

Objective: Students will be able to 1) recite the New Commandment given to us by Jesus and 2) state that Jesus shows us how to live out the New Commandment.

For the Catechist

This unit began with the lesson on the Nativity of Jesus in which we were reminded that God loved us so much that He sent us His Son. This unit ends with this lesson that shows how much Jesus loved us. Jesus brought us the New Covenant of love for everyone, and He teaches us how to live in this love.

"Before Christ, everything was getting more and more 'unglued,' separated, falling further from union and communion. Now another force is at work. Things are coming back together in Christ" (LLIII 16).

The love that Jesus asks of us requires us to be humble. Jesus gives us many examples of humility—the one in this lesson shows Jesus serving the disciples by washing their feet. Today we do not have many public examples of humility for two reasons: 1) our contemporary media does not find humility sensational or newsworthy and 2) by definition humility is to be hidden.

This lesson also teaches how Jesus shows how to love "to the end" through His suffering and death on the cross. Possibly your newspaper might have a story of a firefighter or military person or someone else who sacrificed his or her life for someone else, and you can use that as an example of someone loving "to the end." The following story is another example. One summer three teens were walking along the railroad tracks when they saw a train coming around a curve. Two jumped away, but the third was frozen to the spot. The boy who had jumped aside ran back and pushed the frozen teen away. Regretfully, he was hit by the train. This story from a New Jersey newspaper clearly illustrates how much Jesus wants us to love each other.

Help the children realize that we are capable of loving and helping this much because God loves us that much!

Lesson Plan Overview

Opening: "The Beatitudes"

Introduction: Discussion of helping each other
Need: long sheet of paper and marker

Read Text Aloud: Have the students volunteer to read the text aloud or have the students read sections silently.

Activity Tracks:

Choose a basic, group, or craft activity (detailed on the pages that follow) to reinforce the lesson.

- *Basic:* We Follow Jesus
- *Group:* "Jesus Teaches Us" Review Game
- *Craft:* Love One Another

Closing: "May our lips be filled with Your praise"

Icon Packets:

Come Bless the Lord:
Christ Pantocrator
Packet II: Parable of the Good Samaritan

Teaching Pics

Background Reading

(Direct quotations from the sources noted)

Living out the Christian Life

"All Christians are called to bear witness to the world, to be martyrs. By living out the Christian life, we are living Gospels, announcements of who and what God is, living evidence of His saving presence and activity. And this Christian life makes us servants to God, to one another and to the world. 'The servant of God ...' is the normal way believers are designated in the divine services because all Christians are sent to serve. We do not have to wait until an absolute maturity is reached in the life of the Spirit to begin serving and being used by the Lord. Quite the contrary: by serving, we grow. By growing, we become capable of even more service" (*LLIII* 25).

Citizens of the Heavenly Realm

"Living, then, as citizens of the heavenly realm, we surround ourselves at all times with means of access to that kingdom. Icons are found in our homes, like churches, and we gather there for prayer. We bring the values of that realm to bear in our domestic affairs as well. There we fast and we extend hospitality in Christ's name, deepening our experience of our true homeland. We try to live every day in an atmosphere of the kingdom, to continually remind ourselves that our baptism has made us actual coheirs with Christ of all that the Father has promised" (*DC* 13).

Humility and True Love

"Humility, self-abnegation, is the foundation of the spiritual life. There can be no genuine growth in God-love without it. Christ insisted frequently that 'If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. What profit is there for one to gain the whole world yet lose or forfeit himself?' (Luke 9:23-25)

"And our Eastern Christian Tradition is most insistent on that same point. As St. Hesychios the Priest expressed it, 'There is no venom more poisonous than that of the asp or cobra, and there is no evil greater than that of self-love [*philautia*].'"

"This sounds strange in contemporary life in which ... great emphasis is placed on *self*-discovery, *self*-esteem, *self*-development, and modern 'spiritual' books emphasize a 'positive' spirituality, decrying an older 'negative' approach. In fact, many modern authors accuse a search for humility of being excessively narcissistic and self-defeating.

"But what does this mean? Isn't a self-centered search for this counterproductive—in that it focuses one's attention even more upon oneself? Jesus also said, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself' (Mt 22:39).

