

QUESTION 9: WHAT DOES GOD REQUIRE IN THE FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD COMMANDMENTS?

ANSWER : FIRST, THAT WE KNOW GOD AS THE ONLY TRUE GOD. SECOND, THAT WE AVOID ALL IDOLATRY. THIRD, THAT WE TREAT GOD'S NAME WITH FEAR AND REVERENCE.

50 minute Lesson Outline:

- Catechism Recap (5 mins)
- Introduction to Question (5 mins)
- Teaching Outline (15 mins)
- Discussion and Question Time (20 mins)
- Virtue Vision (5 mins)

Bible Passage: Exodus 20

Memory Verse: Deut. 6:13–14

Big Idea: God does not tolerate the worship of false idols. He is a jealous God who demands wholehearted devotion.

Aim: To help us understand that God alone should be worshiped and to teach them how they should worship him.

Virtue: Trust.

LEADER'S NOTES:

We will most likely be aware of the relativistic and pluralistic air of the twenty-first century. We will also be conscious that there are people of different religions—and no religion—in our schools, towns, and cities. The media will particularly be training us to be skeptical about the concept of absolute truth. As a result, we may be reluctant to acknowledge that there is only one true God. **This question will help us to engage with God as he reveals himself in the first three commandments.**

This lesson aims to help us understand the kind of relationship that God longs to have with his people and recognize the kind of worship God demands from his people.

Things to remember:

- We may be familiar with the Ten Commandments, but they need to be reminded that God is a jealous God who Will not tolerate any competition.
- We need to be encouraged to search our own hearts and question whether we are worshiping God in accordance with his Word.
- We may be uncomfortable critiquing other religions. Explain that God longs for his name alone to be honored and respected.

CATECHISM REVIEW OF LAST WEEK, Q8

Question 8: What is the law of God stated in the 10 Commandments?

Answer: You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below – you shall not bow down to them or worship them. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Honor your Father and your mother. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not give false testimony. You shall not covet.

INTRODUCTION TO QUESTION 9

Begin by showing the images of some of the false gods that people have worshiped or still worship. As you show the images, explain which religion the false god is identified with. (1. Golden calf: Baal worship; 2. Artemis: Greek mythology; 3. Shiva: Hinduism; 4. Shango: Yoruba religion.) Explain that many people worship false gods. Then show the pictures of the various idols people in the twenty-first century worship. Explain that people make gods (with a small g!) out of all sorts of things. When we worship created things above the Creator, we are worshiping idols. (5 . Altar for ancestor worship: Buddhism; 6. Power; 7. Possessions; 8. Family)

Introduce Question 9: “What does God require in the first, second, and third commandments?” When God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses, he gave specific instructions about how his people should relate to him. God is a jealous God and longs to be the number one person in everyone’s life; he will not tolerate being relegated to second place or being ignored.

TEACHING OUTLINE

QUESTION 9: WHAT DOES GOD REQUIRE IN THE FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD COMMANDMENTS?

What do you love most in your life?

READ: Exodus 20:1-7

1 And God spoke all these words, saying,

2 "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

3 "You shall have no other gods before me.

4 "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.

5 You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me,

6 but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

7 "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

At this point in Israel's history the people had experienced God's saving power. He brought them out of Egypt and rescued them from slavery. They knew that they had been chosen, called, and loved by God. They knew he was real, and they had every reason to trust him. Yet in spite of this, we encounter in the first command a strong warning from God. He says, "You shall have no other gods before me." God addresses each and every person individually when he says you! It's not a general proclamation; it's a personal message for each individual.

God knew that Israel had at times worshiped false gods—a bit like the ones worshiped in the other religions today. Despite the fact that they had seen the true and living God work in amazing ways, he was commanding them to love him alone, for he feared they might once again turn to worship created things rather than the Creator. The Creator God longed for his people to know, love,

and worship him alone. God was not and is not prepared to tolerate his people worshipping anything or anybody else except him.

Ask: What do you think about the worship of false gods?

There are people who still worship false gods today and to consider how they might engage with those of other faiths. People often worship other things in the place of God as well.

Ask for some examples of things people worship today.

Emphasize that God is a jealous God, and he will not share his worship, praise, or glory with anyone else.

Ask for some examples of things that bring us joy.

Who or what do they trust above all else? Is it God, or is it something or someone else?

Explain: That the first commandment is all about who we worship, and the second commandment is about how we worship. God very clearly says he doesn't want people to worship images (pictures) or statues of him or of false gods. God wants to be known through his Word alone that is how he has chosen to reveal himself, and that is where he can come to be known.

When people make an image of God, they are using their imagination to show God the way they want him to be. The problem is that they will either leave things out that they don't like or add things in that aren't true. Even if they try their best, they can never make an accurate image of God using a painting or statue. God can't be reduced to a lump of stone or a colored canvas! God the Father has never been seen, and so any image of him would just be coming from the human imagination.

Worship must be concerned with the God of the Bible, not a human representation of God. We can't make God who we want him to be but must know him and worship him as he has revealed himself to us.

