

## First Commandment – God & Idols



**“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.”**

EXODUS 20:2-4

### **Objective**

For students to understand that there is only one God.

### **FOCUS THIS WEEK**

We are called to fear, love and trust this God above everything else. So, what does this mean for us today? There is only one God. All other “gods” will leave us high and dry. This God who commands us to obey is the only God who can carry us to eternity. What does this mean in a world where many other “gods” crowd the true God out of our schedule, thoughts and dreams?



**SHARE** highs and lows to set the stage for a more open and meaningful discussion.



**READ** and highlight the theme verse, Exodus 20:2-4, then connect it to one or more of the following

texts: Exodus 32:1

Isaiah 44:6

Matthew 6:21

1 John 5:21



**TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to today’s highs and lows. Supplement your discussion with some of the following.

### **A. IMAGES IN WORDS AND ART**

Take a look at the theme art. What do you see in the art? Ask youth where they are in the art. How might the art and the theme verse apply to your group highs and lows today?

### **B. ROLE PLAY**

A teen spends five hours a night on the Internet chatting, playing games, and instant messaging. Her homework, chores, family time, and sleep suffer. Her grades slip because she isn’t handing in her assignments. She doesn’t even have five minutes a night to do Highs & Lows with her family. Sunday morning arrives and she is too tired to go to church. You are her parent. What do you say? As a friend, what do you say?

## C. Questions to Ponder

### 1. Where do you spend most of your extra:

**Time:**

**Money:**

**Energy:**

*Affirm all thoughtful answers. Don't forget to share your own ideas!*

### 2. When do good things (like sports, relationships, grades) become gods? How can you keep this from happening?

*Whatever (or whomever) we trust first for ultimate good or run to for help in time of need becomes a "god" to us.*

*Some examples:*

- *Money—When we trust in our wealth to care for us, it becomes our god.*
- *Popularity—When status or the opinions of others become more important to us than what God thinks of us, popularity is our god.*
- *Internet—When anything we own starts to own our time, consume our thoughts or take first place in our schedules, it becomes a god.*
- *Another Person—If a relationship becomes more important than anything else, that person is taking the place of God and becomes a god. If that person is worshiped (like a hero) and we are willing to do anything for him or her—even things we know to be wrong—that person has taken God's place.*
- *Sports—When sports and victory at all cost are valued more than God, sports ARE god.*
- *Looks—When appearance and acceptance become more important than God, looks can become a god.*

### 3. Why do you think God gave the "no other gods" command first? Affirm any thoughtful answer. You may suggest that putting God first helps you place the rest of life in a proper perspective.

## D. Quotations

Ask youth to choose a quotation and share their thoughts and questions about it.

*As long as you set yourself up  
as a little god to which you  
must be loyal, how can you  
hope to find inward peace?*  
-A.W. Tozer

*And the people bowed  
and prayed to the neon  
god they'd made.*  
-Paul Simon

*The good Lord set definite limits  
on a person's wisdom, but set  
no limits on his stupidity—and  
that's just not fair.*  
-Konrad Adenauer

## E. WRAP UP

Summarize the event with your group, assigning someone to share what you learned at closing.

- One new thing we learned today
- One thing we already knew that is worth repeating
- One thing we would like to know more about



**PRAY** for one another. Praise and thank God for your highs. Ask the Holy Spirit to be with you in your lows. Include other people's highs and lows in your prayers. Think of something going on in the world that calls for prayer.



**BLESS** one another by name. Trace a cross on each hand or forehead. Look them in the eyes and give them a smile. Ask for their blessing as well!