

Giving God Highest Honor



Life Need (5-10 minutes)

 Discover how choosing one thing usually means giving up something else. ☐ No materials



STEP 2 \bigcirc Bible Learning (15-20 minutes)

- Bible Study: Examine a ruler's decision and Jesus' teachings about priorities.
 - ☐ Bible Adventures pp. 2–3, Bibles, "The Ten Commandments" Teaching Aid
- Bible Review: Discuss how God must be the number one priority in our lives.



STEP 3 \bigcirc Bible Application (5-10 minutes)

- Discuss how the Ten Commandments are important today.
 - \square "The Ten Commandments" Teaching Aid, Bible Adventures p. 1, pencils



Life Response (about 5 minutes)

- Memory Work: Discuss what the Key Verse means and evaluate whether following God is a top priority.
 - ☐ Bible Adventures p. 4, pencils
- Optional Activity: Prayer journal assignment

Memory Verse

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength."

-Mark 12:30

indicates items you will need to prepare before class

Bible Basis:

God commands people to honor Him above all (Exod. 20:3). A rich young ruler chooses his possessions instead of following Christ (Matt. 19:16-30).

Bible Truth:

God should be more important than anything else in a person's life.

.esson Aim:

That your students will begin to know and follow Christ as their highest priority.

UnderStanding

Our first unit of this new quarter focuses on New Testament passages that reinforce the Ten Commandments. The first lesson

highlights God's command to love Him above all else.

When a rich young man asked Jesus how to receive eternal life, Jesus told him to obey God's commandments. The man replied that he had done this, but he wondered what he still needed to do. Jesus told the man that he should sell his treasures and give the money to the poor. The man turned away from Jesus because he didn't want to part with his wealth.

The man who came to Jesus was rich and young and he was also a ruler (Matt. 19:20, 22; Luke 18:18). Few people could claim that they had obeyed all the commandments that Jesus listed! Still, the ruler knew something wasn't quite right, for he had come to Jesus for help.

Even though the man may have obeyed the commands Jesus mentioned, he still felt unfulfilled. The comfort, prestige, and security that money could give was more important to him than God. He revealed this attitude in his unwillingness to part with his wealth.

In the Gospels, we are told that it is not possible to serve God and seek after wealth at the same time (Matt. 6:24).

—continued on next page

Understanding the Bible —cont'd

As the young man walked away, Jesus talked about what a struggle it is for a rich person to put God ahead of possessions. He said that it was more difficult for a rich person to enter the Kingdom than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. The disciples wondered whether anyone could be saved. Jesus reminded them that only God has the power to free us from loving money and its security more than Him.

TiPS

lassroom

Here are some tips to foster a sense of fairness in your class-room.

- Allow your students to be involved in making any needed classroom rules. Students often consider rules to be more fair if they have a voice in formulating them.
- Make as few rules as possible, and do it in a spirit of love and cooperation.
- Encourage your students to deal fairly with each other and not to nitpick about every little infraction of a rule.
- Your example of fairness in dealing with your students will teach them
 to act the same way. For example, give all of the students a chance to
 answer questions, and parcel out the jobs and privileges equally.
- You may want to point out that God is not only fair, He is also merciful. He always gives us another chance when we do not follow His rules.

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PRESESSION ACTIV

Choose from these activities to do with your class as other students are still arriving.

- Have students make a list of the 10 most important things in their lives. Then have them circle three of those things that they would be least willing to give up.
- paper, pencils
- Provide students with old magazines and a marker. Have them circle all the number "ones" they can find and the word "first." They could count the number of times each word appears.
- □ old magazines, marker
- Have your students split up into two groups and come up with skits about their own prized possessions. At the end of the skits have your students discuss how personal belongings can sometimes get in the way of our relationship with God and others.
- For Worship Time, use the songs for this quarter from the DisKit CD in the *Upper Elementary Creative Teaching Aids* packet. You will find a quarter theme song as well as a song for each unit.
- ☐ DisKit CD and CD player



Understanding Your Students

Your upper-elementary students have a strong sense of fairness and are interested in rules and laws. They want to be treated fairly at all times. However, they may think of laws and rules mainly as something to keep others in line.

