

ALIVE IN CHRIST

GRADE 8

The Church

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Our Sunday Visitor

MORALITY



How does observing the First Commandment keep right order in our relationships?

CHURCH HISTORY TIMELINE

- 34 Death of Stephen, the first Christian martyr
- 451 Council of Chalcedon
- 1950 Assumption of Mary is defined as dogma
- 1979 Blessed Mother Teresa wins Nobel Peace Prize

Go to page 348 for more



Our Catholic Tradition

- God calls us into relationship. We honor him when we love and respect him and his name, connecting what we believe with how we live. (CCC, 2084, 2142)
- Families are called to be schools of faith where we learn how to love, act, and treat others. The obedience, love, and respect found in the Holy Family is a model for our families. (CCC, 1657)
- God created us with equal human dignity, so we must work for the common good. The common good comes about in a society when the fundamental rights of the person are met, social well-being of all people is the goal, and there is security and peace. (CCC, 1924–1925)

Our Catholic Life

- The First Commandment calls us to put God first in our lives, to give him the praise and honor he deserves as the Creator of everything. (CCC, 2093)
- Within the family, we develop personal character, grow in our understanding of right and wrong, and learn what's truly important. (CCC, 2223)
- Our individual actions to promote Catholic Social Teaching, peace, and love begin close to home. We can make a difference. (CCC, 2224)

Honoring God

♥ Let Us Pray

Leader: God, you alone are God. We honor you. Help us make you a priority in our lives. Help us see your presence in each other.

“The precepts of the LORD are right,
rejoicing the heart.” **Psalm 19:9**

All: Dear Lord, help us to live for you.

Scripture

“One of the scribes, when he came forward and heard them disputing and saw how well he had answered them, asked him, ‘Which is the first of all the commandments?’ Jesus replied, ‘The first is this: “Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is Lord alone! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.”’” **Mark 12:28–30**

Have you ever thought...

- What matters most in life?
- How can you show that God is important to you?



Getting Started

In this chapter, you will explore how we respond to God and identify how we can keep God the primary focus of our lives. You will also learn about the importance of the Second Commandment.

Catholic Faith Words

- Great Commandment
- idolatry
- blasphemy
- perjury

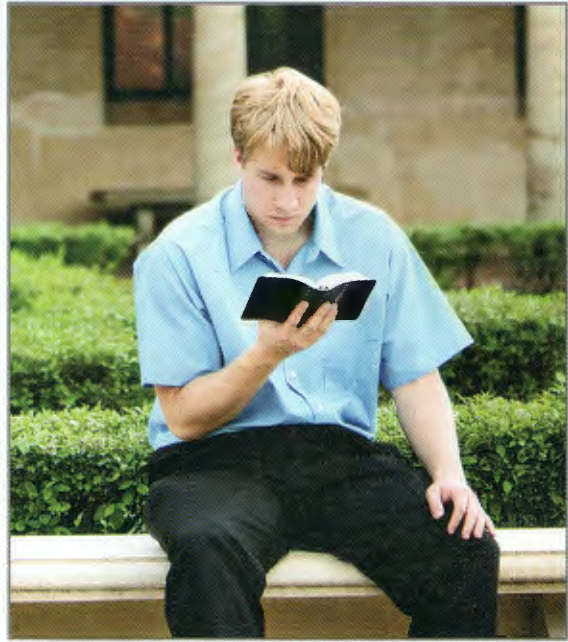
1. Write each Commandment.
2. Name ways that you can observe each Commandment. You can add to the list as you complete the chapter.



The First And Second Commandments	
First Commandment	Ways to Follow It
Second Commandment	Ways to Follow It

RECALL

Priorities, Priorities! Reflect on your past week. Fill in the week-at-a-glance to indicate the type of activities that filled your days and nights. Then complete the sentence.



Monday

Tuesday

Thursday

Wednesday

Friday

I can follow the Great Commandment (see Mark 12:28–30) by using my time wisely to _____.

I Am the Lord, Your God

What do we owe God?

If we say God is our number one priority in life, how do we live so that we aren't the only ones in our lives who know it? The best way to witness is to live like Jesus did, connecting what we say and do with what we believe. When we do that, we honor God, who is the source of all that is good.

God's Covenant with Us

Long ago God chose a people for himself—the Israelites—and made a covenant, or sacred promise, with them. He declared, “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall not have other gods beside me” (**Exodus 20:2-3**). God made a commitment to the Israelites and their descendants, who became known as the Jewish people.

God honored his covenant and then made a new covenant in Jesus Christ. He promises

to take care of us, and to give us new life, and he calls us together as his People, the Body of Christ. Our part of the covenant relationship with God requires that we show that we are his People. Followers of Christ honor God for the life he gives us and follow the law and Jesus' teachings. One important way we do that is by living a life that shows gratitude to God; we owe him everything!

