

## A Day of Worship

### STEP 1 Life Need (5–10 minutes)

- Read and discuss a feature in *The Rock*.
  - The Rock*
  - Whiteboard or poster board and markers

### STEP 2 Bible Learning (15–20 minutes)

- Compare and contrast the Christian Sunday with the Jewish Sabbath.
- Review the fourth commandment.
- *Optional:* Study a Sabbath law from Scripture.
  - Bible  *The Rock*
  - Pencils or pens
  - “The Big Ten” booklet from *Middle School Creative Teaching Aids*
  - Optional:* Bibles

### STEP 3 Bible Application (5–10 minutes)

- Discuss a poster about the abuse of the Sabbath.
- Discuss what students can do to make Sunday more special.
  - Bible
  - Paper
  - Pencils or pens
  - Whiteboard or poster board and markers

### STEP 4 Life Response (about 5 minutes)

- Encourage students to make the Lord’s Day more meaningful.
  - Bible  *The Rock*
  - Paper
  - Pencils or pens
  - Whiteboard or poster board and markers

### Memory Verse

“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.”

—Exodus 20:8

### Bible Basis:

The commandment regarding the Sabbath (Exod. 20:8-11); the origin of the Lord’s Day (Mark 16:2-6); the Lord’s Day observed (Acts 20:7).

### Bible Truth:

God wants His people to use one day each week to specially honor Him.

### Lesson Aim:

That your students deepen their understanding of how to show right attitudes toward the Lord’s Day.

### Understanding the Bible

In its layout, the Mosaic law code was similar to ancient Hittite treaties in which some great monarch would spell out the rights and responsibilities of his vassals.

Several Old Testament reasons are given for keeping the Sabbath. The first is to remember God’s rest after Creation (Exod. 20:11). The second is to remember God’s liberation of the nation from Egyptian slavery (Deut. 5:15). It was also intended for worshipping God (Ezek. 20:16).

Unfortunately, by their later legalisms the Pharisees made the Sabbath more burdensome than restful. They had gotten the cart before the horse by making lots of overcautious rules about the Sabbath, thus working a hardship on people. Jesus said this rest day was to help humanity, not burden it (Mark 2:27).

Christians can go to the same extremes today. We can crowd so many church activities into one “day of rest” that people are actually worn out—and need a day of rest to recover from this “day of rest”! Or so many taboos can be forced on young people and children that they eventually rebel against a good thing made sour.

Mark 16:2-6; Acts 20:7. Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week, so Christians began to get together

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indicates items you will need to prepare before class

## Understanding the Bible —cont'd

on that day instead of on the Jewish Sabbath to worship their risen Lord and celebrate the Lord's Supper.

## Tips

### classroom

You'll discover that this lesson does not lambaste people who don't know what it means to honor God on the Sabbath. Nor does the lesson attack Christians who "worship our work, work at our play, and play at our worship." Instead, it acknowledges the genuine stress of living today (see "Race against Time" in *The Rock*)—and woos students to consider the joy that comes from obeying God's command.

You can enhance this message by inviting one or two guests to speak who find great joy in honoring the Lord's Day. God can use heartfelt testimonies like these to convince your students of the value of Sabbath rest and worship.

## Understanding Your Students

Influences in the lives of your students have increased and will continue to do so over the next few years. In addition to the concerns of home and church, your students have to grapple with pressures from school and peers, including fellow students and neighborhood friends. With the likelihood of increasing demands from all sides, lessons like the one today are critical.

The lesson is really about priorities. Getting this kind of lesson across to youth from both Christian and non-Christian homes can be a real challenge because of the chaotic conditions of the world. Unconsciously, some of your students

are negatively programmed by day-to-day exposure to undisciplined or ungodly living.

One of the ways to help bring sanity to your students' lives is by stressing that, just as Jesus is Lord of everything else, He is Lord of time.

Because yours may be the only voice that is giving that kind of message, say it repetitively and creatively during the course of the lesson. Make sure that the truth is applied to their lives specifically so that there will be no question in their minds what offering their time first to the Lord looks like.



## PRESESSION ACTIVITY



### Rules, Rules, Rules

• **Objective:** To acquaint students with each other's family life.

Have students get in small groups and list on paper as many household rules as they can think of.

Regather the class, collect their papers, and select a few examples from each list to discuss. Ask the student whose family follows the particular rule you have selected, how the rule originated and how well (or not) it works in the family.

# STEP 1

Life Need  
5–10 minutes

## Lesson Aim:

That your students deepen their understanding of how to show right attitudes toward the Lord's Day.