7 "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

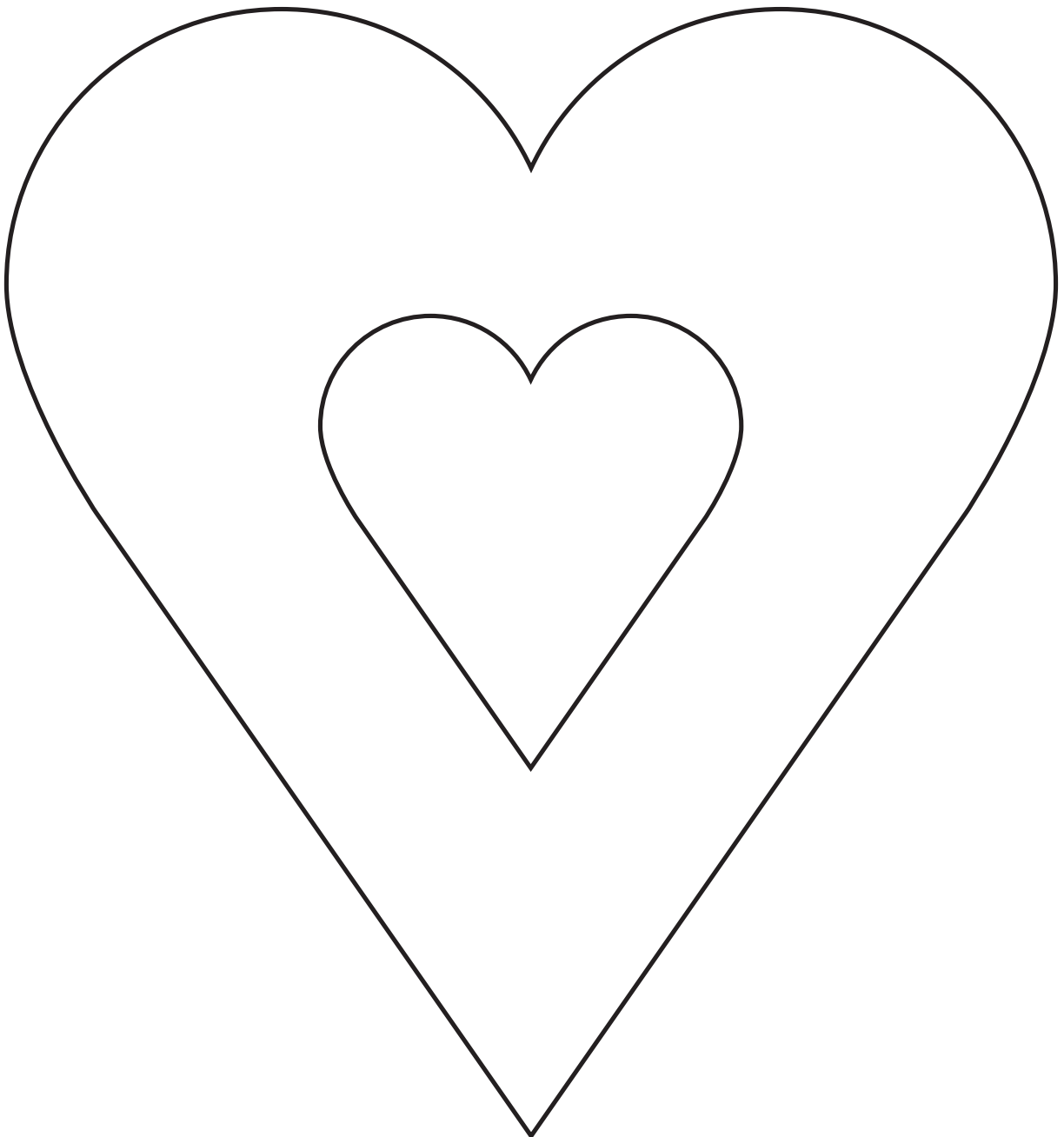
How do you feel when you hear someone misuse God's name?

God is concerned to protect his name and his reputation, and he takes it very seriously when his name is misused. When God told people his special name, Yahweh, he was revealing his character to them. The use of God's name often says something about a person's relationship with God. If someone loved God above all things, worshiped him, and found great joy in him, then surely they would not misuse his name. Only those who are estranged from God would misuse his name.

**Reflect on who you worship and
how you worship in everyday life.**

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Activity: Write God inside the center heart to remind you to that God alone must be worshiped. **What are some things that you might be tempted to love above God?** (write them along the edge of the outermost heart.) **What are some good things that you also love?** (family, pets, food, etc. Write them inside the outermost heart.) It is right to love these good things God has created, but we should never put them in the place of God. Share your responses with the group.



SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

(Allow for several answers within your group before reading the provided response.)

- 1. Why would anyone worship a statue?** When people worship an idol, they think that statue or image has a god behind it, and that the god has power. They think if they can make a god happy with them, he will give them what they want. It may sound crazy to us, but many people feel desperate for help and don't know where else to turn.
- 2. What does it mean to misuse God's name?** There are many different ways to misuse God's name. One would be to use it as a swear word. Another would be to claim the name of Christ when asking for something, but not to ask in the way that Christ commanded.
- 3. Is jealousy a good emotion?** When God expresses an emotion, it is always pure and not affected by sin. It is not like our own jealousy just as it is appropriate for a husband not to want his wife to love anyone else, it's appropriate for God to want us not to worship anyone or anything else.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

Can you clearly describe what biblical worship is? (Worship of God alone as he is revealed in his Word.)

Are you prepared to live in contrast to the world, where the misuse of God's name is commonplace?

VIRTUE VISION: Trust

Everyone puts their trust in someone or something at some time. Children trust their parents to care for them. Airplane passengers trust that the pilot will be able to fly the plane. Zoo visitors trust that the fences will keep them safe from man-eating tigers! The God of the Bible continually shows his people that he is trustworthy. Do you think that false idols—such as money, power, or even family—are trustworthy?

Write down one or two things that you need to trust God with completely.

What's holding you back?

MEMORIZE Deut. 6: 13–14

“It is the LORD your God you shall fear. Him you shall serve and by his name you shall swear. You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are around you.”