

## Welcome to Sunday School!

The theme of our Fall Kick Off at St. Luke's is "Project: Love Your Neighbor."

Everything we are trying to do to provide a safe way to worship and experience community at St. Luke's is being done with this in mind.

How can we do that in our everyday lives especially during a pandemic as we head back to school? Today we are going to explore the Greatest Commandment and what this truly means.



## SCRIPTURE:

He replied, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it. You must love your neighbor as you love yourself."

—Matthew 22:37-39

## THE GREAT COMMANDMENT IN 2 PARTS:

We read the story of the greatest commandment in some form in all of the 4 Gospels. But we will look at the version found in Matthew 22:34-46.

A long time ago, when Jesus was on earth, people thought the Bible was just about rules. Do this. Don't do that. Say this. Wear that. Go here. Worship there. Rule after rule after rule. There was a little bit about LOVE, but there were so many rules that was all people cared about. But LOVE was all Jesus cared about. He came here to show each one of us just how much he LOVES us. He LOVES us so much that he even died showing his LOVE. There was a whole bunch of people who really liked Jesus' message of LOVE, but there were also a bunch of people who really liked rules. They thought following the rules was all that mattered, but they forgot that everyone makes mistakes sometimes and disobeys those rules, and then what? Is that it? One broken rule and it's all over? No way! Jesus came so that even when we make a mistake, he forgives us. He LOVES us. One day the rule followers wanted to know what Jesus thought was the most important one of all. If they could follow just one rule, which one would it be? They expected Jesus to say one of the 10 commandments, like obeying your parents or keeping the Sabbath day just for God. But Jesus had an even better one. Jesus said, "LOVE the Lord your God with all your HEART and with all your SOUL and with all your MIND. This is the greatest commandment. And the second is like it: LOVE your NEIGHBOR as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these 2 rules." Jesus turned all of those rules into 2 simple ones. LOVE God, And LOVE others.

Why is the great commandment important? Religious leaders tested Jesus repeatedly. They thought they could catch him making a mistake. In this story they asked him a legal question. The Pharisees and Sadducees were proud that they knew religious law. To answer them, Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:5 which says we should love God with all our heart, being and mind. But, then Jesus surprised them by adding a second commandment about loving our neighbor. When you think about everything Jesus was trying to teach his followers, it's really all about these 2 commandments. Together we call these the GREAT commandment.

## ACTIVITIES:

### Family Discussion:

1. What rules do you follow at home? ...at school? How does it make you feel to follow rules?
2. Why do you think Jesus said these 2 rules were the greatest of all commandments?
3. Who is your neighbor? Can it be someone that lives far away? In what ways can you love your neighbor?
4. What does it mean to love God with all of your heart, soul (being) and mind?
5. During this pandemic, how is wearing a mask and keeping your distance a way of loving others?

### Ways to LOVE Activity:

Divide a piece of paper into 3 columns - label one column "GOD", and the second column "ME" and label the third column "OTHERS". Write down ways you can love God under the "GOD" column, ways you can love yourself under the "ME" column and write down ways you can love others under the "OTHERS" column.

## PRAYER:

Dear God,  
Thank you for giving us rules to live by.  
Please know that I love you with all of my heart,  
soul and mind. Help me to show my love  
for you by loving others.

Let's pray the Lord's Prayer together:

Our Creator,  
who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.  
Thy kingdom come,  
Thy will be done on earth  
as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread  
and forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For Thine is the kingdom and  
the power and  
the glory forever.  
Amen