



One

The First Commandment

Family Study Guides • The Ten Commandments Series

One

The First Commandment

“You shall have no other gods before me.”

We suggest that as you use this Family Study Guide, select and focus on a main portion or two that you feel will help your family’s study into the commandment. You do not need to cover every aspect, discussion or scripture presented in this guide. Select the aspects or principles most relevant or helpful to your family.



Objectives:

- Help your children learn more about developing a relationship with God by understanding the meaning of the First Commandment.
- Help your children compare the results of obeying the First Commandment to the results of violating the First Commandment.

Memory Verse

“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment” (Matthew 22:37-38).

1. What does it mean to “worship no god but Me?”

- a. God wants to be first in our lives because of His love for us.
 - When we put our trust in God only, we learn to look to Him for protection, healing and for the things we need every day like food and a place to live.
 - “For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matthew 6:32-33).
- b. We must learn to love and think like God before we will be truly like Him.
 - If we are to be like God, we must first learn more about what He is like.
 - “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God...Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure” (1 John 3:1-3).

2. Why should we observe this commandment?

- a. The God we worship is real—and He is the only God. The only other “gods” there are—are those that man creates in his own mind!

b. We say that God provides us with food, shelter and clothing. Discuss with your family how it is that God does this. (Example: God created trees that we build homes from).

c. God cares for us as a parent cares for their child. Parents are to raise their children to understand and obey God. They also provide love, food, a place to live, clothing, etc. What if, after all they have done, their child might say, “Well, thank you for all you have done for me, but I think I would like to have someone else to be my parent instead.” How would that make your parents feel? Consider what God, our provider, thinks when we do the same to Him.

d. God is calling us to be part of His family.

3. In what ways should the first commandment be observed fully?

a. Worship God and no other being, including false gods or people. “...‘You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve’” (Matthew 4:10, ESV).

b. Worship God putting Him first with your *time*.

- Include daily prayer and Bible study.
- Honor God’s Sabbath day.
- Attend church services regularly.
- “If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight and the Lord’s holy day honorable, and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, then you will find your joy in the Lord...” (Isaiah 58:13-14, NIV).
- What other specific ways can you honor God with your time?



c. Worship God with your thoughts and actions.

- Throughout your day, think of God’s ways, His blessings in your life, and consider His wondrous Creation. Psalm 119 is a wonderful example of thinking on God’s ways.
- “And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him” (Colossians 3:17).

d. What are some of the blessings or results that come from putting God first in our lives?

4. In what ways might this commandment be broken or violated?

a. Worshipping false gods breaks this commandment.

- People through the ages have established false gods like Brahma, Zeus, Jupiter, etc. Many religions worship the earth and sky and nature, saying that all of it makes up God.
- “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12, ESV).

- b. Spending too much time on work, hobbies, etc. is another way to violate the first commandment.
 - Choosing to play lots of video games instead of taking time to read about God’s way in the Bible is an example of not putting God first. Playing video games part of the time is not wrong, but what do you spend most of your time thinking about?
 - “So, then, be careful how you live. Do not be unwise but wise, making the best use of your time because the times are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is” (Ephesians 5:15-17, ISV).
- c. Breaking other commandments breaks this commandment.
 - Choosing to play sports or other such activities on the Sabbath, tells God that these things are more important to us than worshiping Him (Isaiah 58:13).
 - Using foul language or lying or cheating to fit in or make life easier is also a way of disrespecting God and not worshiping Him and serving Him only. It is much more important to please God (Matthew 10:32-33).
- d. What physical and spiritual consequences do we face when we violate this commandment?

The Bible provides us examples for us to learn from the successes and mistakes recorded. What can we learn about the First Commandment and our relationship with God from the following examples?

- Israel and the Golden Calf (Exodus 32)
- Elijah and the Priests of Baal (1 Kings 18)
- The Temptation of Jesus (Matthew 4)

What other examples can you think of as a family?



Family Discussions & Activities

Ten Commandments Journal

Write down the First Commandment and what the commandment means to each family member. Also you can add your discussions and examples from the month.

Time Management Exercise

Teach your child to put God first by helping him learn to set aside time each day to pray and read about God.

- a. Discuss the First Commandment and why God wants us to put Him first in our lives. How would the world look differently if everyone obeyed it?
- b. Have each family member fill out a “My Time Manager” chart for a whole week. Then discuss that God has given each of us 24 hours every day and we are responsible for how we use that time.
 - What do we put first in our lives?
 - Are we making a “god” out of something, because we put it before God?
- c. When we closely examine our priorities, our plans, how we use our time, how we spend our money, we get a clearer picture of who or what is truly our god.