**Objective:** That your students read and discuss a feature in *The Rock* showing the need for rest.

### Materials:

- The Rock*
- Whiteboard or poster board and markers

After your students have settled down and are ready for class, begin by asking what they and their families do on most Sundays—all day. Allow them to exchange ideas about family traditions. You can even quickly list them on the board.

Today we're going to talk about the Sabbath and the Lord's Day (or Sunday). The word *sabbath* literally means "rest," so we're going to also talk about the importance of a day of rest. Let's read a short story about work and rest.

Distribute today's issue of *The Rock*. Have students read the feature titled "Race against Time." Then briefly discuss the article.



- ▶ Without naming names, do you know anyone who gets busy and burned-out like Jamal? How is that person like Jamal?**

Draw a line scale on the board. At one end, write *busy* and at the other end, write *bored*. Draw a line near the busy end and explain that this is how busy Jamal probably feels. Have each student go to the board and draw a line somewhere on the scale to show how they feel most days. Or students can put their initials at the appropriate spots along the scale.

- ▶ What will probably happen if Jamal doesn't rest?**  
*(He might always feel tired and grouchy. He might feel as if he'll never catch up.)*
- ▶ How do you feel when you don't get the rest you need?**  
*(Eventually, I feel like Jamal does.)*
- ▶ What things could Jamal do on his day off that could help him and honor God?**  
*(Think about how great God is, enjoy nature, relax, pray, or spend quiet time with family or friends.)*
- ▶ Which of the day-of-rest ideas appeal most to you?**
- ▶ Why do we need a whole day instead of just a few minutes' rest here and there?**  
*Contrast the longer-lasting effect of a day of rest with the brief effect of eating sugar or drinking caffeine.*

God created us to need a break. And then He told us to take one every seventh day. In fact, it's one of the Ten Commandments. Let's take a look at it.

# STEP 2

Bible Learning  
15–20 minutes

## Bible Basis:

The commandment regarding the Sabbath (Exod. 20:8-11); the origin of the Lord's Day (Mark 16:2-6); the Lord's Day observed (Acts 20:7).

**Objective:** That your students see how the Lord's Day is similar to, and different from, the Jewish Sabbath.

**Materials:**

- Bible
- The Rock*
- "The Big Ten" booklet from *Middle School Creative Teaching Aids*

This is the second lesson in a five-lesson unit on the Ten Commandments. Remind your students that these commandments grew out of God's love and concern for His people. Today's lesson is on the Sabbath. As they've already seen, the Sabbath meets some basic human needs.

Distribute "The Big Ten" booklet from *Middle School Creative Teaching Aids*. Review the introductory material and have someone read the fourth commandment aloud. Remind your students to keep this commandment in mind as they study Scripture today.



**Exodus 20:8**

**"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy."**

You can also reread the sections in the pamphlet titled "What They Aren't" and "What They Are" to refresh your students' memory. Then collect the pamphlets and save them for use in the rest of the lessons in this unit.



Have students turn to "Special Days," the Bible study in *The Rock*. Divide the class into groups of three or four students and set them to work. Get them back together to discuss the answers.

The Bible study from *The Rock* is reprinted here along with additional questions for class discussion.






**■ From THE ROCK—Special Days**

What's your favorite day of the year—your birthday? Christmas? Valentine's Day? Fourth of July? The last day of school?

Whatever it is, you look forward to it weeks ahead of time. When it arrives, you celebrate it in a way that makes it different from all other days that year. When it's over, you remember it and probably miss it, but you know the day will come again next year.

God wanted His people to have special days too, but not just once a year—once a week! Those special days are called Sabbaths.

Today we study the fourth commandment (some churches treat this command as the third one). As you read, keep in mind that the word "Sabbath" comes from a word meaning "rest" or "time out from work". The word "holy" means "dedicated to a special purpose."

-  1. Read Exodus 20:8-11. How were God's people supposed to act differently on the Sabbath? (*Do no work, and don't make anyone else work.*)
-  2. Why were they supposed to act differently on the Sabbath? (*Because God worked for six days and rested one day when He created the world.*)
-  3. How do you think the Sabbath helped the people? (*It gave them time to rest, relax, and worship God with their families.*)

## TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

Exodus 20:8-11

<sup>8</sup>Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. <sup>9</sup>Six days you shall labor and do all your work, <sup>10</sup>but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. <sup>11</sup>For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Mark 16:2-6

<sup>2</sup>Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb <sup>3</sup>and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?"

<sup>4</sup>But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away.

<sup>5</sup>As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.

<sup>6</sup>"Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him."

Acts 20:7

On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight.

