

General Church Education



Naboth's Vineyard

1 Kings 21:1-29

Lesson 13

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 6: The Lord Is Our Prophet

For ages 11-12 years

Naboth's Vineyard

1 Kings 21:1-29

Teacher Background

Naboth owned a vineyard next to Ahab's palace. It was his inheritance from the Lord. However, Ahab coveted the vineyard. He went to Naboth and offered to buy or exchange it for a vineyard somewhere else. When Naboth refused, Ahab sulked. But his wife Jezebel set about getting it for him. She treacherously arranged Naboth's murder. Afterwards, Ahab claimed the vineyard. However, when Ahab went to see the vineyard Elijah met him there. He told Ahab that he and his family would die and their bodies would be eaten by dogs and birds. When Ahab heard this, he humbled himself. Consequently, these things would only happen after his death.

From the time Ahab married Jezebel, she fed his evils and led him and all of Israel to the worship of Baal. Ahab's response to her evil actions was either to follow along or to turn a blind eye—and then reap the consequences. Her temptation of Ahab can be compared to the temptations evil spirits bring to us, or, more immediately, to the temptations of peer pressure where “friends” urge others to do things that are wrong.

Focus Points

- Ahab coveted Naboth's vineyard.
- Ahab's wife, Jezebel, conspired to get the vineyard for him.
- Elijah warned Ahab about his actions but Ahab humbled himself and was given reprieve.

Readings from the Writings

“A ‘vineyard,’ in the Word, signifies a church that is in truths from the Lord.” *Apocalypse Revealed* 316

“[I]t is said of Jezebel that she ‘calletth herself a prophetess,’ not that Jezebel the wife of Ahab called herself a prophetess, but this is said because ‘Jezebel’ signifies the delight of the love of self and the world; and this delight teaches and seduces those who are in truths. For everyone, when he thinks by himself, thinks from his own love, and thus imbues himself with falsities, which is ‘to teach and to seduce.’ ... By all these things the perversion of the church by the delight of the love of self and the world, and by the evils and falsities flowing forth therefrom, was represented. For all the historical parts of the Word, as well as the prophetic, are representative of such things as are of the church.” *Apocalypse Explained* 160.1, 2

“All worship of God must needs begin with holy fear, within which is the thought that God will reward the good and punish the evil.” *Arcana Coelestia* 6071.5

Teacher Activity Overview

The lesson offers the following activity choices:

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house, you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s.” (Exodus 20:17)

Projects and Activities (for answers, see back of lesson)

Naboth’s Vineyard True or False?

Decide whether each statement is true or false.

Design a T-shirt Slogan to Reject Coveting

Transform the commandment, “ You shall not covet”, into a short slogan and/or picture to reject coveting and decorate a T-shirt.

Additional Project and Activity Choices for Parents and Teachers

A Chart of the Kings of Israel and Judah

As you learn about the kings of Israel and Judah, complete a chart. Think about whether the king is good or evil as you fill in the spaces. Available at: <https://newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-a-chart-of-the-kings-of-israel-and-judah-1-kings-2-kings.pdf>

Queen Jezebel, a Picture of Hell

People sometimes use the name “Jezebel” to describe an evil woman. Match the evil she did to the greater spiritual evil her actions picture. See: <https://newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-queen-jezebel-a-picture-of-hell-1-kings-21.pdf>

Naboth’s Vineyard Word Search

Find words from 1 Kings 21. They are written down, up, backwards, forwards, and diagonally. Online at: <https://newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-naboths-vineyard-word-search-1-kings-21.pdf>