Memory Verse Wall Hanging

Make a memory verse wall hanging and then help find a place to display it, so that your child can be reminded how important it is to obey God and keep His commandments. You will need the following supplies:

- 9x12 inch construction paper or card stock (selection of colors)
 - Copy of memory verse (see end of lesson)
 - Crayons or markers / Stickers (optional) / Yarn / Tape (regular and double-stick)
1. Print out and have children color and decorate the memory verse. Mount decorated memory verse onto construction paper using double-stick tape.
 2. Attach yarn so it can be hung.

Additional Resources for Your Family Studies

UCG Study Booklet “The Ten Commandments”

<https://www.ucg.org/bible-study-tools/booklets/the-ten-commandments>

UCG Beyond Today Bible Study Series “The Ten Commandments”














<https://www.ucg.org/beyond-today/beyond-today-bible-study/ten-commandments>

UCG Study Guides

<https://www.ucg.org/the-first-commandment-do-not-worship-other-gods>

My Time Manager

Name: _____

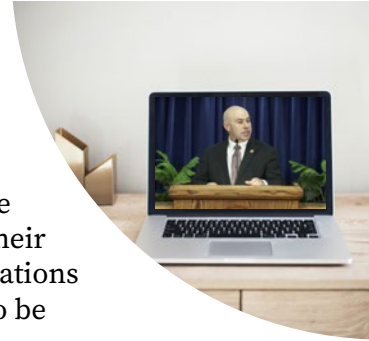
How many hours/minutes a day do you:	Time	How many hours/minutes a day do you:	Time	Daily Total
 Play video games or watch TV?		 Spend in school?		
 Spend with friends?		 Study or do homework?		
 Prepare and eat meals?		 Talk on the phone or text message?		
 Commute to and from school?		 Do chores?		
 Spend online or on the computer?		 Study the Bible, pray or think about God?		
 Spend in extracurricular activities?		 Get showered and dressed?		
 Sleep?			Do other things?	
TOTAL		TOTAL		24 hours
<p>What does the way I spend my time say about me?</p> <p>How could I spend my time more constructively?</p>				

Classroom Activities

Commandment Scenarios

Summarize your learning about the First Commandment in 20 words or less. Apply the principles of the First Commandment to everyday situations.

Main Activity: Place students into small groups. Give each group one of the following scenarios. After 15 minutes, students will present their skits/dialogues to the group. After the presentations, discuss observations and strengths of the presentations, as well as what can be learned to be ready for a future discussion of this sort.



1. A friend in church says to you, “I think I’m just going to connect to the webcast now and then and stay home from church once I graduate. It’s more of a rest day that way. Besides, as long as I’m a good person it doesn’t really matter.” How could you use your understanding of the First Commandment and the role of the church to best answer them? Do some research (family study guide, plus any internet search on ucg.org) and prepare a skit/dialogue illustrating what a friend or group of friends might say, and what can be said in response. Possible Resources: First Commandment Family Study Guide.

2. You just got back from camp where you learned about God’s exciting calling! You really want to have a better relationship with God. Back at camp it was so easy because there were no distractions. How do you and your camp friends help each other keep God’s way first in your lives?

3. A friend asks you, “So, you say you’re a Christian and that you should love your neighbor. But how can you show love if you don’t accept other people’s forms of worship?” How could you use your understanding of the First Commandment to best answer them? Do some research (printed out family study guide, plus any internet search on ucg.org) and prepare a skit/dialogue illustrating what a friend or group of friends might say, and what can be said in response. Possible Resource: Fundamental Beliefs of United Church of God: “The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ” <https://www.ucg.org/booklet/fundamental-beliefs/sacrifice-jesus-christ>



4. Your coach wants you to be captain of the team, and explains to you this would be an extra commitment of time on your part. You’ve also been recruited to be on Student Council, and have agreed to help pet-sit for your neighbor for some extra spending money. How could you use your understanding of the First Commandment to help you make your decision? Do some research (printed out family study guide—My Time Manager, plus any internet search on ucg.org) and prepare a skit/dialogue illustrating what your discussion might look like with the coach, your Student Council advisor, your neighbor, your friends, or all of them!

Reflect: Why is the First Commandment so important ?

Instructor's Notes: Israel and the Golden Calf

Open by reading Exodus 20:1-3. Possible discussion points:

a. God was speaking to the children of Israel only three months after He brought them out of slavery from the land of Egypt. In this First Commandment God tells the people, “You shall have no other gods before Me.”

- What have you and your family learned about this commandment?
- What does this tell us about how we are to worship God?
- Why do you think God wants us to put Him first in our lives?



The Ten Commandments
movie excerpt

b. Ask the students to tell the story that led up to the golden calf incident.

c. Give a brief overview—including following points about false gods.

