

lesson 1

Unit 22 Theme:

Rules to Live By

Honoring God's Name

LES. 1

STEP 1 Life Need (5–10 minutes)

- Discuss what it might be like to hear God's voice.
- *Optional:* Drama about the Ten Commandments.
 - ☐ Bible
 - ☐ *Optional:* Props—clothing, long stick, art on poster board

STEP 2 Bible Learning (15–20 minutes)

- Complete a Bible study.
- *Optional:* Discuss names of God.
 - ☐ Bible ☐ *The Rock*
 - ☐ Paper, pencils or pens
 - ☐ Whiteboard or poster board and markers
 - ☐ “The Big Ten” booklet from *Middle School Creative Teaching Aids*
 - ☐ *Optional:* Bibles

STEP 3 Bible Application (5–10 minutes)

- Read and discuss a story in *The Rock*.
- Discuss how people bring honor or shame to God's name.
- *Optional:* Find ways to honor God's name.
 - ☐ Bible ☐ *The Rock*
 - ☐ *Optional:* Bibles

STEP 4 Life Response (about 5 minutes)

- Students show respect for God's name.
- *Optional:* Art activity.
 - ☐ Bible ☐ *The Rock* ☐ Paper
 - ☐ Pencils or pens
 - ☐ *Optional:* Construction paper, scissors, glue or tape, magazines, color markers

Memory Verse

“You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God.”

—Exodus 20:7a

Bible Basis:

God establishes a special relationship with His people (Exod. 19:3-5; 20:1-5a, 7); the sons of Sceva misuse the divine name (Acts 19:13-17).

Bible Truth:

God's name should be honored.

Lesson Aim:

That your students honor their relationship with God by using His name respectfully.

Understanding the Bible

Exodus 19:3-5. This passage sets the stage for the covenant on Mount Sinai in which God established a relation-

ship with His people even more wonderful than the one the patriarchy enjoyed. This covenant was like a marriage ceremony, compared to the betrothal between God and the patriarchy.

Exodus 20:1-5a, 7. The actual covenant was communicated in a literary form familiar to the Hebrews. First, the maker of the treaty was introduced. Then the history of the relationship between the two parties in the treaty was recounted (vss. 1-2).

The conditions of the treaty were spelled out (vss. 3-5a, 7). The third condition is the focus of this lesson. Originally, Jews were “not [to] misuse the name of the Lord” (Exod. 20:7)—(1) as a cover-up in court (for instance, a lying witness who swears “so help me God”) or (2) in cursing or carelessness. God's name represents all God is.

Acts 19:13-17. Shakespeare, in his *Comedy of Errors*, referred to Ephesus (where one of this week's Bible passages takes place) as a “town . . . full of . . . dark-working sorcerers.” Acts 19:13 refers to certain strolling Jewish exorcists. Apparently, other ancient groups besides Christians attempted exorcism.

—continued on next page

☐ indicates items you will need to prepare before class

Understanding the Bible —cont'd

Sceva (SEE-vah) is called a “Jewish chief priest” (Acts 19:14), which may mean he was connected with a high priestly family or was a self-proclaimed priest who should know about the pronouncing of the divine name. Sceva and his seven sons used the name of Jesus as a magical formula. God exalted His Son (Phil. 2:9-11). However, Sceva and his sons didn’t authentically confess that name. So their fraud was exposed.

Tips

classroom

This lesson will communicate the fact that the Ten Commandments were motivated by God’s love, and He wants our obedience to be a response to that love. Make sure you don’t skip or shortchange the time you spend communicating this important fact.

Our middle-school students may come to appreciate God’s unconditional love for them as we love them without reservation. And we won’t be able to love them that way until we realize that God loves us unconditionally too.

