Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese Department of Christian Education

2014 Creative Festivals Lesson Plan:
Middle School/High School

Theme:
"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself."
Luke 10:27

Goal:
To help the students understand the theme well enough to express it in art, photography, poetry, or creative writing.

Objectives:
The students will be able to:

- Break apart the Bible passage to interpret the meaning.
- Explore the Old Testament and New Testament references to loving God and loving your neighbor.
- Recall the Ten Commandments by memory.
- Explain how the Ten Commandments can be narrowed down to the two greatest commandments of all: loving God and loving your neighbor.
- Match certain actions/behaviors with the commandment that is being addressed.
- Explore ways in which they can show love to God.
- Create prayer cards.

Time:
40-45 minutes

Materials:

- Bibles (enough for every 2 students)
- 2014 Creative Festivals Logo icon and verse on a full page (one copy)
- Blank paper & pencils
- Sheets of paper cut into 4 pieces- at least one set for each student
- “The 10 Commandments Connection to the Theme” handout (one per student)
- “Ten Commandments Matching Activity” (one for every 2-3 students) – cut these out ahead of time
- Index cards
- “The 10 Commandments” board game (one sheet)
- Theme Song, “Love is a Verb” by Gigi Shadid, which can be obtained from the Dept. of Christian Education website: http://www.antiochian.org/festivals/cf
Opening Prayer: *(Gather students around the icon corner)*

O Heavenly King, O Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, Who art in all places and fillest all things; Treasury of good things, and Giver of Life: Come and dwell in us, and cleanse us from every stain, and save our souls, O gracious Lord.

The Lesson Plan:

Opening

Read and show the theme verse (logo icon) from Luke 10:27: *You shall love the Lord your God with ALL your heart, with ALL your soul, with ALL your strength, and with ALL your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.* Have the students recite the theme verse with you.

Introduction

1. Ask your students: Which word(s) appear most in the theme verse? *(Allow for think time.)*
2. "With ALL" is used four times in this verse. Why do you think the word “all” is used so many times? It must be important. Our relationship with God must be a relationship of **total commitment**. Ask: What does it mean to give 100%?
   - We must love the Lord our God with every ounce of our being, with all our strength. 100% is the minimum requirement according to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ – nothing less than a total effort. The fathers of the Church basically tell us that if you can do that, you can love your neighbor as yourself. We need to be able to do both: to love the Lord our God with every ounce of our being, and to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Breaking Down the Theme

**HEART** - The heart is the center of our being. When we love someone, we often say that we hold that person in our heart. Do we hold Jesus in our heart? Is He the most important person to us? Or is our heart filled with so many other people and things that there isn’t enough room for Jesus?
   - **Activity:** Take a sheet of paper and write the word “Jesus” in very large type on it, so that it takes up almost all the space on the paper. Place it on a chair. Hand out at least 1 set of the 4 smaller pieces of paper to each student. Have them write on the pieces of paper people or things that are important to them. (Answers may include family, friends, sports and other activities, material things like their phone, clothes, computer, etc.) Have each student come up to the chair and place their small pieces of paper on the chair, over the one large sheet of paper with the word “Jesus.” Soon the word “Jesus” will be completely covered. Ask the students how they might be able to have more room in their hearts for Jesus. (Answers may include praying or reading
the Bible more than being on Facebook, cutting down on time spent watching TV or listening to music, not placing as much value on material things, etc.) Take note if many students wrote the same thing on their pieces of paper, such as their cell phone, etc. Point out to them that this might be a good thing to cut back on. Tell them that we should hold Jesus #1 in our hearts, and have room for other people as well (our neighbors), but our hearts should not be cluttered with material things that are really not all that important.

SOUL – How can we love God with all our soul? (Obtain responses.) Do you ever think about eternity? When you make your decisions and choices, do you think about how they will affect your relationship with God? When you’re faced with a difficult choice, ask yourself, “Is this what God would want me to do?” One day, we’re all going to be held accountable for our actions. If we love the Lord with all our soul, it will be reflected in our behavior and the way we live our lives.

STRENGTH – Earlier we talked about how we should love God with every ounce of our being, with all our strength. Do you remember the story of Zacchaeus? Zacchaeus used all his strength to climb a tree so that he would be able to see Jesus. We need to be like Zacchaeus and seek God with all our might. Sometimes we may not feel like praying, reading the Bible, or going to church, but we have to gather all our strength to do these things because we know they will bring us closer to God. If we sin, we have to confess our sins, and try to do better next time. We should constantly be trying to improve our relationship with God.

