

# The Ten Commandments

A lesson featuring a candy-making project about the heart of God's Law  
from the Rotation.org Writing Team



## Overview

In this lesson, participants engage in a bad-tasting demonstration (drawn from the Exodus story itself) and then a sweet-tasting scripture-inspired candy-heart-making project to remember and share the Ten Commandments with others.

## Scripture

[Exodus 20: 1-21](#), [John 13:34](#)

Read the [Bible Background](#) at [Rotation.org](#). It provides a quick overview of the story behind the Ten Commandments and numerous interesting insights about various commandments that can be used to come up with words to write on the hearts.

## Supplies

- Read the [Bible Background](#).
- Have at least one Bible ready to read or click the Bible links to open the passage online.
- Internet access so you can watch the opening video.
- Print copies of the [Commandment Hearts preparation worksheet](#) (attached to the bottom of this PDF)
- Small clear cups of water, one for each person.
- Several sharp spices such as paprika, pepper, and onion powder.
- Ingredients to make the candy hearts (see recipe below.)
- Mixer
- Food coloring pens for writing on the dried candy hearts (available online and at craft stores.)
- Tinfoil to make a "stone tablet" container to carry the hearts away from the lesson, share, or display them.



### Important Notes About Making the Candy Hearts

The hearts need to be made *at least* 24 hours ahead of time so that they can harden and be written upon. If you're doing this project at home, make the hearts in advance together. Be sure to make the hearts big enough to write a word or two on (1+ is good). See the recipe below.

## LESSON PLAN

### Opening

Introduce the story of the Exodus starting with the Hebrews in Egypt and briefly recounting the story of Moses confronting Pharaoh, leading the people to freedom across the Red Sea, and arriving at Mt Sinai in the wilderness. Have them help you remember “what comes next in the story.”

### Play the Video Clip: The Ten Commandments and the Golden Calf

This short video clip features the story of Moses on Mt Sinai receiving the Ten Commandments -- while back down below in the Israelite camp, the Israelites were breaking God’s heart (and commandments) by building a golden calf and worshipping it. YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/aX28nAB4S7A>- 4 minutes



**Ask and Say:** Why do people need God’s rules to guide them? (Accept any answer.) This video clip helps reveal the answer!

### “Moses and the Nasty Taste of Sin” – a demonstration

Following the video, perform the following demonstration in front of your group, or better yet, having each person perform the demonstration as you instruct them.

**Introducing the Video: (Say)** One of the strangest parts of the Exodus story (and there are many) is the part in Exodus 32:20 heard in our video where Moses melted down the golden calf, ground it up, and made the people drink it.

**Ask:** Why do you think Moses made them drink it? (accept any answers then do this demonstration) **Say:** I have a demonstration that might just give us the answer!

*As you share the following, pick up each of the seasonings, sprinkle, and stir them into their small cups of water. Then invite the participants to drink their mixed water (it is meant to taste bad, not kill them! ...and it will be a great memory maker.)*

**Bible scholars say there are three reasons Moses ground up the golden calf and made the people drink it.**

**Reason-Glass #1:** It was a form of punishment. A taste that wouldn't kill them, but a lesson they would never forget. Kind of like washing your mouth out with soap, Moses wanted to make sure the people would never forget how WRONG they had been.

**Reason-Glass #2:** The dissolved ashes of the golden calf, which was largely made out of wood, was a ritual way to "purify" or "atone" for their sins. Today, some people take charcoal tablets for the same reason—to settle their stomach or neutralize acid or poison. Heaping ashes on your head is also a sign of sorrow and repentance in the Bible. So drinking it might have been a symbol to the people that they needed purified or saved from their horrible sin.

**Reason-Glass #3:** This last one is a little gross, but especially to the Israelites it made total sense. Many scholars think the reason Moses had them drink the gold dust was so that it would mix with their poop and thus become "untouchable waste" which would forever become "ritually unclean"—meaning, they could never again use for any other purpose such as for an offering or jewelry. Worshiping other gods or making idols was like jumping into the cesspool of an outhouse. By drinking the gold, it would remind them that sin truly stinks!