Understanding Your Students

Familiarity with the Ten Commandments will vary among your students. Some may be able to quote chapter and verse where the commandments are found. Others may not be able to identify whether these guidelines for human behavior originated in the Old or New Testament, and still others may not recognize them as being a part of the Bible at all. At any rate you have the opportunity to acquaint or reacquaint your students with truth that is rooted in the character of God.

Today’s urban youth are bombarded with a multitude of choices. Because of peer pressure

and other influences, sometimes their choices aren’t thoroughly processed. To gain acceptance, though afraid, young people find themselves saying and doing things before they know it. The lessons in this unit will enable you to put them in touch with the God who loves them and accepts them. Labor with them so that they will understand that the Ten Commandments represent God’s design for humanity’s well-being, not our frustration. Weekly lessons will demonstrate this reality in specific areas of their lives.



PRESESSION ACTIVITY



Getting to Know You

• **Objective:** To help your students tell others about themselves.

Divide your classroom into three or four areas with at least three students in each area. Each time you give a signal—hand clap, whistle, or whatever you choose—they are to talk about the topic you suggest. When you say, “Change!” everyone changes to a different area.

At the first signal, have youth tell their name and school to the others in their group. From then on, choose subjects such as favorite color, favorite sport, or someone they’d like to meet. Have them change areas often so that they can talk with as many classmates as possible.

After a few minutes, ask students to tell something they remember about at least two people. There are no winners, but this activity should help students feel more comfortable with each other.

STEP 1

Life Need
5–10 minutes

Lesson Aim:

That your students honor their relationship with God by using His name respectfully.

Objective: That your students discover how God spoke audibly to the Israelites when giving them the Ten Commandments.

Materials:

☐ Bible

- ▶ Have you ever wished God would speak directly to you?
- ▶ If you could hear God speak aloud, what do you think He would sound like? (*Thunder, a tornado, an earthquake, a rushing river, etc. Some students may remember the story of Elijah who heard God in a still, small voice.*)

God rarely spoke aloud, even in Bible times. But when He did, you can be sure He had something very important to say. Today we'll learn what was so important that it had to be said aloud.

Have students pick one of their five senses. As you read Exodus 19:19-25, have them write down everything they notice from the point of view of the sense they picked. For example, if students picked hearing they would write down things like: I heard a trumpet sound; I heard Moses' voice and God's voice; I heard Moses' footsteps as he climbed up and down the mountain; I heard rocks roll down the mountain after Moses stepped. Encourage students to be creative. After you finish reading have students share what their sense perceived. This should help the class have a more complete picture of what it may have been like to witness this scene. Then ask:

- ▶ How did God speak to the Israelites?
(*From a cloud of smoke at Sinai.*)
- ▶ Who did God say He was?
(*The Lord their God.*)
- ▶ What did God call them?
(*His chosen people.*)
- ▶ What did He give them?
(*The Ten Commandments.*)
- ▶ God gave the commandments audibly, so they must have been very important. But do they apply to us today? Let's find out.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

Materials:

☐ Props—clothing, long stick, art on poster board

If there's time, you can have some of your students dramatize main parts of the account from Exodus chapters 19 and 20. Choose students to be the voices of God, Moses, and the Israelites gathered at Sinai. The student dramatizing God's voice could speak from behind a poster board designed as a cloud of smoke. Feel free to enhance the drama with props such as clothing, Moses' staff, and a picture of a mountain.



Free! Downloadable
Options for Steps 1 and 4.
RealLifeDownloaded.com

STEP 2

Bible Learning

15–20 minutes

Bible Basis:

God establishes a special relationship with His people (Exod. 19:3-5; 20:1-5a, 7); the sons of Sceva misuse the divine name (Acts 19:13-17).

Objective: That your students understand why God commands us to not misuse His name.