MIND – When you daydream, what do you daydream about? What images come into your head? Are they pure images? Our mind is a playground. Who are you allowing to play there – the angels or the demons? If you find yourself thinking about sinful things, try to say a short prayer. Later on, we’ll make a prayer card with brief “go to prayers” that you can say any time during the day. If you wear a cross, this can also remind you to think and behave in a Christ-like manner. You may want to hold your cross and say a brief prayer when you’re tempted to do something wrong.

NEIGHBOR – Jesus says to “love your neighbor as yourself.” What does this mean? (Obtain responses.) What are some ways we can show others we love them? (Obtain responses. Possible answers might include acts of service such as visiting nursing homes, volunteering at the food bank, raising money for charitable causes, etc.) If we do volunteer work, is this all we need to do to fulfill the commandment of loving our neighbor? (Hopefully, this will spark a discussion among the students.) Have you heard of “The Golden Rule?” What is it? (“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”) This is a good guideline for us to use when dealing with other people. Treat others with love and respect in the same way you’d like to be treated. Do you apply the Golden Rule in your interactions with others? Do you stand up for those who are being bullied in school? Do you welcome into your group of
friends those who may be considered “unpopular”? Are you careful with your postings on Facebook? Are your comments to others kind or unkind? These are only a few examples. We need to continually ask ourselves if we’re doing what God would want us to do in our daily lives.

Explore the Old and New Testament Connection

1. Where do we hear these commands (love God & your neighbor) in the Old Testament?
   • Deuteronomy 6:5—“And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.” Leviticus 19:18 says, “You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself.” In Leviticus 19:10 we read: “And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather the fallen fruit of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and for the sojourner.” Isaiah also speaks of caring for the widows and orphans, not just the ones who are Jews (Isaiah 1:17)

2. Is “Love your neighbor as yourself” something new?
   • No, it has always been one of God’s commands.
   • The definition of “neighbor” had been distorted through inaccurate interpretation by the Jews (in Luke Chapter 10:25-37). Take a moment to have a student volunteer to read this aloud. Christ clearly defines and interprets the term “neighbor” so that there is no question.

3. What is the difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant regarding these commands?
   • Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament. God no longer spoke to us though prophets or tablets of stone, but through the actions of His only begotten Son who is the express image of the Father. Through His teachings and by His example, Jesus showed us what it means to love God completely and to love your neighbor as yourself.
   • Of these two great commandments (loving God and loving our neighbor), Christ says, “On these two things hang all the teachings of the law and the prophets.” Note that this does not negate the teachings of the Old Testament, but rather this is what the teachings of the Old Testament hinge upon. We are to judge all that we do by our relationship with God, and that relationship must be a relationship of total commitment.

4. The lesson of “The Good Samaritan.”
   • Even in the Old Testament, the command always stood to love all of humanity, both Jews and Gentiles. Through cloudy interpretation of their own Scripture, the Jews came to see their neighbor as fellow Jews only. The idea that a neighbor could be outside of the Hebrew people was absurd to them. This is why Jesus shocks them when He tells the parable of the Good Samaritan. The hero of the story is a Samaritan. Samaritans were not seen as equals, but were looked down upon. Notice how Jesus has those who were respected in society (the priest, the Levite) do the wrong thing.
The important lesson to remember is that everyone is made in God’s image and is therefore, our neighbor.

**The 10 Commandments Connection**

- Have students get into groups of two or three. Pass out blank paper to each group and have them compete to see which group can list all of the Ten Commandments first. Are there any missing? *Use chart paper or a white board to write their responses.*
- Pass out “The 10 Commandments Connection to the Theme” handout.
- Have the students use the handout to discover which commandments were missing from their list.

**Essential Question:** What do the 10 Commandments have to do with the Creative Arts Festival theme? *(Allow think time for students to respond.)*

If students are not making the connection, direct them to look closely at “The 10 Commandments Connection to the Theme” handout.

- The 10 Commandments of God embody the two greatest commandments – “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind” and “love your neighbor as yourself.” And, those two commandments are really just one, because they are the same (when we truly love God, we will also love our neighbor). All the commandments can be trimmed down to just one word: LOVE.
- Use the handout to help them see how the first four commandments are about loving God and the last six are about loving our neighbor.

