

Parent Partnership Handbook

A Parent Guide for Leading Children in the Ways of Love

Love of God—Commandments 1, 2, 3

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On Mount Sinai God initiated a covenant with humankind. Moses pronounced the covenant to the assembly; nevertheless, the covenant was an expression of a one-on-one commitment—first of God's love for us and then of our free response in love. God invited each of us into a personal relationship of love.

The *Decalogue* or *ten words* made known to us God's will and clearly expressed what a free, loving response to God would look like! We call the *two tablets of the Testimony* the Ten Commandments. Correctly understood, the commandments are not isolated rules and regulations: They are expressions of what love looks like.

Throughout history the ordering of the Ten Commandments has changed. Currently, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* presents the organization that Saint Augustine taught: The first three commandments relate to love of God and the remaining seven highlight love of neighbor. This newsletter presents **COMMANDMENTS 1, 2, 3** as formulas for expressing our love of God.

First Commandment: "I am the LORD your God: you shall not have strange gods before me."

Deuteronomy 6:5 advised: "Love your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength." God is faithful. God will keep the promises that God has made to us. God's love will never end nor be withheld from us. Some of the ways that we demonstrate our desire to make God number one in our lives include the following practices:

- In conversation and prayer acknowledge God as the supreme being: almighty, all-knowing, all-loving, all-merciful, and provident Father.
- Cultivate a routine of morning and evening prayer.
- Thoughtfully pray the Acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity. These prayer formulas are found in church missalettes, in the printed materials of religious education programs, in devotional prayerbooks, and on websites.
- Put God first and let everything else fall into place: power, popularity, prestige, wealth, comfort, etc.
- Depend on/trust the providential love of God to provide for your well-being rather than giving into despair or superstition, or seeking knowledge of the future from sources like astrology or palm reading.

Second Commandment: "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain."

A name represents a person. Respectful use of it fosters growth in relationship and witnesses to others the importance of the person in our lives. For this reason:

- Speak respectfully God's name and honor the things of God.
- Refrain from cursing or using God's name in frivolous conversation or slang language.
- Hold as sacred the oaths and promises taken in the name of God.
- Recognize that false oaths, swearing, and perjury are abuses of love because they ask God—who is Truth—to witness to a lie.
- Avoid blasphemy—thought, word, or act that makes fun of or shows contempt or hatred for God, the Church, the saints, or sacred objects.
- Respect the names of other people as a sign of their dignity as children of God. Name-calling reduces a person to an object.

Third Commandment: "Remember to keep holy the LORD's Day."

Reserve Monday through Saturday for "business as usual." Sunday replaces Sabbath for Catholic Christians, a day to recall who you are and Whose you are! Christian Sabbath is a celebration of Christ's victory over death, therefore every Sunday is a "little Easter." Sunday is a time set apart for parish worship via participation in Mass, the greatest prayer that the Church can offer. Within the liturgy we feed on the Word of God and on the body and blood of Jesus. Within community Christians give public witness to God's goodness and to their relationship with God. Sabbath restores perspective and balance to our lives. God intends that Sabbath observance will nourish the soul and cultivate family, cultural, and social life. For this reason the commandment requires us to avoid all unnecessary work. ▲



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