

Second Commandment—Name in Vain



“You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God.”

— EXODUS 20:7

SECOND COMMANDMENT:

You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God.

FOCUS THIS WEEK

We are commanded to keep God's name holy, special and sacred. So what? God doesn't want us to treat God's name as a common, low, or meaningless word. We are commanded to use God's name in prayer, praise and thanksgiving—never to curse, swear, lie or deceive. So, what does this mean to God's people in a world where cursing is common?



SHARE

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



READ

and highlight the theme verse, Exodus 20:7, then connect it to one or more of the following texts:

- Proverbs 15:2
- Matthew 5:34-37
- Psalm 63:5



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 and cartoons. 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 friend swears a lot. She says it's no big deal. What might you say or do to share how her language offends you and disrespects God without looking judgmental?

C. CATECHISM ENCOUNTER

Read Martin Luther's explanation of the Second Commandment in the Small Catechism. List three ways we should use God's name.

Luther's Small Catechism Meaning of the Second Commandment:

We are to fear and love God, so that we do not curse, swear, practice magic, lie or deceive using God's name, but instead use that very name in every time of need to call on, pray to, praise, and give thanks to God.

D. QUESTIONS TO PONDER

1. In Bible times, people didn't even dare whisper the name of God out loud for fear of breaking this commandment. Today "God" is simply a fill word in our conversations. Do you think God cares how we use God's name? Why or why not? Ask students how they think God feels when we lower God's holy name to become a common swear word. God set this as the second commandment. It must matter to God. God deserves the respect of our keeping God's name holy.

2. How do cursing and swearing relate to respect and disrespect? Name-calling does not lead to respect. Cursing and swearing at someone is abusive and is the opposite of love.

3. Where and with whom are you most likely to use "garbage" language? How can you start to change this situation? Affirm all thoughtful answers. One thing you can do is surround yourself with a different group of people. Who we hang out with certainly affects how we act.

E. TERMS OF THE WEEK

Review these key terms and write definitions.

Curse: A profane phrase or swear word.

Name in Vain: Using God's name for anything other than prayer, praise and thanksgiving.

Praise: To voice admiration and exaltation to God.

Swear: In this case, to use profane words—to curse.

Thanksgiving: An act of giving thanks; an expression of gratitude, especially to God.

F. WRAP UP

Summarize the event with your group/student, 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
- The highest highs and lowest lows which our group will bring to the closing prayer



PRAY

for one another. Praise and thank God for your highs. Ask the Holy Spirit to be with you in your lows. Include your friend's highs and lows in your prayers. Invite youth to 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!