

# heartfelt Newsletter

March 2009

SCRIPTURE: Exodus 20:1-17

THEME: A Lenten Journey Up the Mountain

family  
round  
the  
table

EATING TOGETHER



Decorations: Assemble some rocks and a candle; add a map as a symbol of God's direction.

## MENU

Chili or a favorite Soup (remembering the pots of wandering Israelites); Bread Sticks (the frozen kind are great, but crackers are OK, too); Fresh Vegetables with Dip; Sand Pudding

## RECIPE

### Sand Pudding

Prepare your favorite pudding recipe – instant, canned or scratch. In a blender pulverize vanilla wafers or Graham crackers and sprinkle on top of the pudding. This “sand” remembers the desert wanderings of God’s people at Sinai.

**Blessing:** Before beginning the blessing, review the response.

*For the daily sustenance which you provide without cost,  
For the guidance which leads us to freedom and life,  
For those you give us to share the journey,  
ALL: We offer you our thanks, O God.*



# PLAYING TOGETHER

## Activity One: Mount Sinai Pictionary

### Materials:

File cards or small pieces of paper for listing things to be drawn; markers for drawing; sketch pad or paper large enough for drawing so that all can see.

### Directions:

Prepare the file cards in advance using Exodus 20 and the events surrounding the Exodus and the giving of the Ten Commandments. List one thing on each card that can be drawn and guessed by your family. Examples might include things like Mt. Sinai, Moses, the tablets, the people of Israel, some of the plagues, several of the commandments.

1. Invite a family member to draw a card and sketch clues on the paper that will help the rest of the family to guess what is on the card. No words are allowed.
2. When the information on the first card has been guessed, invite another member to choose a new card and draw the clues for it.
3. Depending on the age of the children in the family, continue choosing cards until all family members have a chance to play.
4. If the children in the family are preschool age, adapt the game by having the adults team up with the children to choose a card and decide what to draw.



# STUDYING GOD'S WORD TOGETHER

- Locate Exodus 20:1-17 in the Old Testament and read it aloud or invite a family member to read it aloud.
- Following the scripture, read the following or tell in your own words:

*"No! Do this! Don't do that! If I have to tell you one more time...!" Lots of people think that is what the Bible and God are all about. They think that the Bible is a collection of rules, spoken by a God who, like an angry parent, is out to spoil our fun and make our lives miserable. Nothing could be further from the truth.*

*Take for instance the most famous of all of God's rules, the list that we call the Ten Commandments. Our Jewish brothers and sisters call this list the "Ten Words," words given by God to God's people in order that they might live more completely. God gave these words to Moses on Mt. Sinai after God had freed the Hebrew people from slavery. Rather than being restrictions, God gave the "Ten Words" to help the people share their new freedom and life together.*

*Even when people are free, they still need some guidance, some order, some restriction on negative behaviors so they can live together positively. Can you imagine a classroom where students can come and go at any time they choose, where they can decide whether or not to do the assigned lesson, where they can talk loudly anytime they desire, even when the teacher is trying to teach? Not much learning would take place! Can you imagine riding in a car where there*

*are no traffic laws, no speed limits, no restrictions on who can drive, no stop signs, no traffic lights, no agreement about the traffic flow in each lane? No one would get anywhere!*

*The first four commandments are about God. They tell us that if we are to live freely, then we will worship and serve only the true living God. Any lesser god would make us slaves again. The last six commandments focus upon how we are to live with each other. If everyone is to live freely, then each of us will have to act in ways that care for others. I cannot treat you in any way that makes you less of a person. Or as we say in LOGOS: Everyone is to treat everyone else as a child of God. No one has the right to treat anyone else as if they do not matter.*

*The commandments are intended to help everyone live up to their God-given potential. That's a positive thing!*

### Reflection Questions for the Family

1. Which of the Ten Commandments do you find the easiest to follow? Why?
2. Which of the Ten Commandments are hard for you to do? Why?
3. If you could write an 11th commandment, what would it be?
4. What are some of the rules that you have in your family?
5. How do these rules make it easier for you to live together?
6. If you could change a family rule, what rule would you choose? How would you change it?



## PRAYING TOGETHER

- Prepare a worship center by placing a lighted candle, open Bible and the other Lenten symbols in the center of your family.
- As the prayer time begins, ask these questions and note the responses in the corresponding places in the prayer below:
  1. Who are the people you know who need to feel free?
  2. What are the things in your life right now that you most thankful for?
  3. What do you need God's help with right now?
- Invite the family to pray with you as make the following prayer:

*God of freedom, who brought us out of slavery to sin and death, and led us to this moment of remembrance and praise, please hear our prayer. We remember those who remain trapped and in need of your liberating love, especially: [names]. We thank you for the many ways in which you have guided and protected us in our own journey, especially when [events]. We ask your continuing guidance as we seek to become more and more the people you have called us to become in Christ, asking especially that you help us with [requests]. Give us the grace to live as your people in the world as we move toward the fullness of life that is already ours in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.*