A close-up photograph of a stone archway. The arch is made of light-colored, textured stone blocks. In the crevice of the arch, there are several vibrant purple flowers, possibly bougainvillea, with some petals showing signs of being dried or pressed. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the stone structure.

Family Study Guides

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

2. "YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FOR YOURSELF ANY
GRAVEN IMAGES."

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Family Study Guide

2. "You shall not make for yourself any graven image."

[We suggest that as you use this Family Study Guide, select and focus on a main portion or two that you feel will help your family's study into the commandment. You do not need to cover every aspect, discussion or scripture presented in this guide. Select the aspects or principles most relevant or helpful to your family.]

Objectives:

- Help your children explain the meaning and importance of the Second Commandment.
- Help your child describe examples of the Second Commandment being obeyed and disobeyed.
- Help your family gain essential understandings: God is our only true God and our protector. We cannot worship or put anything above God. How we worship God is important to Him.

MEMORY VERSE:

Exodus 20:4-6 *"You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments."*

Or for the younger children:

1 John 5:21 *"Little children, keep yourselves from idols."*

As a family read **Exodus 20:4-5** and discuss what the Second Commandment is.

What can we learn about God from His Second Commandment?

- **From the UCG Teen Bible Study Guide "The Second Commandment:"** *Some religions misunderstand the second commandment; they combine the second commandment with the first. (Read the 1st commandment in **Exodus 20:3 or Deuteronomy 5:7**. What does it actually say?) The first commandment has to do with WHOM we worship, while the second commandment has to do with HOW we worship the true and only God.*
- **Exodus 20:4-6** This commandment teaches us how we are to think about God. It tells us that we should not think about God as looking like anything that we see here on the earth or in the universe.
 - Throughout time, people have wanted to worship something they can see. Because of that, they create images of those things they believe to be their gods. The American Indians worship the earth and sky and nature, saying that all of it makes up God. The Egyptians during the time of the Israelites, had gods that looked like the sun, the moon and sometimes animals. They made statues of most of these so they could see them. They didn't think they could believe in anything they couldn't see.
 - There is only one true and only God. Speaking of God and Christ, **1 Peter 1:8** says, *"Though you have not seen him, you love him. And even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice..."* {ISV} The second commandment tells us that God does not want us to make images that we think represent Him – or any other god.

Why is this commandment important?

- **No statue or image can fairly represent God's power.**
 - The first commandment shows that God is all-powerful. There is not any one thing or one way in which we can describe or represent Him. We would not see God as the living God that He is if we represent Him in the form of a statue or a picture. The second commandment reminds us that God is far greater than anything we can see or imagine. There is nothing that is equal to Him. God wants us to worship Him in our hearts and minds. This takes faith, which is believing in something that you cannot see (Hebrews 11:1)
 - **Read Isaiah 44.** Why does God say he does not want us to use images to represent Him or His Creation?
 - **Romans 1: 21-25** ...*although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things...who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever.*
- **God gave us ways to know He is all powerful even though we can't see Him.**
 - His Creation--**Romans 1:20** *For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead*
 - The things He does for us when we obey His laws—**Deuteronomy 28:1-14**
- **Although God gives some basic descriptions of Himself in the Bible, there is no way that we could make a picture or statue of Him that would show Him as He really is.**
 - **Isaiah 42:8** *I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.*
 - **Isaiah 40:18** *To whom can you compare God? What image can you find to resemble him? V.19 Can he be compared to an idol formed in a mold... {NLT}*
 - God says not to make pictures or images to use as forms of even worshiping Him. God is greater than we can imagine! It is not possible for us to draw a picture or make a statue that looks like God because no human has ever looked at God's face. We also do not know what Jesus looked like when he was on earth. We know that He created humans in His likeness so He has a form that looks like a human. But we do not know His exact facial likeness. We also know that He is not in the form or shape of any animal, fish or bird. We show love to God by not making a statue or picture of Him and bowing down to worship that object as if it were God. God said that if we bow down to worship a carved statue then that is an act of disrespect and those who do not honor God will be punished.
- **Exodus 20:5 NLT "...(I)will not share your affection with any other god!" While this says that we should not have an image of anything and pretend it is a god, it also means that God does not want us making images of things and pretending it is HIM!**
 - **People put a lot of things first in their lives before God.** What do we put as first before God? As a family discuss things that could become a god in place of the true God.
 1. **The god of Pleasure.** Pleasure is like a drug. The need for always doing fun things can start as a legitimate diversion from school work or chores or our jobs, but when you only want to have fun, it can take your time, money, and energy. So then wanting fun - out of balance - can become sin.

