

## **GOD'S COMMANDMENTS: STEALING**

Bible Verse: Exodus 20:15; John 12:1-8

### **Parents Dig In**

Read: Exodus 20:15; John 12:1-8

In This Passage: God commands his people not to steal. Judas, one of Jesus' disciples, is the treasurer for the group. Instead of being responsible with the money, he secretly steals some for himself and then criticizes a woman who gives generously to Jesus, saying she's being wasteful.

### **Bible Point: We don't steal**

Summary Verse: "Jesus replied, 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind' " (Matthew 22:37).

### **Dig Deeper**

You'll Be Teaching: We don't steal. Stealing is a fairly black and white topic to kids. They don't perceive a lot of gray area; they know it's wrong. However, they have a strong temptation to take a small item just because they want it. Help kids see why stealing is wrong and replace a desire to steal with a desire to give generously.

Think About: What are you tempted to steal? How can you change that temptation to generosity?

### **Dig In to Prayer**

Ask God to help your kids have a stronger desire to give than to get.

### **Quick Tip**

When talking about God's Commandments, remember to keep your environment a judgment-free zone. That means if a child confesses he has stolen, make sure it's a safe place to share that without immediate condemnation. Instead, talk to the child separately about how God might want him or her to rectify the situation.

## OPENING INTRODUCTION

### Introduce the Lesson

Say: We're learning about God's Commandments. Now you might think that sounds like a bunch of rules, but God's Commandments are like street signs, showing us the best way to go. Today we're going to learn that we don't steal. Instead, we can give generously. The street sign for Giving Boulevard can remind us of that!

### Share

- Tell kids something *you'd* never want to be stolen from you.
- Ask kids to share what *they'd* never want to be stolen.

### Summarize

Open a Bible to Exodus 20, and say: No one likes to be the victim of someone who steals. But some people are so focused on getting more and more that they're willing to steal! In the Bible, God says we don't steal. The Bible is amazing! It's full of incredible stories—and they're all true! God gave us the Bible so he can show us how to live. Let's hear from him as we explore the Bible. And let's talk with him right now.

Pray, asking for his help not to steal or be greedy.

## TALK-ABOUT VIDEO

- "Noah's Story" teaching video

### Discuss and Watch "Noah's Story"

Say: We're learning that we don't steal. But sometimes it's hard to know what's really stealing.

Ask: If you find money on the ground, should you take it? Explain.

Say: Let's see a story where that happened and two friends had to decide what to do.

**Watch "Noah's Story." (watch or download [here](#))**

Ask: • What did you think about Noah's choices in this story? What about Jared's?

• How would it have hurt someone if Jared had kept the money?

Say: We don't steal. Even though Jared wanted the money, keeping it meant a kindergartener couldn't afford a book at the book fair. Taking from other people is selfish. Instead, we can give generously.

## MUSIC VIDEOS

Sing Songs To God!

- “Thankful” (watch or download [here](#))
- “Worship Christ” (1 Peter 3:15) (watch or download [here](#))
- “Stand Together” (watch or download [here](#))

## CORE BIBLE DISCOVERY

### Supplies

- Bible
- snack-size bags of Goldfish crackers or other snack that can be eaten a little at a time (2 bags for every 5 kids)
- basin (1 for every 5 kids)
- cups of water, scented with essential oil (1 per child)

### Steal the Goldfish

Have kids form groups of five. Choose a child in each group to be the Keeper of the Goldfish. Tell kids that person will hold on to the snack until it's time to eat it.

Call the Keepers of the Goldfish over to get one bag each, and whisper to them that they should sneak Goldfish throughout the story and try to eat the whole bag by the time you've finished telling about Judas, without their groups noticing.

**Say: Today's Bible story is about a guy named Judas. You may know him as the guy who betrayed his friend Jesus and helped people arrest and kill Jesus. But this story happens before he did all that.**

**You see, Judas was one of Jesus' 12 disciples. The disciples were Jesus' closest friends, and they followed him around and learned from him.**

**Judas was the treasurer for the group. That means he was in charge of the money. So when they would go to the market, Judas was responsible for buying the food.** Have kids walk around the room as if heading to the market.

**And when they went to the Temple, Judas was in charge of the offering.** Have kids walk around the room as if heading to the Temple.

**And when they needed new sandals, Judas paid the bill.** Have kids walk around the room, take off their shoes, and then put them back on.

**And when they had to stay at an inn, Judas handled the payment.** Have kids walk around the room, lie down as if sleeping, and then get back up.

**Or if they had to rent a donkey, Judas would pay the fee.** Have kids gallop around the room.

**But there was a problem. Judas was a thief. And he's not the only one.** Motion to the Keepers of the Goldfish. **It looks like we have some trouble with the people in charge of things in *our* class, too!**

Have the Keepers of the Goldfish hold up their bags and show that the Goldfish are gone or mostly gone.

