



THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT: YOU SHALL NOT MURDER

The Sixth Commandment teaches us to respect life as something that God alone can give—and take.

OBJECTIVE

To help your children understand that life is precious to God (and should be precious to us, too).

NOTE: You may need to adapt this lesson depending on the concepts your children are prepared to handle. Not all children grapple with the concept of death and the impermanence of life the same way. Decide ahead of time how much you'll be wading into the topic.

HELPFUL SCRIPTURES

Before starting this lesson, we recommend you look up these scriptures on your own and familiarize yourself with them. We've included notes about how they connect with this lesson, but we'll leave it up to you to decide when and how to best introduce them to your children.

Genesis 2:7 – When God made Adam, He breathed the breath of life into Adam. We're alive because God placed life within us.

Deuteronomy 32:39 – Life and death are God's prerogative and within God's control.

Revelation 21:1-4 – A beautiful reminder of how things will be when death and even crying are ended.

Matthew 5:21-22 – Murder begins in the heart. How we feel about and treat each other matters to God.

Genesis 9:5-6 – God demands a reckoning for murder. If we kill someone else, we forfeit our own life. We were made in God's image.





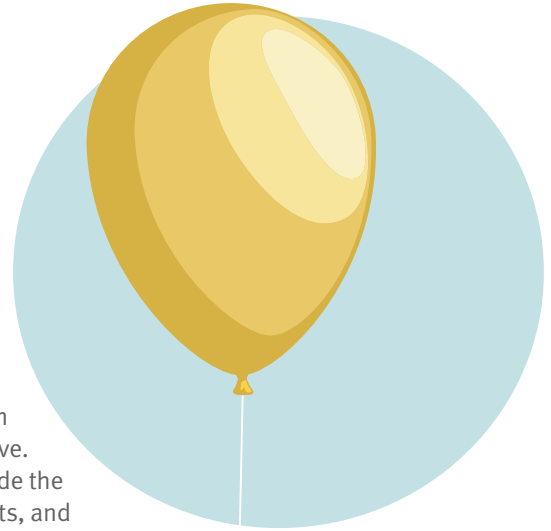
ACTIVITY

Fixing the balloon

Supplies needed:

- Rubber balloon (uninflated)
- *Optional:* water
- *Optional:* A pin or other sharp object
- *Optional:* Duct tape

In front of your children, inflate and tie off the rubber balloon. Ask them to hold onto it. Ask your children to think about what it means to be alive. What opportunities do they have just by being alive? If you need to guide the conversation, mention their favorite activities, upcoming exciting events, and close relationships. Ask specifically whether we could enjoy the company of friends and family if we were dead.



“And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.”

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Read or summarize the following:

When God made Adam, the Bible says that God breathed the breath of life into Adam. Before that, Adam was just a body, but God made him *alive*. It's kind of like your balloon. A minute ago, it wasn't much of anything—but now I've filled it with air and changed it.

Activity Continued

Ask your children to pop the balloon. Once they have done that, hand the remains of the balloon back and ask them to put air back into it. Once they have tried to re-inflate it (or simply told you that it's impossible), continue below.

Summary Continued

Continue reading or summarizing:

You can't put air back into the balloon. It's destroyed, and there's no way for you to make it what it was before.



That's kind of how life works. We can take it from other people the same way we can destroy a balloon—but we can't put it back, not you, not me, not anyone—except for God. He's the only one with that kind of power. He gave us life, and He can give us life *again*. But no matter how hard we try, we can't put air back into that balloon.

Life is a special thing that only God can give, which means it's something only God can choose to take away. The Sixth Commandment tells us not to take that precious gift away from other people, and it reminds us that if we do, we can't give it back.

*“Whoever sheds man’s blood,
By man his blood shall be shed;
For in the image of God.
He made man.”*



Make it your own

Here are some ways to personalize or modify this activity:

Adding water: Instead of air, fill the balloon with water. (This is best done outside.) When your children pop the balloon, the lesson will be a little more obvious—there is no way to repair the balloon, and there is no way to regather the water that was in it. Everything is gone and ruined.

Vanity of vanities: After your children pop the balloon, provide some duct tape and ask them to try to tape the balloon back together and *then* try and re-inflate it.

DISCUSSION

After explaining the popped balloon, take some time to chat with your children about the activity and about the precious nature of life. Here are some open-ended questions you can use to start a discussion (and some hints to get your children thinking about the answers).

Remember, these questions are just suggestions. Feel free to use the ones you think would work best for your family (and come up with some of your own). You know your children best—the important thing is coming up with questions that will get them talking and thinking.

Question: When someone dies, what happens to their friendships? What about their relationship with God? How do you think that makes Him feel?

Hint: *Remind your children that God loves everyone and wants a relationship with all of us, and that death gets in the way of that relationship.*

Question: Some stories in the Bible tell us about times God has taken away someone's life. We know that God has the *right* to do that, but why do you think He chooses to do it?



Hint: Ask your children to think about what happens when someone is allowed to keep making decisions that harm other people. Ask about God's plan for those who have died—even the ones He has killed. Will they live again? What will the world be like when they do? Will they have an easier time listening to God then?

Question: One of the last parts of God's plan is to get rid of death forever. Why do you think He made it so that people die at all?

Hint: Point your children to the story of the Garden of Eden. Death was a consequence of disobeying God. Ask what the world would be like if everyone was allowed to disobey God and His laws forever.

Question: When God puts an end to death forever, and everyone who was dead is alive again, who are you excited to see?

Hint: This is a totally open-ended question. If your children need a nudge, you can ask them if there are people from the Bible they would like to talk to or famous people from history or even loved ones they miss.