"This implies that we are commanded to love ourselves. True humility does not exclude a *proper* love of self. However, a proper love is the key. Because God loves us and our neighbors, we love them and ourselves, based on and using that very love of God. When we grow in our ability to love others—and especially God—there are several stages through which we pass: I love me; I love you for me; I love you for love; I love you for you; and finally, I love me for you. Humility is to love all things and everyone in truth and in order, including oneself. It is also a love for the *true* self, as opposed to the *false* self. The false self is the one we have organized independent of our relationship with God and others, a caricature of what we can be and should be. It is precisely that which must be denied and done away with so that the true self can emerge" (*LLIII* 84-85).

The Lesson Plan

Opening

Let's turn to the Gospel of Matthew 5:1-12 for our opening prayer. What do you think we are going to pray? (The Beatitudes)

Introduction

Today we are going to make a list of all the jobs you do around the house. Look at this long sheet of paper I brought. I am expecting a lot of answers. [Start listing what the children say. Leave space under each suggestion.] Great answers.

Now we are going to write under each job all the people we help by doing this job. For example, if we do dishes, we help our mom, dad, and brother. How? They have clean dishes and they did not have to do them. Let's start listing the people we help.

How many of you realized all the people you help every day just by doing your chores? Now let's think of other people we help throughout the day. [You should include in the list you as catechist because you help the children learn about God.] Let's add some more of these activities and people to our list. Each time we are nice to someone, we are helping them. Why do you think God wants us to help other people? (To show our love)

Let's turn to our lesson to find out how much Jesus wants us to show our love.

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Jesus Is the Way



We have learned about the covenant that God made with the Israelites. We also learned how difficult it was for them to keep their part of the covenant. They could not keep the Ten Commandments and God's Law on their own. God made a New Covenant with all people, not just the Israelites, when He sent His Son Jesus into our world.

Jesus reminded the people how the Ten Commandments were about loving God and their neighbor. We learned that the Greatest Commandment explains this. Read **Luke 10:27** and copy Jesus' words here:

"You shall love the Lord, your God **with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind,** and your **neighbor as yourself**"

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Reading of Text

As the children read aloud, help them interact with the text using the comments or questions below which are keyed to the text phrases (in bold type).

"You shall love the Lord, your God _____ and your _____."

How would you summarize what Jesus said?

(We have to love God and each other completely.) How can we show God we love Him that much? (Through prayer and the way we live and treat others.)

Someone asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus answered by telling a parable. Find **Luke 10:28-37** to learn what Jesus said.

The Jews and the Samaritans did not like each other. Still, the Samaritan stopped to help the Jewish man who was hurt. The parable means that we should love strangers and even our enemies if we want to keep the Greatest Commandment. We remember how Jesus said we are to love everyone, good or bad. That is the way we will be like our Father.

Some people do not like members of other races or other religions. Others hate people from other countries or anyone who does not live like they do. Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan to remind us that all these people are our neighbors because we all have the same Father, God.

What would you do if someone who hated you needed help? Would you stop and help, or call someone who could help even if you were busy? Or would you ignore the person and walk on by? Jesus wants us to act like the Samaritan in His parable. Jesus wants us to remember that we are all children of God and that we must take care of each other.



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... that we must take care of each other.

When have we heard the parable of the Good Samaritan?

(Other years in class and in church) Let's think of times we help people. [Let the children share. Possibilities: in school when someone falls or drops something; at home when parents need help carrying something; at church when we open the door for people.] Now let's think of times we have helped people we do not know at all or even our enemies. That is what this parable wants us to learn - we have to stop to help even people we do not like.

"I give you a new commandment:_____.

As I have _____ , so you also should love one another."

Who will help us follow this commandment? (The Holy Spirit) Let's sit quietly for a moment and think about loving everyone—even our enemies.

He died on the cross to save us all.

What do we remember every time we receive Holy Communion? (How much Jesus loves us. He showed us how to love completely.)

Words to Remember: [Read the words together, and use them to introduce, summarize, and/or review the lesson.]

At the end of His life on earth, Jesus taught His followers an unusual lesson. He was having His last meal with His disciples when He did something that surprised them. **Read John 13:3-5** to find out what He did.

Even though He is the Son of God, Jesus acted like a servant instead of like a master. Imagine being at a big party in a fancy restaurant. Would the Guest of Honor leave the table and go to wash the dishes? Jesus did even more. Then Jesus explained why He had washed their feet. He was giving them a New Commandment and wanted them to see what He meant. **Read John 13:34** and write this New Commandment here:

"I give you a new commandment. **love one another** _____
As I have **loved you** _____, so you also should love one another."

This New Commandment is another sign of the New Covenant. Jesus wants us to imitate Him and love others the way He loves them. He gave everything for us. He acted with humility, like a servant, to teach us how to help others. Jesus calls us to do more than keep the Ten Commandments. He asks us to give of ourselves to others as He did. Then we will be keeping His New Commandment.