**Ask:** • What do you think about the Keepers of the Goldfish?

• How do you think the other disciples would have felt if they had known Judas was stealing some of their money?

**Say:** So...Judas was in charge of the money, but he stole some. That goes against today's commandment: We don't steal.

Read Exodus 20:15.

### **Tell the Story From Judas' Point of View**

**Say:** All that background brings us to today's Bible story. Let's look at what happened from Judas' point of view.

Read John 12:1-3.

**Ask:** • Put yourself in the mind of Judas. You're always trying to get as much money for yourself as possible. What do you think when you see Mary pouring this expensive perfume?

**Say:** Let's see what Judas said. Read John 12:4-5.

**Ask:** • Do you believe that was Judas' real reason for being mad? Why or why not?

**Say:** Let's keep reading. Read John 12:6.

**Say:** We don't steal. If we do steal, it messes up our hearts! We get greedy, wanting more and more for ourselves. Judas didn't care about the poor. He cared about a woman wasting perfume that was worth a lot of money, because *he* wanted that money for himself.

### **Retell the Story From Mary's Point of View**

**Say:** We know that Judas' heart was greedy and self-centered, because he was stealing money for himself. But what about Mary's heart? Let's consider the story again from her point of view.

Give each group a new bag of Goldfish, but don't give it to the Keepers of the Goldfish.

Read John 12:3.

**Ask:** • Judas focused on taking more and more for himself. How would you describe Mary's heart?

**Say:** While Judas was greedy, Mary was generous. What she did was the *opposite* of stealing. She could've kept the perfume; it was hers to begin with.

**Ask:** • Why do you think Mary gave up the perfume?

**Say:** Mary willingly gave up what she had as an act of worship to Jesus.

Have groups return their bags of Goldfish.

**Say:** Mary wanted to worship Jesus, so she gave generously. And here's what Jesus said.

Read John 12:7-8.

Give each child a cup of scented water, and have kids gather around the basin.

**Say:** Mary gave expensive perfume as a generous act of worship. Talk to Jesus silently about what *you're* willing to give up for him. As you pray, pour your water into the basin, imagining Jesus' feet are soaking in the basin.

Allow time for reflective prayer.

**Ask:** • What are some differences between Mary's perspective of the events and Judas' perspective?

**Say:** When it comes to money and things, we can be greedy or we can be generous. But God's way is best, and he shows us that we don't steal. We don't try to take more and more for ourselves like Judas did. Instead, we give generously like Mary did.

I want to be generous right now! Distribute the Goldfish kids returned, and allow time for groups to share the snack.

## DEEPER BIBLE DISCOVERY

What Do I Do If I've Stolen Something

### Supplies

- Bibles
- uncooked angel hair pasta (1 noodle per child)
- ½-inch hex nuts, shown below (several per child)
- tape



### Hoard Hex Nuts

Give each child a noodle of angel hair pasta. Set out a pile of hex nuts, and have kids arrange them so they're standing up on their sides, scattered around a table. Challenge kids to fit as many hex nuts as possible on the noodle without it breaking. Kids must get a hex nut onto the noodle by poking the noodle through the hole and picking it up, and they can hold only one end of the noodle. Allow several minutes for kids to try.

**Ask:** • What happened when you tried to add more and more hex nuts to your noodle?

• How is that like what can happen when we try to get more and more money or things?

**Say:** When people are focused on getting more and more, sometimes they end up stealing. And like too many hex nuts broke your noodle, stealing can break our relationships with God and others. That's why we don't steal.

Allow time for kids to mend the noodles with tape.

**Say:** With pasta, you can't put it back together once it's broken. Is that the way it is if you've stolen something? You can say you're sorry, but can you really fix it? What *do* we do if we've stolen something? Let's dig in to that.

### Dig Deeper

**Say:** The Bible actually has a specific law about what to do if you've stolen something! Let's look at it together. As we read it, pay attention specifically to what you're supposed to do to make up for stealing.

Help kids turn to Leviticus 6:1-6 so they can follow along as you read it.

**Ask:** • What did you notice about what you have to do for the person you stole from? What about for God?

- If those are the consequences for stealing, why do you think people steal?
- If you have to pay back *more* than what you stole, how would you do that?

**Say:** If you've already stolen something, these verses tell you what to do—pay it back, plus extra, and make it right with God. Maybe you can't pay back what you stole with money, but you could pay someone back with time, with chores, or by saving up to pay the person back. The important thing is that you set things right with God *and* with the person you stole from, because we don't steal.

