

Becoming God's People

Focus on the Theme

1. Think about how 'rules' operate in different spheres of life: household rules, rules in a school classroom, rules of the road. Why are such rules made, and how important is it to keep them?
2. In the commandments themselves (Exodus 20:2-17), what is said about (a) how the people are to relate to God, and (b) how they are to relate to each other?

In what ways does Jesus' summary of the law in Matthew 22:34-40 reflect this two-fold dimension?

Going Deeper

3. What has God done for his people, and what does he call them to do in response (19:4-6)?
4. Read Genesis 12:1-3 and Exodus 19:6. What is God's ultimate goal in selecting one person and people group from among the nations? How is Israel's relationship with the Lord bound up with God's plan for the world?
5. Why is it significant that God begins with what he says in Exodus 20:2 before he gives the ten commandments?
6. Skim through the commands of the covenant in Exodus 21:1-23:33. What topics are covered? What character traits of God are reflected in the laws?
7. Read Hebrews 12:18-29.

What contrasts does the writer to the Hebrews draw between the experience of the people of God at Sinai and our experience as people of the new covenant in Christ?

Living it Out

8. How would you respond to someone who concluded from a reading of the commandments in Exodus that God is out to spoil our fun?
9. How do the values of the daily context in which you find yourself in any given week - your workplace or your neighbourhood or your leisure activity - overlap and/or divert from the ten commandments?
10. Having declared Christians to be 'a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession' (1 Peter 2:9), echoing Exodus 19:4-6, Peter calls on his readers to live 'such good lives among the pagans' (2:11). Thinking about one of your daily contexts - family or neighbourhood or place of work or study - what might this look like?