2. The god of Possessions - wanting "stuff" can dominate our lives. Do we place money and things first? Always needing to have the "right" clothes, shoes, toys? As you get older the right cars and or house? Being possessed by things - Proverbs tells us. "the eyes of man are never satisfied"

3. The god of "Me First" - When a person feels that the world revolves around them, and that they must always come out on top.

4. The god of "My Activities" - Anything that occupies the mind and life ahead of God – such as being so busy with other things that your relationship with God is pushed behind you. Being "too busy" to have time for God.

Biblical Examples:

Discuss one or two Biblical examples that involve keeping or breaking the second commandment.

- **1 Samuel 4-7--Israel, the Philistines, and the Ark of the Covenant**
 - Why did Israel choose to bring the ark to battle against the Philistines? How could this be seen as violating the 2nd Commandment? What were the consequences?
 - What did the Philistines rely on for power? How was this a violation of the 2nd Commandment? What were the consequences?
 - How did God show His true power throughout this story? What can we learn about God from the way things turned out?

- **Daniel 3 - Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego**
 - How was the 2nd Commandment obeyed or violated in this account?
 - How did God show His true power? What can we learn about God from the way things turned out?

- **Acts 17:16-32 - Paul and Idol Worship in Athens**
 - Why was Paul so upset in Acts 17:16? What actions showed how seriously he took the 2nd Commandment? Read 1 Corinthians 10:14-22 to see the way Paul "reasoned" on this subject.
 - In what ways did the Greeks and Greek culture promote idol worship? What influence from this society do we still see today in our media and in other areas of our society?
 - The Areopagus was a place where the "experts" would discuss "new ideas" in society. Where and how do we see this type of thinking today? Why was it important that Paul spoke to these people? Based on what we know about the 2nd Commandment, how should we view these types of ideas in our society?
 - How did people respond to Paul? Look at both the worshipers and the philosophers. Why do you think they acted this way?
 - What can we learn from the way Paul represented God in this situation?

Possible Family Discussions:

- ✓ The Bible and The Ten Commandments show us that God warns against the practices of worshipping idols and against other forms of idolatry. What is God's definition of true worship?
(Acts 5:29, Deuteronomy 8:6; Matthew 22:37-39)
- ✓ What does it mean when God says He is "jealous"? Why would God say this? Study how the word is used in this scripture, and where else it is used in the Bible (Strong's H7067, Hebrew word qanna). From the **UCG Teen Bible Study Guide "The Second Commandment:"** *Why should we be glad that God is jealous for His people? What is the difference between being jealous OF someone and being jealous FOR someone?*
- ✓ What does **Romans 1** say about what happens to people as a result of worshipping idols?
- ✓ What does it mean when the Bible says we must worship God in sincerity and truth?
Discuss the following points:
 - Sincerity and truth means having no images to hinder our path toward God.
 - The first four of the Ten Commandments show us how to worship God.

Family Activities:

- ✓ **Journal:** Write down the second commandment in your family notebook. Discuss and then write about what the commandment means to each family member. Discuss things that "idolize" or could take the place of God.
- ✓ As a family, research the origins of Christmas and Easter symbols. What symbols have come down from the idol worship in the Bible? Discuss the things used for Christmas and how those are, in reality, idols of worship for some people.
- ✓ Watch for and notice charms that people carry, wear or put in their cars for protection, or are being sold in stores (such as statues, dice, rabbit's feet, stones, crosses, medals, etc.) Discuss that these could become idols for people. It is impossible for these things to do anything, much less protect people.

Additional resources that you can use in your family studies:

- **UCG Study Booklet "The Ten Commandments"** <https://www.ucg.org/bible-study-tools/booklets/the-ten-commandments>
- **UCG Teen Bible Study Guide "The Second Commandment"** <https://www.ucg.org/teen-bible-study/teen-bible-study-volume-3-ten-commandments/second-commandment-do-not-worship-idols>
- **Beyond Today Bible Study Series: "The Ten Commandments"** <https://www.ucg.org/beyond-today/beyond-today-bible-study/ten-commandments>
- **Beyond Today: "Why shouldn't we wear a cross as a sign of being a Christian?"** <https://www.ucg.org/bible-study-tools/bible-questions-and-answers/why-shouldnt-we-wear-a-cross-as-a-sign-of-being-a>
- **Vertical Thought Article: "Paganism in Christianity"** <https://www.ucg.org/vertical-thought/paganism-in-christianity>

POSSIBLE CLASS ACTIVITIES

1) "Pagan Gods Mentioned in the Bible" Worksheet (worksheet at end of guide)

- Make copies of the handout for each child
- Discuss: In the Bible, God told His people not to worship the various gods of the pagan nations around them. Some of these pagan gods that were mentioned are pictured on this activity sheet. From the scripture list at the bottom of the page, see if you can match the correct scripture with the pagan god pictured.
- What other things, not on the sheet, that people might trust in more than they trust in God?
- When everyone is finished, read the correct answers off the back of your master copy and have the students correct their own pages.
- Then have them cut up the false gods into confetti.

