

God gives the Law to Moses

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Scene Summary

Israel had crossed the Red Sea, traveled through the desert and assembled at the foot of Mount Sinai. This play, “God gives the Law to Moses” presents the miraculous story of God’s provision for His people, teaching them how to live with Him and each other. Scenes include: God calls the people together at the foot of the mountain...God speaks to the people...Moses is called up the mountain...the people get tired of waiting for Moses...the people build an idol...Moses returns and leads the people back to God.

Scripture

(Exo 20:1-21 NIV) And God spoke all these words: {2} "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. {3} "You shall have no other gods before me. {4} "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. {5} You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, {6} but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments. {7} "You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name. {8} "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. {9} Six days you shall labor and do all your work, {10} but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. {11} For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. {12} "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you. {13} "You shall not murder. {14} "You shall not commit adultery. {15} "You shall not steal. {16} "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. {17} "You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor." {18} When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear. They stayed at a

distance {19} and said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die." {20} Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning." {21} The people remained at a distance, while Moses approached the thick darkness where God was.

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Players

- **Narrator** – The play's "catechist" or teacher should be a good reader with a clear voice.
- **Moses** – This person is played with humility and yet commands great authority.
- **Joshua** – Moses' apprentice, always nearby, watching and learning.
- **Aaron** – Someone with a strong voice should play Moses' elder brother.
- **God** – Strong and clear offstage voice.
- **Person 1, 2, 3** – More people can be added as needed.

Special Props

- Normal items from the prop box such as cloaks, veils, robes and headdresses.
- Cardboard cut out of tablets of stone.

Script – God gives the Law to Moses

Narrator: Moses looked at the camp below.

Moses: [to himself] Why can't the people do what is right? God helps us everyday, but the people still argue, fight and steal. They forget to obey God.

God: Call the people together and give them a message from me.

Narrator: Moses hurried down the mountainside and called the people together to tell them what God wanted them to do.

Moses: Wash your clothes and get ready to meet God. Day after tomorrow you will hear the long trumpet sound. Come to the foot of the mountain and God will speak us.

Narrator: The people hurried to get ready. [pause] Early in the morning on the third day, thunder rolled and lightning flashed. A thick cloud covered the top of the mountain. It was then the trumpet sounded, long and loud. The frightened people assembled at the foot of the mountain. Then God spoke to the people. He told Moses and Aaron to come up the mountain. [editor ME check this sequence. The concept of a mediator is vital. It is important that the people did not want to hear God's voice. They wanted Moses to be the mediator.] Then God spoke his rules.

God: You shall have no other gods. [pause] Do not kill. [pause] Do not steal. [pause] Do not lie.

Narrator: God gave many other rules. Moses hurried down the mountain to tell God's rules to the people.

Moses: God said, "Do not make any idols." [pause] "Do not take God's name in vain." "Honor your parents."

Narrator: The people listened carefully to Moses and nodded.

People: [together] We will obey God.

Narrator: Then God told Moses to go high up on the top of the mountain. The people watched him go. They waited and waited, but Moses did not come back down. Finally the people went back to their tents. Everyday, they wondered about Moses, still high up on the mountain. After many days, the people began to grumble.

Person 1: [to Aaron] Moses has been gone a long time. Maybe he died on the mountain.

Person 2: Make us a god to lead us to Canaan.

Narrator: The people gave Aaron their gold earrings and bracelets to melt down and shape into the shape of an idol that they could worship. It was a golden calf. [pause] After 40 days, Moses started back down the mountain carrying two tablets that contained ten important rules, written on stone by the finger of God.

Moses: [to himself] The people promised to obey God. The rules and plans of God are very good.

Narrator: Joshua had waited for Moses on the mountain.

Joshua: [to Moses] Listen! It sounds like war in the camp below.

Moses: [stops and listens] It is not the sound of war. I hear singing!

Narrator: The men hurried to camp. There they found the golden calf that Aaron had made for the people to worship.

People: [together] This is our god!

Narrator: They laughed and sang and danced around the golden calf. [pause] Sadly Moses watched the people.

Moses: [to Joshua] Already they have forgotten God.