**Loving God:**

1. Do not worship any other gods.  
   *(Believe in the Holy Trinity- God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.)*
2. Do not make any idols.  
   *(Don’t make anything in your life more important than God.)*
3. Do not misuse the name of God.  
   *(Always say God’s name with love and respect.)*
4. Keep the Sabbath holy.  
   *(Honor the Lord by resting on Sunday.)*

**Loving Our Neighbor:**

5. Honor your father and mother.  
   *(Love & respect your mom and dad.)*
6. Do not murder.  
   *(Never hurt anyone.)*
7. Do not commit adultery.  
   *(No sexual relations outside of marriage.)*
8. Do not steal.  
   *(Don’t take anything that isn’t yours.)*
9. Do not lie.  
   *(Always tell the truth.)*
10. Do not covet.  
    *(Be happy with what you have, and don’t wish for what other people have.)*

**10 Commandments Matching Activity**

- Play the 10 Commandments matching game with your partner or group.
- Discuss their answers and see if they are correct.
  1. Have I read the Holy Scriptures regularly? *(2nd commandment)*
  2. Did I sleep in on Sunday morning instead of going to church? *(4th commandment)*
  3. Have I kept anything that did not belong to me? *(8th commandment)*
  4. Did I say something to my parents that was not true? *(9th command)*
  5. Do I spend more time on Facebook and on the computer than I spend in prayer each day? *(1st commandment)*
  6. Have I called anyone names? Do I use foul language? *(6th commandment)*
  7. Have I looked at pornographic images on my computer or phone? *(7th commandment)*
  8. Have I pronounced the name of God without reverence, joking? *(3rd commandment)*
  9. Do I respect and obey my parents? *(5th commandment)*
 10. Have I been unhappy with what I don’t have and wished for what other people have? *(10th commandment)*

**ASK:** How do we **SHOW GOD** we love Him?

- By coming to church
- Making the sign of the cross
- Kissing an icon (reverently; beware lest we be like the Pharisees – kissing icons and then sinning against our brother)
- Praying, etc.

Love of God means **CONSTANT THANKFULNESS**. Are we thanking God on a daily basis? How do we PRAY? Here is a good way to pray:

   P – Praise God  
   R – Repent
   A – Ask for Others
   Y – Yourself (pray for yourself at the end)

We always approach God *first* with a **thankful** heart.
**Short “go to” Prayers:** (Pass out index cards and have students write these prayers on their cards. Encourage them to keep these cards in their prayer corner at home.)

- “Thank you, Lord.”
- “My Lord, my King and my God.”
- “In You I live and breathe and have my being.”
- “Lord have mercy.”
- “O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me a sinner.” (*The Jesus Prayer*)
- “I believe, help my unbelief.”

St. John Climacus said: “Let your prayers be simple, for both the Publican and the Prodigal Son were reconciled to God by a single phrase.”

**Obeying God’s Commands**

Obedience is *relational*. We are not being obedient to stones (i.e., the tablets of the Law), we are being obedient to GOD. God is the faithful husband and the people are His faithful bride. To refer to the 100% example from the start of the lesson, if sinning is “missing the mark” then obedience is hitting the bull’s eye. We are striving for perfection. It is not enough to say, I have not committed murder, when in fact I have harbored hatred in my heart for my brother. Giving 100% means hitting the bull’s eye every time, right in the center. Even though we may try our best to obey His commands (and still “miss the mark”), we rely on the great mercy of God. We go to confession and repeatedly implore Him in our services and prayers: “Lord have mercy.”

**Closing**

Repeat the Creative Festivals theme quote and gather the students around the icon corner for prayer (suggest using their index prayer cards they made in class).

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**NOTE:** “The 10 Commandments Game” could be played on another day to remind the students of the theme and reinforce the lesson.

**Theme Song:** Play the Creative Festivals theme song, “Love is a Verb” throughout the Sunday school year (as students enter class and at the end of class). Music can be obtained through the Antiochian Archdiocese Dept. of Christian Education website.
YOU shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, with all your mind; and your NEIGHBOR as yourself.

-- Luke 10:27
The 10 Commandments Connection to the Theme

Christ, The Good Samaritan

“Adam” – All Mankind

GOD
1: Do not worship any other gods
2: Do not make any idols
3: Do not misuse the name of God
4: Keep the Sabbath holy

MAN
5: Honour your father & mother
6: Do not murder
7: Do not commit adultery
8: Do not steal
9: Do not lie
10: Do not covet

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind…”

“…and your neighbor as yourself” (Luke 10:27).

