism questions and they have to take turns to run to the board and write the number that is linked to what has been read out. Note who is the fastest and who is correct after each round. Give one point to the fastest team and a point to each team that guesses the correct number. The team with the most points at the end wins.

## 5 Introduction to Question 13

Ask the children what they think the worst crimes are. Write their list on a whiteboard.

Once they've listed some crimes, ask them to rank them from the most offensive to the least offensive. Once they have completed the activity, ask them where they would place themselves on the list. They will probably be shocked at the suggestion that they should even be on the list and protest their innocence.

Reassure the children that you're aware that they haven't committed a crime or broken any laws in the eyes of the state, but

challenge them to consider whether they've broken God's law. Now ask them once again where they think they should be on the list, given that it's a list being prepared for God. Hopefully they will put themselves right at the top of the list. Eliminate the rankings and tell the children that before God, everyone is equally guilty. Introduce Question 13: "Can anyone keep the law of God perfectly?" Remind the children that God gave his law to show his people how to live, but that everyone except Jesus has failed to keep the law of God perfectly.

## 10 Activity

Tell the children about Evel Knievel. Explain that he was a famous motorcyclist who attempted daredevil stunts. Show them some pictures or video footage to illustrate the kind of stunts he performed.

Explain to them that on the September 8, 1974, Evel Knievel planned to jump across the Snake River Canyon in a specially

designed Skycycle. All the spectators were disappointed because he didn't make the jump. He fell short. (Reassure the children that, surprisingly, he was not killed and only had minor injuries.) No one was really interested in how far he did get; the reality was that he just couldn't reach the other side. When you're jumping across a canyon, "almost" is not good enough!

## Notes

**Notes**

Help the children understand that this is an illustration of how humanity is before God's law. Every single person fails to reach the standard of God's law.


**Teaching Outline**

Begin the teaching time by asking for God's help. Ask that the lesson would be taught faithfully, and that the children might listen well.

Ask the children if anyone here has ever received a perfect score on a test. Congratulate those who say they have! Then ask those children if they always get 100 percent on their tests. Explain that it is very unlikely that anyone will consistently achieve 100 percent on every test throughout his or her life. Reassure the children that it actually doesn't matter whether they get 100 percent on every exam, as long as they try their best. But help them to see that perfection is impossible to live up to.

**Read Romans 3:9–20.** Provide Bibles for the children to read along with you.

Introduce the children to Paul's letter to the Romans and explain to them that, at this point in the letter, Paul is helping his readers and listeners understand just how bad the situation is for them! Paul clearly explains to them that everyone, both Jews (God's chosen people) and Gentiles, fail to live up to God's standard as revealed in his law—the Ten Commandments. Paul says that everyone is born sinful, and that means that no one can keep the law of God perfectly.

Explain to the children that God designed human beings to be able to keep his law perfectly, but when sin entered the world through Adam, everything changed. Adam rejected God's law in favor of living his own way, and every single person who has lived since is tainted by the sin that first appeared in Adam. Explain to the children that everybody is separated from God by sin and that no one is capable of living the perfect righteous life that God demands. Remind the children that God has declared that he will punish those who fail to keep his law.

Paul explains that no one is right with God. Invite the children to look back through the passage and pull out some of the things it says about people. Ask the students to identify the parts of the body that are mentioned in the passage. There is no part of us that isn't affected by sin. Ask them if they are shocked or surprised or worried.

Help the children to see that it is both relationships with other people and the relationship with God that is spoiled.

Read verse 20 for the children, and explain that it means it is not possible to save oneself by the law, but rather, through the law people become aware of their sin.

Ask the children if your classroom is dirty or clean. (Hopefully, they will say that it is clean.) Tell them that although it may be tidy, there may be dust on surfaces that we can't see. Let a few children take turns using the flashlight to see if they can find any dust. Help the children see that the law allows us to see where we have failed to live according to God's perfect way, just as the flashlight helps us see dust that we could not see without it.

Tell the children that there is some good news though! Describe how understanding our failure to keep the law helps the beauty of the gospel to shine through. It's like a black piece of velvet that is put behind a diamond to allow the diamond to shine brightly.

Tell the children that there is One who kept God's law perfectly, and that was Jesus. Explain that God intends to punish those who have rejected his rule and broken his law, but Jesus wonderfully, willingly bears God's punishment in order for relationships to be restored between God and man.

**Conclude the teaching time by helping the children commit Question 13 and the answer to memory.**

*(These notes are just for guidance. Please expand or amend to suit your own children and context. Write out your talk in your own words and include illustrations and applications that you know will connect with your children).*

## Notes

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### Activity

Draw a line down the middle of the whiteboard. Write "Before" on one side and "After" on the other. Let the children take turns writing things on either side of the

line. Everything on the *Before* side should be things that were true before the fall of Adam. Everything on the *After* side should be what is true of our world now.

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### Discussion and Question Time

Some of the questions that might arise include:

**? Why did God allow sin to enter the world?**

Explain to the children that God knew humanity would sin, but that he allowed it to happen so he could display

his amazing love by sending Jesus to die on the cross.

**? What difference does it make if people actually keep the law?**

Explain to the children that because God is just and holy, he will punish those who don't keep his law perfectly



Notes

and fail to repent. People can live as if God doesn't exist and as if his law isn't important, but one day they will stand before God in judgment.

**? I'm not sure I'm a Christian. Will I face God's punishment?**

Help the children understand how to become a Christian by putting their faith in Jesus.

Also use this opportunity to help the children to think about their own lives

and how this question and answer affects them personally.

- Ask the children how they might describe the concept of original sin to someone else.
- Ask the children how they might be inspired to obey the law in gratitude for God's saving grace in Jesus.
- Help the children to consider the urgency of sharing the gospel.



**Virtue Vision**



**Forgiveness**

*Have the smooth stones and paint pens ready.*

Suggest to the children that it would be very bad news for us that we cannot perfectly keep God's law if we did not know that God forgives those who repent. But because the punishment that we deserved was taken by Christ, we can be completely forgiven.

Ask the children how that might make a difference when someone hurts our feelings or sins against us. Does the fact that God has forgiven them make them want to forgive others?

Give each child a small smooth stone. Ask the children what they could draw on the stone to symbolize forgiveness (a cross would be a good choice, but they may have another idea). Let each child decorate his or her own stone. Tell them that this is meant to be a forgiveness stone—a reminder that since God has forgiven us (upward forgiveness), we should forgive other people (sideways forgiveness). When someone sins against them, the forgiveness stone will be a reminder that we forgive because God forgave us.

*Don't let the children take the stones home yet. Make a few extra forgiveness stones to keep for next week's Virtue Vision.*



### Memory Activity

On the whiteboard, write out the memory verse or catechism answer without vowels. Invite the children first to try to read it without the vowels, then to suggest where

the vowels should go. Once all the vowels have been inserted, read the memory verse or answer through several times with the children.

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### Notes

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### Closing Prayer Time

Pray that the children would rejoice in their salvation and that they would be urged to pray for the salvation of others.