▶ **What do you think God was telling people through these Sabbath regulations?** (*We all need times of rest—not just people, but animals and even the land.*)

▶ 4. Christians aren't commanded in the New Testament to celebrate the Sabbath. But we do have something to celebrate and remember. Read Mark 16:2-6. Why do most Christians call Sunday the Lord's Day? (*It's the day our Lord rose from the dead; the day we worship Him.*)

▶ 5. In Acts 20:7 we see an example of the early Christians coming together on Sunday. What did they do? (*They celebrated the Lord's Supper or Communion.*)

Just as the Jews took time on Saturday to remember God's creation and their deliverance from Egypt, early Christians took time on Sunday to celebrate the Resurrection.

▶ **How is our celebration of the Lord's Day (or Sunday) like the Jewish Sabbath celebration? How is it different?** (*Both treat a certain day of the week as special; remember important events; gather people together; and allow time to worship God. They are different because the observance of the Sabbath was a command; the Lord's Day wasn't. Therefore, the Lord's Day doesn't have specific rules and restrictions like the Sabbath does.*)

## OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

### Materials:

Bibles

If you have time, read Leviticus 25:1-7 to the class. These verses describe the Sabbath year—an extension of the Sabbath-day principle of rest. Go over the verses with your students until they grasp the facts.

▶ **How is the principle of allowing the land to rest similar to the principle of our Sabbath-day rest?** (*People need to rest in order to renew themselves for the week ahead. The land needs to rest so that its nutrients can be renewed for another growing season.*)

God created the earth so that it could renew itself up to a certain point. But people have pushed the land beyond its limits.

▶ **Name some things people do that affect the land. What could happen if they continue to do these things?**

▶ **What changes could be made to stop this from happening?**

# STEP 3

## Bible Application

(5–10 minutes)

**Objective:** That your students suggest meaningful ways to celebrate the Lord's Day.

**Materials:**

- Bible
- Paper
- Pencils or pens
- Whiteboard or poster board and markers

Discuss:

- ▶ **How do some people worship their work?** *(They devote most of their time and energy to it; they think it's the most important thing in their lives.)*

Remind students that, for most of them, work means school—even though some might actually have a part-time job.

- ▶ **What does it mean to work at our play?** *(To try too hard to have fun; to over-work at getting better at a sport or game; to make winning the most important thing.)*

- ▶ **What does it mean to play at our worship?** *(To not take it seriously; to go through the motions for the sake of appearances.)*

People worship famous people by overly obsessing about them. They care so much about a celebrity's thoughts, actions and activities that it takes precedence over other things. Nothing should interfere with our worship or our commitment to God. The way we worship God shows how much we love Him and what we think of Him. That's why it's important to worship Him throughout the week.

Have someone look up and read Isaiah 58:13-14a aloud. It's a wonderful verse about finding joy in the Lord by honoring the Lord's Day.

- ▶ **Think about the way you spend Sunday. What could you do to help make Sunday a special day—a day set apart for God?** *Insist that students not restrict themselves to church activities. Rather, have them think about other ways to enjoy their special relationship with God. Also, remind them that rest doesn't merely mean doing nothing. Our bodies and spirits need a break in routine to help them recharge; therefore, rest can mean activity and recreation.*

If students have a hard time getting ideas started on making Sunday special, suggest that they think of these categories: things to do with family; things to do with other families from church; ways to help people in need; ways to appreciate God's creation; ways to communicate with God.

Write ideas on the board as they're given. Make sure each student copies key words or phrases on a separate sheet of paper for use during Life Response.

# STEP 4

Life Response  
(5–10 minutes)

## Bible Truth:

God wants His people to use one day each week to specially honor Him.

**Objective: That your students, individually or with others, observe the Lord's Day in meaningful ways.**

### Materials:

- Bible
- The Rock*
- Paper
- Pencils or pens
- Whiteboard or poster board and markers

**Look at the list of Lord's Day ideas that you just copied from the board. Circle your three favorites.**

Give students a minute to make their selections.

**Now put a star by one of the circled ideas that you think would interest you or your family.**

Ask students to explain exactly how they could honor the Lord's Day in ways that will please God.

List their ideas on the board and encourage them to copy the list. Students might suggest that they could read Isaiah 58:13-14a or today's other Scripture passages with their families.

Encourage students to try these exercises, even if no one at home seems interested. You might suggest that students reach out to other people in the class or to non-Christians in their neighborhood.

If students follow through on this idea at home, explaining the importance of the Lord's Day to their families will reinforce what they learned today.

Before you close class in prayer, tell students that you will give them a few moments of silence in which they can talk with the Lord about honoring His day. During your prayer, thank God for the privilege of taking one day out of the week to remember Jesus Christ's resurrection and God's rest.