Your students need to begin looking at God's commandments with new

understanding—not just as a set of grownup rules that have little to do with them. They need to see how obeying God's commandments helps them to lead better lives.

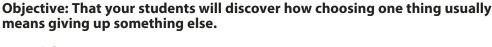




Life Need (5–10 minutes)

Lesson Aim:

That your students will begin to know and follow Christ as their highest priority.



Materials:

□ None

To get students thinking about today's Bible study about putting God first from Exodus 20:3 and Matthew 19:16-30, have them participate in the following discussion.

One Saturday, B.J.'s basketball team played in the playoffs, but B.J. wasn't there because he went on his church's weekend retreat instead. Many people criticized B.J. for not being loyal to his team. Some even blamed him for his team's loss. Others, however, applauded his loyalty to God.

- What would you have done if you were in B.J.'s shoes? Why?
- What do you think of B.J.'s choice?
- How hard do you think it was for B.J. to make the choice he did? Explain your answer.

Sometimes choosing God's way isn't easy. Let's hear another story about some ordinary college athletes who did an extraordinary act of kindness.

Sara hit the first home run of her life. As the ball sailed over the fence, the two runners on base sprinted for home. Sara set off around the bases but was so excited she missed touching first base. As she turned back, she tore a ligament in her leg, and fell to the ground in severe pain.

Her coach and teammates knew the importance of the home run for Sara. If her coach replaced her with a pinch runner, the hit would only be counted as a two-run single instead of a three-run homer. If Sara's teammates helped her around the bases, she would be considered out.

After receiving permission from the umpire, Mallory and Liz, players on the other team, came forward. They carried Sara to each base, letting her touch her good leg at each one.

Their unselfish act caused Sara's team to win, but fans rewarded Mallory and Liz with a standing ovation.

- Why do you think Mallory and Liz helped Sara score a run?
- Would you have done the same thing? Why or why not?
- How was this act of kindness like putting God first?

Putting God first isn't always easy. It would be much easier if our friends and peers supported our decisions to put Him first. But, we can do the right thing even though others may make fun of us. God knows at times it's hard to follow Him, but if we do, we will grow stronger in our faith.

Today we are going to talk about a young man who learned the importance of putting God first. Let's hear his story.



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STEP 2

Bible Learning (15-20 minutes)

Bible Basis:

God commands people to honor Him above all (Exod. 20:3). A rich young ruler chooses his possessions instead of following Christ (Matt. 19:16-30).



Objective: That your students will learn about godly priorities from the story of Jesus and a rich young ruler.

Materials:

- ☐ Bible Adventures pp. 2-3, Bibles
- ☐ "The Ten Commandments" Teaching Aid

In Old Testament times, God gave Moses the Ten Commandments for the people. They tried to keep these commands by choosing to do good deeds. However, people soon made them into a complicated system of "dos and don'ts." The Pharisees developed a whole set of "mini-commandments" that were designed to keep them from breaking the original ones given to Moses. Now, instead of having just 10 commandments, they had more than 600! When Jesus came, He taught that the true way to keep the commandments was by loving God above all and loving other people as ourselves, as Jesus reveals to a wealthy young ruler.

Bible Study

Put "The Ten Commandments" Teaching Aid in a place where students will be able see it. Distribute Bible Adventures and have students turn to pages 2 and 3. Explain the features in these pages. Students will read the Scriptures directly from their leaflets, as well as look up passages in their Bibles. Point out the footnotes that help with word pronunciation and give additional facts about the study. Have a volunteer read aloud the introductory paragraph, then have students look up Matthew 19 in their Bibles. Have a volunteer read Matthew 19:17.

Who is the One who is good? (God is the One who is good.)

Why do you think Jesus told the young man to obey the commandments to "enter **life"?** (He may have been revealing what his relationship to God was.)

