

# **Lesson 1**

## **God's Day is Holy**

### **Lesson Overview**

BIBLE LESSON: Genesis 2:1-3 and Hebrews 4:9

MEMORY VERSE: I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord."  
Psalm 122:1

CHALLENGE MEMORY VERSE: This is the day which the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. Psalm 118:24

CATECHISM: The Third Commandment: Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.  
What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not despise His Word and the preaching of the same, but regard it as holy, and gladly hear and learn it.

#### **LESSON OBJECTIVES**

The student will:

- learn that we honor God by hearing His Word, especially as we gather to worship on Sundays.
- understand that rest is a gift from God.

MATERIALS: Lessons, activity sheets

LESSON OVERVIEW: The Third Commandment prescribes a special day God has set aside for us to honor him every week. That day is a gift of great benefit to us. God created the world in six days and when His work was finished, God rested. Reviewing the creation story briefly from Chapter 1 may be helpful. The finished work of God and His rest make the Sabbath day unique. The word "sabbath" means rest or cease. God blessed the Sabbath day. The pattern of working six days followed by a day of rest is a God-given cycle. We are to remember it and keep it holy.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS: 1) Why did God make the seventh day special? 2) What does the Bible call God's day? 3) What does the Third Commandment say about how we treat God's special day? 4) How do we keep God's day special? 5) Can you think of good things to do on God's Day?

ACTIVITY 1: Write in and drawing activity. Write three verbs to tell ways that we can keep the Third Commandment (worship, hear, rest). Then draw a picture of how you keep God's day holy.

ACTIVITY 2: Coloring and fill in the blank activity. Color all the boxes with an X blue. Color all the other boxes yellow. Write the Message (Hear God's Word) and talk about ways to follow it.

# TEACHER PREPARATION

## Prepare to Teach

Pray that God will help you express the joy of worship and keeping God's Day holy. Pray for wisdom and guidance as you teach the children sacred truths about God who has given us this special day of rest to honor and worship Him.

## Prayer Preparation

- Thank the Lord for each of the children He has placed in your class this year, and ask Him to bless these children.
- Spend some time in heart-to-heart conversation with the Lord. Talk to God in a child-like way about your personal needs.

## Prepare Materials

- Activity Sheets
- Lessons
- Read through the Word of God's account of Creation in preparation for your class. This is not told in detail in the student's lesson. You will be able to tell/read the creation story in an activity at the beginning of your class using paper plates as visual aids for what God made on each day. First day - Light; second day - sky/heaven and water; third day - seas, land, plants; fourth day - sun, moon, stars; fifth day - fish (sea creatures) and birds; sixth day - animals and human beings.
- On each of the six days of creation, God carried out a specific task of creation. The accomplishment of each of the first six days is set apart by an "evening and morning" formula. After the different works of the first six days was finished, the work was completed (Genesis 2:1-3).

## Bible Background

Genesis 1:1-31 & Genesis 2:1-3

When God created the world and all that is in it, he performed a specific task of creation on each day (Gen 1:1-31). Each of the six days is set apart by an "evening and morning" (Gen 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 25, 31), and at the end of those six days the work of creation is complete (Gen 2:1-3). On the seventh day, the "evening and morning" phrase is not repeated because the day and night cycle will continue as God promised Noah: "While the earth remains...day and night shall not cease" (Gen 8:22).

The seventh day is called the Sabbath, which means "rest" or "to cease" from labor. But the Sabbath day is not just an "empty space" for us to fill as we please. The Sabbath is, in a sense, another aspect of creation because God blessed that day and made it holy, which means the Sabbath day is sanctified or "set apart" for sacred use by man. When Jesus' disciples were eating grain on the Sabbath, they were accused of breaking a Sabbath law (made by man). Jesus said "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord, even of the Sabbath" (Mk 2:27-28). Jesus also healed on the Sabbath. Of course we eat on Sundays, and there

are reasons why some people have to work on Sunday, but even that should be done only for the greater good of man.

The pattern of six days of work followed by a day of rest is the God-given cycle for life. Throughout history, people have tried to eliminate references to God and Christianity by changing the calendar. For example, during the French revolution the Gregorian calendar was replaced with a more scientific and rational system that was meant to avoid Christian references. It was based on 10-day week with a rest every ten days. It had been tried before, but it never lasted for long. The seven-day week (unlike the day, month, and year) has no astronomical basis. We keep time in weeks simply because our biological rhythms are constructed that way by God.