All three possibilities have the same idea: REMEMBER WHAT YOU DID WRONG, *and don't do it again!* That's why God gave us the Ten Commandments:

1. To keep us from being hurt and hurting others.
2. To keep us out of the poop.
3. And to heal us by showing us a better way to live our lives.

Now... **who wants to drink some of my Golden Calf water?** (Invite everyone to "taste" and see that sin will leave a bad taste in your mouth and in your relationships.)



For more explanation about Exodus 32:20 [read this article](#).

## Let's Read the Ten Commandments Together

[Exodus 20:1-17](#)

### A Commandments Candy Heart Project

**Hold up a candy heart and ask:** When we talk about keeping something or someone "in our heart" what do we mean? (To keep someone or something "in our heart" means to love and hold something or someone close, hang on to their memory. To "know by heart" means to know deeply, intimately, to trust, respect, honor, etc.)

In several places in the Bible, God tells us to keep the Commandments in our hearts too.

- *In Hebrews 10:16, God says, "I will put my laws in their hearts"*
- *In Jeremiah 31:33, God says, "I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts"*
- *And in Proverbs 7:3, God says we should "write them on the tablet of your heart"*

**That's why we're now going to write the commandments on our hearts!** ...But we're not going to write all the words of the Commandments on these candy hearts, just some of the most important words to help us remember.

Here are two ways to write the Commandments on the hearts. Try both!

**Option 1:** Pick the keywords from your favorite translation of the Ten Commandments and write them on the hearts. For example, "Thou shall not bear false witness" can be shortened to "don't lie." Or, for "Thou shall not murder," could be written on the heart as the word "murder" with an X through it.

**Option 2:** Come up with "new positive keywords" for each commandment that encourage us to DO something, rather than "Do Not." For example, "*Thou shall not bear false witness,*" for example, can be positively stated as, "Tell Truth." "You shall not murder," for example, can be rephrased, "Protect."

**Note:** To help with Option 2, complete the attached Ten Commandments Worksheet to prepare for writing your own Ten Commandment hearts. If you're working as a group, you can print one copy of the worksheet and have your group complete it by writing on sheets of paper. This will also be good practice for writing on the hearts themselves.



Let each participant decide which single word or phrase they want to write on their hearts – the only rule being that they must write a heart for each commandment. If someone makes a mistake or the writing is illegible, give them another blank heart. (In advance, the leader may make an additional set.)

**Question:** What famous candy heart phrase might be a great summary of the purpose of the Commandments?

How about:



## Play a Game with the Commandment Hearts

**Game 1:** Pile all the completed hearts at the center of the table.\*\* Read the first commandment and have the first person select a heart that matches that commandment. Read the second commandment and have the next person select a heart that matches that commandment. Keep reading through the commandments and selecting the matching heart until all the hearts are gone. (If you have four people, you will in effect read through all the commandments four times. If you need to save time, reduce the number of times you read through the commandments to two or three.)

**Game 2:** (if time) Have each participant gather their ten hearts in front of them. Then, one by one, have each person push one of their hearts forward and let others guess which commandment it matches. Depending on the size of your group, adjust the number of times a person shares a heart with the group.

**\*\*Note:** Make sure everyone's hands are clean. If needed, let each participant keep their own hearts in front of them and turn them over for others to see, instead of piling them all in the center.

### Questions you could ask:

- When we live by God's commandments, we are showing and sharing God's commandments with others. What happens when you break a commandment in front of others? What does that tell them about YOU and your faith? About the importance of following God's commandments?
- When someone breaks a commandment (bring/crush one of the hearts), how is it like breaking God's heart? How does God respond? Does God "break" us? How does God respond to our failures and sins?
- How should we as a group/family respond to each other when one of our members breaks a commandment? (Do we expect each other to be perfect? No. What do we expect? What does God expect?)
- If you haven't already, take a number of unfinished hearts and write keywords on them using Jesus' "new" commandment in [John 13:34](#).