The Ten Commandments are the laws of the covenant God established with the Israelites, and they still hold true today. Jesus summed them up with the **Great Commandment**: to love God above all else and to love your neighbor as yourself. “The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments” (**Matthew 22:40**).

The first three of the Ten Commandments focus on our relationship with God, with loving God with all our heart, soul, and mind. This seems like a mighty task, but Jesus gives us many examples of how to do this.



Go to the Source

Read *Matthew 22:34-40* to see how Jesus connects love of God with love of neighbor.



Making Connections by Faith

The first of the Ten Commandments is “I am the Lord your God . . . you shall have no other gods before me.” This Commandment calls us to live our faith and to have a relationship with God; to believe in God, hope in him, and love him above all else. Our lives are connected to God. This number one priority gives shape and meaning to everything else we do.

The word *religion* comes from the same Latin root word for “ligament.” The purpose of religious practice is the same as the ligaments in our body: to hold us together.

There are several ways we can follow the First Commandment and give God the honor and importance he deserves. We show that God is our number one priority by

- adoring God, recognizing that he is God and Creator, the source of all things, praising him as we realize that we need him to have life,
- praying to him,
- worshipping him, and
- fulfilling the promises we make to him.

Virtues and the First Commandment

The three Theological Virtues of faith, hope, and charity (love) give us the foundation for living by the First Commandment. They are called Theological Virtues because their source is God himself, and because those who live in faith, hope, and charity (love) are pointed back to God.

These virtues help us keep on track, believing all that God has revealed to us, putting all our trust in his care for us, and returning to him, albeit on a much smaller scale, the love that he gives us.

Catholic Faith Words

Great Commandment the twofold command to love God above all and your neighbor as yourself. It sums up all of God’s laws.

EXPLAIN

How do you practice the First Commandment and “honor the Lord your God”? Explain your answer to a classmate.



“Empty idols make their worshippers empty...” (CCC, 2112)

We Can't Replace God

What are some ways people fail to give God the honor he deserves?

Your parents may put limits on you in ways that you don't agree with. You may disagree on things or argue. But your relationship with your parents is more than a temporary disruption. A lifelong relationship is irreplaceable.

Putting Others in God's Place

Our heavenly Father is irreplaceable, too. God is the only God there is. There is no other. No one and nothing can occupy his place in our lives, or his importance to us. When we try to put other people or things in God's place, it dishonors God, disorders our lives and his plan for us, and is unfair to those people or things.

Catholic Faith Words

idolatry the sin of putting other people or things in God's place, or before God, in our lives

The name we give to putting other people or things in God's place is **idolatry**. Idols are empty, powerless false gods. When we confuse what's important in our lives, we can elevate these idols—such as power, prestige, money, pleasure—to the place of God, making them the number one priority in life. It's like we worship them because we give them all our time and attention. When we practice idolatry, our lives eventually fall apart. The idols that we are worshipping cannot satisfy us, and will keep us from experiencing true faith, hope, and love.

➤ **What are two types of false gods or idols that we, as a society, try and put in God's place?**

Leading Away from God

When you get your driver's license, you will notice a lot more street signs warning drivers in advance that particular roads are "Dead Ends" or "Wrong Ways."

Likewise, there are a number of attitudes and practices that take you down a dead end or

wrong way in your relationship with God. They challenge all Catholics to pay attention to where they are heading in their spiritual lives. Because these actions are all dead ends or take you the wrong way along the path of discipleship, they are sinful. They are contrary to the First Commandment.

Sins Against the First Commandment

- Tempting God:** testing God's goodness or power by word or deed, such as "If you give me an A on this test, I will go to church every weeknight."
- Sacrilege:** treating holy people, places, and things in an unworthy way, such as not consuming the Eucharist, the Body of Christ; or defacing a crucifix or statue
- Simony:** buying or selling spiritual things, such as paying for the Sacraments of Baptism or a wedding Mass (donations can and should be made, but a price is never set on the Seven Sacraments because their source is God and we receive them from the Lord as a grace, the free, loving gift of God's life and help)
- Atheism:** rejecting or denying the existence of God, such as "We human beings are in total control of our lives. We are the makers of our world."
- Superstition:** identifying certain objects or practices with a religious power, such as walking under ladders, voodoo dolls, Ouija boards, seances, and crystal balls.

Place a check mark next to the issues you think most affect people your age.



WRITE

In the space below, write your own prayer to God by finishing the three sentences.

Dear Lord, you are God. I have faith in you because . . .

I have hope in you because . . .

I love you because . . .

What's in a Name?

Why is it important to respect God's name?

