

HERE WE COME!

As the children arrive, place them behind a line stretched across one corner of the room. It should be large enough to hold the expected number of children, but small enough to cause them to squeeze together to fit in the space. Try doing different actions in the limited space such as sitting down, waving, or turning around. End the activity by saying, "It was fun to press together in a small space, but now it's time to press on to the next part of our class. Everybody out!"

SCRIPTURE WORDS AND WORSHIP

The scripture verse from Philippians includes the admonition to "press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of Christ Jesus."

The scripture is greatly adapted for children, making it simple to learn and understand. Print each word on a footprint and hide them in the pages of Philippians for the children to find.

The text from the Old Testament comes from Exodus 20, and includes the Ten Commandments. These were given to a group of Hebrew people who had lived in slavery in a land where many gods were worshiped by the Egyptians. They are sometimes called the "don't" rules. The scripture story focuses on three that children can relate to.

PRESS ON

Love is an important part of every commandment.

Scripture Words

I want to keep going the way Jesus wants me to.
—Philippians 3:14
NRSV adapted

STORY TALKING

Let the children tell you about rules they live by.

- Which are family rules?
- Which are school rules?
- Which are rules they follow at church?
- What is a commandment?
- What are we expected to do with commandments?
- Why?

MOVING MUSIC

- "This Is My Commandment"

This Is My Commandment

Traditional

This is my com- mand- ment that you love one an- oth- er, that your joy may be full. This is my com- mand- ment that you love one an- oth- er, that your joy may be full; That your joy may be full, That your joy may be full;

D.C. al Fine

LIVE AND LEARN

This might-have-been story is based on a time period after Moses received the Ten Commandments and Joshua, as the new leader, begins to help the people put them into action.

Getting Into It by Marge Nelson

“Give it back! It’s mine!” Micah yelled as he grabbed Benjamin’s sleeve and threw him to the ground. Micah pounced on the helpless child and began pulling at the belt wrapped around his middle.

“Here, boys, stop that!” Joshua said, reaching down to lift Micah off Benjamin. Micah was still squirming, trying to get loose, but Joshua held him fast.

“Now, tell me what this is all about,” Joshua said, brushing the boys off.

“Benjamin has my belt,” Micah accused. “I accidentally left it under the palm tree yesterday. I saw him take it!”

“You did not!” Benjamin yelled. “I made sure no one was looking when I...” He clapped a hand over his mouth and his face began to turn red. “Ooops,” he muttered.

“Benjamin, does the belt you are wearing belong to Micah?”

“Yes,” he whispered, “but he didn’t want it. He left it laying there in plain sight. He should take better care of his things.”

“Why did you take it?” asked Joshua.

“Because I wanted it!” he exclaimed. “It was better than the one I had. Mine was old and worn, and this one was new. I wanted it so I took it.” Micah glared at him.

Joshua offered up a silent prayer. “Help me know what to say, Lord. What do you want us to do?”

He was reminded of the new rules Moses had introduced to the people. They were simple and basic, but the people still had to learn to treat each other more kindly.

“Remember the rules Moses gave us a few days ago? I’m afraid I’ve seen three broken here today,” Joshua said, shaking his head.

Micah was ready. “Don’t steal’ was one of them,” he pointed out.

“Right,” Joshua agreed. “And don’t covet. That means looking at something someone else has and wanting it so badly that you break the other rule and steal it. If it belongs to someone else, leave it alone.”

“So what’s the third one?” Micah asked, glaring at Benjamin.

“That’s one you might be guilty of, Micah. It’s about being a false witness. You said you saw Benjamin take the belt. Did you really?”

“No, I just figured he must have so I said I saw him.”

“But what if you had been wrong? What if someone else had taken it. You would have blamed Benjamin for something he didn’t do.”

“I’m sorry,” Micah confessed. “I shouldn’t have done that.”

Benjamin reached up and untied the belt around his waist. “Here, Micah. I’m sorry twice.”

“Twice?” Micah looked puzzled as he accepted the belt.

“Yes, once for taking something that wasn’t mine and also for wanting your property in the first place.”

“You’ve learned three important lessons,” Joshua said, giving each boy a hug. “Keeping the rules is really pretty easy if you just keep remembering to love God and each other.”

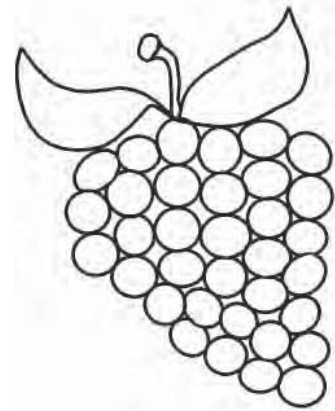
UP AND AT 'EM

Play a game of “Bunch the Grapes.” The children scatter and run around in a safe area. When the teacher calls, “Time to gather grapes!” all the children bunch up as close to each other as possible.

SENSE-ATIONS

“Press on” is a figure of speech not often used by children to mean “keep going” or “keep at it.” But they can enjoy the experience of pressing foods familiar to people in biblical times. Use olives and grapes, flat plastic lids, the back of spoons and blocks wrapped in waxed paper. Have paper towels handy. The juice from the grapes will be easy to see and taste. Press olives that have seeds inside as well as pitted ones that have been stored in oil. Show a bottle of olive oil and let the children taste it. Talk about the big wheels that were used to press the fruit. A Bible encyclopedia would have pictures.

Decorate the picture of grapes in the pattern section. Use glue with glitter, purple felt circles, or tissue paper.



THERE WE GO

Ask the children to teach the new song to their families.

