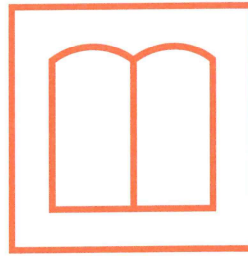


## Question 8

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# What is the law of God stated in the Ten Commandments?



## Answer

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You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol. You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Honor your father and your mother. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not give false testimony. You shall not covet.

### Big Idea

God revealed his moral law to the people of Israel in the Ten Commandments.

### Aim

To help the children understand what the Ten Commandments are.

### Bible Passage

Exodus 20

### Memory Verse

“You shall have no other gods before me.” (Ex. 20:3)

### Virtue

Gratitude





## Notes

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### Leader's Notes

The children may encounter a number of opinions about the Ten Commandments. They may be told that they are of no relevance today to either the Christian or non-Christian. Or they may be told that they are of every importance to the Christian today and must be obeyed in order to be right with God. Neither of these statements is true! This catechism question will begin a detailed engagement with the subject of the law; eight questions focus on God's law in this curriculum. Question 8 introduces the law in its original context and examines why and how God gave the law to his people Israel.

Things to remember when planning and teaching:

- The Ten Commandments are God's moral law.
- The Ten Commandments reflect God's character.

- The Ten Commandments are given in love.
- The children may be familiar with the concept of the law.
- Caution must be taken when teaching about the law so it doesn't nurture legalism.
- The question of how to address adultery will be handled in lesson 11. You might want to flip ahead and read the "Note to Teachers" on page 93 in case it comes up in this lesson.
- 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

Father God, thank you for your law. Thank you that through it you help me realize my responsibilities to you and to my neighbors. I'm grateful that as I study your law, I can understand more of who you are and what you're like. Grant understanding

to the children who will hear this lesson. May their hearts be filled with gratitude as they encounter your law, because they understand that you are a loving God who chooses to reveal himself to his people. In Jesus's name. Amen.



### Leader's Tool Kit

- Q8 Catechism Recap (DL)
- Tape
- Jenga game
- One piece of scratch art paper per child (black with color underneath)
- One wooden stylus (or toothpick) per child
- Pictorial representation of the Ten Commandments
- Markers
- Some large pieces of paper

### Notes

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### Catechism Recap

*Print and cut out Q8 Catechism Recap (DL). Tape the previous seven questions to Jenga blocks and build the Jenga tower.*

Divide the children into teams. Invite individual children from each team, in turn, to approach the Jenga tower and attempt to remove a block (don't continue to build the tower, just place the blocks to the side once

they have been removed from the tower). If the block they remove has a question on it, the child can either answer the question herself or pass the question back to her team. If the team fails to correctly answer the question, another team can jump in and answer it. If they answer it correctly, they will win a point for their team. The team with the most points wins.

### Introduction to Question 8

Read these real laws to the children:

1. In Arkansas, it is illegal to mispronounce the word *Arkansas*.
2. In Carmel, California, it is illegal to wear high heel shoes without a permit.
3. In Nevada, it's illegal to hunt camels.
4. In Gainesville, Georgia, it is legal to eat fried chicken only with your hands, *not* a fork!
5. In New Orleans, Louisiana, it is illegal to curse at a firefighter.
6. Until 2015, it was illegal in Alabama to play cards on Sunday.
7. In Beacon, New York, it is illegal to possess a pinball machine within city limits.
8. Until 2007, it was illegal to fake a wrestling match in Louisiana.
9. In Kentucky, it is illegal to handle a reptile in a religious service.
10. In Quitman, Georgia, it is illegal to let a chicken cross the road.

**Notes**

11. In Georgia, it is illegal to sell a child younger than twelve to the circus.

Ask the children why they think laws are important.

Laws help society function well, but some of these laws are crazy!

Introduce the children to Question 8: “What is the law of God stated in the Ten

Commandments?” Explain to the children that God gave a set of laws to his people that were concerned with helping people to live in a way that was honoring to God; it was all about right and wrong—God’s moral law. Tell the children that this question will explain what the law of God as stated in the Ten Commandments is.

10

**Activity**

*Give each child in the group a piece of scratch art paper and a wooden stylus to scratch with.*

Show the children a pictorial representation of what the Ten Commandments might have originally looked like. Invite the children to make their own version of the

commandments by cutting the scratch paper into a tablet shape and engraving the commandments onto the paper.

Read Exodus 20 aloud as they are making their tablets.