When we hold someone in tremendous respect, we speak of that person with an almost hushed voice. The Second Commandment—You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain—reminds us that the way we use the Lord's name must always show great respect for him. God is awesome. He is holy. So, his name is holy.

We can defame the name of God in a variety of ways. **Blasphemy** is showing contempt or lack of reverence for God and his name. It includes

- speaking words of hate or defiance against the Lord: for example, damning God
- speaking ill of God: for example, attributing evil to God
- misusing God's name: for example, using "God" itself as an expletive or curse word

The Commandment not to use God's name in an offensive way also extends to respecting the names of Jesus (the Son of God), the Virgin Mary, and the Saints.

Jesus tells us "Do not swear at all; not by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King" (**Matthew 5:34-35**).

> **When has your name—or the name of someone you care about—been "dragged through the mud"? What did it feel like?**

The Truth in God

God is holy, awesome, and totally good. That would be reason enough to treat his name with respect.

However, God is also the measure by which all truth is calculated, for in the Lord there is no falsehood or lie. This means that the Second Commandment also forbids us from making false oaths (swearing to God that something is true when it isn't). We cannot call on God, in whom all truth resides, to be a witness to a lie on our part.

Catholic Faith Words

blasphemy the sin of showing contempt or lack of reverence for God and his name

perjury making a promise under oath which the maker does not intend to keep



Perjury is when we make a promise to tell the truth under oath and do not intend to keep it. The Lord is always faithful to his promises. Every promise that we make under oath involves a reference to God, who is the Speaker of all truth. God's truthfulness and his own reliable promises must be respected in the oaths we ourselves take.

Scripture

"O LORD, our Lord, how awesome is your name through all the earth!" **Psalm 8:2**

Go to the Source

Read *Matthew 5:33–35, 37* to find out what Jesus teaches us about swearing and oaths.



Law and medical students participate in a mock trial

LIST

List three promises you could make to yourself, to others, and to God.

I promise myself . . .

I promise others . . .

I promise God . . .

IN SUMMARY Catholics Believe

God calls us into relationship. We honor him when we love and respect him and his name, connecting what we believe with how we live.

- The First Commandment calls us to put God first in our lives, to give him the praise and honor he deserves as the Creator of everything.
- We need to avoid putting so much importance on things or other people that they take God's place in our lives.
- The Second Commandment states that God's name is holy, and we must always refer to his name with respect and reverence.

Our Catholic Life

Do you focus too much on what you wear, or the things you own? Do you place too much value on your friendships and what people think about you? There are more important things in life, and your **faith** is among them. Find ways to include God in your thoughts and decisions, even about your ideas of friendship and who or what means most to you. Rely on God when you are unsure of something or need a friend. Be open to what the Spirit is telling you when a new person or idea comes into your world, and give that person or idea the thought he, she, or it deserves. Most of all, consider ways to be in friendship with God. It's the most important relationship in your life.



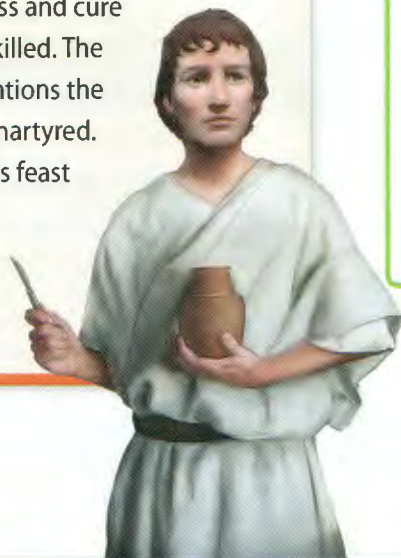
➤ What do you hear God telling you about your relationships? How will you respond?

People of Faith

Saint Blaise, d. c. 316

When the bishop of Sebasteia (now Sivas, Turkey) died, Saint Blaise was named to succeed him because people knew he was a pious and good man. He is said to have performed many miracles. When the emperor ordered that Christians had to renounce the faith or be killed, Blaise refused to deny Christ. On his way to execution, a mother allegedly placed her son, who had a fishbone in his throat, before Blaise. The Saint stopped to bless and cure the child before he was killed. The explorer Marco Polo mentions the place where Blaise was martyred. The Church celebrates his feast day on **February 3**.

