

# TEN COMMANDMENTS

## *1st Commandment: No Other Gods*



## REFLECTIONS

1. The first commandment has priority over everything else. God is described as “unchangeable, all powerful, all merciful, all forgiving, faithful, just, without any evil, our Creator and the Creator of everything.” Does this describe the God that you worship?

2. If there truly was no God, how would your life be different? Would you live differently? Would you treat others differently? Would you look for or create your own god?

3. The first commandment embraces faith, hope, and charity. Adoring God is an action of our whole being. Therefore, the transgressions of the first commandments are sins against the three theological virtues. (Catechism pg 506–508)

4. Sins against the faith: voluntary doubt, incredulity, heresy, apostasy, and schism. Why is God offended by my doubting him or not believing in him?

5. Sins against hope: despair, presumption. When I despair, I stop hoping for my personal salvation or trusting in God’s mercy. Or, do I presume that, since God is all-merciful, that I can continue my sinful ways without my conversion?

6. Sins against charity: indifference, ingratitude, lukewarmness, acedia, hatred of God. Do my prayers include my expressions of love and gratitude? Am I mad at God because he “caused” me to sin, or my loved one to die, or my illness? Do I spend time adoring Jesus in



the Magnificat Chapel? What vow can I make to God today to show him that I love him?

7. Spend time reflecting on the Magnificat (Luke 1: 46–55).

# ACTIVITIES

## For Children and Families

### *For Families:*

1. Read aloud: Deuteronomy 6:4–9. The first two verses are a fundamental Jewish prayer, the Shema (Hebrew for “hear”), which is prayed every day, posted in the home, and worn on the body. When asked to tell the greatest commandment, Jesus begins by repeating this prayer (see Mark 12:2–34). How has this commandment been accomplished and fulfilled in Jesus Christ? How is God fulfilling this commandment in your life today?

2. Read aloud: Psalm 135:13–21. The “idols” were false gods from which the people sought security and happiness. After promising to obey the ten commandments, the people of Israel built an idol, a golden calf (see Exodus 32). Enumerate and discuss the idols of the world today. In what things do people look for happiness and security? In our lives, what do we put before or ahead of God?

3. Read aloud: Ezekiel 36:24–28. The people of God are rebellious. God manifests to them his mercy and his faithful love. God is faithful to his promises. In what ways are we “rebellious”? In our lives, how have we experienced the mercy and the faithful love of God?

### *For Children:*

1. Jesus said, “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength.” Choose a saint whose feast day is

this month. Read about or have someone read to you about the life of this saint. Use details to tell, make a chart, and/or write about the ways in which the saint demonstrated loving God with their heart, with their soul, with their mind and with their strength.

2. God loves us and wants us to have complete and permanent happiness in our relationship with him. Many times people look for happiness in things by putting them in front of or ahead of their relationship with God. Make a collage with cut-out magazine photos and/or drawings that show things that people may try to put ahead of God in trying to find happiness.

3. God is love and he has created us out of love. He knows that we will experience the greatest happiness in loving others, even at times when they have done something that goes against us. He pours forth the Holy Spirit into our hearts, giving us his own merciful and loving nature. Tell or write about a time when someone asked you for forgiveness. Have you forgiven them? Tell or write about a time when you’ve asked someone for forgiveness. Is there someone today who you need to ask for forgiveness?

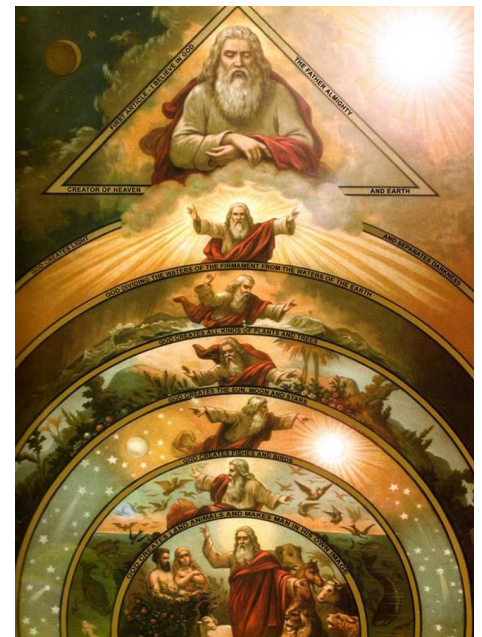
## For Youth

1. Pray with John 14:15–18. The first thing we do in the morning says a lot about what is most important in our lives. Instead of reaching for your phone first thing in the morning pray an Our Father.

2. Go grab a bible and read Matthew 6:25–34. In this passage Christ reminds us to trust completely in the Father’s love for us. As you read, reflect on the following questions.

- If we put God first do we really trust that He will provide for us?
- What holds us back from trusting God completely?
- What are the things in our lives which we cling to more than God?

3. Placing no other gods before the Lord, requires a sacrifice of self. To practice sacrificing yourself for the sake of another, intentionally offer to **take care of a task for another person.**





## For Young Adults

1. It is easy to think that we have no issues following the first commandment, after all, we aren't worshipping the sun-god or bowing down to the trees. But the first commandment goes much further than believing in other gods. It involves ensuring that God has his rightful place as the number one priority in our lives (tip: doing so will make us happier!). Take a few minutes to ponder if God has been dethroned by other priorities in your life (work, friends, etc.). How can you remedy this by placing God in his rightful place as the number one priority in your life?

2. Think you've got the first commandment buckled down? Where do you think superstitions lie in all of this? Visit **youtube.com** and search "**The First Commandment Columbia Catholic**" and watch the first video result to hear Father Dan O'Reilly explain how we can grow in fidelity to our Lord through faithfully obeying the first commandment. You'll be surprised how much scope the first commandment covers!

## For Adults

1. **Pray with John 14:15–18.** This inspired our "tagline" for the theme. Consider this promise of Christ to send us the Holy Spirit. What is the connection between the Holy Spirit and the Commandments? Why would God's first commandment to Israel be focused on our relationship with him? What sort of "idols" do we put in front of God in our lives that prevent us from fully opening up to His love and showing him our love for Him?



2. **Read paragraphs 9 and 10 of *Veritatis Splendor*.** Pope St. John Paul II reflects on how our very purpose as human beings becomes clear as God reveals Himself to us and that we are dignified because of the lengths to which God has gone to save us from sin. What does St. John Paul II say is our response to God?

3. **Watch the short video titled: "The First Commandment: Believe in the True God" on FORMED.org.** The parish pays for this content subscription for all of our parishioners so it is free for you to use! This video comes from a series on the catechism by Bishop Donald Hying. Reflect using the question provided at the end of the video.

## For Ministry Leaders

1. As the leader of a ministry, reflect on the question "do I

dedicate every meeting that I facilitate to God?" It's so easy to hop into the business without first turning to the Lord, but this is a simple way to put God first in your ministry.

2. Take time to discuss how your ministry brings people to God and helps them to place their trust in Him.

3. Pray with John 15:1–8 as a group, discuss our call to remain in the Lord and how that applies to the first commandment.

4. Think of one way that your ministry may be distracted from its purpose, of glorifying God and leading others to Him, and brainstorm ways to overcome that obstacle.





*The Adoration of the Golden Calf*, Nicolas Poussin, 1633–1637

“Idolatry not only refers to false pagan worship. It remains a constant temptation to faith. Idolatry consists in adoring and making divine anything that is not God. Man commits idolatry whenever he honors and reveres a creature in place of God, power, pleasure, race, ancestors, the state, money, etc. An idolater is someone who transfers his indestructible notion of God to anything other than God” (CCC 2113–2114).