4.1 Living the Law of Love

This unit explores the ‘law of love’. It begins by recalling with students the purpose of rules in groups and communities. It then examines the Ten Commandments, focussing on their purpose and principles for living in relationship with God and each other. This forms the basis for introducing and exploring Jesus’ ‘new commandment’ with reference back to the Commandments. The unit leads to a deeper understanding of how the Commandments and Jesus’ ‘new commandment’ guide us in living in relationship with God and others.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Values & Attitudes**  *Students will demonstrate that they are:* | **Knowledge & Understandings**  *Students will demonstrate that they can:* | **Skills**  *Students will demonstrate that they can:* |
| S2.2 attentive to the opportunities in their own lives where the actions and teachings of Jesus might be applied. | identify the actions and teachings of Jesus | apply the actions and teachings of Jesus to their own lives |
| 02.2 attentive to ways in which they can apply the message of Jesus in reaching out and relating to others | identify the connection between the message of Jesus and their relationships | apply the message of Jesus in making decisions in their relationships with others |

Syllabus Outcomes  
Self/Others – Stage 2

Classroom Outcomes

*Students will be able to:*

* recall the ten commandments and identify their guiding principles
* relate Jesus’ ‘new commandment’ to the ten commandments
* identify how the ten commandments and Jesus’ ‘new commandment’ influence their living as followers of Jesus
* identify how individuals and organisations in the Church “show they are Christians by their love”

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Scripture | Doctrine |
| Exodus 12-15 *The Exodus*  Deuteronomy 5:1–22 *The Ten Commandments*  Jeremiah 31:33-34 *Deep within them I will plant my law*  John 13:34–35 *I give you a new Commandment*  **Related**  Matthew 12:9–14 *Cure of a man with a withered hand* | * God gave the chosen people the Commandments to direct their way of life * Jesus gives us a new commandment – the law of love * Jesus loves all people * Jesus calls us to live the law of love |

Spiritual Reflection for Teachers

All the world religions teach their followers to love others. This is a central aspect of being genuinely human.

Jesus does more than teach his followers to love. He instructs his disciples to follow a new commandment: "love one another, just as I have loved you". And Jesus tells us that this is the sign of being his disciples: "by this love you have for one another, everyone will know that you are my disciples".

Do people experience our school and church communities and say 'see how they love one another'?

*What is special about the way Jesus loved?*

Catechism of the Catholic Church

**Excerpts from the Catechism of the Catholic Church are included below as information for teachers. They present the Church’s teachings contained in this unit.**

**1972** The New Law is called a *law of love* because it makes us act out of the love infused by the Holy Spirit, rather than from fear; a *law of grace*, because it confers the strength of grace to act, by means of faith and the sacraments; a *law of freedom,* because it sets us free from the ritual and juridical observances of the Old Law, inclines us to act spontaneously by the prompting of charity and, finally, lets us pass from the condition of a servant who "does not know what his master is doing" to that of a friend of Christ - "For all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you” - or even to the status of son and heir.

**2083** Jesus summed up man’s duties towards God in this saying: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” This immediately echoes the solemn call: “Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord.”

God has loved us first. The love of the One God is recalled in the first of the “ten words.” The commandments then make explicit the response of love that man is called to give to his God.

**2196** In response to the question about the first of the commandments, Jesus says: "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

The apostle St Paul reminds us of this: “He who loves his neighbour has fulfilled the law. The commandments, ‘You shall not commit adultery, You shall not kill, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,’ and any other commandment, are summed up in this sentence, ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

Scripture: Background Information

**Exodus 12:1 – 15:21 The Exodus**

The Book of Exodus is the second book of the Bible and the second book of the Torah (Law) or Pentateuch (5 books). The Torah or Pentateuch is made up of five books – Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. It was composed over a long period of time from oral, tribal stories as well as other sources, both written and oral. By the time these texts were finally edited in the sixth century, hundreds of years had passed since the events they relate.

As the title of Exodus suggests the Book recounts the story of the Israelites’ escape or exit from slavery in Egypt to freedom and eventually their homeland in Canaan. The Exodus theme permeates the rest of the Bible. The ideas of freedom, coming home, being chosen by God and covenant are all linked to the Exodus. The background to the Exodus story in the first fourteen chapters tells of the birth of Moses (1-2), his marriage and call by God to liberate the people (2-6). A struggle follows between God and the Pharaoh (7-12) culminating in the first Passover meal (12). Then the Red Sea is crossed by the Israelites into relative freedom in the desert (12-13). It is an epic narrative in which God and Moses are the major characters and certainly the heroes. It is written, largely, to show the greatness of God and how God loves the people.

We have no other historical evidence to support the historicity of these stories. In teaching them to students it is important not to teach them too literally as they do ‘exaggerate’ in order to show how great God is. The stories of the plagues can be distressing because the innocent apparently suffer as well. We need to understand that the plagues are presented as a struggle between God and Pharaoh who was regarded as divine. Two great rulers are in combat. God eventually wins and continues to care for and love the Israelite people through their sojourn in the desert. Moses, the great leader, teacher and mystic, leads his people to freedom under God’s guidance. Chapter 15 presents a victory song of Moses, praising God for delivering them all safely out of Egypt.

Note: The Exodus story in this unit is a re-telling and is more easily done using the story script provided.

**Deuteronomy 5:2-21 The Ten Commandments**

The Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy are very close to the version in Exodus 20, but there are some differences. In fact the word Deuteronomy, based on the Greek, means ‘second law’. Mount Horeb, mentioned here as the mount of the covenant (5:5), is Mount Sinai. The two names are interchangeable depending on the source of the text.