For more, go to
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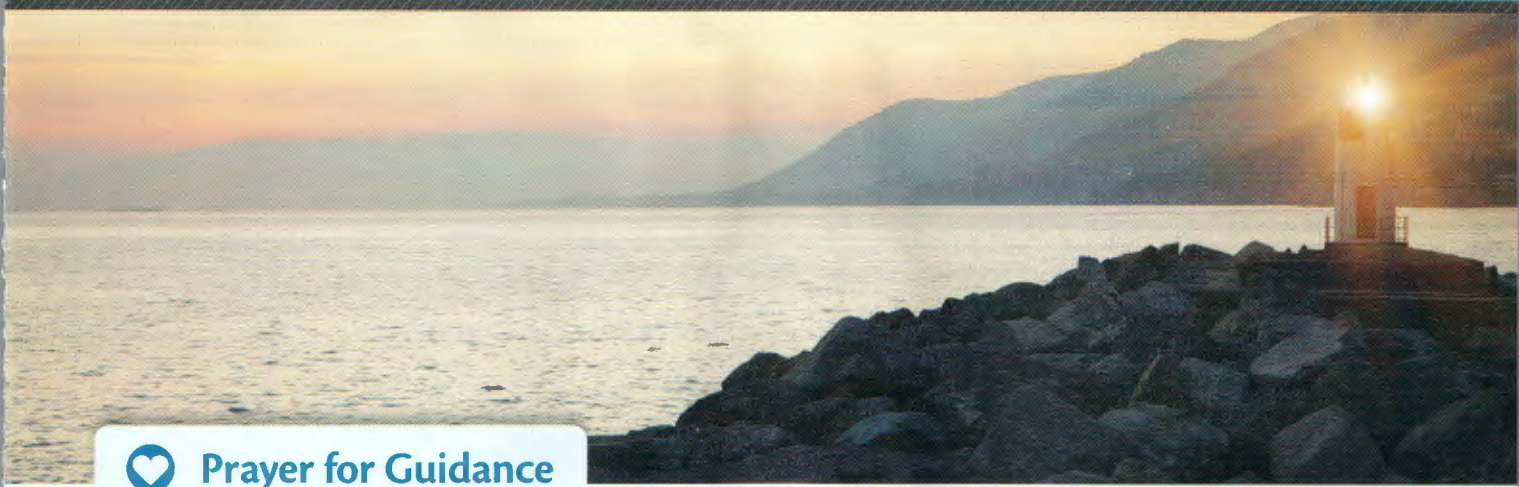


LIST

List two things you can do to intentionally strengthen the amount of attention you are giving to your relationship with God.

1. _____

2. _____



Prayer for Guidance

Leader: A reading from the book of Psalms.

Reader 1: I will bless the LORD at all times;
his praise shall be always in my mouth.

My soul will glory in the LORD;
let the poet hear and be glad.

Magnify the LORD with me;
and let us exalt his name together.

(Psalm 34:2-4)

Leader: This is a prayer by Saint Teresa of Ávila, a sixteenth-century Doctor of the Church, who was sometimes uncertain what path God wanted her to take.

We follow this path to symbolize the way we hope to follow Jesus.

Reader 2: Lord, grant that I may always
allow myself to be guided by you,
always follow your plans, and perfectly
accomplish your holy will.

Reader 3: Grant that in all things, great
and small, today
and all the days of my life, I may do
whatever you may require of me.

Reader 4: Help me to respond to your
grace, so that I may be your trustworthy
instrument of your honor.

Reader 5: May your will be done in time
and eternity—by me, in me, and through
me. Amen.

Leader: God, you led Saint Teresa to do
great things for your Kingdom.

Today, we offer these prayers, asking you to
guide us, too.

*Each person is invited to take turns and add his
or her intentions.*

All: God, guide me to be fair and caring.

 *Sing or play "Take Me"*

A Work with Words Complete each sentence with the correct term from the Word Bank.

superstition	blasphemy
Theological Virtues	simony
idolatry	perjury
sacrilege	atheism

- The name we give to putting other people or things in God's place is _____.
- Identifying certain objects or practices with religious power is called _____.
- Faith, hope, and charity (love) are _____ because they come from God and point us back to him.
- _____ is showing contempt or lack of reverence for God and his name.
- When we lie under oath we are committing _____.

B Check Understanding Circle the letter of the choice that best completes the sentence.

- Jesus taught that the ____ Commandment is to love God above all else and to love your neighbor as yourself.
 - Tenth
 - Great
 - Golden
 - First
- The purpose of ____ can be compared to the ligaments in our body: to hold us together.
 - religion
 - Commandments
 - simony
 - virtue
- ____ is buying or selling spiritual things, such as having to pay for the Sacrament of Baptism.
 - Sacrilege
 - Simony
 - Superstition
 - Atheism
- The ____ Commandment calls us to put God first in our lives, to give him the praise and honor he deserves as the Creator of everything.
 - First
 - Second
 - Fifth
 - Third
- ____ is rejecting or denying the existence of God.
 - Blasphemy
 - Idolatry
 - Atheism
 - Tempting God

- C Make Connections** On a separate sheet of paper, write a one-paragraph response to the question: What effect do "Dead End" attitudes and practices have on your relationship with God? Pick one specific attitude or practice, and consider how you can apply the Theological Virtues to head back toward God.