This Sabbath rest day was so important that God included it in the Law as a day that is to be kept “holy.” How do we do that? Notice Luther’s explanation of the third commandment. He does not focus on the day itself exactly, but on how to keep the day holy. That is done by not despising God’s word or the preaching and teaching of it, but gladly hear and learn it. Ignoring God’s word results in ignoring the Sabbath Day and keeping holy. Unfortunately, the Sabbath as well (as well as God and His name) have been shamefully defiled in ways that only man’s sinful nature can conceive.

The seventh day was not meant to be merely a break from work here on earth. It is a foreshadowing of our eternal Sabbath rest in Jesus, so we are warned: “Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts...Consequently, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God” (Heb 4:7, 9).

After Jesus “finished” His work of redemption on the cross, He was buried and then rose again on the third day, the “first day of the week.” In recognition of Jesus’ resurrection, the church began meeting for worship on Sunday, the first day of the week. It was a Sunday when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the church. This day still reminds us to rest after our labors of the week are done, but it also reminds us to rest in Jesus and be strengthened for our service to Him in the week ahead.

The Sabbath was meant to be a delight. Keeping the Sabbath holy is not merely an opportunity to recover from the past week. It is a time to rest from our normal activities and be reminded of God’s grace in all our days, especially as we assemble for worship and the hearing of God’s word.

## Learn the New Words

*It is okay to explain the new words in the beginning or as you encounter them.*

**create:** to make something from nothing. God spoke things into being.

**rest:** to stop work.

**Sabbath:** the name God gave for the seventh day, a day of rest.

**worship:** to love, respect, and treasure God both inwardly and in our actions.

**blessing:** a good thing given to us, a benefit.

**despise:** To hate. We despise God’s Word when we forget it or don’t hear and learn it (not in the lesson but in the catechism meaning of the Third Commandment).

**deem:** to have an opinion, to believe

## BEGINNING YOUR CLASS HOUR

### Welcome and Opening Prayer

Greet the children as they arrive.

Open the class with prayer, praying for each child by name, if you like. Thank God for giving us a special day of rest and worship. Praise God for churches where we can go to worship. Ask God to help us keep Sunday holy to honor Him.

### Read the Memory Verse

Remember the appendix of ways to teach memorization of the verse. Read the verse clearly,

“I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go to the house of the Lord.”” Psalm 122:1.

Be sure to read it together aloud. Remind the children you’ll repeat the verse again at the end.

### Review the Recent Lessons

**Say:** We are going to study the Third Commandment now. Before we do, can you remember the Second Commandment?

Recite the Second Commandment together.

## TEACHING TODAY’S BIBLE LESSON

### Introduce the Lesson

God asks us to love Him best, and to honor and respect His name. The first two commandments talk about our relationship to God. In the Third Commandment God tells us that He has set aside a special day that we should use to honor Him. That special day every week is a great benefit (a very good thing and great help) to us.

**Ask:** Who can read the title of today’s lesson? (Call on someone). **SAY:** Let’s read that together. (Read). **SAY:** Yes, there is one day in the week that we call God’s Day. Yes, it is Sunday. In the Bible God’s Day is called something else: the Sabbath. Today’s lesson is about God’s Day. It begins at the very beginning...

### Read the Lesson

**SAY:** A long, long time ago the beautiful world we live in was not here. There were no flowers or trees; no animals or birds; no sky, no sun, no stars.

But God was here. God was always here. And He created everything. He made it out of nothing. God just spoke, and it happened.

Everything happened just the way He said it. If you are using the paper plate activity, introduce it to the children. After you read each verse about each day of creation, pause and have the children look for the paper plate that has a matching simple picture or symbol that matches what you have read:

.At first, it was dark. But God said, “Let there be light” and it was light (*Genesis 1:3*). He made day and night. That was the first day.

On the second day, God made the sky (*vss. 7,8*).

The third day, God said, Let the water come together into seas and let the land appear. Just like that sea and land came to be (*vs. 9*). Plants and trees began to grow.

In the same way God created the sun to shine in the daytime and the moon and stars to shine at night on the fourth day (*vss. 14-19*).

On the fifth day God said, “Let there be fish in the sea and birds to fly in the sky.” And there were (*vss. 20-23*).

On the sixth day, God made every kind of animal that lives on land (*vss. 24,25*). And then He created the first two people (*vss. 26-27*).

When God was finished with all of His creating, He rested on the seventh day. Listen while I read that part of the lesson from the Bible (Read *Genesis 2:1-3*).

Read the second paragraph. **ASK: What did God tell the Israelites to do on this special day?**

Read the next paragraph. ASK: What did Jesus do on the Sabbath day when He lived here? *Jesus kept the Sabbath by worshipping in the temple. He healed people and did other good things on that day, showing us that helping others is okay on the Sabbath.*

Read the last two paragraphs. **What can we do to honor the Sabbath day? What can your family do to keep Sunday holy? Why do you think God made the seventh day special?** (*Because He rested on that day*). Just like God finished His work of creation and rested, so Jesus finished His work of salvation when He died on the cross.