The second commandment, not to misuse the name of God, refers in that society to perjury or magic. The command to keep the Sabbath, to rest, is the longest (5:12-15). All must rest, including servants, strangers and even animals. This day of rest is consecrated to God. As in Exodus, a proper parent-child relationship is encouraged (5:16). “You shall not kill” (5:17) refers to deliberate homicide but not capital punishment and the killing of animals for food – the Hebrew verb *razach* (kill) suggests this. “You shall not covet your neighbour’s wife” favours women a little more than the Exodus version, which mentions the household with all its contents, including the wife. Here Deuteronomy puts the wife in a separate category with a distinct verb – a small but important improvement for women. The Catholic tradition divides this final commandment into two parts.

**Jeremiah 31:33-34 I will write my Law of Love on their hearts**

The prophet Jeremiah lived in troubled times. He witnessed the invasion of Judah and Jerusalem by the Babylonians and the killing or deportation of many of his people to Babylon. Jeremiah is often known as a prophet of doom and gloom. This is true. Nonetheless there is much consolation and encouragement in the Book of Jeremiah. In fact there is, what scholars term, a Book of Consolation, which begins at chapter 30 just after his consoling letter to those exiled to Babylon in chapter 29. Here in chapter 31 we find more words of hope. Indeed the whole of the chapter is worth reading. The verses that concern us here (33-34) refer to a covenant or law that God ‘plants deep within’ us, writing it on our hearts. Part of that inner covenant is knowing God - a genuine knowing of God truly, deeply and intimately. It is a close and personal relating in knowledge, love and forgiveness that also involves our neighbours and indeed our families. “There will be no further need for neighbour to try to teach neighbour, or brother to say to brother, ‘Learn to know the Lord!’ No, they will all know me, the least no less than the greatest” (Jer 31:34). These short few verses have been referred to as “the most profound and moving” in the whole Bible.

**John 13:34-35 I give you a new Commandment**

In this passage John establishes the approaching death of Jesus as the ultimate example of love. The command then to love one another is new because it is founded, not in the commandments of love from the Jewish tradition, but rather in the self-offering of Jesus, the supreme example of love. The disciples and the Christian community for whom John writes are called to love and to be of service to one another, following the example of Jesus Christ, who is the model of true love. The formulation of this new commandment became the distinctive mark of the Christian community. People could see how much they loved and cared for one another[[1]](#footnote-1).

**Matthew 12:9-14 Cure of a man with a withered hand**

In this episode Jesus is in conflict with his contemporaries. In verses 1-8 immediately preceding this passage there is a similar clash. In both instances the controversies are about the observance of the Sabbath law.

The Jewish Sabbath is on a Saturday and it is a day of rest, prayer and renewal. The Jewish scriptures give a simple command to keep the Sabbath holy (Deuteronomy 5:12-15). However, the Jewish priests had gone on to classify many different types of work that were forbidden on the Sabbath. The Pharisees were scrupulous observers of the law, particularly at the time when Matthew’s gospel was written.

In this incident Jesus is questioned about healing on the Sabbath. Matthew’s account presents Jesus using reasoning and debate to demonstrate that what he had done had not broken the Sabbath law. Matthew makes it clear that Jesus is not anti the law or the Sabbath. However, he is against the over-development of the law at the expense of humanitarian concern. Jesus stands within the law. He wants the law to serve people rather than enslave them. Jesus, in this scene, is highlighting the **spirit** of Judaism, which indicates that love is foremost and even above the Sabbath law.

For our students at this stage, the most important aspect of this text is that rules are made to give life to people and communities. If we become too scrupulous about their enforcement and forget their purpose, we may miss the point of the good they are promoting. Always the highest concern must be people and the works of mercy and love.

**Note:** this is categorised as ‘related’ scripture and as such is not required for all students. This scripture story is provided for ‘extension’ for some students. It presents a dilemma about following the law.

The Church’s Teaching and Lived Tradition

**In Tradition - *To Know, Worship and Love* Year 4, p122** - Preface of Sundays in Ordinary Time

This prayer from a Preface of Sundays in Ordinary Time reminds us that our whole life is enfolded in God’s love. Our joy comes from our striving to show God’s love to others. The preface is based on St Paul’s sermon at Athens (Acts 17:28). [[2]](#footnote-2)

Celebration: Prayer and Liturgy

**Celebration is a key part of Religious Education. The following suggestions provide opportunities throughout the unit for celebration in prayer and liturgy. Most of these suggestions are included as ‘teaching/learning’ activities in Unit Content sections.**

* Silent reflection/journaling (based on strategies in Unit Content 2). Read Jeremiah 31:33-34 again. Play some quiet music as students respond privately to the following. ‘Think of a time today, this week, when you have done something you know is wrong. How did you ‘know’ it was wrong. How did you feel? Is there a time recently when you had to make a choice, because you knew something was right but you didn’t want to do it. What told you it was right? Did you do it? How did you feel?’ Allow students to share, only if they want to. Conclude with a song reflecting the message of the scripture.
* Prayer – Use scripture John 13:34-35 (related to strategies in Unit Content 3). Students who made posters bring them to the sacred space and talk about one of the symbols on the poster. After the reading is proclaimed, sing the hymn used above. Choose some students to accompany it with their movement (from above strategy). Spontaneous or prepared prayers can then be prayed thanking God for loving us, for the people who bring God’s love to us, especially Jesus and for the people who bring God’s love to those in need.
* During class prayer, share the preface “In you we live and move and have our being…” included in the ‘In Tradition’ section of KWL, Year 4, p122. Reflect on what this might mean in our lives. How do you experience God’s love each day? Who are the people who bring God’s love to you? Using crayons, paint wash and/ or acrylics students respond to the questions asked, creating images of how they experience God’s love. Students write a prayer of thanksgiving for these experiences.
* After dealing with each of the above commandments (see Unit Content 4), draw on students’ responses to develop prayers of petition and sorrow for those who are victims of the failure to live by these commandments, eg for those whose lives are taken in conflict, for lives lost because of the greed and selfishness of others, for those who do not have enough food, clean air and water, for those whose lives are diminished by being ‘left out’, hurt etc. Use a hymn of forgiveness, familiar to children.

