

THIRD WEEK OF LENT: “THE TEN BEST WAYS”

OPENING PRAYER

The leader prays out loud:

Guiding God, you set before your people the best ways to live: in right relationship with you and one another. Open our ears to hear your wisdom afresh. Amen.

GATHERING TIME

Each person responds to one of the following:

- What are some of the most important rules in your home?
- What was your most treasured possession when you were a child?
- Tell the story of a time you broke the rules.

BIBLICAL REFLECTION

The leader reads the following:

This passage comes shortly before Moses reads the 10 Commandments to the people of Israel when they gathered at the foot of Mount Sinai, having just escaped from Egypt. A people who had been enslaved now needed to learn what freedom meant. Through the commandments they’re about to receive, God invites them into the kind of relationship that blesses all peoples.

A member of the group reads the passage:

[God said,] “You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is mine, but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation.” (Exodus 19:4-6)

The group discusses the following questions, picking and choosing the ones that work best for them:

- Pop quiz! Working together, can your group remember all 10 Commandments?
- As you think about the 10 Commandments, notice that the first four are all about how to be in right relationship with God, and the rest are about how to be in right relationship with neighbor. Why are these things tied together? Can you be in right relationship with God if you’re not in right relationship with your neighbor? What about vice versa?
- Sometimes in the story of our faith, people had to break the rules to do the right thing: Jesus healed on the sabbath; Martin Luther condemned the sale of indulgences; Sojourner Truth preached even though women were supposed to be silent. How do we know when/whether God approves of our actions when our actions seem to break God’s law?
- What are some rules of our community? How/do they help us?
- What spiritual practices (if any) have you committed to during this forty-day Lenten journey? How are they going so far? Where do you need God’s help to succeed at them?

CLOSING PRAYER

The leader prays aloud:

God of goodness, we live in a complicated world. Sometimes it’s easy to tell the difference between good and evil, but sometimes we lose ourselves in gray areas. Bear us on eagles’ wings and bring us to yourself. Help us to discern how these ten ancient commandments can still guide us. Shape us day by day, so that we become a blessing to those who meet us. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.