2) Stuffed Animal Analogy Lesson (for younger students)

Put out some stuffed animals, or pictures of stuffed animals for the children to see.

1. Ask, do these toys look like other creatures you know about? (Yes) These are images of something God created.
2. Do you have a stuffed animal that is special to you? What is it?
3. Are these stuffed animals alive? (No)
4. Could these stuffed animals help you if you were in trouble? (No).
Some people look to non-living things like stuffed animals to help them. These things are called "idols." Sometimes it is a statue, or even a tree.
5. Can you think of anything people hang up, or carry, as "good luck" charms to protect them? (Things like cross, statues of dead "saints," rabbit's feet, stones, beads, medals)

These are all idols, and should not be looked to for good luck or blessings. Only God can give us the blessing of protection.

3) For ages 10 and up: Use scriptures and discussion questions from the UCG Teen Bible Study Guide "The Second Commandment" <https://www.ucg.org/teen-bible-study/teen-bible-study-volume-3-ten-commandments/second-commandment-do-not-worship-idols>

- For a different format, assign each student 1-2 of these questions a couple of weeks before your youth instruction meeting. Have them research the question and create a short 1-2 minute presentation with scriptural evidence in response to the question(s).

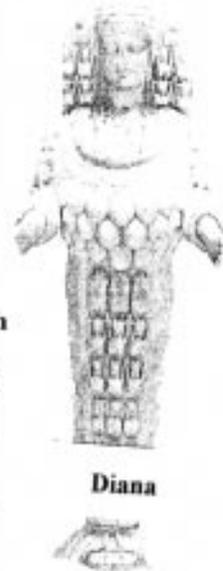
4) Use discussion questions from one of the Biblical examples from the study guide to focus on the second commandment.

5) Additional notes on Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego.

- ✓ **Read Daniel 3 (in a student friendly version) together as a class.**
- ✓ **Why does it matter to God how people worship?** A right Biblical example is found in Daniel 3. These three young men (Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego) obeyed and kept God's Commandments and God protected them. They knew that they should only look to God for protection and not anything else.

Pagan Gods Mentioned in the Bible

Some pagan gods who are mentioned in the Bible are pictured below.
Match the god with the corresponding scripture and write it under each one.



Acts 19:24, 27-28

Isaiah 46:1

Exodus 32: 5, 8, 19

Acts 7:43

Numbers 22:41

Acts 14:12-13

Acts 28:11

I Samuel 5:2-7

I Kings 18:19

Pagan Gods Mentioned in the Bible

Answer Sheet

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Asherah (and or Baal) | 1 Kings 18:19 |
| 2. Baal | Numbers 22:41 |
| 3. Nebo | Isaiah 46:1 |
| 4. Golden Calf | Exodus 32:5, 8, 19 |
| 5. Zeus | Acts 14:12-13 |
| 6. Moloch | Acts 7:43 |
| 7. Diana | Acts 19:24, 27-28 |
| 8. Dagon | I Samuel 5:2-7 |
| 9. Twin Brothers | Acts 28:11 |

THINGS WE TRUST AND PUT AHEAD OF GOD

Worshiping God in sincerity and truth, means obeying the First and Second Commandments. In ancient times mankind made many images to represent God. People worshiped things found in nature like the sun, moon, stars, bugs and cows. In modern times we put material possessions and our hearts' desires ahead of our desire to obey God's Commandments. The edge of this page contains words that represent things available in our society that people might believe in or put their trust in besides God.

Look through magazines and cut out pictures to paste on this page, or another sheet of paper, which would represent the gods of our society and which would match the words at the edge of the paper. Have fun!

CAR

MOVIE STARS

MAGICIANS

SEX APPEAL

THE MILITARY

GOOD LOOKS

FORTUNE-TELLERS

MUSICIANS

WRONG RELIGIONS

DRUGS

**JOB OR HIGH
POSITION**

CLOTHES

EXPENSIVE HOUSES

SPORTS

CELEBRITIES / SPORTS FIGURES

JEWELRY

PUT YOUR TRUST IN THE GOD OF THE BIBLE.