We can’t love God if we don’t love our neighbor.
10 Commandments Matching Activity *(Cut these out into strips, one set per group of 2-3 students)*

Have I read the Holy Scriptures regularly?

Did I sleep in on Sunday morning instead of going to church?

Have I kept anything that did not belong to me?

Did I say something to my parents that was not true?

Do I spend more time on Facebook and on the computer than I spend in prayer each day?

Have I called anyone names? Do I use foul language?

Have I looked at pornographic images on my computer or phone?

Have I pronounced the name of God without reverence, joking?

Do I respect and obey my parents?

Have I been unhappy with what I don’t have and wished for what other people have?
1st COMMANDMENT

2nd COMMANDMENT

3rd COMMANDMENT

4th COMMANDMENT

5th COMMANDMENT

6th COMMANDMENT

7th COMMANDMENT

8th COMMANDMENT

9th COMMANDMENT

10th COMMANDMENT
Answer Key:

Have I read the Holy Scriptures regularly?  (*2<sup>nd</sup> commandment*)

Did I sleep in on Sunday morning instead of going to church?  (*4<sup>th</sup> commandment*)

Have I kept anything that did not belong to me?  (*8<sup>th</sup> commandment*)

Did I say something to my parents that was not true?  (*9<sup>th</sup> command*)

Do I spend more time on Facebook and on the computer than I spend in prayer each day?  (*1<sup>st</sup> commandment*)

Have I called anyone names? Do I use foul language?  (*6<sup>th</sup> commandment*)

Have I looked at pornographic images on my computer or phone?  (*7<sup>th</sup> commandment*)

Have I pronounced the name of God without reverence, joking?  (*3<sup>rd</sup> commandment*)

Do I respect and obey my parents?  (*5<sup>th</sup> commandment*)

Have I been unhappy with what I don’t have and wished for what other people have?  (*10<sup>th</sup> commandment*)
# The 10 Commandments Game

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>You honored your mother &amp; father, move up 6 spaces</th>
<th>What is the 4th Commandment?</th>
<th>What is the 8th Commandment?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the 1st Commandment?</td>
<td>Which commandment says, Do not lie?</td>
<td>What is the 6th Commandment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the 5th Commandment?</td>
<td>Caught stealing, move back 4 spaces</td>
<td>What is the 3rd Commandment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not covet or be jealous – go back 4 spaces</td>
<td>What is the 10th Commandment?</td>
<td>Which commandment says keep the Sabbath holy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For obeying God’s commands, move forward 5 spaces</td>
<td>What is the 9th Commandment?</td>
<td>What is the 2nd Commandment?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**To Play:** Choose any object as your game piece (i.e. a coin). Roll one dice and see where you land. If you land on an empty space or a picture, you don’t have to answer a question. If you land on a question and get it wrong, you stay in that spot until your next turn. If you land on a question and answer it correctly, you get a free roll. You may only answer one question per round. First one to the last box wins!
Love is a Verb  By Gigi Shadid

I’m gonna love the Lord my God,
With all my mind, with all my soul and with all my strength.

I’m gonna love the Lord my God,
With all my mind, with all my soul and with all my strength.

Love is an action – It’s a verb! Go and serve!
Let us love one another –
So that with one mind we may confess ~
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
The Trinity One in essence, and undivided!

I’m gonna love the Lord my God,
With all my mind, with all my soul and with all my strength.

Get down on my knees, beg and plead,
Lord, have mercy on me ~
Transform my prayers into deeds.
Love my neighbor as myself,
Each one in His image –
Christ in disguise ~!

I’m gonna love the Lord my God,
With all my mind, with all my soul and with all my strength.

Love is an action – It’s a verb! Go and serve!
Let us love one another –
So that with one mind we may confess ~
Trinity, reveal to me, your perfect love on fire,
And ignite it!

If I love the Lord my God,
I’ve gotta live the Lord my God.
Live and breathe,
Live in me.
I believe, help my unbelief.
So I no longer fear the Lord,
But I love him. ~

I’m gonna love the Lord my God,
With all my mind, with all my soul and with all my strength.
With all my mind, with all my soul and with all my strength.