Assessment

**Interim Assessment Statement 2014**

The identification of Teaching/Learning strategies as ‘suggested assessment’ has been removed from the 3-6 RE curriculum. The type of assessment activity and the way evidence of learning is gathered will vary, depending on such factors as; the outcomes being assessed, the evidence being gathered, the teaching and learning activity, context and students’ learning needs (NSW Board of Studies, <http://syllabus.bos.nsw.edu.au/support-materials/k-6-assessment-strategies/>) .

Assessment in Religious Education is based on the same principles as in other key learning areas. Please refer to the CEO Sydney site supporting the implementation of the Australian Curriculum in the context of the NSW BOS Syllabus. At this site <https://sites.google.com/a/syd.catholic.edu.au/professional-learning-modules/home> professional learning modules are provided to support teachers as they engage with the NSW BOS Syllabuses for the Australian Curriculum.

**Module 4, Assessment and Planning** explores the principles of effective assessment ***for***, ***as*** and ***of*** learning and considers a range of strategies and methods for assessing student learning. Activities focus on moving beyond assessment as an index of learning, towards assessment that motivates, enhances learning and achieves deeper understanding to meet the diverse learning needs of all as students. Participants are encouraged to reflect on assessment as a driver for improvement in teaching and learning.

**Religious Education Curriculum and Assessment**

In Year 3-6 Religious Education Curriculum, both Syllabus Outcomes and Classroom Outcomes are key reference points for decisions about students’ progress and achievement. Classroom outcomes are more specific to the unit content. Unit Content statement and *Students will learn* statements in each unit should also be taken into account in planning and developing learning and assessment opportunities. Outcomes and Unit Content Statements are derived from Syllabus objectives.

Effective Religious Education involves teaching the Catholic faith (Scripture, doctrine, traditions, prayer and sacraments) and nurturing the faith of the child. There is no attempt to assess the child’s faith. Assessment is concerned with skills, knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith taught in the curriculum and supported in the religious life of the school.

Resources

***To Know Worship and Love* Year 4 Chapter 15,(2003), James Gould House Publications, Melbourne, Victoria**

Catholic Education Office, Bathurst NSW, (1998), *Breathing Life into the RE Classroom,* CEO, Bathurst, NSW

Middleton, C L Jnr and Craig R P, *Teaching the Ten Commandments Today, (*1977), Twenty-Third Publications, West Mystic, CT

**DVD / Video**

Cronin G, *Commandments for Young People Part 1 and 2, Ikonographics, Louisville, Kentucky.*

*Available in DVD version 1998*

Music

Catholic Worship Book, *A New Commandment,* Collins Liturgical Publications, EJ Dwyer, Darlinghurst, NSW

Landry C, (1976), *Hi God 2,* North American Liturgy Resource, Phoenix, Arizona

Websites

[www.caritas.org.au](http://www.caritas.org.au) Caritas Australia

[www.vinnies.org.au](http://www.vinnies.org.au) St Vincent de Paul

[www.catholicmission.org.au](http://www.catholicmission.org.au) Children’s Mission (Catholic Mission)

[www.jrs.org.au](http://www.jrs.org.au) Jesuit Refugee Service

[www.matt-talbot.com](http://www.matt-talbot.com) Matthew Talbot

Key to Symbol

✪ denotes higher order activity

Unit Content 1

Each group has its own rules. Rules guide people in making decisions.

*Students will learn:*

* about the purpose and function of rules
* to identify values on which familiar rules are based

Unit Content: Background Information

Human beings are by their nature relational. We seek to be known by and to know others. While each person is an individual, we live in relationship with others and come to know ourselves in relationship.

Whenever a group of people or a community forms, rules or laws emerge to guide the people in their interactions. These rules are usually based upon the shared values of the community. The rules help people to preserve what the community values and holds in common.

Children at this age are acutely aware of ‘rules.’ In this section we explore the notion that rules are made for the good of the group and the individuals in the group. If the rules are not kept it diminishes the harmonious life of the group. It also diminishes the life of the individual. In examining rules, students may identify rules that they believe do not promote the good. If this is the case, use it as an opportunity to explore the values underpinning such rules. Also use it as an opportunity to explore the idea of balance between the good of the individual and the ‘common’ good.

Rules and decision-making are explored in a number of ‘key learning areas’ throughout the primary curricula. Teachers need to decide how many activities to do depending on prior work on rules. However, it is important in this part of the unit to make the connection between rules/laws and the values underpinning them. These values need to be seen in the context of community.

The Prayer Place script for Ordinary Time is provided in Resource Sheet 1. This could be used at the beginning of the unit and / or school year to continue the story of the Church’s year.

Suggested Teaching/Learning Strategies

* Brainstorm and list groups to which students belong. Groups could include family, school, nation, as well as groups such as guides, scouts, hobby and sporting teams or clubs. Discuss what the members of the group have in common, what brings them together – shared interests, common purpose etc?
* Place students into groups according to common membership of a group (identified above). Those who don’t belong to specific groups could be in a ‘school’ or ‘family’ group). Each group identifies and records key rules of the particular group. Groups present to class, either orally or in poster form, key rules of their group.
* In light of the above, class discuss why we need rules and what the consequences are of not following the rules. Focus on the rights and responsibilities that people have within a group or community.
* Students create a concept map on the need for rules.
* Present students with a copy of the school rules. Divide into pairs or groups of three, depending on how many rules there are. Give each group one rule. Ask each group to identify
* the purpose of their rule
* what the rule tells us about the group’s values
* the consequences to the group and the individual of breaking the rule.