**Closing:** Have each participant share some of their heart creations as you review all Ten Commandments. Using tin foil, shape a set of "foil tablets" to hold the hearts and place them in a prominent location to share with others.

**Offer a prayer** that we would "take God's commandment to heart" by making them part of our lives, and that others would learn God's values by looking at how each of us lives our lives following God's Commandments.

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## Candy Heart Ingredients

1 teaspoon of dry unflavored Gelatin

1/3 cup Cold Water to mix with the gelatin

1 1/2 pounds Confectioners (Powdered) Sugar, about 6 cups

Pinch of Salt

Flavoring or Extract Options: Cherry, Mint, Almond, Lemon (or whatever your family favorites are)

Two or three colors of Food Coloring (add as many drops as you like to achieve color)

1-1/2 inch Heart Cookie Cutter, or comparable size

Edible Ink Food Writing Pens (inexpensive and available online and in most craft stores)



## Directions

1. Pour the water in a microwave-safe bowl. Sprinkle the gelatin over the cold water and let sit for 5 minutes.
2. Microwave the water and gelatin in 15 second intervals until fully dissolved (about three intervals).
3. Pour the water and gelatin mixture in a mixing bowl. On low, mix in the confectioner's sugar one cup at a time until a dough ball forms. Adjust amount of sugar to create a well-formed ball. The "wetter" the dough, the longer it will take to dry.
4. Divide the dough into smaller balls and designate which balls of dough will receive which color and flavor. You can mix these in by hand (recommended) or return the balls of dough to the mix and add the ingredients. To mix by hand, flatten the dough ball, sprinkle on the flavor and color, then mix thoroughly. Add additional sugar to keep the ball dry and well-formed.



5. On a surface dusted with confectioner's sugar, roll the dough out about 3/8-inch thick. Cut out hearts and place on a baking tray lined with parchment or wax paper. Use powdered-sugar to help separate.



6. Let the hearts dry one to two days before adding your messages with the edible writers. The thicker the hearts, the longer the drying time.

## A Ten Commandments Handout

### for use with the Rotation.org Writing Team's Candy-Heart Making Project

In the left-hand column are the Ten Commandments. The center column suggests one positive way to express each commandment (feel free to come up with more). In the right-hand column, you are to write one or two words that positively summarize what each commandment says to you. We've used the New Revised Standard Bible's version of [Exodus 20](#). The translation you want to remember may be slightly different. We've also included two of Jesus' famous "commandments" passages which are "do" rather than "do not's."

The Commandments	A Positive Form of the Commandment	Your summary in one or two words
1. You shall have no other gods before me	Put your trust in God alone	
2. You shall not make for yourself an idol	Make God the most important thing in your life	
3. You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God	Show your respect for God	
4. Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy	Make quality time to rest, worship, and be with God	
5. Honor your father and your mother	Bring honor and happiness to your family	
6. You shall not murder	Protect people's lives and feelings	
7. You shall not commit adultery	Keep your sacred commitments	
8. You shall not steal	Be trustworthy	
9. You shall not bear false witness	Be honest	
10. You shall not covet	Respect other people's property	
<b>John 13:34</b> (Jesus said) I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.		
<b>Matthew 22: 36-40</b> "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" 37 He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 This is the greatest and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."		

Note: Many Lutherans and Catholics number the commandments a little different. They combine the first two commandments (Exodus 20: 3-4) into one and separate verse 17 about "coveting" into two commandments. Please also note that while we've condensed the Ten Commandments into these ten traditional phrases for the purposes of memorization, each commandment has more words describing it than shown here. [See the full version in Exodus 20](#).  
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