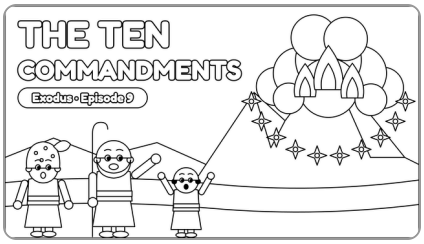
The Ten Commandments

Exodus 19 and 20 · For ages 3 to 10 · Video: 5 min 46



The story in brief

The people come to the desert of Sinai and camp in front of the mountain. On the morning of the third day: thunder, lightning, a thick cloud, the sound of a horn. The mountain smokes and shakes, and God speaks ten words: the Ten Commandments. The people are afraid, and Moses tells them, “Do not be afraid!”

> **Note for parents.** All ten words are said, in the order of the text (Exodus 20:2-17), in simple words. “You shall not commit adultery” becomes “You shall be faithful to your husband or your wife.” “You shall not kill” is said as it is; the picture shows a mother and her baby. No number is given, by the voice or on screen, because the Jewish, Catholic and Lutheran, Reformed and Orthodox traditions do not divide the ten words in the same way: each word has its picture, then ten lights come on together. God is never shown, only the cloud, the fire and the light. The stone tablets are not shown: they come later in the book (Exodus 24 and 31). The ban on touching the mountain on pain of death (19:12-13) and the sentence about the fault of the fathers (20:5) are not said.

Let’s talk about it

1. Where do the people set up their tents?
2. What message does Moses bring back from the mountain? What do the people answer?
3. What happens on the third day, early in the morning?
4. How many words does God speak? Can you say a few of them?
5. What does Moses say to the people when they are afraid?
6. Kofi changes the rules of the mancala game every turn. Why is it hard to play without rules? Which rules help you live well with others?

> **Notes for the grown-up.** In front of the mountain, in the desert of Sinai. The message: “I carried you as on eagles’ wings. If you listen to my voice, you will be my treasure among all the peoples.” The people answer, “Everything the Lord has said, we will do!” On the third day: thunder, lightning, a thick cloud on the mountain and the sound of a horn; the mountain smokes and shakes. God speaks ten words. They begin like this: “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.” They ask us to have no other gods and to make no idol, not to misuse God’s name, to remember the Sabbath day, to honor our father and mother; not to kill, to be faithful to our husband or wife, not to steal, not to say anything false against our neighbor, not to covet what belongs to someone else. Moses says, “Do not be afraid!”

To remember

Ten words to live together, ten words for all to hear. His people are his treasure: do not fear!

The song: Ten words to live together

Ten words to live together, ten words for all to hear!
His people are his treasure: do not fear!

To do

With your family or your friends, choose a game, and say its rules out loud before you start. Then draw or write one rule that helps everyone live well together at home.

Watch the episode and hear the song: labiblesouslebaobab.com/en/episodes/the-ten-commandments/
From the book of Exodus, chapters 19 and 20. Free for home, Sunday school and children’s ministry.