Each pair or group report their responses on the above areas of enquiry to the class. Record these on a chart. Assist students to see that rules are based on values and help the members to live according to the shared values of the group. Be prepared to listen to students who may question the validity of a rule.

* If not already established, develop classroom rules. In groups, students brainstorm rules that would help the class function well throughout the year. Encourage students to explain why they have suggested rules, what values the rule is based on and the common good it promotes. Groups return to class group and come to a consensus on the class rules for the year. A good process for coming to a consensus is the ‘nominal group technique’ (*Breathing Life into the RE Classroom,* p49*).*

or (if class rules are already established)

* Examine the class rules, identifying their purpose, the values they are based on and the good they promote for the class members and the class as a whole. Depending on class needs, students may brainstorm additional rules or changes to the rules. You may wish to use the ‘nominal group technique’ (see strategy above) for coming to a consensus on any additional rules.

Unit Content 2

The Commandments of God guide our living - in relationship with God and each other.

*Students will learn:*

* about the Commandments God gave to the people of Israel
* about the way of life promoted by the Commandments
* to identify ways the Commandments guide our living

Unit Content: Background Information

The Ten Commandments were given to the Hebrew people in the context of their relationship or covenant with God. This covenant relationship began with God and Abraham. But it was the Exodus event that became for the Israelites, their foundational event. We recall this event through the story of ‘The Exodus’ in this section of the unit. In this event Moses led them out of Egypt, into the desert and eventually under Joshua they reached Canaan – their ‘promised land’.

After the Exodus event, they found themselves in the wilderness. Their spirits were low and they were not unified. Their great ‘saving’ experience was yet to make them a people. As with all communities they needed law to help them live together. In this context Moses received the Ten Commandments from God. The commandments would help them live in solidarity and remain faithful to God, their ‘saviour’ and ‘liberator’. The story of the ‘The Ten Commandments’ is also told in this section of the unit closely following ‘The Exodus’ story.

In light of the full richness of the Hebrew understanding of ‘covenant’, the commandments should not be seen simply as a set of rules. “What we have then in the Ten Commandments, is not a set of highly refined and polished ethics, but rather a fundamental or foundational set of principles which are the focal point of unity for a group of people to form a community and to reflect upon their basic purpose” (Middleton, C L Jnr and Craig R P, p21-22).

The positive values promoted by the Ten Commandments need to be explored. It is also important to present the commandments as a way of living that will bring peace and prosperity to all God’s people.

This Unit Content section relates directly to the work on rules, values and consequences in Unit Content 1 which provides a basis for examining the Ten Commandments. At this level the focus is on building familiarity with the Commandments and their basic principles.

Suggested Teaching/Learning Strategies

* Ask students what they already know about the Ten Commandments. Record their statements so they can be revisited later. (Students have looked at the first three and the eighth briefly in Year 3).
* Tell the story of the *Exodus* using Resource Sheet 2 and suggested materials and / or

Use the K-2 Big Book ‘Moses’ to share the story of the *Exodus*, in order to provide the context for Moses receiving the Ten Commandments.

* Engage students in wondering about the story. The following ‘I wonder’ statements are suggestions.

I wonder what it would be like to be a slave.

I wonder how the people of Israel felt when they were trapped between the powerful Egyptian army and the Red Sea.

I wonder if you’ve ever felt trapped.

I wonder how the people felt when they were free at last.

I wonder why the Israelites felt close to God after their delivery out of Egypt.

I wonder how they will live now that they are free to do what they like and go where they like.

* Tell the story of ‘The Ten Commandments’ using Resource Sheet 3 and suggested materials.
* Engage in wondering with the students. The following ‘I wonder’ statements are suggestions.

I wonder why lots of important things in the story of God and God’s people happen in the desert.

I wonder if you’ve ever been in the desert.

I wonder what it would be like to be in the desert.

I wonder which commandments you think would help the people live well together.

I wonder which one of the commandments you think is most important.

I wonder which commandment you like the best.

* Locate the Commandments in KWL Year 4 p157. Also refer to Deuteronomy 5:1-21 to locate the commandments. Some of this scriptural text will help in exploring the meaning of the commandments. Read through the commandments together. Explore briefly word meanings for ‘in vain’, ‘adultery’ (being untrue to a marriage partner) ‘covet’ (KWL, p125 ‘Did You Know’), and other words and phrases not familiar to students. Ask students how these rules would have helped the Israelites to live together as a people in the desert. Relate the first unit doctrine to the above exploration.
* Create a wall display of the Ten Commandments. Classify the Commandments in the two groups(in the story) – Love God and Love Others. This display will be built up and referred to throughout the unit.
* Put students in groups of two or three and give one commandment to each group. Ask each group to discuss and record on separate cards (strips of paper) -
  + the value/s this commandment is about e.g. God, life, being true, etc.
  + the commandment re-worked as a positive e.g. ‘Put God first’

- Each group explains their responses as they put their cards on the wall display under their commandment. Invite discussion about the responses. Additional suggestions could also be put on the display.

* Refer to re-worked positive commands on class display. Discuss and brainstorm suggestions for how we can live each of these. Add these to class display under each commandment. This could be done individually, in groups or as a class. Role-play could be used for presenting practical ways to live each commandment.
* Memorising exercise. Students choose a partner and both have a short time to try to memorise the commandments (KWL Year 4, p157). Each partner then checks as the other recites them. This can be adapted to suit the students. The commandments could be done in two groups – the first 3 and the next 7 or 5 and 5. The activity can be repeated over a number of days. This should be a fun activity and mastery is not essential. It will however build familiarity with the commandments and religious literacy.
* Joint Cloze Passage. See Resource Sheet 4 (cloze passage A) and Resource Sheet 5 (cloze passage B). Teacher photocopies Resource Sheet 4 and 5 on different coloured paper.