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**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 could establish their own country, what kind of laws might they make to help the country run smoothly? Ask the children to imagine that they were establishing laws for people whom they loved very dearly; would that make a difference?

Help the children understand that the intention when any laws are established is

to allow humanity to thrive and flourish in a safe and prosperous society. Introduce the children to Exodus 20. Explain that this Bible passage recalls how God gave the law to his rescued people Israel. Highlight that God gave the law to the Israelites because he loved them and wanted the best for them.

**Read Exodus 20.** Provide Bibles for the children to read along with you.

Emphasize that many people think that laws are harsh and intended to restrict, but in actual fact laws are meant to be for people’s good. When God spoke his law



## Notes

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directly to Moses for the people of Israel, he did so because he loved them and was concerned that they would live safely and successfully. God's law as stated in the Ten Commandments is loving and is intended to bless rather than burden his people. Explain to the children that each commandment reveals something about the character and nature of God. When we study the law, we begin to understand the mind of God—we know what he loves, and we know what he hates.

Invite the children to read back over the Ten Commandments and see if they can discern God's character in and through the law.

At the beginning of creation, God gave Adam and Eve one law and that was not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Rather than restricting Adam and Eve, God liberated them! There was only one law to keep. But the Devil caused Adam and Eve to break that one law, and so sin entered into the world. The law as stated in the Ten Commandments is necessary because the world and everything in it is affected by sin.

**Read Exodus 19:3–6.**

Show the children that in these verses God declares that he wanted the Israelite people to be his treasured possession, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. God wants the people to remember that he rescued them from slavery, and that he showed them miraculous care and love as he led them out of Egypt. God wanted the people to

understand the laws in the context of the great love that he had for them. He gave them the law not so they could be saved, but because they had already been saved. They had been slaves but now they were free, and the law was meant to serve them in their freedom. God made a covenant with Israel, and he promised great blessing to the Israelites if they upheld the law. But he said he would bring curses upon those who break it.

Ask the children why they think their parents have rules for them to obey. For instance, why do they have to go to bed at a certain time or eat fruit or vegetables? Is it because their parents are mean and want to ruin their fun? No! Explain to the children that it's actually because they want them to enjoy life to the fullest.

The law of God as stated in the Ten Commandments is motivated by a Father's love. Non-Christians might think that God is a spoilsport or a big police officer in the sky, but Christians should know and understand that ultimately God wants the best for his people. That is why he has given them a guide or a set of laws for life.

Explain to the children that God's law is still relevant today, and that it focuses specifically on our relationship with God and with our neighbors.

**Finish the teaching time by helping the children commit Question 8 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.)*



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### Activity



Play Ten Commandment Charades. Let the children take turns pantomiming one of the commandments while the other children guess the commandment.

5

### Discussion and Question Time

Some of the questions that might arise include:

law came from him and not from a human source.

#### ? Are the Ten Commandments relevant for today?

Explain that they are because they help God's people to understand their responsibility toward him and also their responsibility toward other people.

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

#### ? Did God actually think people could keep the commands?

Help the children to understand that God knows the heart of all people and that nothing surprises God. We will talk more about why we fail to keep the law perfectly when we get to Question 13.

- How do the Ten Commandments help them understand God's character more?
- Can they understand that the Commandments were born out of love?
- How do they measure up according to God's standards as established in the Ten Commandments?

#### ? Why did God give the Ten Commandments to the people in such an unusual way?

Tell the children that God gave the Ten Commandments in such a spectacular fashion to clearly indicate that the



## Virtue Vision

### Gratitude

*Cover with paper an area of wall that can become a “gratitude wall.” At the top write, “I am grateful that God is . . .”*

This lesson has helped the children to understand that God has lovingly revealed

his character in the Ten Commandments.

Encourage the children to write on the wall the things that they have learned about God’s character from Exodus 20. Help the children reflect on how wonderful it is that God chose to reveal himself in this way.



## Notes

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## Memory Activity

Play the song for Question 8 from “Songs from The New City Catechism” (available for free at [newcitycatechism.com](http://newcitycatechism.com) or on the NCC app). Let the children listen to the song a few times, and then assign a different

commandment to each child. Sing the song, allowing the children to sing their assigned commandment. Once they’ve got that down, have them swap commandments with someone else and repeat.

## Closing Prayer Time

Gather the children around the gratitude wall, and encourage them to praise God for who he is and for the way his law allows people to know him more fully.

