

St. Paul 2017 Faith Focus: The Small Catechism  
Week 1: 10 Commandments  
Host guide

**Getting to know each other**

*You can introduce yourself; then have each person in the group share:*

- Share your name and a rule in your house as a child (or a current rule that you have!)

**Warm-up activity**

*This is a free for all:*

- As a group, can you name the 10 commandments?

You shall have no other gods	You shall not make an idol (this is not in Luther's 10)
You shall not take the Lord's name in vain	Honor the Sabbath
Honor your mother and father	You shall not kill
You shall not commit adultery	You shall not steal
You shall not bear false witness	
You shall not covet; this commandment is broken down into two commands by Luther and others	

**Teaching: Audio**

*These audio segments will be available online and in a CD format.*

Segment 1 of audio content (3 minutes): The Ten Commandments in the Bible

- The 10 Commandments grow out of God's love for and relationship with the people.
- The 10 Commandments are intended to guide our relationships with each other.
- They are not numbered in the bible (How then do we number them?).

*Some discussion questions:*

- Was anything Pastor Rob said new for you? What surprised you?
- Pastor Rob indicated the commandment grew out of God's relationship with the people. Can you think of a time when rules helped you? When do you set up rules to help other people?

Segment 2 of audio content (3 minutes): Luther's insights into the Ten Commandments

- Luther puts the law first, unlike most catechisms; Luther reminds us that the law produces guilt – more on this later
- Luther reminds us that our obedience to the commands grows out of our relationship to God
- Luther adds a "do" to the "do not", expanding the intention of the commandment is to serve our neighbor

*Some discussion questions:*

- Do you think God expects all people to obey the 10 commandments or just Christians and Jews?

- How often do you think about the 10 commandments? (Do you ever say to yourself--I would do that, but that breaks the X commandment?)

### **Application: 8<sup>th</sup> Commandment**

Eighth commandment: You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor

*What does this mean?*

We are to love and fear God so that we do not tell lies about our neighbors, betray or slander them, or destroy their reputations. Instead we are to come to their defense, speak well of them, and interpret everything they do in the best possible light.

*Some discussion questions:*

- How does Luther expand on the basic idea of the commandment?
- If you had to put this commandment into one sentence: We are to honor our neighbor's \_\_\_\_\_
- Have you ever been frustrated that others spoke ill of you?
- What might the world look like if we did this?
- How can you, when someone has done something bad, avoid gossip about someone but still communicate what they have done?

### **Prayer**

Segment 3 of audio content (1-2 minutes)

Luther emphasizes praying through the parts of the catechism. In a book to his barber, he emphasizes four moods of praying through each of the commandments:

- + Meditate -- Ask God what does this mean for my life; meditate on its meaning
- + Thank -- Thank God for the way in which God has cared for the aspect of your life touched on by this commandment
- + Confess – Confess to God the ways in which you have broken this commandment
- + Pray for binding – Ask God that your life would confirm to this commandment.

*I would suggest the class close with roughly a minute to give each person time to prayer through the 8<sup>th</sup> commandment. I would end by inviting everyone to conclude with the Lord's Prayer.*