Naboth's Vineyard

1 Kings 21:1-29

Vocabulary

moped—sulked

gloat—take selfish pleasure one's success or another's misfortune

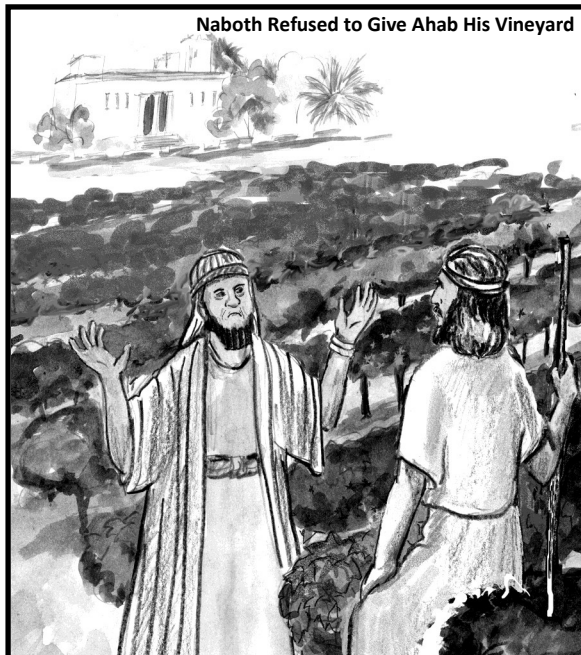
reprieve—cancel or delay punishment

Ahab Wants Naboth's Vineyard

Ahab disobeyed the Lord's command to destroy the Syrians. Then he returned to his palace in Samaria and noticed a vineyard next door. He wanted that vineyard badly. So, he went to the owner, Naboth, and offered to buy the vineyard from him or to exchange it for a better one somewhere else. Naboth answered,

"The Lord forbid that I should give the inheritance of my fathers to you!" (1 Kings 21:3)

Naboth loved and needed his vineyard. It was an inheritance from his family and was his source of income. It was probably large and fruitful or the king would not have wanted it. But Naboth also knew the inheritance laws that the Lord had given Moses. One law stated that "no inheritance shall change hands from one tribe to another" (Numbers 36:9). Unlike Ahab, who did not seem to value the Lord's laws, Naboth wanted to obey them. He knew that Ahab was from a different tribe than himself and that he had no right to the vineyard. Still, it must have taken great courage to refuse his king.



Jezebel Gets Naboth's Vineyard

In his heart Ahab knew that Naboth was right and that he had no legal claim to the vineyard. But, once again, Ahab showed his selfishness. He returned to his palace, went into his room and moped. He refused to eat any food. Despite being a king, Ahab ignored his royal responsibilities because he could not have what he wanted.

When Jezebel heard what Ahab was doing, she went to talk to him. As Ahab told her about Naboth refusing to give or sell him his vineyard, Jezebel reminded him that he was king and had authority over Israel. She told him to get up and eat, and promised to get the vineyard for him. Her words made it clear that she did not care

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about the laws or the religion of Israel. Ahab did not seem to wonder how Jezebel would get the vineyard, nor did he appear to care. He continued to sulk in his bedroom while she came up with a plan.

In Ahab's name Jezebel wrote to the elders and nobles in the city, telling them to proclaim a fast. A fast was a gathering called to make serious decisions. Jezebel asked them to seat Naboth in a high position. Finally, she told the elders and nobles to seat two evil men at the assembly. They were to accuse Naboth of blaspheming God and the king and to call for him to be stoned to death.

The elders and nobles of the city did as Jezebel asked. Naboth sat in the assembly at the head of the table and was accused of blasphemy. Then he was taken out and stoned. Once this was done, the elders wrote to Jezebel to let her know that Naboth was dead.

Ahab Is Warned Again

Imagine Ahab's excitement when Jezebel told him that the vineyard was his! He showed no guilt for Naboth's death, nor did he question why he had been stoned. Instead, he stopped moping, got up and went out to claim the vineyard.

However, Ahab did not have much time to gloat over his new possession. At the Lord's instructions, the prophet Elijah went to meet Ahab at the vineyard to give him a warning.

“Thus says the Lord: ‘Have you murdered and also taken possession?’ And you shall speak to him saying, “Thus says the Lord: ‘In the place where the dogs licked the blood of Naboth, dogs shall lick your blood, even yours.’” (1 Kings 21:19)