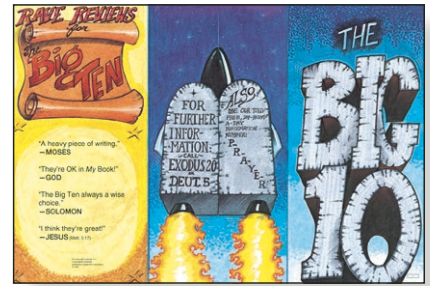
Materials:

- ☐ Bible
- ☐ *The Rock*
- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Pencils or pens
- ☐ Whiteboard or poster board and markers
- ☐ “The Big Ten” booklet from *Middle School Creative Teaching Aids*

Ask if anyone remembers any or all of the commandments. After students answer, distribute “The Big Ten” booklet from *Middle School Creative Teaching Aids* to confirm their answers. Read over the sections titled “What they aren’t” and “What they are.” Collect the booklets at the end of class.

Today’s lesson focuses on a commandment that gives us a specific instruction about our relationship with God. Let’s read it as it’s written in Exodus 20:7. Have a volunteer read it aloud from his or her Bible.

Have students turn to pages 4-5 in *The Rock*. Have someone read aloud the introduction next to the title “Honor God’s Name.” Then have volunteers read aloud today’s Scripture. Give students time to do the study individually. Then go over the answers as a class.



■ From *THE ROCK*—Honor God's Name

We always want to know why we should do something. Today’s Bible study will show us three reasons why we should honor God’s name. Read these short passages and answer the questions.

Read Exodus 19:3-5.

- ▶ What had God done for the Israelites (vs. 4)? (*He destroyed the Egyptian army, carried the Israelites on eagles’ wings, and brought them to Himself. In other words, He rescued the Israelites from the Egyptians.*)
- ▶ What has God done for you? (*Try to get students to be specific. God protected me from harm. He helped me get over a fear. He gave me eternal life.*)
- ▶ If the Israelites obeyed God, what would they become to Him? What do you think this means? (*The Israelites would become God’s “treasured possession.” It means God and the Israelites would have a special relationship.*)
- ▶ What are you to God? (*Not all students may be able to say they are God’s children through salvation by faith. Even so, remind them that they are created by God and valuable to Him.*)

Now move to the questions at the top of page 5. You’ll do the rest of page 4 later.

Read Exodus 20:1-5a, 7.

- ▶ How did God identify Himself when He spoke to the Israelites (vs. 2)? (*He said, “I am the LORD your God.” He also identified Himself by His actions.*)



TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

Exodus 19:3-5a

³Then Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain and said, "This is what you are to say to the descendants of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: 'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. ⁵Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession.'"

Exodus 20:1-5a, 7

¹And God spoke all these words:

²"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

³"You shall have no other gods before me.

⁴"You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. ⁵You shall not bow down to them or worship them;

⁷"You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name."

Acts 19:13-17

¹³Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, "In the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out." ¹⁴Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. ¹⁵One day the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are you?" ¹⁶Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.

¹⁷When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor.

God might have identified Himself differently to people who didn't have a relationship with Him. He might have said, "I am the Lord God."

- ▶ What could God say He has done for you? (*This question is similar to one found earlier in the study—only this time, youth answer from what could be God's point of view. After everyone who wants to has responded, ask students to compare and contrast their answers to those two questions.*)
- ▶ What was God's command to the Israelites in verse 7? (*You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.*)
- ▶ Is this command also to you? Why? (*If students don't know, they should look up: Matt. 5:17; 7:12; and 22:36-38. All show that Jesus considered the principles of the Law to be valid.*)

Now go to the Acts 19 questions on page 4.

Read Acts 19:13-17.

- ▶ How were these people misusing God's name (vs. 13)? (*They were using His name as a lucky charm, or magic, as if saying the words could make something happen.*) What happened to them (vs. 16)? (*They were beaten by a demon-possessed man.*)

You could explain that perhaps the demon realized these men were not protected by God. God's name is powerful, but it cannot be used for manipulation.