In pairs, one student completes Cloze A and one Cloze B. When complete, each pair marks their passages together. Words have been systematically deleted on each of the cloze passages so together each pair will have the missing words. The students’ sheets can be collected for assessment purposes

* Using Resource Sheet 6 students match each commandment with its re-worked positive command, reflecting its underlying value. See Resource Sheet 7 for correct answers.
* In preparation for reading Jeremiah 31:33-34 share some background information about the prophet Jeremiah (see Scripture: Background Information). Tell the students that Jeremiah wrote many hundreds of years after Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt. However now the Israelites were being invaded and taken off into exile. They needed reminding that their God is a faithful and forgiving God. They also needed reminding about being faithful to God. Jeremiah warned them that they must return to God, be converted, not only in outwardly practising the law, but in their hearts. Although the people did not listen to Jeremiah until it was too late, his words gave them hope in exile.
  + Read the text with students.
  + Explore and discuss what it might mean to have the law written “on their hearts”.
  + What sentence tells us about the relationship between God and the people? How would you describe that relationship?
  + Read the passage again slowly and reflectively. Ask students how this passage makes them feel? What does God ‘feel’ like in this passage? Students suggest words to describe God.
  + Silent reflection / journaling. Read Jeremiah 31:33-34 again. Play some quiet music as students respond privately to the following. ‘Think of a time today, this week, when you have done something you know is wrong. How did you ‘know’ it was wrong. How did you feel? Is there a time recently when you had to make a choice, because you knew something was right but you didn’t want to do it. What told you it was right? Did you do it? How did you feel? Conclude with a song reflecting the message of the Scripture.

Unit Content 3

Jesus came to show us how to live in love and he gave us the new law of love.

*Students will learn:*

* about Jesus’ new commandment
* about how Jesus related to people
* to identify ways in which they can live the law of love

Unit Content: Background Information

The new law of love is not ‘new’ in its requirements, but it is new in that it is founded on the self-giving love of Jesus. In a sense love becomes the law. The same Lord who announced “I give you a new commandment” also said “I have come, not to abolish the law, but to complete it” (Mt 5:17). In the self-giving love of Jesus, even to death, we see the fullness of the law that Jeremiah spoke of (31:33-34), a law that is “written on our hearts”.

Jesus became human to show us the love of God. In his life and death he showed us that this love has no limits. In Jesus, we also see to what every human being is called. Through the power of God’s Holy Spirit in us, we can become ‘other Christs’ responding to that law of God’s that is “written on our hearts”.

In this content section, it may be necessary to explore the word ‘love’ with students. It is important for them to understand that love is more than a feeling. Rather it should be explored as a way of regarding others that involves attitudes, emotions and actions. It involves being interested in and attentive to others, empathising with others, ‘walking in their shoes’ and knowing what it’s like to be them. When we do this we are more able to ‘prize’ others, to appreciate, honour and respect them, to be compassionate and to help – to love.

Matthew 12:9-14 is ‘related scripture’ as the passage is provided for ‘extension’ for some students. It presents a dilemma about following the law.

Suggested Teaching/Learning Strategies

* Introduce this section by referring to KWL Year 4, p120, 1st two paragraphs. Ask students what they think is ‘new’ about Jesus commandment. Focus their attention on “…. just as I have loved you”. Explain that although the Israelites experienced God in the saving event of the Exodus and in exile etc, now God had entered human history as one of us and we could ‘know’ God’s love in the person of Jesus.
* John 13:34-35.
* Prepare to hear the Word. Ask students to think of a time recently (this week) when they have experienced someone reaching out in love to them. It might be a parent, grandparent, teacher or friend. How did the incident demonstrate love (care, respect) for them? How did it feel? Explore the notion of self-giving love.
* Read John 13:34-35. How did Jesus love us? Brainstorm incidents in Jesus’ life when he reached out in love. Assist students to find some of these incidents in the Gospels. In groups students take an incident and prepare to retell it. Allow students to choose a means of presenting the event e.g. role-play, comic strip, retell. After each presentation ask students how Jesus’ actions were based on love. Focus students on how Jesus ‘gave’ of himself in the incident.
* Draw students’ attention to the fact that Jesus died as a consequence of bringing God’s way of living and loving to the world. This is the ultimate act of loving – giving one’s life for others.
* Prepare a ‘fact file’ on what we know about Jesus loving others from the above presentations. Include the people Jesus reached out to, their need, what he did, what effect it had on them, what position it put him in.
* Students respond to the following stems, either in writing, using exposition or by illustrations with captions.