At the Last Supper Jesus gave us one more sign of the New Covenant. **Read Luke 22:19-20** to find this sign and write it on the following line:
Jesus said, "This is my body. This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you" — Holy Communion

Whenever we receive Holy Communion, we are remembering how perfectly Jesus kept the New Commandment He had given us. He gave up His body and shed His blood for us. He died on the cross to save us all.

Words to Remember:
Humility: Not being proud; instead being kind and helpful always.
The New Commandment: "Love one another as I have loved you" (John 13:34).

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Activity Tracks

Basic: We Follow Jesus

[This worksheet is in the student text.]

Today we are going to crack the code for the scriptural passage. Then think of ways that you can show you are a follower of Jesus by your reaction to the situations identified in the second part of this activity.

We Follow Jesus

I. Find the message in this Code-o-Gram. Crack the code first!
Clue: A-1, B-2, C-3, etc.

DO TO OTHERS WHATEVER YOU
4 15 20 15 15 20 8 5 18 19 23 8 1 20 5 22 5 18 25 15 21

WOULD HAVE THEM DO TO YOU
23 15 21 12 4 8 1 22 5 20 8 5 13 4 15 20 15 25 15 21
(Matthew 7:___)

II. What would you do in the following situations?

1. Today is the first time you see a new girl at your school bus stop, and you recognize her as the new student who came into your science class yesterday. On the following lines, write what you could do or say that morning that shows you are a follower of Jesus.

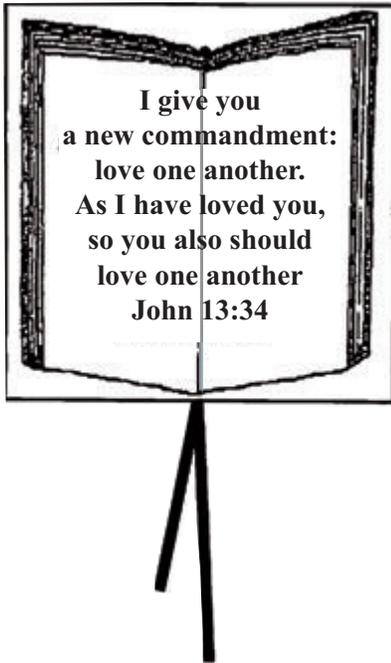
2. On your way home from school, you see Seth, the one who never picks you to be on any of his teams. His bike is off the road, and his books and papers are all over the sidewalk. He is trying to fix his bike so he could ride it home. Could you do anything that would show you are a follower of Jesus? On the following lines, write your answer.

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Group: "Jesus Teaches Us" Review Game

Materials: Paper cube made from review worksheet at the end of this lesson. Copy the pattern on heavier paper and follow the instructions at the bottom of the page.

Today we are going to play a game that will let us review everything we have been learning since the beginning of the year. You toss the cube and see what category is on top. Then you must identify one fact about that topic. Let's see how much we remember. [If your class is large enough, you might want to have teams and competition.]



Craft: Love One Another

Materials: Plastic canvas squares that can be bought in a craft store or cut out of larger pieces of canvas, magnet strips, masking tape, and thin ribbon (1/8"), about 40 inches per square (the canvas and ribbon can be any colors)

[Have sample ready to show children.] *Today we are going to make a decorative magnet to hang on our refrigerators. It will remind us and all our family members of the New Commandment. What is the New Commandment? (Love one another as I have loved you.)*

Around the outside of the square, weave the ribbon. Make a needlepoint edge in the ribbon by wrapping a small piece of masking tape around one end. After you have the entire outside of the square woven, tie the ends together. Tie a bow and cut off the extra ribbon. On the inside of the square, glue the picture from the worksheet. Tape two magnets (one on the top and bottom) on the back and take it home to put on your refrigerator.

Closing:

We are going to pray "May our lips be filled with Your praise" for our closing prayer.

