The Ten Commandments

Jesus summed up the Law with these two sentences: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” and “Love your neighbour as yourself” (Matthew 22:37–39, NIV). I think we can do no better than to follow His example. All of the Ten Good Rules remind us of those two directives: Show love and respect to God, and show love and respect to others.

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**Age-Appropriate Versions of the Ten Commandments for Kids**

What follows are the texts of the Ten Commandments as given in Exodus 20:1–17 (NIV) along with suggestions for age-appropriate versions of each good rule: the Ten Commandments for kids (the main text of the alternative commandment for each age group is set in italics).

(You may also find a list of the Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy 5.)

**RULE 1**

Exodus 20:3 “You shall have no other gods before me.”

For Kids Under 5  
“There’s one God! Listen to Him.”  
For Kids 6-10  
“Follow the one true God.”  
For Kids 11-13  
“Worship the one true God—no one else.”

**RULE 2**

Exodus 20:4-6 “You shall not make for yourself an image 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; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.”

For Kids Under 5  
“Sometimes people try to make things that look like God—and then they bow down to those things and pretend they are God! That’s silly! Don’t do that! Respect God. *Don’t make a pretend God.”*  
For Kids 6-10  
“*Don’t follow idols instead of God.* An idol is something people make to bow down and worship—like a pretend form of God.”  
For Kids 11-13  
“*Don’t make idols and worship them instead of God.* God wants us to give Him all our worship.”

**RULE 3**

Exodus 20:7 “You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.”

For Kids Under 5  
“God’s name is special. Respect God’s name.”  
For Kids 6-10  
“Respect God’s name. Don’t use it like any other word.”  
For Kids 11-13  
“Respect God’s name. Don’t misuse it.”

**RULE 4**

Exodus 20:8 “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.”

For Kids Under 5  
“*Take time to rest and show respect for God.*What’s one way we do that? We go to church!”  
For Kids 6-10  
“*Remember to take time to rest and focus on God.”*  
For Kids 11-13  
“The Hebrew word *shabbāth means “rest.” Remember to take time to rest and focus on God.”*

**RULE 5**

Exodus 20:12 “Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.”

For Kids Under 5  
“*Respect your mom and dad.”*  
For Kids 6-10  
“*Respect your mom and dad.”*  
For Kids 11-13  
“Respect your parents—live in a way that will bring them honor, not shame or trouble.”

**RULE 6**

Exodus 20:13 “You shall not murder.”

For Kids Under 5  
“Respect life! Don’t take away anyone’s life.”  
For Kids 6-10  
“Don’t kill anyone on purpose and unlawfully.”  
For Kids 11-13  
“Don’t murder anyone. Murder is unlawful killing that is planned out.”

**RULE 7**

Exodus 20:14 “You shall not commit adultery.”

For Kids Under 5  
“Respect husbands and wives. If you get married, keep your promises to each other.”  
For Kids 6-10  
“Husbands and wives must stay faithful to each other.”  
For Kids 11-13  
“Adultery is when a married person has a physical relationship with another person. If you get married, be faithful to your spouse. Don’t commit adultery.”

**RULE 8**

Exodus 20:15 “You shall not steal.”

For Kids Under 5  
“Respect other people’s stuff. Don’t take things without asking.”  
For Kids 6-10  
“Respect other people’s stuff. Don’t steal.”  
For Kids 11-13  
“Respect others and what belongs to them. Don’t steal.”

**RULE 9**

Exodus 20:16 “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour.”

For Kids Under 5  
“Respect others. Tell the truth. Don’t tell lies.”

For Kids 6-10  
“Respect others. Don’t tell lies about anyone. Tell the truth.”  
For Kids 11-13  
“Respect others. Don’t tell lies about anyone. Don’t twist the truth, or hide the facts, or act in a way to deceive. Be honest.”

**RULE 10**

Exodus 20:17 “You shall not covet your neighbour’s house. You shall not covet your neighbour’s wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour.”

For Kids Under 5  
“Respect others. Be happy with what you have. (Otherwise known as the “You get what you get and you don’t throw a fit” rule.)”  
For Kids 6-10  
“Respect others. Be content with what’s yours. Don’t crave other people’s stuff.”  
For Kids 11-13  
“Respect others, but don’t play the comparison game. Be content with what you already have. Don’t crave what doesn’t belong to you.*“*

Remember, when you teach the Ten Commandments for kids, consider this: Having kids memorize these ten rules is great. But helping kids understand what it means to love and respect God and each other is even better (and more important).

<https://ministryspark.com/ten-commandments-kids/>