

BIBLE TIMELINE ASSEMBLIES

29. The Ten Commandments

Bible Base: Exodus 20:1-19

Key Christian Belief: God wants His people to obey Him.

Aim: To show the importance of keeping God's rules

You will need:

- The PowerPoint and backing track supplied.

Introduction

Ask the children to tell you what rules they have in their school. You may want to use prompts. E.g. Are there any rules about how to behave in the classroom, how to behave in the corridor, how to behave in the playground, what to eat for break...?

Point out that as well as school rules, there are rules for using the road, rules for playing games and rules that the Queen expects everyone who lives in this country to obey.

Ask the children why they think rules are important. Help them to see that most rules are there to keep us safe and to make life fair for everyone.

Ask them if they would like to belong to a school, play a game or live in a country in which there were no rules? Many of them will probably at first think that would be a great idea - but use the following scenarios to help them imagine what it might be like.

Imagine someone steals your PE kit, you complain to the teacher and your teacher replies, 'That's OK - he's allowed to do that' and does nothing to help you get it back. Then money goes missing from your pocket, someone steals your brand new lunch box and no one ever does anything about it.

Or imagine someone runs along the corridor, knocks you over and you twist your ankle. You tell your teacher what happened but he or she does nothing about it because running in the corridor is not against the rules. So it happens again - sometimes in the corridor, sometimes in the playground. At least twice a week someone is hurt.

The P7s play in the same playground as the P1s; nobody ever listens in class or does anything the teacher asks. I wouldn't want to go to a school like that...

Nor would I want to live in a country in which drivers could drive on whatever side of the road they wished or ignore the red lights when people are crossing the road...

Or play a game of football if the other team were allowed to make their nets twice as big as my team's, or lift the ball and run with it whenever they felt like it...

We need rules - to keep us safe and make things fair for everyone.

Point out, however, that people in charge don't always make good rules. For example, a really cruel headmaster might make a rule that no one was allowed to smile or play games in the playground, or that everyone had to do at least four hours homework every night. There are people who make rules just to get their own way or make life difficult for everyone else. Isn't it just as well that your headmaster is not like that?!

Bad rules make life difficult and unfair and where there are bad rules, they need to be changed. Good rules, however, like the ones in your school, keep us safe and make things fair for everyone. And where there are good rules - it is wise to obey them.

Story

God's people knew all about unfair, cruel rules. King Pharaoh had made them work hard, and had ordered them to be whipped if they didn't work hard enough. Worse still, he had ordered all newborn baby boys to be killed. But now they were free from this cruel king - and on their way to the new land God had promised to give them.

At the foot of Mount Sinai the people stopped while Moses and his assistant Joshua went up into the mountain to talk with God.

When they came down from the mountain, Moses had a message for the people. It was good news. 'The God who has rescued us from Egypt wants us to be His people. He promises to give us a land of our own, full of good things, and to keep us safe from our enemies. However, if we are His people there are some rules He will expect us to keep.'

The rules that God gave His people that day are known as the Ten Commandments and show us how God expects us to behave, especially if we are His friends.

Use the PowerPoint supplied to teach the children what God's rules were. Go through the list - from the bottom up - and explain briefly what each rule means. For example:

God wants us...

- 1 to get to know Him, talk to Him and trust Him as the one true God.
- 2 to put Him first and not let anything take His place.
- 3 to show how special He is to us by the way we speak to and about Him.
- 4 to make time to worship Him and to listen to what He says.
- 5 to do what our mums and dads tell us - without grumbling or complaining.
- 6 not to hurt others by the things we say and do, especially when we are angry.
- 7 to keep the promises we make - especially to our future partners.
- 8 not to take things from others without their permission.
- 9 always to tell the truth.
- 10 to be content with what we have and not always wishing we had more.

Then explain that the words fit to the tune of the Twelve Days Of Christmas and encourage the children to sing along to the backing track provided, while the words are displayed on the screen a line at a time. You may also wish to use the following actions:

Have no other Gods but me	Shake head and wag finger ('no')
Don't worship things	Hands together in front of chest, head bowed
Show me respect	Salute
Make time for me	Tap (imaginary) watch on wrist
Obey mum and dad	Nod head ('yes') and put thumb up
Don't go mad	Shake fist
Don't break a promise	Fists together side by side - then pull apart
Don't steal from others	Pretend to snatch something with one hand
Don't tell lies	Place finger across lips
Learn to be content	Fold arms

Exploring Christian Belief

Ask if anyone can remember what God's ten rules are? No? Then tell them not to worry - Jesus taught that we only need to remember two:

'Love the Lord your God with all your heart...'

'Love your neighbour as yourself.'

If we love God we will want to spend time talking to Him and getting to know Him. We will want to do what pleases Him and show Him how special He is to us by what we say and do. If we love others - we will not do anything to hurt them, we will tell them the truth and keep the promises we make to them. We won't take things from them that don't belong to us and we won't be jealous when they do well.

Christians believe that God has shown His love for us by sending Jesus to take the blame for the wrong things in our lives. The Bible says that he wants us to be His friends and promises that, if we choose to be His friends, He will love and take care of us always. However, this story also shows us that if we want to be His friends, He will expect us to keep these two rules.

Jesus said that these are the two most important rules in all the world. They are God's rules - and they are good rules. They are not there to make life hard for us, but rather to help us enjoy God's love and friendship and get on well with others. And where there are good rules - it's always wise to obey them.

Prayer

Let's ask God to help us love Him most of all and learn to love others as much as we love ourselves.