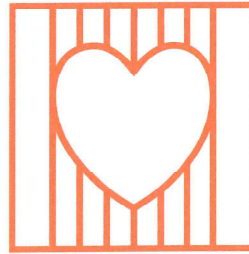


Question 7

What does the law of God require?



Answer

That we love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength; and love our neighbor as ourselves.

Big Idea

God's law is still relevant for the Christian, and it requires obedient and loving lives.

Aim

To help the children understand what it is to live wholeheartedly for God in light of his love and grace.

Bible Passage

Matthew 22:34–40

Memory Verse

“And [Jesus] said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.’”
(Matt. 22:37–40)

Virtue

Gratitude



**Notes****Leader's Notes**

This lesson is the first in a section of nine questions that deal with God's law and the response that God demands from his people. Each question will consider an aspect of the law and will engage with its significance for the children today. This lesson will highlight for the children that God's law is still relevant today and that it is an important part of the Christian life. This lesson aims to encourage the children to consider carefully what it means to respond to God's saving grace by living thankful lives characterized by obedience. The children will be encouraged to consider their love for God—and how that is expressed in their lives—as well as their love for others. The role of God's law is often downplayed in the Christian life, but this question will help children to understand that it is meant to guide us in how to respond appropriately to his grace in his world.

Things to remember when planning and teaching:

- Be sure to point out that obeying the law will never make anybody right with God.
- You will need to help the children to think seriously about how this question will practically affect their individual lives.
- Be careful to articulate clearly the fact that wholehearted devotion to God will involve striving to live obedient lives in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- 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.

Leader's Prayer

Gracious God, please help me to love you with all my heart, soul, and mind. Help me to love my neighbors as myself. Please illuminate to me the areas of my life where I could be glorifying you more, and help me to live wholeheartedly for you. Grant

understanding to the children who will hear this lesson. May they see the beauty of the grace of the gospel, and may they long to love you with their heart, soul, and mind. In Jesus's name. Amen.

Leader's Tool Kit

- Paneled beach ball
- Permanent marker
- Board games
- A long roll of paper (old wallpaper or butcher paper would be ideal)
- Construction paper cut into heart shapes, one for each child



- Markers

- Q7 Tweet Template (RB)

Notes

10 Catechism Recap

On a paneled inflatable beach ball write Questions 1–6 with a permanent marker.

Gather the children into a circle and explain that the idea of the game is to keep the beach ball off the floor. Each child must participate to keep the beach ball in the air. If the beach ball drops to the ground, someone must

volunteer to answer one of the catechism questions written on the ball, or the whole group gets a penalty. The penalty could be things like twenty jumping jacks or five push-ups or something silly. The activity should encourage the children to search their memories and remember what they've learned about Questions 1–6.

5 Introduction to Question 7

Ask the children to consider what life might be like if there were no laws.

Initially their response may be oriented toward positive and exciting possibilities! Help them reflect on some of the laws that are created to keep people safe. For example, what would it be like if cars never stopped at red lights? Or if people could harm each other without consequences?

Explain to the children that laws are an essential part of life and that they are generally established so that society can operate safely and well.

Go on to ask the children to consider what life would be like if there were no punishment for breaking laws. They will hopefully observe that the law means nothing without the threat of punishment! Help them to see that people would just break laws constantly if there were no consequences for breaking them.

Introduce the children to Question 7: “What does the law of God require?” Explain that this lesson, and the next eight lessons, all focus on God’s law.

**Activity**

Set up some board games for the children to play around the classroom.

Tell the children that there are board games placed around the room for them to play. Settle the children down around the games, and get them ready to start. Explain to the children that the rules for today are that there are no rules! Explain that they do not need to observe the normal rules

of the various games. Let the children play for a little while, and allow them to feel the frustration of knowing that there are rules for the games but seeing no one obeying them.

Help the children to once again reflect on how helpful rules and laws are. Even in something as simple as a board game, they make playing easy, ordered, and enjoyable!

**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 they are good at obeying their parents. Ask them if they are ever perfectly obedient. Why do they disobey? Help them to reflect on whether it is loving or kind to their parents, and ask them to think about how their disobedience affects their parents. Explain to the children that everyone in the world is a lawbreaker and not just because they disobey their parents. Explain that even if we've kept the laws of our country, we have all broken God's laws.

Explain to the children that God has revealed his law to his people, and it is recorded in the Bible. Ask the children if they know what you're referring to (many of the children will be familiar with the Ten Commandments).