Narrator: [angry] Then angrily, Moses threw the stone tables to the ground.

Moses: The people are worshiping an idol, just as the heathen do. They promised to obey God. How could they do such a terrible thing?

Narrator: Moses ran to the calf. He knocked it down and broke it into very small pieces then set fire to it. Finally he ground the remains into powder.

Moses: [sternly] You have disobeyed God's laws. I will see if He will forgive you.

[Moses goes away from the people by himself and kneels to pray]

Moses: [to God] Oh God. These people have done a very bad thing. But they are your people. Please forgive them.

Narrator: God heard and answered Moses' prayer. He forgave the people and promised to continue to lead them. Then He told Moses to come up to the mountain.

God: Write the rules I gave you before.

Narrator: Moses cut the words of the Ten Commandments on two new stones. Moses stayed on the mountain another 40 days, then returned to down to the camp with God's rules.

Moses: [to himself] Now the people will obey God.

The End

Supplemental Information

For many years, God's rules were not written down. When God wanted Noah, Abraham, Jacob or other men to do something, God spoke aloud to them. They did not see God, but heard His voice. Parents taught their children the things God had taught them. Then, when they grew up, they taught God's laws to their children.

The Hebrews, on their way from Egypt to Canaan had many problems. Moses was their judge and he appointed others to help him. They tried to be fair with everyone when they settled arguments and other problems.

The people had crossed the Red Sea and headed south towards the plain of the Sinai Peninsula. Here they setup camp. To the south was a three-peak mountain of red granite. As Moses climbed the mountain, he could look down and see the many dark goat haircloth tents that dotted the plain below. While on the mountain, God spoke to Moses. God had important words to say to Moses. God wanted the people to hear Him speak.

For three days, the people got ready to listen to God. On the morning of the important day, God sent thunder and lightning, perhaps to get their attention and to remind them of His great power. He set fire on top of the mountain and the mountain shook. The top was covered in a cloud of smoke.

When the people gathered at the foot of the mountain, they heard God speak. Later, God called Moses and Aaron up higher in the mountain. Moses listened as God told him many rules. Some of these rules we call the Ten Commandments. God also told Moses how to judge the people. God said, "If a man steals a sheep, then the man must pay back four sheep." God gave many practical rules for daily living and promised stiff punishment for those who disobeyed.

With such a large group of people, it was important to keep law and order. God gave the rules to help the people. Moses told the people all that God had told him. The Hebrews promised to obey all of God's rules.

God called Moses again to the mountain along with Aaron and seventy other rulers went partway up the mountain. Moses went alone to the top of the mountain to talk with God. The men had a meal together on the mountain with God. Then they returned to camp.

God gave to Moses instructions to build a tabernacle where the people could worship. God gave Moses two slabs of stone that were written the laws. Aaron was in charge of the camp during Moses' absence. For weeks, Moses stayed on the mountain and the people became tired of waiting for his return. Perhaps they thought Moses had died. They wondered who would lead them to Canaan. Back in Egypt, it was common for people to worship idols. Perhaps they felt that they needed to worship something they could see. They seemed to have forgotten about God, yet everyday God fed them with manna and just a short time before they promised to obey God's rules. Now they asked Aaron to make an idol for them to worship. Aaron took their

earrings and bracelets, melted them down and made a golden calf. Aaron proclaimed a feast day and the people began to sing, drink, eat and dance before the idol. They said, “this is the god that brought us out of Egypt.”

Just 40 days before, the people promised not to have any other gods. God became angry. Moses was angry too. This was a serious sin. God would have destroyed the people unless Moses had interceded on their behalf. Moses pleaded with God to forgive the people. God did forgive them and promised to be with them.

God told Moses to prepare two stone tables to replace the ones that had been broken. Moses took them up the mountain and God repeated the Ten Commandments. Moses wrote them on the two stones.

Extra time

Review the meaning of the Ten Commandments with your students. Discuss the reasons for having rules. Discuss how rules help the people then as well as today. Let your students discover how these rules help them. Discuss how rules from God, rules from our parents and others help us to live together.

Use clay to make a flat tablet that your students can write one of the Ten Commandments.