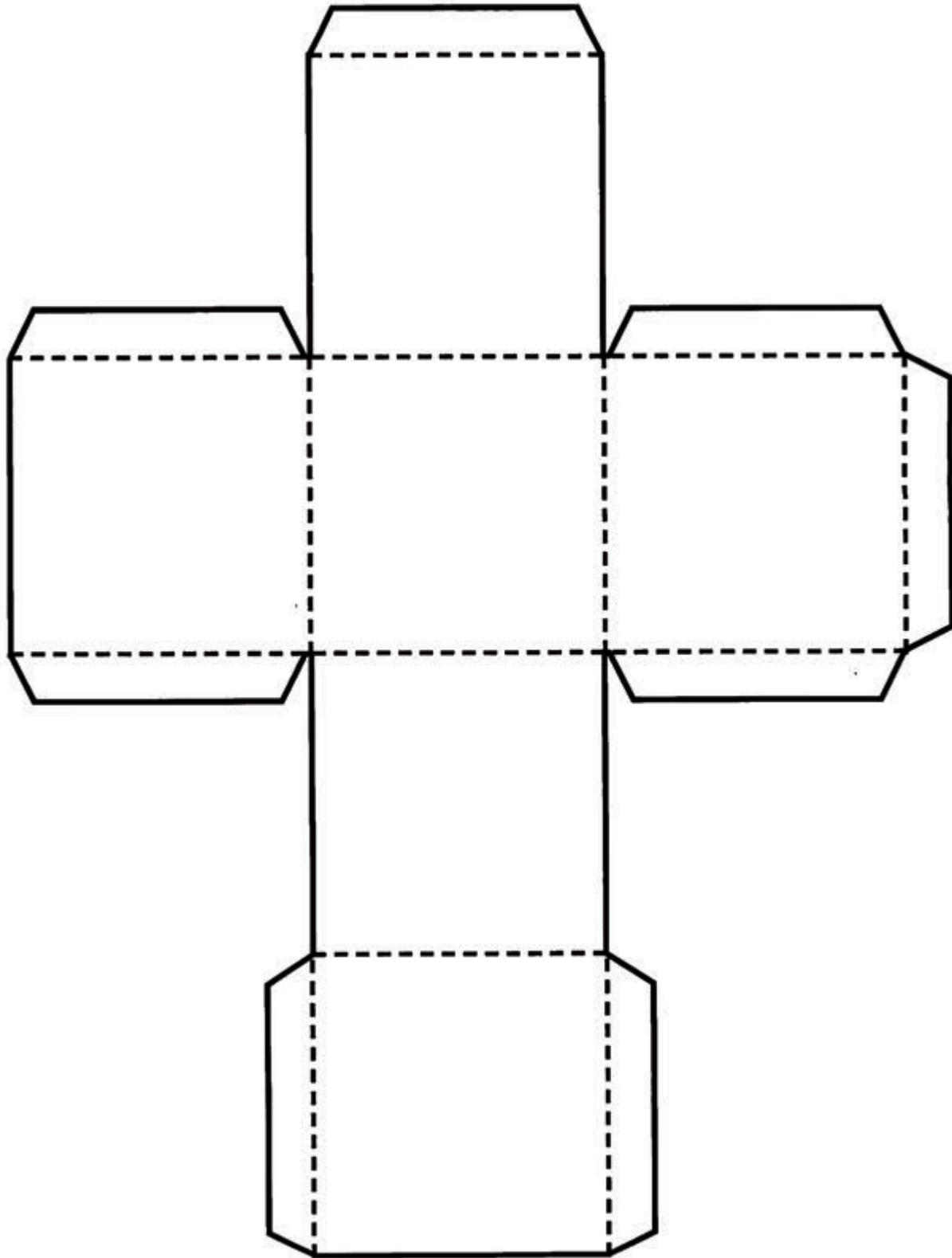
[This prayer page is in Lesson 16.]