Have a volunteer read the transitional statement, and another look up and read Matt. 19:20 in their Bible.

- **W** How did the young man answer? (The young man told Jesus that he had kept all those commandments, but he also asked what was still missing.)
- Do you think he had obeyed every commandment? Why or why not? (He probably thought he had. He probably sincerely tried to follow the commandments. But no human being, except Jesus, is sinless, so the young man must have broken some commandments.)

Have someone read the next brief transition, and then have a volunteer read the first section of Scripture Spotlight, Matthew 19:21.

Put yourself in the young man's place. How would you feel if Jesus told you the same thing He told the young man? (It could be a tough choice to make. It would be hard to give up everything we own in order to follow Jesus.)



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BIBLE STUDY BASED ON EXODUS 20:3; MATTHEW 19:16-30



of an official counci

Jesus, He asked, "What good thing must I do to get etemal life?"

Read Matthew 19:17. Who is the One who is good? Why do you think Jesus told the young man to obey the commandments to "enter life"?

The man asked which commandments3 he should obey. Jesus answered by naming some of the commandments He knew the young man had really tried to obey

Read Matthew 19:20. How did think he had obeyed every

commandment? Why or why not?

Even though the young man felt he had kept all the commandments, he still was not sure he had eternal life. He knew in his heart it was

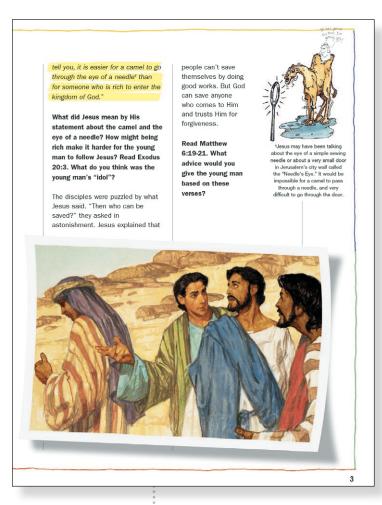
answered, "If atthew 19:21-24 be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me. Put yourself in the young man's place. How would you feel if Jesus told you the same thing He told the young man? When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had

not enough. So did Jesus.

great wealth. Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again

God wrote the Ten Comm one tablets and gave them t Moses for the people.

12 Lesson 1



Have students think about things they have and love. Would they give those things up if Jesus told them to? (Use the question to help them realize the difficulty of the young man's choice.)

Have another volunteer read the second section of Scripture Spotlight, Matthew 19:22-24.

- What did Jesus mean by His statement about the camel and the eye of a needle? (It is impossible for a camel to go through such a small opening. It is also impossible for anyone to enter God's kingdom without God's forgiveness and help.)
- How might being rich make it harder for the young man to follow Jesus? (He had more possessions to give up.) Point out that Jesus was not saying there was something always wrong with being rich or having nice things. He wanted the young man to see what he truly valued. The young man had come to Jesus wanting to know how to gain eternal life. But when Jesus put His finger on the sore spot, he couldn't give up his wealth.

Have students find and read Exodus 20:3 and point out the commandment on "The Ten Commandments" Teaching Aid.

What do you think was the young man's "idol"? (Money, possessions. He put these things before God.) Help them see that the young man had not made a statue out of his gold; but he put his money first, so he valued it more than he valued God.

Have students read the next section. Then have the students look up and read Matthew 6:19-21 in the Bible.

What advice would you give the young man based on these verses? (Have students restate the idea in their own words: "Earthly treasures don't last; don't value them too highly. The kingdom of God lasts forever; we should value this most of all.")

Bible Review

Have students read Matthew 19:30 from the Bible.

- What kinds of people "come in first" by the world's standards? Why might some of them be last in God's kingdom? (The world tends to put first those who are rich, beautiful, important, powerful, or famous. But God judges people by their relationship with Jesus, by how much they love Him, and by how much they have helped others with the gifts God has given them.)
- What are some reasons it is important to always put God first? (God is holy and perfect; He deserves first place in our lives. A relationship with God is worth more than money or other material goods. God is the one who gives us all our possessions, and we shouldn't put them above Him, but should be thankful for what He has given us.)

