

# The Greatest Commandment

Lesson Scripture: Matthew 22:34-40

**Bible Truth:** I will love God with ALL my heart.

**Bible Story:** Matthew 22:37-40

**Bible Verse:** “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.” (Deuteronomy 6:5, NIV)

## FOCUS

### Learning Activity: “God Doesn’t Like Fractions”

#### Preparation

Write several fractions on a piece of poster board. Prepare the following objects or visual aids: half of a cookie, a whole cookie, half of an umbrella (or any other useful object), and half of a catcher’s glove, a ball or any other sport object that children are familiar with. Make a giant heart out of a red poster board. Cut it in half. Draw a happy face on one half of the heart and a sad face on the other half.

**Materials**  
white poster board  
red poster board  
markers  
cookies  
umbrella  
sports ball or catcher’s glove

#### Presentation

As you show the fractions say: **Can anyone tell me what these numbers are called? Yes, they are fractions. Fractions are numbers that represent a part or parts of a whole.**

**How many of you have begun to learn about fractions in school? Do you enjoy learning about fractions? Many children do not enjoy learning about fractions because it is a bit harder to add and subtract fractions than whole numbers.** Give an example of adding two whole numbers and another example of adding two fractions.

Show children the whole cookie and half of a cookie. Say: **If someone offered you half of a cookie or a whole cookie, which one would you choose? I’m sure you would choose the whole cookie. Half (or a fraction) of a cookie is never as good as a whole cookie, isn’t that right?**

**Fractions (or parts of a whole) are often much harder to use. How could I use only half of an umbrella on a rainy day? What could you do with half of a catcher’s glove when your team is**

**playing?** Mention the objects or visuals you have prepared if you did not use the suggested ones. Say: **Do you know that God doesn't like fractions either? He says in Deuteronomy 6:5, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength."** (Show the half of the heart with a happy face.) **It's very hard for God to only use half of a child. He can't send you where He wants you to go because your other half doesn't want to go.** (Show the half of the heart with a sad face.) **He cannot teach you His Word because only part of you wants to learn. God doesn't want us to give Him only part of our lives. He doesn't like fractions! He wants us to surrender completely to Him.**

Our Bible truth today reminds us of this. **"I will love God with ALL my heart."**

## **SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION: Deuteronomy 6:5**

### **Preparation**

Write the words WHOLE=ALL on a poster board or on the whiteboard.

Cut an apple into pieces or peel an orange and divide it into pieces. (Candy will also work, as long as it can be divided into many pieces.)

Write Deuteronomy 6:5 on the back of the poster board and underline the word ALL every time it appears in this verse.

Prepare a red heart for every two children in your class. Write Deuteronomy 6:5 on each heart. Cut each heart into two pieces like a puzzle. Be sure that each heart is cut differently, so each half only has one match.

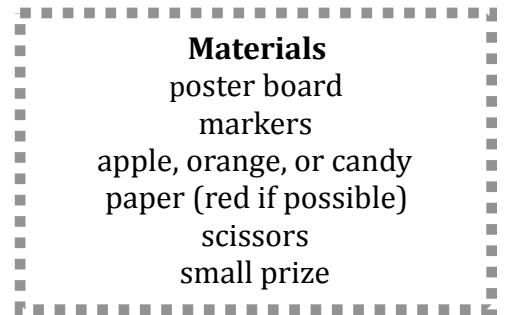
### **Explanation**

Ask: **Do you like \_\_\_\_\_** (mention the fruit or candy that you have prepared)? Pick a child that raised his/her hand. Say: **Would you like a small piece of \_\_\_\_\_** (fruit or candy) **or would you prefer the whole thing.** (Most children will choose the whole thing.) Say: **Just like you wanted the whole thing, God also wants all of us instead of just a part.**

Read Deuteronomy 6:5 with the children. Explain that this verse tells us how we need to love God. Ask a child to circle what part of us should love God—heart, soul, and strength.

### **Memorization Activity**

Give each child half of a prepared heart. Instruct the children to wait for the signal and then look for the person that has the other half of their heart. When they have found their partner, they



should study the verse together. When both children can quote Deuteronomy 6:5, they should raise their hands. The first pair who can quote Deuteronomy 6:5 will receive a small reward.

## INSTRUCT

### Bible Story: "The Greatest Commandment," Matthew 22:37-40

#### Preparation

Read and study Matthew 22:37-40.

Draw two large tablets that look similar to the Ten Commandments on a piece of poster board. Write Matthew 22:37 on the left side of the tablet. Write Matthew 22:39 on the right side of the tablet. Write the Ten Commandments on the back. *\*Save this visual for use in Lesson 4.*



#### Presentation

Say: **Jesus was in the bustling city of Jerusalem. Many people crowded around Him to listen to what He was saying about His Father in heaven. Some people believed He was the Son of God. But there were some people that hated Jesus. They were the religious leaders, ministers, and rulers of the temple.**

Every time religious leaders were among the crowd, they would ask difficult questions. They thought Jesus wouldn't be able to answer their questions. They hoped Jesus would say something that would make people doubt that He was really the Son of God.

One day, one of these leaders asked Jesus, "What is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?"

The religious leaders knew that Moses had been given these ten laws known as the Ten Commandments. Each one of these was important and needed to be obeyed. What would Jesus say?

(Show the side of the tablets where the Matthew verses are written.) ***"Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"***

Jesus was right! If we love God and our neighbors (the people around us), can we disobey the rest of the commandments? **NO!** If we love Jesus with ALL our heart, we will treat those around us the same way Jesus would treat them. (Show the Ten Commandments side of the poster board. Discuss with children how each of the Ten Commandments can be followed by loving God and our neighbors.)

## APPLICATION

### Learning Activity: Creative Writing, "Showing My Love"

#### Preparation

Cut enough hearts out of paper for each child to have one. Fold each heart in half.

#### Presentation

Give every child a heart-shaped piece of paper and a pencil. Ask the children to write or draw in one half of the heart ways they can show love to Jesus. On the other half of the heart ask them to write or draw ways they can show love to their neighbors (those around us).

**Materials**  
paper  
scissors  
pencils, markers, or  
crayons

## MINISTRY TIME

#### Preparation

None

#### Presentation

Form a circle. (If the group is large, form several small groups with a leader for each group.) Ask every child to share one way he wants to show his love to Jesus. Then ask everyone in the group to pray for each other that they will love God with all their hearts.

**Materials**  
none