- In the land of Egypt, where the Israelites had lived for more than 100 years, the people worshiped many gods and had many idols. Each of their gods represented something different in their lives. They had a sun god, a rain god, a god they thought could heal them, another god for protection, a god for fire, and the list goes on and on. They were really worshiping the things God created and not the One who created them.

If you watch the “10 Commandments” movie video segment, review the following questions:

1. What was God’s reaction to the Golden Calf?
2. Why do you think, “You shall have no other Gods before me” is the first commandment?
3. Discuss the following two quotes from the movie where Moses says:
 - a) “There is no freedom without the law” (read 2 Peter 2:19; John 8:32)
 - b) “Those who will not live by the law shall die by the law!” (read Deuteronomy 30:15-20; James 1:12-15)

While these statements are not direct Bible quotes—discuss why they reflect biblical principles—and how they apply to us.

- What is more important—that there are not other gods. It would be like playing with a “Super-Hero” toy—and saying that that toy could actually save someone—or destroy the bad guy. It is only plastic and it cannot do anything.

- What else has God given us that we need? (Let students respond. Examples: sun for heat, animals to help us work or for food, the air we breathe, the Bible, family, the Sabbath). When we make God first in our lives, we show Him we are thankful for all these things He does for us and gives us.

- We don’t bow down to and worship other gods or idols as the Egyptians did. But are there ways in our lives we can disobey this First Commandment? [Discuss any examples the students bring up.]

God wants us to learn to trust in Him even though we cannot see Him. When we choose to obey Him, He will show us His love by the things He does for us. We can learn more about developing a relationship with God by understanding the meaning of the First Commandment. The first Commandment teaches us we must put God first in our lives. The story of the golden calf shows how easy it can be to forget what God has done for us, and why every day we must make God a part of everything we do and say.

Instructor's Notes: Elijah and the Prophets of Baal

Open by reading Exodus 20:1-3. Possible discussion points:

- What have you and your family learned about this commandment?
- What does this tell us about how we are to worship God?
- Why do you think God wants us to put Him first in our lives?

Today we are going to learn more about the First Commandment by reading about contest between a man who honored God and people who broke the First Commandment by putting other false gods before our great God.

Story

1 Kings 18:16-39. Tell in your own dramatic words or read from a children's Bible the story of Elijah and the prophets of Baal. Important points to cover:



a. Background about how some of the kings of Israel did not serve God and often worshiped idols such as Baal.

- The land was in a drought and needed rain. Food couldn't grow. Animals were dying.
- Elijah was a prophet of God who was trying to turn the people towards God and away from worshipping Baal. Worshipping only God is keeping the First Commandment.

b. Research and discuss what an altar was and what it was used for.

- God had commanded sacrifices to be offered to Him.
- False priests built altars to their gods such as animals, the sun, moon and other things.)

Discussion

1 Kings 18:18 ...you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and have followed the Baals.

a. Relate the dramatic story of Elijah vs. the 450 prophets of the false god Baal! Possibly have kids role-play the characters. At one point Elijah said to the people: "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him" (1 Kings 18:21).

- How do you think God is telling us the same thing in our lives?
- In what ways can we trust things or people rather than God?

b. This powerful story should help us recognize the one true God—and cause us to put our faith and trust in Him.

- 1 Kings 18:37 "Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that You are the LORD God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again."
- What details from this Biblical example can you use to explain why we should put God first in our lives?

First Commandment Word Search

C C C O E I R N Y T I M E W Z Y Q B M G
 N N O L W G B T L J H O U O V Q E F P U
 T A B M O V I X J I F H Y R B C O B Q N
 X I D D M R N M H P B L E S S I N G O C
 B A Z E O A Y C H J D R T H T R F S A Y
 Y E K I M X N S Y O G Z U I W T J K I E
 R T R U P E A D O M Z M C P S V K F H U
 R P R C I F O Y M E X W L O W A H I R K
 A H M U B J Z M X E E X J G K L E R J A
 U A K J E Y Q W H W N D K Y E H D S O T
 L H O M A Z H R P A K T K R L X Y T S V
 D T C X H T B Z V J I K Y Q Z A G K I L
 O X K Q C R I G D P R Y F K L P M Y N P
 P R A X L B E S L P S E U R Y C I J B M
 O Y J T X T P L B C F I L E D H Q O L F
 R U L J T O F F B N X R Q Y C J C J R Z
 M U P V G R Z Q Z P F M C A X M C R Z T
 A N W Q X F S Z D N I M D R H C U C A A
 K S A I Y H O O F R S H W P P P F M F B
 T C Q B I U L W R D F O J I O I I A O T

Bible
 Blessing
 Commandment
 First

God
 Mind
 Obey
 Prayer

Priority
 Time
 True
 Worship

Coloring Activity



Exodus 20:3 “You shall have no other gods before Me.”