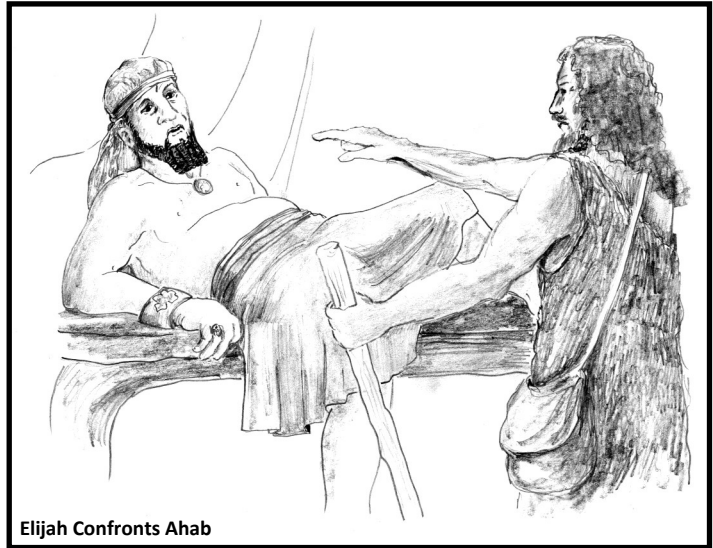
Once again Ahab was told that he would die for his evil choices. Elijah told Ahab that not only would he die, but that his entire family would die and their bodies would be eaten by dogs and birds. In those days it was important to honor a person with a decent burial. The more important the person, the greater the ritual.

As king and queen, Ahab's and Jezebel's burials would typically have included grand ceremonies and ceremonial mourning. Instead, the dogs would eat Jezebel's body and the bodies of any members of Ahab's family who died in the city. Carrion birds would eat the bodies of those who died in the fields. To be eaten by a dog would

have been the worst, for they were considered very unclean animals, but to be eaten by flesh-eating birds would also have been a great dishonor.

Ahab Humbles Himself

When Ahab heard the words of the Lord, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth, a scratchy and uncomfortable material. He fasted and lay about in mourning. This earned him some reprieve. The Lord told Elijah that Ahab's house would be destroyed in Ahab's lifetime, but after his death, during his son's reign.



This story reminds us of how evil Ahab was. We are told that there was no one like him in the evil that he did. Some of the blame is put on Jezebel for stirring him up, but his actions are called abominable. It is just after this description that the Word says that Ahab mourned and showed sorrow for what he had done. In Israel, people were required to show signs of repentance. Consequently, Ahab's punishment was lessened.

Coveting

Was it wrong of Ahab to wish he could have Naboth's vineyard? Is it wrong to wish you could have something someone else has? What makes such a wish coveting?

We often see things we wish we could have. Such a wish only becomes coveting when we want something so badly that we wish that we could have it instead of another person, when we begin to hate or wish harm to a person who has what we want, or begin to think of ways to cheat to get it.

Jezebel, Ahab's wife, was the person who actually planned how to get the vineyard and had the plan carried out. But, Ahab knew what his wife was like. He knew she would have to use devious means to get the vineyard because, according to the law, it belonged to Naboth's family. His covetous wish for the vineyard caused him to ignore the evil done to Naboth.

It is important to recognize when a wish we have begins to turn into coveting. To do this we need to be aware of the thoughts we are having toward the owner of something we want and the lengths we would go to get it.

Thinking more usefully, we might turn our minds to ways we could earn money to buy what we want or ask for it as a gift for a birthday, etc. If there is no way we can or should have the item, we need to let go of our desire for it and be happy that someone else has something special.

Activity Overview

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house, you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s.” (Exodus 20:17)

Projects and Activities (for answers, see the back of this lesson)

Choose one or two.

Naboth’s Vineyard True or False?

Decide whether each statement is true or false.

Design a T-shirt Slogan to Reject Coveting

Transform the commandment, “ You shall not covet”, into a short slogan and/or picture to reject coveting and decorate a T-shirt.

Naboth's Vineyard True or False?

1 Kings 21:1-29

Circle T or F to indicate whether you think each statement is true or false. If you choose F, write what you think is true underneath.

1. T or F Ahab was the king of Samaria.
2. T or F Ahab saw an olive grove and wanted it for himself.
3. T or F The owner of the thing Ahab wanted was named Naboth.
4. T or F The owner was not willing to sell his possession.
5. T or F Ahab was content with the man's answer.
6. T or F Ahab's wife, Jezebel, decided to get Ahab the thing he wanted.
7. T or F Jezebel was willing to use trickery to get what Ahab wanted.
8. T or F The owner of the possession was safe from Jezebel's trickery.
9. T or F Ahab got the thing he wanted.
10. T or F Ahab did not suffer any harm from his wife's trickery.

Design a T-shirt Slogan to Reject Coveting

Decorate a T-shirt to illustrate the Lord's command that we should not covet things that belong to others.

