

# SABBATH SCHOOL

## Preteen Sabbath Instruction Program — Teacher's Outline

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Level 5 • Unit 4 • Week 3

### THE NEW COVENANT

#### **OBJECTIVE:**

To demonstrate that obedience to God has to go beyond outward appearances and must also be present in our attitudes, thoughts and feelings.

#### **ATTENTION GETTER:**

Ask: Have you ever known someone who acted good to impress people, but who you knew was not sincere? Maybe you picked it up in something he said or in an attitude he displayed when he wasn't trying to please or impress people. Do you think God approves of this attitude?

Ask: Have you had the experience where just before you did something wrong, you thought about it first? You thought about it for awhile and then you did the wrong thing. On other occasions maybe you only had the wrong thoughts. While God is not pleased with wrong actions, He is also not pleased with wrong thoughts. (Ask for class discussion around this issue.) Have the class give some examples of wrong thoughts to make sure they understand what they are.

Say: Sin can often start in our thoughts, attitudes and feelings. God wants us to obey His law not just in our actions, but in our thoughts, attitudes and feelings as well.

#### **BIBLE LESSON:**

In the previous lesson, we learned about the covenant God made with Abraham. Who can remember what that covenant was about? [Brief review would be in order here.] We learned about the Ten Commandments, which have been in effect from the beginning of mankind's history. They were written by God's hand at Mt. Sinai and given to Moses to deliver to the children of Israel. This is known as the Old Covenant. Other laws and ordinances were also given to the Israelites to be a guide for them on how to live their lives and love God. These laws and ordinances were also designed to show them how to love their fellowman and how to love God.

In Matthew 5:12, Jesus tells the people during His Sermon on the Mount that He didn't come to change the law, but to help people understand it more fully.

Read: Matthew 5:17. Explain that the reference to the Law and the Prophets pertains to sections of the Old Testament.

Jesus tells the people that they are not to break any of the commandments. He tells them that if anyone teaches people to break any of the commandments, they will be least in the Kingdom of God.

Read: Matthew 5:18 and give some examples of people teaching others that disobeying the commandments is okay. Possible examples would be not keeping the Sabbath, observance of certain holidays, telling white lies, abortions, taking God's name in vain, coveting, etc.

Jesus instructed the people that they needed to do more than give the outward appearance of obeying God. This is what many of the scribes and Pharisees did. Jesus said that not only did God want people not to kill, for example, but that we shouldn't hate people or desire their harm. In essence, God wants us to obey Him in our actions, thoughts and emotions.

Read: Matthew 5:20-22. Discuss the difference between the letter of the law and the spirit of the law.

Ask: Do you think it's possible to obey just the letter of the law but not the spirit of the law? How might a person do this?

Another example that Jesus used to make this point is in his discussion of adultery. Adultery is having the wrong kind of relationship with a married person. Jesus took this sin a step further and said that an individual commits this sin if he or she has wrong desires for a person he is not married to. This is referred to as lust. We can lust for other things in the wrong way as well—we can lust for material possessions or desire to have something that belongs to another person. Lust and hatred are wrong attitudes of the heart and mind. They often lead to wrong actions. They lead away from the law of love, which the commandments of God are designed to teach us. The commandments are guidelines that show us how to love others and God. Jesus' example and instruction was designed to take us beyond the actions and behaviors of doing the right thing (righteousness) and shows us that our inward thoughts and feeling should also reflect this law of love.

Forgiveness is also an inward as well as an outward display of love. Jesus emphasized this point by saying that bringing physical gifts to God is less important than reconciling or forgiving our neighbor.

Read: Matthew 5:23-30. Explain that verses 29 and 30 are not to be taken literally. Clarify for the

students what it means.

In order to please God, we must practice and live these laws of God. These principles will produce peace and prosperity for all people. A time is coming when we will not have to think about keeping these laws or even teach others to do so. A time is coming in the future when we will have this perfect attitude of heart and mind that God desires in each of us. We will automatically love others without even having to think about it. This promise is referred to as the New Covenant. This is a promise and agreement that God has made with His people. It is spoken of in both the New and Old Testaments.

Read: Jeremiah 31:31-34. Explain that “after those days” is a future time after Jesus’ return to earth.

Read: Hebrews 8:8-13 and explain that the reason that no one will need to teach his neighbor or brother is because everyone will have the truth in their minds.

It will not be like today when people have so many different ideas of what is the truth. Everyone will have the same knowledge and understanding. Everyone’s actions will be based on these right attitudes. There will be no lusting after what other’s have. There will be no hatred, wars or offenses of any kind. The perfect law of love will be practiced by everyone. The results of living this way will eliminate the consequences of sin (unrighteousness), disease, pain, death and all forms of suffering. What a wonderful time it will be and you can be a part of it through all eternity.

#### **LESSON APPLICATION:**

Conclude by asking the students to make a list of the changes that will occur as a result of everyone keeping God’s laws. Put the list of ideas on poster board for everyone to see.

#### **MUSIC:**

Teacher’s choice from the United Church of God hymnal.

#### **MEMORY VERSE:**

Jeremiah 31:33 “But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”

# *family activity*

## **THE POINT:**

Keeping God's laws involves our attitudes, thoughts and feelings.

## **ASK ME...**

The Sixth Commandment says not to kill, what did Christ say was the spirit of this law?

Is Matthew 5:29 to be taken literally?

## **FAMILY TOGETHER TIME:**

Review the Ten Commandments and select three to discuss in terms of how a person might show outward signs of obedience to a commandment, but inwardly have a wrong attitude, feelings or thoughts connected to that commandment.

Example: The First Commandment says: "You shall have no other gods before Me." While this clearly means we should not worship other gods, the broader meaning includes anything that someone puts ahead of God as a priority in their life. For one person that could be money. If that person's thoughts and emotions are always focused on making money, then money, in a sense, has become their god. It has, for that person, become the most important thing in their life. God wants to be the most important thing in each of our lives.

## **MEMORY VERSE:**

Jeremiah 31:33 "But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."