Jesus showed us how to love by …………

I experience this love when people ………

I show this love when I ………………

* Read John 13:34-35 again. Focus this time on “By this love you have for one another, everyone will know that you are my disciples”.
* Students identify people from their experience who show that they are followers of Jesus by the way they love one another. Encourage them to cite people who do this in the ordinariness of every day life, e.g. a parent, teacher, friend, community person
* Tell students that the Church too shows that it is the community of Jesus by the way it loves one another. Invite a person from an organisation of the Church that reaches out to others to speak to students e.g. Caritas Australia, St Vincent De Paul, Matthew Talbot, Jesuit Refugee Service, Pontifical Mission Society (see resource section).
* Students in groups or individually research a Church organisation, group or Religious Order whose work is to help those in need. Guide their research with questions which focus on – What is the group? What is its mission? Who does it help? How does it help?
* Students/groups present their research to class. This may happen over a period of time.
* Students choose one person or group/organisation and outline how this person or group lives Jesus commandment to love one another as Jesus loved us.
* Listen to the hymn *A New Commandment* (‘Catholic Worship Book’), *This is My Commandment* (‘Hi God 2’)or another hymn based on John 13:34-35. Highlight where the words come from. In small groups students respond to this hymn by either;
  + representing the ideas and feelings with symbols, colour and words using crayons
  + preparing a reflective movement to accompany the hymn.
* Prayer – Use scripture, John 13:34-35. Students who made posters bring them to the sacred space and talk about one of their symbols. Proclaim the scripture. Sing the hymn used above and select students to accompany it with their movement (from above strategy). Spontaneous or prepared prayers can then be prayed, thanking God for loving us, for the people who bring God’s love to us (these could be named by students), especially Jesus, and for the people who bring God’s love to those in need.
* Students record the new commandment in their workbooks with Doctrine 3. Students read p123 KWL Year 4. Discuss the features of an acrostic poem. Students write an acrostic poem based on a word/ or words from the scripture, Jn 13: 34-35. Create a wall display using the poems.
* Collect and display newspaper images/articles that show people sharing Jesus’ spirit of love and compassion
* Use the cartoon pictures in KWL Year 4 p124 ‘Living the Gospel’. Students identify what might be happening in each picture and how the action is demonstrating respect, care and concern for others. Students can write captions to accompany each picture. “When I (listen to others) I am showing \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_”
* Explore Matthew 12:9-14. Prepare students for this passage by explaining the importance of the Sabbath law in Jesus time (see Scripture: Background Information). Introduce the passage by telling students that they are going to look at a time when the Jewish holy men challenged Jesus about living his ‘new commandment’.
* Read the passage.
* Students use Resource Sheet 8 to explore this passage either in small groups or individually. Share and discuss responses.
* ✪ - Interviews: Students prepare questions to ask Jesus, the disciples and the Pharisees.
* Ask students to think of examples today where keeping the ‘letter of the law’ is preferred to showing mercy.

Unit Content 4

**As Christians we are called to live the law of love.**

*Students will learn:*

* about the relationship between the ‘new commandment’ and the ten commandments
* to identify how they can live the new law of love, guided by the commandments, especially 5th, 7th & 10th

Unit Content: Background Information

Jesus ‘new commandment’ completes the law. It establishes the basis of the law in love – the love of God made visible in the life and death of Jesus. Humanity would experience that love in the person of Jesus. It would also know that love, through the Church – the Body of Christ, and in every Christian, through the Holy Spirit.

Jesus came “so that you may have life and have it to the full” (John 10:10). To accept the invitation to Christian faith is to accept the call to live as Jesus lived, to be for others the person and message of Jesus. It is important to explore with students how this self-giving love brings ‘life’ and selfish and self-centred ways diminish the joy of living, for which we were all created.

We return to the Ten Commandments here for two reasons. Firstly, we examine some of them in the light of Jesus law of love, thus making the connection with it. Secondly, it gives students at this stage a very concrete and tangible means of identifying ways we can live the ‘law of love’ today.

The commandments we explore here are the 5th and the 7th and 10th  (addressed together).

Suggested Teaching/Learning Strategies

* Read a picture book story about reaching out in love to others or another. Explore the theme of love as valuing, respecting and seeing the good in another/others. How do the characters in the story demonstrate this? How do they give and receive love in the story?
* During class prayer, share the preface “In you we live and move and have our being…” included in the ‘In Tradition section’ (KWL Year 4, p122). Reflect on what this means. How do you experience God’s love each day? Who are the people who bring God’s love to you? Using crayons, paint wash and/ or acrylics students respond to the questions asked, creating images of how they experience God’s love. Students write a prayer of thanksgiving for these experiences.
* Return to the class display of the Ten Commandments. Tell the students that all of the commandments are about ways of loving, but they are going to focus on three in more detail.
* Focus on the 5th and then the 7th and 10th commandments. The following suggestions are given for both explorations. In dealing with these commandments relate them to the ‘new commandment’ to love as Jesus loved.
* Use the DVD (or video) *Commandments for Young People Parts 1 and 2 - Ikonographics.* Deal with only the 5th, 7th & 10th (done together on the video). Each commandment is presented in two parts. Part 1 explores the commandment, giving suitable background information at the students’ level (10 minutes). Part 2 presents a short reflection for students’ on how they can live the commandment today (5 minutes). Show part 1 and follow with discussion and activities to recall and sort the information. Show Part 2 and allow students to respond using mime, role-play, artwork or journaling.

or (without the video)

* Read the positive command and ‘value’ words written on the class display. Help students to ‘break open’ the commandment beyond its immediate and literal meaning but still in keeping with the child’s level of understanding. This will be easier if you relate the words of the commandment to the positive command. Then allow students to reflect on how they can live these commandments today in their lives. The following suggestions may be useful.

**5th commandment** ‘You shall not kill’ – ‘Respect life’. Explore all that has life – self, others, plants, animals. How do we respect and protect our own lives? the lives of others? all living things? Integration with Health, Personal Development as well as Science and Technology may be useful here.

**7th and 10th commandments** – ‘Respect others’ rights and property’. ‘Be happy with what you have’. For the Israelites these commandments were initially about stealing ‘people’ thus robbing them of their freedom and dignity. Later these commandments came to refer to people’s property. Brainstorm positive ways we can live this commandment related to students’ experience – respecting people’s right to their freedom and property, respecting everyone’s right to what they need, taking care of other people’s property, returning borrowed property, being content and grateful for what we have, sharing what we have, not taking more than we need and leaving others without, respecting and not claiming other people’s ideas.