Materials Needed

T-shirt template (on the following pages)

Marker

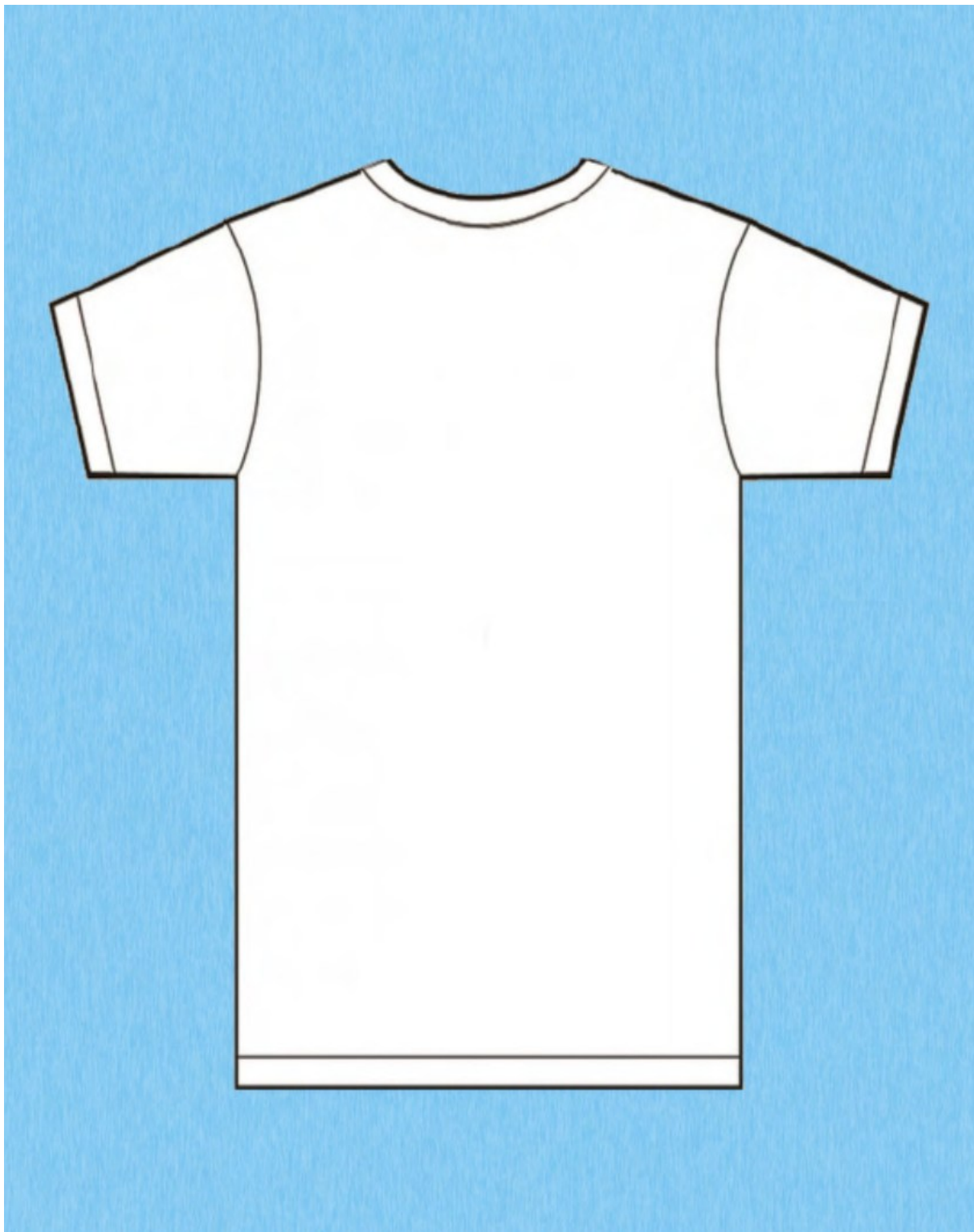
Pens or paints to decorate the T-shirt

Directions

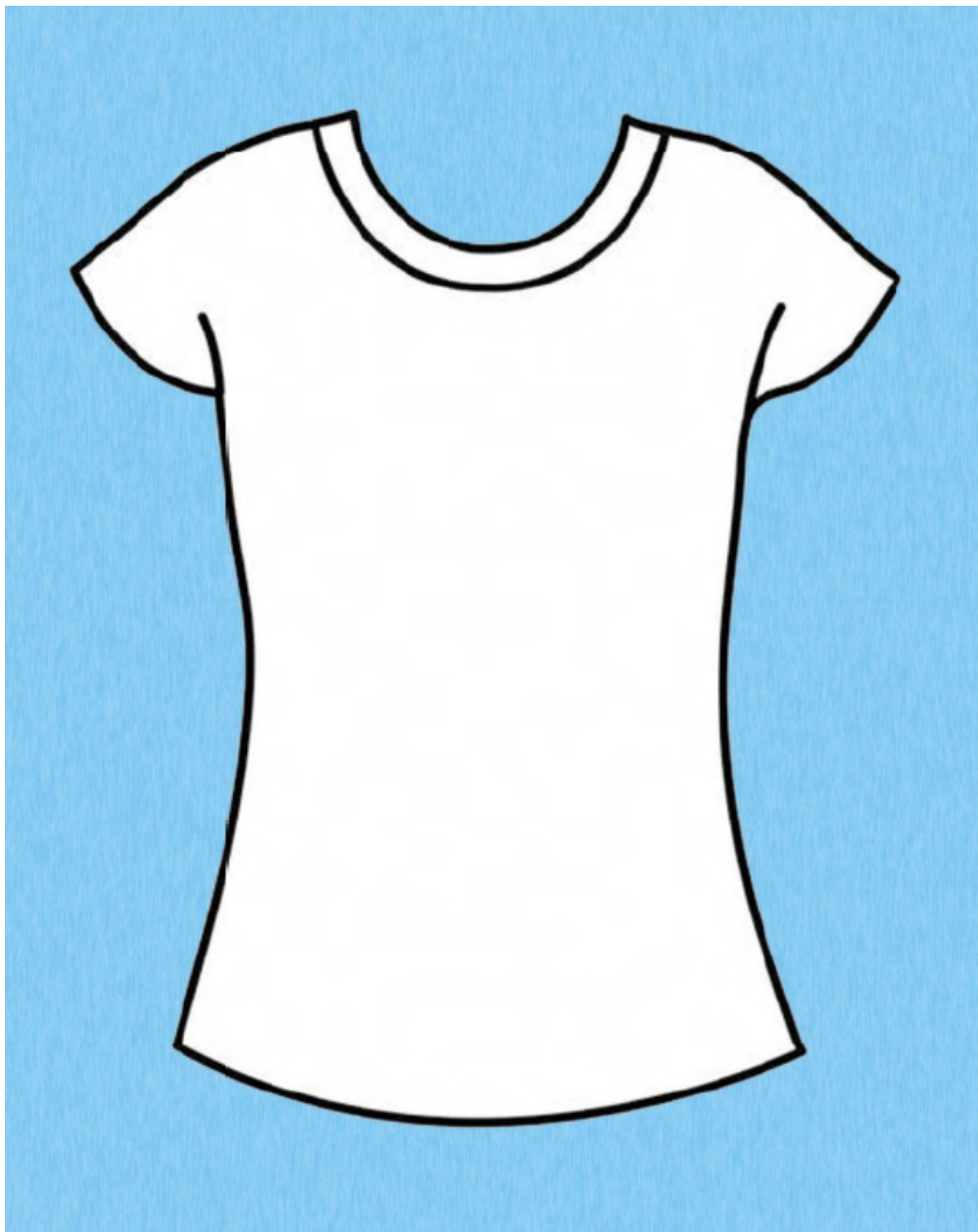
1. Manufacturers use catchy slogans and fun images to persuade us to buy their products. Short taglines that capture our interest are a sometimes called a "call to action".
2. What slogan might you use to spread the command, "You shall not covet"? One way to say this might be, "Curb coveting".
3. Sometimes an advertiser will take the opposite approach and tell people what they *should* do instead of what they should *not* do. What does the Lord want you to do instead of coveting? For example, if you flip from coveting to thankfulness you might say, "Be Thankful".
4. Choose a template on the following pages to design a T-shirt that expresses a call to action about coveting. Decide between using a "you shall not" slogan or a positive action. Use compelling language that encourages others to *want* to obey the command not to covet.
5. Decorate your T-shirt.



T-shirt Template



T-shirt Template



Answers

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True or False?

1. F, 2. F, 3. T, 4. T, 5. F, 6. T, 7. T, 8. F, 9. T, 10. F.