- ▶ After reading these passages, write three reasons why you should honor God's name. (*Because God is the Lord; because He said to; because of all He has done for me.*)

Have a volunteer read each of the following verses aloud as you make these statements and give the Scripture references: **There are at least three reasons why we should honor God's name.**

G—God's name is worthy of honor because of who He is—Psalm 9:2.

O—Obedience goes along with my relationship with God—John 14:15.

D—Disobedience brings consequences—Job 5:17.

Now that we understand why we shouldn't misuse God's name, let's look at ways God's name can be both misused and respected today.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

Materials:

□ Bibles

Have students look up these passages to identify God by different names or characteristics. Write this two-part question on the board so each student or group can answer it: **How does each verse identify God? What does God do for us?**

Psalm 3:3 (Shield; God give us glory on us; lifts my head high.)

Job 19:25 (Redeemer; God lives; He will stand on the earth.)

Deuteronomy 32:4 (Rock; Everything God does is perfect; does no wrong; does upright and just things.)

STEP 3

Bible Application

(5–10 minutes)



Objective: That your students discuss ways God's name is both misused and respected.

Materials:

☐ *The Rock*

Tell students to turn to *The Rock* feature titled "Not Just a Name." Have several volunteers take turns reading it aloud.

▶ **There are a number of people in this story who misused God's name. Name each one and describe how they misused God's name.**

(Tyrone's favorite performer used God's name only when it benefitted him. He didn't really have a relationship with God or even care to have a relationship with God. The actors in the movie used swearwords that degraded God in a very flippant way. This is not respectful to God. The television preacher used God's name much the same as the musician. He wanted others to think he was holy, but he did not live as he proclaimed. Maybe he wanted to appear holy but struggled with major issues of sin in his life. Shantell had good intentions. She really wanted to please God, but she struggled with sin. As she recognizes her sin, God can forgive her and help her respect others better.)

▶ **How do you feel when you hear or see people misusing God's name?**

To get things started, you may want to talk about someone you know who misuses God's name, and how it makes you feel. Don't mention names. You can also point out that many Christians actually cringe when they hear God's name used in vain. They love God so much that it hurts to hear people say God's name in anger or disgust.

▶ **How did Tyrone come to honor the name of God?**

(He realized that not honoring God is bigger than just using a swearword. His eyes were opened and his heart changed.)

▶ **How can you honor God's name in your own life?**

(We can speak highly of Him to others, not use His name as a swearword, and make sure we respect God and others.)

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

Materials:

☐ Bibles

For more ideas on how to honor God's name, have students look up these passages in the Psalms: 103:1-2 (praise His name); 29:2 (give glory to His name); 34:3 (exalt His name); 68:4 (sing praise to His name); etc. Discuss how these can be lived out daily.

STEP 4

Life Response
(5–10 minutes)

Bible Truth:

God's name should
be honored.

Objective: That your students honor God by using His name respectfully.

Materials:

- ☐ Bible
- ☐ *The Rock*
- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Pencils or pens

Now you're going to get a chance to demonstrate your respect for God in what may be a new way for you. Use your creativity to show respect for God's name by drawing a picture or writing a few sentences.

For example, you could draw a picture of a mountain and write God's name at the top, or write your name below God's name to indicate that you think highly of Him.

Give students two or three minutes to draw or write. Then let volunteers explain their drawings or read their sentences. Encourage students to always show respect for God's name—especially in the words they choose to say and in their actions.

As you close class in prayer, mention the students' individual efforts at showing respect for God's name. Take time to praise His name in prayer.

Before you dismiss the class, remind students to spend time each day with God by using the "Every Day Devotions" on page 8 in *The Rock*.

Remember to collect "The Big Ten" booklet before students leave.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

Materials:

- ☐ Art supplies—construction paper, scissors, glue or tape, magazines, color markers

Provide plenty of construction paper, markers, magazines, scissors, and glue so that students can get really creative in showing respect for God's name as explained in the regular Life Response activity.

