

Sunday, October 26, 2008
24th Sunday after Pentecost

Preparation:

Read the Gospel for the day over – [Matthew 22: 34-46](#). Pay attention to the words or phrases that jump out at you.

Read over the lesson so that you are familiar with what is intended to happen. Gather the materials that you will need for each section of the lesson. For deeper thinking or for ways to extend the lesson take a look at the following websites:

<http://www.ebibleteacher.com/children/lessons/greatestcommand.htm>

<http://www.textweek.com/yeara/propera25.htm>

<http://www.sermons4kids.com/number-one.html>

http://ecusa.anglican.org/50534_62453_ENG_HTM.htm

<http://msssbible.com/newtestament/greatestcommandment.htm>

Gathering:

Materials needed:

Small table or end of one table

White candle

Bible & Bookmark

Green cloth (optional)

Newsprint and markers

Gather around the small table or at the end of one table. If you have the green cloth put it down and place the candle on it and put the Bible near the candle (you may want to let the children help with this). Write the prayer up on the newsprint so that everyone can see it. Light the candle.

Pray the following prayer together:

**Loving God be with us today,
Loving Jesus be with us today,
Loving Spirit be with us today,
Amen.**

Blow out the candle. If you created the 'Question Box' last week, take some time to answer any questions that the children came up with before moving on.

Write up the following list of rules on the newsprint:

1. One person at a time talks in the group.
2. We all listen to each other.
3. There will be no yelling in the group.
4. We will all jump up and down together.
5. We will be considerate of each other's feelings.

Read over the rules to the children. When they have all been read out ask the children if the rules make sense. Are there any that shouldn't be there? Are there any that were missed? Explain to the children that in today's story they will hear about the most special rules of all.

Story Time:

Materials needed: red construction paper, scissors and a marker – make three hearts of the same size out of the red construction paper – write on one **God**, on the second **Neighbour**, on the third **Self**

Jesus was continuing to teach in the temple. While he was there, some of the religious leaders sent a lawyer over to him. This lawyer knew all the laws or rules that God had given to the people of Israel. The lawyer had a question for Jesus.

The lawyer asked Jesus, “Teacher what is the greatest rule or law that God has given to the people?”

Jesus looked thoughtful. He looked like he was happy to hear that question. Jesus told the lawyer and all the people listening, “You shall love the Lord your God (*lay the heart down with **God** printed on it in front of the children*) with all your heart (*touch heart*), with all your soul (*hug yourself*) and with all your mind (*touch head*). This is the first and the greatest law that God has given us. There is a second law like it. You shall love your neighbour (*lay the heart down with **Neighbour** printed on it in front of the children and point to all the children*) as yourself (*lay the heart down with **Self** printed on it front of the children and point to yourself*). On these two laws every other law made for God’s people are built.”

When the lawyer and the other religious leaders heard Jesus’ response to the question they realized they could not ask him any more questions. They were astounded by all the things that Jesus had to teach them about God and living in God’s way.

Teach the children the following song using the tune from *Row, row, row your boat*:

**Love, love, love your God
With everything you are,
Love your neighbour as yourself,
God’s law is built on this.**

**Love, love, love your God
With heart, soul and mind,
Love your neighbour everyday,
Wherever they are found.**

Once the children have learned the song, use it and the hearts from the lesson to reinforce the concepts in the story. When they sing the first and second line place the first heart down and have the children point to it. When they sing the third and fourth line place the second and third hearts down and have the children point to them. Have fun with this and sing it a couple of times.

Response:

Idea #1: Love Mobile

This will be a concrete way for the children to remember the greatest commandments that we are all meant to live by.

Materials needed: red construction paper, scissors, hole punch, yarn, hangers, markers, stickers

Instructions: Cut the yarn into lengths from 20 cm/8 inch to 30 cm/12 inch, so that there are three pieces for each child. For younger children cut out three hearts – for older children let them cut out the hearts themselves. Invite the children to print on the hearts the following: **LOVE GOD, LOVE NEIGHBOUR, LOVE SELF**. Punch holes into the top of each heart and help the children that need to tie the yarn onto the hearts. Invite the children to decorate the hearts with positive images using the markers and the stickers. When they are finished tie the hearts on to the bottom part of the hangers. Encourage the children to hang their mobiles up at home where they can remember God's laws that Jesus wants us all to live by.

Idea #2: Love Banners

The children can use this response to share with their families and others the great commandment that Jesus gives to all of us.

Materials needed: construction paper, scissors, clear contact paper, poster board, glue, markers, hole punch, yarn, and tissue paper

Instructions: Cut the poster board into 30 cm/12 inch wide strips along the long side of it. Cut three hearts from the construction paper for each child and cut a corresponding three hearts from the contact paper that are slightly larger than the construction paper hearts. Tear the tissue paper into small pieces. Cut the yarn into 60 cm/24 inch lengths. Have the children glue the tissue paper pieces over the construction paper hearts. When they are completed help them place the three hearts in a descending row on the poster board. Using the larger hearts made out of the clear contact paper, attach the construction paper hearts to the poster board. Have the children that can write print **LOVE** with the markers at the top of the banner over the first heart and then under each of the three hearts print one of the following – **GOD, NEIGHBOUR, SELF**. With the hole punch cut two holes near the two top corners of the banner. Help the children to tie their yarn to each hole. Encourage the children to hang up their banners at home where others can see them.

Idea #3: Love Letter

This will be a good response to do with children who are able to write and if your parish has a mission or outreach project you are working on.

Materials needed: newsprint, markers, white paper, fine line markers, pencils, large envelope, and information about the mission or outreach project in the parish

Instructions: Share with the children the hopes of the mission project that the parish is involved in. Explain that one of the ways we can live out the law to love our neighbours as ourselves is by writing encourage letters to those who are doing God's work in other places. With the children brainstorm on the newsprint encouraging words that could be shared in a letter. After they have come up with the phrases work together to write letters of encouragement and love to those involved in the mission

project. Use the envelope to put all the letters and arrange to put it in the post or have it delivered if the mission project is in your community.

Closing:

Gather with the children around the worship table again. Relight the candle. Say the prayer line by line and encourage the children to repeat it after you:

Thank you God for our time together,

Thank you Jesus for being our friend,

Thank you Spirit for showing us the way,

Amen.