

The Greatest Commandment

All-age talk / Collective Worship / Messy Church

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

You will need:

- 12 pieces of card/paper with these words in large letters. Attach a piece of sticky tape to each card and place them in order along a table edge or broom handle.
 - Love
 - the Lord
 - your God
 - with all your
 - heart
 - and soul
 - and mind
 - and strength
 - and love
 - your neighbour
 - as
 - yourself
- You will need 2 or 3 volunteers, one of whom will have sticky tape attached to them.
- A large Bible (with talk inside)

You can stick the cards anywhere on the stickee, but the suggestions in the table below will have them in an easy reading order.

All-age talk

I don't know if you've noticed, but the Bible is a really big book. I mean, it's like, huge. It's shorter than the Harry Potter series, maybe Harry Potter minus the prisoner of Askaban, but it's still a big book.

You can't imagine summarising the whole Bible in only twelve pieces of paper, can you? No, me neither. But Jesus managed it!

When someone asked Jesus which was the most important bit of the Bible, the one page he'd rescue if a Bible exploded and all the pages went everywhere, the part he'd have printed on a t-shirt, this is what Jesus chose:

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength.' And he added "and love your neighbour as yourself. That's it," Jesus said. "The rest is commentary. If you forget everything else, remember this and you'll do fine."

So how do we remember this? Well, our passage today, which is what Jesus was quoting from, has some helpful hints. Let's have a look at them. It's in Deuteronomy, chapter 6 [mumble Bible, nodding]

Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children.

Oh. Ummn. [look up] "Impress them on your children," it says. [look around for children]

I suppose I'll need some children for this. I'll need two people to be **stickers** and one to be a **stickee**.

By the way, grown-ups, you don't get to think, "Oh, this is only for the children. I can take a nap or check my phone for this part of the service." Oh no. You don't get away that easily. That bit where it says, 'impress them on your children'? That assumes that we've already impressed them on ourselves. Yes?

OK, so I'll read out what it says in Deuteronomy, and you stick these in appropriate places, OK? [Talk about items as you stick them on, eg:]

With all your heart. What do you think that means? [ask cong]

Soul. I'm not sure where your soul is. We'll just put that in the middle 'cos it's kind of all of you.

When we sit and when we walk. Of course, that includes all the times in between as well. It's like when we say we've searched high and low for something, we mean the bits between as well (It's a figure of speech called merism.)

When you lie down and when you get up. What do you think that means? Only at those two times?

Hands = everything we do, forehead = everything we think about.

Doorframes and gates – hmmn, you don't really have any doorframes or gates, do you? I guess we could just stick these on any spare bits.

Verse

Love the Lord your God with all your heart
and with all your soul
and with all your mind
and with all your strength.

Talk about them when you sit at home
and when you walk along the road,
when you lie down
and when you get up.

Tie them as symbols on your hands
and bind them on your foreheads.

Write them on the doorframes of your houses
and on your gates.

card

heart
and soul
and mind
and strength
your neighbour
your God
and love
with all your
the Lord
Love
as
yourself

stick to

chest
tummy
top of head
arm
bum
legs
back
feet
hands
forehead
anywhere spare
anywhere spare

Brilliant, thank you. Let's see if we can read what Jesus said was the most important part of the Bible.

[Spin child round to show verse] Love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength and love your neighbour as yourself.

"Everything else," said Jesus, "rests on these."