Tell the children that in the Old Testament book of Exodus, God clearly handed down his law to his people (the Israelites) at Mount Sinai, which described how God expected his people to live. Explain to the children that God gave his law to his people right after he had miraculously saved them; they had come to know him as a powerful and merciful saving God. God had brought them out of Egypt and then sought to show them how to live as his people and under his rule. God demanded perfect obedience from his people, the Israelites. God wanted his people to respond to him with wholehearted devotion because of his saving grace. But the Israelite people were not able to perfectly obey God's law, and there were consequences for breaking it.

Read Matthew 22:34–40. Provide Bibles for the children to read along with you.

Explain to the children that God's law still remains today and that it is still the standard



by which God expects his people to live. Tell the children that the only person to ever keep God's law perfectly was Jesus. This means that everyone else is a lawbreaker, and lawbreakers deserve punishment. Remind the children that those who are Christians are free from the prospect of punishment, however, because when Jesus died on the cross, he did so in order to take the punishment for all lawbreakers who turn to him in repentance for forgiveness.

Help the children to understand that the reason Christians seek to keep God's law is because of his saving grace shown to them in Jesus, not because it will win them favor with God.

Explain that in Matthew 22:34–40 Jesus taught what can be described as a summary of God's law. It is how he expects his followers to live. Jesus commands people to show upward love and sideways love, to love God and to love other people.

Jesus explains to Pharisees and listening crowds that the law can be summarized by

commending people to love God with all their heart, soul, and mind and to love their neighbors as themselves.

Ask the children how they generally respond when they've been given a gift or shown some kindness. Presumably they respond in thanks.

Explain to the children that God's greatest gift to them is Jesus, the One who saves those who trust in him from punishment and death. Encourage the children to consider what the right response is to God's great gift. Surely it is living thankful lives, seeking to glorify God by living as he commands.

Conclude the teaching time by helping the children commit Question 7 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



Activity



Prepare a paper heart for each child.

Give every child a paper heart, and ask them to write "upward love" on one side and "sideways love" on the other side.

Invite the children to consider how they can love God with all their heart, soul, and mind, and write down some thoughts on the

"upward love" side. Then ask the children how they might love the people that God has placed them among, and encourage them to write down some ideas on the "sideways love" side.

Conclude this time by asking the children to share some of their thoughts with the rest of the group.



Discussion and Question Time

Some of the questions that might arise include:

? Does keeping God's law please God?

Remind the children that living obedient lives is glorifying to God and is pleasing to him, but be sure to clarify that it does not win favor with him.

? I'd like to keep God's law perfectly. How do I do that?

Tell the children that it is impossible to keep God's law perfectly, and that is why salvation through Jesus is essential. Explain that the Holy Spirit will give them the ability to live in increasingly godly ways that are consistent with God's law.

? What happens if I keep breaking God's law?

Help the children understand that if they consider themselves Christians, they can be confident Christ has taken their punishment. Encourage

them to continually repent of their lawbreaking and to ask God to help them live for him with wholehearted devotion. For those children who are not Christians, tell them gently but clearly that they face the punishment for being a lawbreaker.

Also use this opportunity to help the children to think about their own lives and how this catechism question and answer affects them personally.

- Ask the children what they think loving God with all their heart, soul, and mind means.
- Ask the children to consider very practically how they can better love their friends, family, and neighbors. Remind them of God's abundant love and ask them how they can model that to others.
- Ask the children how they can seek to be wholeheartedly devoted to God.



Virtue Vision

Gratitude

Give each child a copy of Q7 Tweet Template (RB) and a marker.

Remind the children that the reason God's law is still relevant is because it is God's guide for life and it teaches how to live with

gratitude in response to his grace. One way that we show upward love is gratitude to God; one way we show sideways love is gratitude toward people around us.

During this time encourage the children to write a tweet (no more than 140 characters!)





that declares their gratitude to God for who he is and what he's done. They may need to practice writing their tweet on the back of

the paper to get it down to 140 characters. Then have them write a tweet of gratitude to another person.

Notes

Memory Activity

Write the memory verse or catechism answer out on a long roll of paper. Unroll the paper and invite the children to read the memory verse through several times. With a person at each end of the roll, begin to reroll

the memory verse so that words gradually disappear from each end. Ask the children to try saying the memory verse again after some of the verse has been rerolled. Keep going as long as time permits.

Closing Prayer Time

As a closing prayer activity encourage some of the children to expand on their tweets in a prayer of gratitude.