After Jesus rose from the dead, the church started to meet on the first day of the week, which was Sunday, for worship. It was on a Sunday when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the church.

Sunday still reminds us to rest. We can rest in Jesus and be strong to serve Him in the week

ahead. We can also rest from worrying about sin because Jesus has saved us from our sins.

## Repeat the Memory Verse

*The goal in the following weeks will be for students to memorize the Bible verse and catechism before the next class session. This will be their weekly assignment and will help students to gain more from their lessons in class each week. Some students may not be used to memorizing, but it is important to encourage them to hide God's Word in their hearts. The creative ideas for teaching the memory verses will then serve as a review for most students but will also help others to learn the verses. The teacher should also memorize the Bible verses and catechism to serve as a model for the students. You may want to give a reward at the end of the quarter to those who have memorized all the memory verses, enrichment verses, and catechism.*

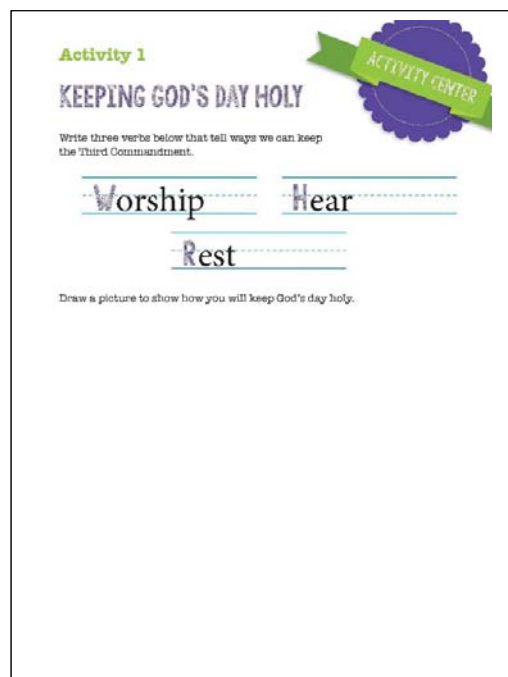
## APPLYING THE BIBLE LESSON

### Do the Activities Together

#### Keeping God's Day Holy

##### Activity 1

Write three verbs, and then draw a picture



Activity 1  
**KEEPING GOD'S DAY HOLY**

Write three verbs below that tell ways we can keep the Third Commandment.

Worship      Hear

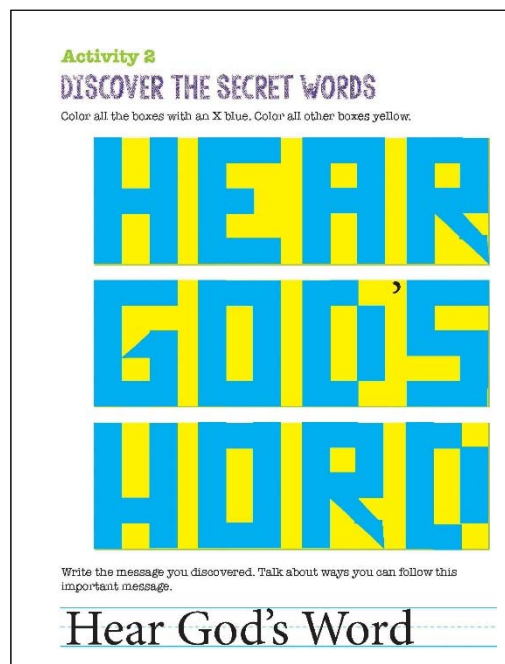
Rest

Draw a picture to show how you will keep God's day holy.

#### Discover the Secret Words

##### Activity 2

Color all the X boxes, and color the rest yellow. Write the message: Hear God's Word.



Activity 2  
**DISCOVER THE SECRET WORDS**

Color all the boxes with an X blue. Color all other boxes yellow.

HEAR  
GOD'S  
WORD

Write the message you discovered. Talk about ways you can follow this important message.

Hear God's Word

## **CLOSING YOUR CLASS HOUR**

### **Closing Prayer**

Ask about prayer requests. Allow students to pray if they choose. Allow time for silent prayer. Encourage students to bow their heads and close their eyes.

## **Additional Teaching Options**

### **Hymns and Songs:**

This is the Day (Ps. 118:24)

Also suggested: This is the Day from Barry McGuire's Bullfrogs and Butterflies

### **Additional activities for a multi-age class:**