

# The Greatest Commandment

PreK-  
K

## LOVE

**MATTHEW 22:34-40**

### What's happening in this story?

First, it should be noted that the Pharisees in this passage were not asking innocent questions. They were hoping to trap Jesus. Second, if you ask Christians, "How many commandments are there?" most will answer, "10." But first-century Jewish people would have answered, "There are 613." With so many commandments to keep track of, there was always a desire to organize and prioritize them, so the Pharisees' question was not new. But Jesus gave a profound response. Jesus pointed out that all 613 commandments came from one source: Loving God with all your heart and soul and mind.

### What does this story mean for kids?

Kids who have been part of a faith community have likely started to learn about the Ten Commandments. Hopefully, they are learning that the commandments are not just a list of dos and don'ts. Rather, they are guides to living a meaningful and full life—another way in which God provides for and blesses us.

### Why this theme?

Love for God and neighbor is the focus and purpose of all the commandments. Kids may struggle to memorize the ten most famous commandments (imagine trying to remember all 613!), and words like *adultery* and *covet* are well beyond them at this age. How fortunate that when we know "Love God; love others," we know all we need to know!

### AGE LEVEL TIP

Younger kids are very literal and will understand Jesus ranking a rule as #1. Also, teachers play a large role in the lives of kids this age, and this story can help kids understand Jesus as a respected teacher (one who can make the Bible as easy to understand as "Love God, love everyone!").



### GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Markers
- Glue sticks
- Masking tape

### LESSON SUPPLIES

- Paper hearts (precut, 1 per kid)
- Bean bags
- Mural paper

## Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

With a crayon, divide each of the four precut letters that you will use in the opening conversation (L, O, V, E) into pieces so they look like a puzzle put together. Each letter should have multiple pieces. Invite kids to use crayons to color in one piece of each letter.

## Circle up with kids for an opening conversation.

Precut four large letters: L, O, V, and E out of mural paper. **Let's look at these four big letters. Who knows what word they spell? The word is love. We show love by our words and our actions. What words and actions show love to you?** Repeat and accept all of kids' many answers. **In our Bible story today, some people called Pharisees asked Jesus questions. Jesus had just one answer. I wonder what it was.**

Pray together: **Dear God, thank you for loving us. Help us to share your love with everyone we meet. We love you too, God! Amen.**

## Pass out leaflets, glue sticks, and paper hearts.

**What does our leaflet say today? L-O-V-E spells love. The leaflet says, "Love God plus everyone."**

Have kids trace the letters with their fingers and spell the word *love* out loud one letter at a time. **Jesus came to teach people about God's love. He showed us what God's love is like. God wants us to love everyone and to love God.** Invite kids to glue their paper heart onto the O of LOVE. Collect leaflets until Respond.



## Gather kids around the screen where you'll watch the video.

**In the video Otto is focused on loving God. But Otto's friends aren't happy with him. Let's see what happens.**

View Episode 5, "The Ultimate BFF," on the Year Gold Spring PreK-Grade 2 DVD.

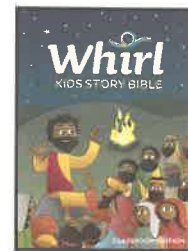
Ask kids these questions about the video.

- I wonder how we learn about love.
- How was Otto acting toward his friends? Why?
- How did Otto's friends feel about the way he was acting?
- What did Otto learn about God's love?
- How do you share God's love with friends?



## Open your Whirl Kids Story Bibles.

**Let's find our story today!** Help kids find "The Greatest Commandment" on page 218. Before you read, invite kids to look for Jesus, the Pharisees, and the one finger someone is holding up.



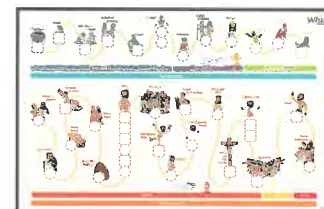
Read the story and Ada and Otto's questions and comments on each page.

Ask these questions after you read the story:

- **What question did the Pharisee ask Jesus?**
- **What surprised you about the tricky question?**
- **What were Jesus' two answers to this question?**
- **Who are the neighbors Jesus wants us to love?**
- **I wonder why loving God and loving others is the most important rule of all.**

## Gather near the Wall Chart to place today's sticker.

Point out the Testament (New) and character image (Jesus). **People asked Jesus a lot of questions. Let's add a sticker to remind us of what Jesus said was God's number one rule** (Jesus' hand showing one finger). Point to the corresponding image of Jesus' hand on page 218 in the Whirl Kids Story Bible.



## Play together!

Set up a bean-bag toss game. Use masking tape to make three heart shapes in a vertical row on the floor—one small heart closest to where kids will toss from, one medium, and one large. (If you have a large group, you may need to make two bean-bag toss stations.) Kids can take turns trying to hit one of the hearts. If they hit the small heart, ask them to name someone in their family they can show love to. The medium heart—name a friend. The large heart—name someone else they know in the world. Offer some prompts to help expand kids' idea of who is a neighbor: a bus driver, a librarian, a server, a friend, kids who live on the other side of the world. **This game could go on forever and we would never run out of people who are our neighbors!**

### BIBLE BIT

Before we share God's love, we feel God's love. We act in response to God's love by loving God and loving others.

### WATCH IT AGAIN

If you watch the video again, point out that by helping Tot, Otto learns that loving God means loving others too!

### OUR CHURCH

Share with kids how your church loves and supports neighbors in your church neighborhood and in different parts of the world. Find these places on a map or globe.



# RESPOND 10

## Pass out leaflets and markers.

Unfold and tear off leaflet square.

1. **Do you remember how we talked about showing love with our words and our actions? What actions and words did we say together?**
2. **Let's draw a special family picture today. Inside the frame, draw your family doing some actions that show all of you loving God and loving others. It might be something you already do together or something you would like to do. It could be helping a relative who is sick, or helping a neighbor with yard work. There are lots of ways to show you love God and love others.**
3. **What word did we learn that these actions describe?** Write the word *LOVE* and show it, or use the letters from the opening conversation. **Can you write the word *LOVE* on your special picture?**
4. While kids are drawing, discuss the following questions. **Who are our neighbors? What are some ways we can love our neighbors? What is the number 1 rule in your home? What is the number 1 rule when you are at school? When is it easy to love our friends? Is it sometimes hard to love our friends?**
5. When kids are finished, give each kid a chance to tell about their drawing.

# LAUNCH 10

## Circle up with kids for a quick review.

**Jesus taught what the most important commandment is: Love God and love everyone. Who is one person you can give God's love to today?** Take time to hear kids' responses.

## Pass out leaflet panels and crayons.

**The leaflet panel says, "Rule #1: Love God, love everyone." Who is on our leaflet panel? Jesus!** Invite kids to sing "Jesus Loves Me" while coloring the large #1. Kids can finish coloring at home if necessary.

## Send kids out with a blessing.

Circle up with kids. **God blesses all of us. And that means me** (place a hand on your chest). **And that means you** (place your other hand on the shoulder of the kid next to you). Each kid passes the blessing by repeating those words and actions. When the blessing makes it back to you, say, **Go and bless the world.**

Thank kids for coming today. Remind them of the Family Square on the other side of the leaflet.