* After dealing with each of the above commandments draw on students’ responses to develop prayers of petition and sorrow for those who are victims of the failure to live by these commandments e.g. for those whose lives are taken in conflict, for lives lost because of the greed and selfishness of others, for those who do not have enough food, clean air and water, for those whose lives are diminished by being ‘left out’, hurt etc. Use a hymn of forgiveness, familiar to children.
* Based on learning about the above commandments and the law of love, students list three ways that they can:

- respect life

- respect other people’s property.

**Resource Sheet 1**

**4.1 Our Prayer Place for Ordinary Time**

**YOU WILL NEED:**

\* a small table

\* ***green*** fabric, Bible, bookstand, candle, cross and an image of a heart, placed in a box or basket

*Invite children to sit reverently in a circle in the part of the classroom where you intend to set up a prayer place.   
This is a liturgical story, so students can be invited to participate by placing the symbols and objects on the prayer place.*

*Begin by saying* **We are going to make a special prayer place. It is a place where we can be quiet with God. We can listen to God and talk with God. We’ll use some symbols and objects to help us be with God at this time in the Church’s year.**

*Place table in the prayer place. Hold the green fabric.***At this time of the Church’s year we place green fabric on the table. Green is seen everywhere. It is a rich colour of life, growth and hope and is used by the Church during the season of Ordinary Time.***Cover the table with a green fabric.*

*Hold the Bible up for all children to see. Be conscious of handling the Bible in a reverent manner.*

**This is our class Bible. At this time in the Church’s year we remember and tell the stories about what Jesus said and did during his life on earth. We’ll continue to do this until the beginning of the next season, Lent.**

*Place the Bible on the bookstand.*

*Take out the candle and show to children.*

**The candle reminds us that Jesus is always with us. We’ll light the candle each time we pray or when we’re listening to the stories from the Bible.**

*Place the candle on the prayer place.*

*Hold the cross.*

**This is our class cross. The cross is a symbol of Jesus, and of our Christian faith and hope.**

*Place the cross on the prayer place.*

*Hold the heart.*

**During the next few weeks we’re going to explore together God’s law of love, known as the commandments in the Old Testament of the Bible and Jesus new commandment in the New Testament of the Bible.** *Place the heart on the prayer place.*

**Other symbols appropriate to Unit 4.1 can also be added here.**

**This is our prayer place for Ordinary Time.**

*Point to the symbols and objects as you name them again:*

**It has green fabric, a Bible, a candle, a cross and a heart.**

*You could finish this story with an appropriate prayer or blessing.*

**Resource Sheet 2**

**The Exodus**

(from Exodus 14-15)

**YOU WILL NEED:**

* Sand tray - desert
* Two strips of blue felt – Red Sea
* 8 peg figures - 7 people of Israel including Moses, and Pharaoh

*Students are seated in a semi-circle ready to listen to the story. When the students are settled, go to the shelf and carry the materials as you would the Bible. Place these beside you.*

*Place sand tray in middle of story circle.*

*Take three of the people out of the story box and place them in the sand to your right.*

**The people of Israel lived in Egypt for many years. Their numbers grew. Pharaoh, the King, made the Israelites his slaves. They lived as slaves for many years. Life as a slave was hard. They prayed to God to save them from slavery in Egypt.**

*Take rest of the people and place them in the sand with the others.*

**God heard the prayers of Israel and remembered the covenant made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.**

*Place Moses in front of the group.*

**God called Moses.**

*Place Pharaoh to your left facing the people. Then move Moses over to face Pharaoh.*

**God called him to go to Pharaoh and give him God’s message, “Let my people go.”**

*Turn**Pharaoh’s back to Moses*

**Pharaoh would not listen. Many terrible things happened to Pharaoh and his people. But still Pharaoh would not let the Israelites go.**

*Move Moses in front of the people of Israel.*

**One night Moses told the Israelites to eat a special meal of lamb and unleavened bread. They called this the great Passover meal. Moses told the people to dress in travel clothes and be ready to leave at a moment’s notice.**

*Turn**Pharaoh back to look at the people*

**Finally Pharaoh agreed to let the people of Israel go.**

*Move Moses and the people one by one into the middle of the desert. Don’t rush this as the students can engage with the silence.*

**Moses gave the signal and all of Israel began the journey out of Egypt. They had to hurry. They wanted to leave Egypt before Pharaoh changed his mind.**

*Place the blue felt across the sand tray in front of the people.*

**Pharaoh did change his mind. He sent his mighty army to find the Israelites and bring them back.**

**Soon the people of Israel were trapped between the powerful army of Egypt and the Red Sea. Moses prayed to God.**

*Turn back each piece of felt, leaving a path through the water. Move the people through one at a time.*

**God is more powerful than any army. God separated the sea and made a path for the people of Israel to walk across the sea on dry ground. The Israelites went across the sea where they were safe and free.**

*Turn each piece of felt back to its original position.*

**Then God closed the path so that the army could not follow them.**

*Move the people into a circle with one person (Miriam) in the centre.*

**God had saved the people from slavery and had given them freedom. The whole of Israel praised God. Miriam led them in dance and song.**

*Engage with ‘I wonder’.*

**I wonder what it would be like to be a slave.**

**I wonder how the people of Israel felt when they were trapped between the powerful Egyptian army and the Red Sea.**

**I wonder if you’ve ever felt trapped.**

**I wonder how the people felt when they were free at last.**

**I wonder why the Israelites felt close to God after their delivery out of Egypt.**

**I wonder how they will live now that they are free to do what they like and go where they like.**

*Carefully pack story materials into storage box and put on shelf. Ensure that children are watching so they know how to pack the materials away and where to find them.*

**Resource Sheet 3**

# The Ten Commandments

(Deuteronomy 5:1-22)

This story is told after the story of ‘The Exodus’.