Humility

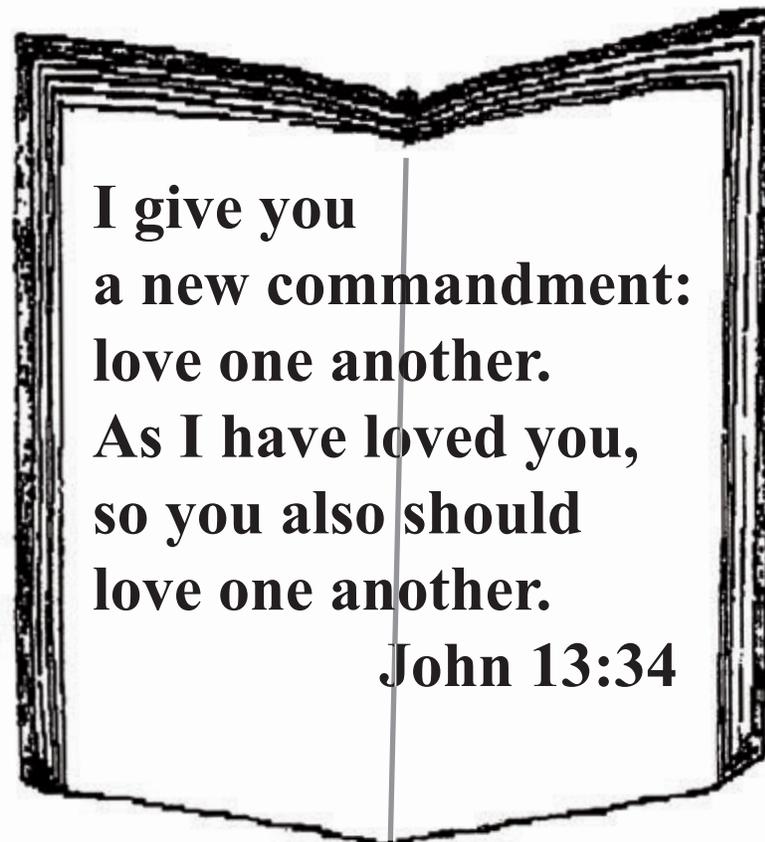
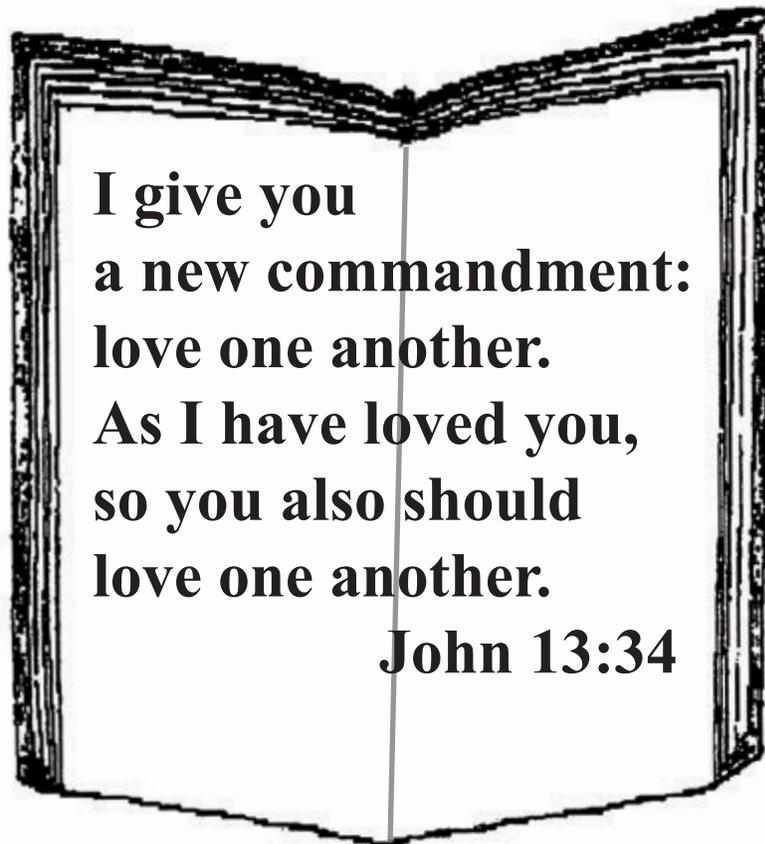
*The New
Commandment*

'Love one another as I have loved you'
(John 13:34)

Not being proud; instead being kind
and helpful always.



Directions: Cut along the black lines. Fold along the broken lines. Insert the tabs to make a cube. Write the following words on four different sides of the cube: Moses and the Exodus, Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, and the New Testament. Two sides will have no writing - they are the free sides so that the students can identify any fact or prayer that they learned this year.



Unit 4 Review

I. Read the following riddles. Then look up the Scripture to answer the question.

1. The Israelites by me were led

As from the Egyptians we fled.

Placing a rod to open the Red Sea,

From Pharaoh and his soldiers did I flee.

Who Am I? Answer: (Acts 7:37) Moses

2. I lived in the desert, a forerunner me.

My diet was locusts and wild honey.

I preached to the people of repentance,

Then I baptized Jesus not many days hence.

Who Am I? Answer: (Mark 1:4) St. John the Baptist

3. Many people are gathered

To listen to Jesus this day

Talk about the way to live

According to God's way.

What Sermon? Answer: (Matthew 5:1) Sermon on the Mount

II. Write two of the lines from the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12). Explain what they mean and how you follow them.

1. _____

2. _____