STEP 3 D Bible Application (5–10 minutes)





Objective: That your students will consider what things may keep someone from following God wholeheartedly.

Materials:

- $\hfill\Box$ "The Ten Commandments" Teaching Aid
- ☐ Bible Adventures p. 1, pencils

Have students look at "The Ten Commandments" Teaching Aid.

- God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai. These commandments were given to the Israelites as a guide for their lives. How does following these commandments help us today? (The commandments tell us how to live; they help us get along with other people; without the commandments the world would be even more evil.)
- Many people do not follow the Ten Commandments at all. Other people follow only some of the commandments, or parts of individual ones. Which of these commandments do you find the most difficult to follow? (Volunteers may discuss why they find it difficult to follow certain commandments.)

Have the poster available in Presession for the next four weeks. Encourage your students to look at it and review the commandments the Bible studies have covered. The poster could also be used each week during Bible Review or Closing Activities. Now have the class turn to page 1 of *Bible Adventures* and read aloud the introduction. The young ruler let his riches keep him from following God wholeheartedly.

- What is keeping these students from making Jesus number one in their lives? (Spending too much time on personal appearance, pride in athletic skill, desire for more possessions.)
- What could these students gain by making Jesus the top priority in their lives? (Some possible answers could be these: The girl would have more time for Bible reading. The boy in the middle scene could learn about Jesus in Sunday school. If the boy in the last picture gave some of his money to God, he could experience the joy of helping others.)

Putting God first in our lives helps us to know Him better and to have the joy of living in His love.

STEP 4

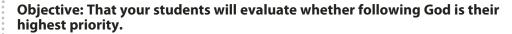


(5-10 minutes)

Bible Truth:

God should be more important than anything else in a person's life.





Materials:

☐ Bible Adventures p. 4, pencils

What Jesus taught the young man and the disciples is important for us, too. We are to follow God as our first priority. Sometimes we may find this hard to do. This week's Key Verse will help us realize what is really involved in loving God most of

Memory Work

Turn to page 4 in Bible Adventures and read the Key Verse aloud as a class.

- What do you think it means to love the Lord your God with all our **heart?** (To love Him joyfully, eagerly, and fully.)
- How can you love God with all your soul? (By worshiping Him for who He is—not just for what He does for us.)
- What does it mean to love God with all your mind and all your strength? (We show this love by reading His Word, asking Him for guidance, and by using physical strength to serve Him and help others. Also, following His rules because we really want to, as part of who we are.)

To keep this commandment we have to give ourselves to God completely. Read the paragraph at the top of the page.

What might we love more than God? (Some possible answers are friends, popularity, sports, education, money, family, or promoting our talents.)

While none of these things are bad, they could act as weights that hold us back from the wonderful life that God has planned for us.

Have your students complete the activity. Since their answers are really prayers, they need to be serious and make the answers specific. Each day we must decide to make God the first priority in our lives. This involves our hearts, minds, and souls.



Close with a prayer asking for God's help in following His commandments. Or let volunteers read some of the prayers they wrote on page 4 of Bible Adventures.

Note: The loose cover wrap from Bible Adventures is a poster for students to take home at the end of class today. It features today's memory verse, Mark 12:30.

Optional Activity

You may choose to have your students continue using a prayer journal started in previous quarters. If you wish to start this idea, bring a notebook for each student or have each student bring one. It could be as simple as a spiral notebook. Each week, have the students write the memory verse at the top of a page to review during the week. Have them write prayer requests and answers to prayer at the bottom of the page. There will be an assignment in Step 4 of each lesson for the students to work on during the week.

The assignment for this week is to pick an item that needs the most work from page 4 of Bible Adventures. Write it in your prayer journal and pray about it each day this week. Write about any progress you see in this area.