**YOU WILL NEED:**

* Sand tray - desert
* Rock to represent mountain
* 7 peg figures or ‘people of God’ figures, including Moses and Miriam
* Heart shaped Box with Ten Commandments inside
* Two hearts, one with ‘Love God’ and one with ‘Love Others’ on them - use template on RE Online to laminate and cut out.
* Ten commandments laminated and cut out

*Students are seated in a semi-circle ready to listen to the story. When the students are settled, go to the shelf and carry the materials as you would the Bible. Place these beside you.*

*Place sand tray in middle of story circle. Slowly run your fingers through the sand as you say:*

**This story also happens in the desert. Deserts can be lonely places and places of danger. Many important stories about the people of God happened in the desert.**

*Bring out the rock and put it in one corner.*

**In this desert there is a very important mountain called Mt Sinai.**

*Place the people of God in a circle in the sand at the opposite end of the mountain with a woman Miriam in the centre. (This is the scene at the end of The Exodus story)*

**These are the people of Israel. Do you remember Miriam? She led the dancing as her people celebrated their escape from Egypt.**

*Bring Moses to the front as you say***:**

**This is Moses who led the people out of slavery in Egypt, through the Red Sea and into freedom in the desert.**

*Move the people slowly over to the foot of the mountain as you say:*

**But it wasn’t all celebrating for the people. It was hard in the desert. Often they didn’t have enough food or water. It was hot and windy and sometimes they wished they were back in Egypt as slaves.**

**Now they were free they needed to live well together as God’s holy people. God loved and cared for them and so God called Moses up the mountain and gave him the Commandments to help them to live in peace with God and one another.**

*Take out heart with ‘Love God’ and put it in sand to the back facing children (commandments will go in front of it).*

**The first three commandments are about loving God.**

*Put ‘Love People’ heart beside ‘Love God’ facing students*

**The other seven are about loving people**

**All the commandments are to help people to live good and happy lives.**

*Now announce each commandment slowly and clearly as you put it down in the sand in front of whichever heart it belongs in. (1,2,3, with ‘Love God’, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 with ‘Love people’).*

*Engage with ‘I wonder’.*

**I wonder why many important things in the story of God and God’s people happen in the desert.**

**I wonder if you’ve ever been in the desert.**

**I wonder what it would be like to be in the desert.**

**I wonder which commandments you think would help the people live well together.**

**I wonder which one of the commandments you think is most important.**

**I wonder which commandment you like the best.**

*Carefully pack story materials into storage box and put on shelf. Ensure that students are watching so they know how to pack the materials away and where to find them.*

**Resource Sheet 4**

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

# The Ten Commandments

## Joint Passage Cloze ‘A’

1. I am the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ your God. You shall have no other gods besides Me.
2. You shall not take the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord, your God, in vain.
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to keep holy the Lord’s day.
4. Honour your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and your mother.
5. You \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ not kill.
6. You shall not \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ adultery.
7. You shall not \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
8. You shall not bear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ witness against your neighbour.
9. You shall not covet your neighbour’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
10. You shall not \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ your neighbour’s goods.

**Resource Sheet 5**

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

# The Ten Commandments

# Joint Passage Cloze ‘B’

1. I am the Lord your God. You shall have no other \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ besides Me.
2. You shall not take the name of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, your God, in vain.
3. Remember to keep \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the Lord’s day.
4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ your father and your mother.
5. You shall not \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
6. You shall not commit \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
7. You shall \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ steal.
8. You shall not bear false witness against your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
9. You shall not covet your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ wife.
10. You shall not covet your neighbour’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Resource Sheet 6**

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**The Ten Commandments**

Match the Ten Commandments in column 1 with the commands in column 2.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | I am the Lord your God. You shall have no other gods besides me | Make time for God on Sunday |
| 2 | You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain | Respect your parents and those who care for you |
| 3 | Remember to keep holy the Lord’s day | Be faithful |
| 4 | Honour your father and your mother | Respect the good name of others |
| 5 | You shall not kill | Put God first in your life |
| 6 | You shall not commit adultery | Respect others people’s property |
| 7 | You shall not steal | Respect God’s name in all you say and do |
| 8 | You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour | Respect relationships |
| 9 | You shall not covet your neighbour’s wife | Be happy with what you have |
| 10 | You shall not covet your neighbour’s goods | Respect all life |

**Resource Sheet 7**

**FOR THE TEACHER**

Answers to Resource Sheet 5

The Ten Commandments

* The commands matching Commandments 6 and 9 may be interchanged. For students at this stage the main idea is similar. You may, however, discuss the meaning of the word ‘covet’.
* The commands matching Commandments 7 and 10 may be interchanged. For students at this stage the main idea is similar. Again you can discuss the word ‘covet’.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | I am the Lord your God. You shall have no other gods besides me | Put God first in your life |
| 2 | You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain | Respect God’s name in all you say and do |
| 3 | Remember to keep holy the Lord’s day | Make time for God on Sunday |
| 4 | Honour your father and your mother | Respect your parents and those who care for you |
| 5 | You shall not kill | Respect all life |
| 6 | You shall not commit adultery | Be faithful |
| 7 | You shall not steal | Respect others people’s property |
| 8 | You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour | Respect the good name of others |
| 9 | You shall not covet your neighbour’s wife | Respect relationships |
| 10 | You shall not covet your neighbour’s goods | Be happy with what you have |

**Resource Sheet 8**

Matthew 12:9-14

When does this story happen?

Who are the people involved?

How did Jesus respond to this challenge?

Why did the people challenge Jesus?

Where does this story take place?

What does this story tell us about the law?

1. KWL, Teaching Companion, 3b, p152 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. KWL, Teaching Companion 3b, p153 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)