There's a guy who did this very kind of thing when he met Jesus. He was a tax collector for his job, and he was cheating people by taking more money than they really owed for taxes. When he met Jesus, listen to what he did.

Read Luke 19:8.

**Ask:** • How did Zacchaeus make up what he'd stolen?

**Say:** Zacchaeus learned that we don't steal, or we need to pay it back plus more. And there's one other thing to know about if you've already stolen something.

Read Ephesians 4:28.

**Ask:** • What are some things you can do instead of stealing?

**Say:** This verse says to stop stealing. We don't steal. Instead, we can use our hands to work hard and give generously. Being generous is a great way to refocus on giving, instead of trying to get more and more for ourselves.

### OBJECT LESSON

Take, Take, Take

## Supplies

- pint-size Mason jars or clear plastic 16-ounce cups (1 for every 5 kids)
- plastic beaded necklaces (like Mardi Gras necklaces, available at your local dollar discount store) (10 for every 5 kids)
- scissors



### Tip

We used a pint-size Mason jar, but you could use a larger jar or a coffee mug for this experiment, too. Simply add or subtract bead strands depending on the size of container.

## Put Beads in a Jar

**Say: We're learning that taking things that don't belong to us is hurtful, so we don't steal. It can also be really hard to stop stealing once we start. Taking even one thing can lead to more and more stealing, and then things can get out of control. I'll show you what I mean.**

- Form groups of about five kids, and give each group 10 beaded necklaces, a pair of scissors, and a Mason jar.
- Have groups work together to cut the beaded necklaces to create strands of beads. Then kids will tie the 10 beaded strands together to create one long string of beads.
- Have adult or teen helpers assist kids as they carefully lower the beads into the jar, leaving the end of the long string barely hanging over the edge of the jar.

## Pull the End of the Beads

**Say: Let's imagine these beads are things we *really* want but don't belong to us. Call out some things you think could be tempting to steal, such as money, a smartphone, or a pair of cool new shoes. Pause and allow kids to respond. Now let's imagine we decide to go ahead and steal, just once. We think, "No one will even notice if I take this one thing." Hold a jar of beads above your head. Gently pull the end of the string of beads, and then let go. Your initial pull will create momentum that causes the rest of the beads to "jump" out of the jar and onto the floor. **Wow, I only meant to take a little bit, but I ended up taking a lot. You give it a try.****

- Have small groups make their bead strings do the same. Jars can sit on a table, or kids can hold them the way you demonstrated.

- Have kids work together to put the beads back in the jar; then give another child a turn to pull on the string and put the beads in motion.
- Repeat, giving each child a turn.

## Talk About It

**Ask:** • Why do you think it was so hard for the beads to stop?

• Why might it be hard to stop stealing once we start?

**Say:** Once the first beads were pulled out, it created something called *momentum*. Momentum can be hard to stop—it can even get out of control the way the beads just kept going and going. Our choices have momentum, too. Choosing to steal can easily lead to choosing to do it again and again until it's out of control. That's why we don't steal.

## CRAFT

Offering Bottle

### Supplies

- 8-ounce water bottles (1 per child)
- scissors
- duct tape in fun colors and patterns
- permanent markers



### Make Offering Bottles

**Say:** In our Bible story, Judas was a thief. But the woman in the story gave Jesus a generous gift by pouring perfume on his feet. We're going to use bottles that can remind us of a perfume bottle to make offering containers. We'll use these to collect money to *give*, rather than trying to get more for ourselves.

Give each child a water bottle. Set out the remaining supplies to share, and have kids follow these directions to make offering bottles.

- Cut off the top part of the water bottle, just where it starts to get narrower.



- Cover the top and the bottom parts of the bottle with decorative duct tape.



- Make a hinge with duct tape to attach the top and bottom so you can flip the top up.



- Use permanent markers to add more decorations.

### Talk About It

Ask: • **How do you feel when you're trying to get more money or stuff for yourself?**

• **How do you feel when you're saving money to give?**

• **Compare those two feelings. Which feels better?**

• **What are some ways you could earn money to give away?**

Say: **We don't steal. Judas didn't understand that. He was just focused on getting more and more for himself. When we're focused on getting, that can lead to stealing. But Mary was focused on giving as she poured out her perfume on Jesus. With our new offering bottles, we can focus on giving, too!**

Have kids take their offering bottles home and use them to save up money for offering.

## LIFE APPLICATION WRAP UP

Generous Hearts

### Pray Scripture

- Have kids hold out their hands.
- Read Proverbs 30:8-9.

Read it again a few more times, pausing after each line for kids to repeat the prayer.

### Wrap Up

Pray: **God, give us generous hearts so that we don't steal. In Jesus' name, amen.**