

Commandment 5: Cain Kills Abel

“You shall not murder”

Exodus 20:13; Genesis 4:3-16

Goal:

This lesson teaches the fifth commandment through the story of Cain killing Abel. Brothers Cain and Abel made offerings to the Lord. The Lord accepted Abel’s offering from his flock but rejected Cain’s offering. Cain was angry and killed Abel.

Process:

Choose activities for the 4 parts of the lesson from the chart below. For multi-aged groups, teach the lesson to the entire group and select activities that suit your students. Online Extras provide additional activity choices.

Lesson Overview

Lesson Parts	Activities	Materials Given	Supplies Needed
1. Introduction (2-3 minutes)	All Ages <i>The Fifth Commandment</i>	introduction p. 2	
2. Readings & Questions (5-7 minutes)	All Ages select readings for your group	readings pp. 2-3 questions p. 4 talk-about picture p. 5	Bible for ages 11-14
3. Activities Choose 1-2 activities (15-20 minutes) Note: Activity ages are approximate. Choose activities that will work for your group.	Ages 3-6 <i>Two Offerings</i> 3-D picture	directions p. 10 <i>Two Offerings Template</i> p. 7	cotton balls, glue, dried grains or beans, crayons or markers
	Ages 7-10 <i>The Offerings of Cain and Abel</i> moving picture	directions p. 8 <i>The Offerings</i> p. 9 <i>The Altar</i> p. 10	stiff paper to print project; scissors; brads, split pins or paperclips optional: colored pencils or crayons
	Ages 11-14 <i>Being a Life-Giver</i> discuss scenarios	directions p. 11 <i>Being a Life-Giver Scenarios</i> pp. 12-13	scissors
	Ages 3-10 picture to color	<i>Abel with His Flock</i> p. 14	crayons or markers
4. Closing & Recitation (2-3 minutes)	All Ages wrap-up	<i>Recitation Slips</i> p. 15	scissors or paper cutter
Online Extras	All Ages additional activities	online links p. 15	various

Introduction: The Fifth Commandment

The fifth commandment is on the second table of the Commandments. It is the first commandment about loving our neighbor. The Lord tells us,

5. You shall not murder. Exodus 20:13

The fifth commandment, you shall not murder, means we are not to hurt the body, mind or spirit of another person.

- Murder springs from anger and from hatred for others. It is exactly opposite to what the Lord wants. The Lord tells us to love our neighbor.
- Our story today is about someone who was jealous. He wanted to be as good as, or even better than, his brother. He did not fight against this evil as it grew in his mind and heart. He let it come out into an evil action.
- The commandment that we should not murder is about more than physically killing another person. It is also about just wanting to hurt someone. We see signs of wanting to hurt another person when we feel like paying them back for something they have done.
- We can commit murder without even touching someone! For example, we kill a person's reputation when we find fault with everything they do or criticize them unjustly.

Our story today is found in the beginning of Genesis. It is a parable from the Ancient Word about two brothers, Cain and Abel. Let's find out why Cain was jealous of his brother and why the Lord punished him.

Reading Ages 3-6: Cain Kills Abel

This is a short retelling of the story for young children. To tell the story in your own words using a picture, see the talk-about picture on p. 5.

Our story is about two brothers, Cain and Abel. Cain was the oldest. He dug the ground, planted crops, and grew food. Abel was the youngest. He was a shepherd. He took care of animals.

One day Cain and Abel brought offerings to the Lord to thank Him for the wonderful things He had given them. Cain brought vegetables and fruits that grew in the ground. Abel brought animals from his flocks.

The Lord liked Abel's offering because Abel loved the Lord. But the Lord did not accept Cain's offering because Cain was selfish.

Cain was jealous! He became angry and forgot about loving and obeying the Lord. He also forgot about loving his brother. So when he was alone with Abel, he did a very wicked thing. He killed Abel.

When the Lord asked Cain where Abel was, Cain lied. He said he did not know where Abel was. But the Lord knew he was lying. The Lord knew what had happened to Abel, and He punished Cain.

Cain could not be a farmer any more. His plants would not grow. He had to wander around looking for food.

Cain knew he had done a terrible thing and was afraid someone might kill him too. So the Lord put a mark on Cain to protect him from harm.

Reading Ages 7-10: Cain Kills Abel

New Church Concept

Teacher Background

'You are not to kill,' in its earthly meaning means not killing people, inflicting on them any fatal wound, or mutilating their bodies. It also means not bringing any deadly evil against their names and reputations, since for many people their reputation and their life go hand in hand.

In a broader earthly meaning, murdering includes hostility, hatred, and revenge, which involve longing for someone's death. Murder lies hidden inside these feelings like an area that is still burning inside a piece of wood under the ashes. Hellfire is nothing else. This is why we say someone blazes with hatred or burns for revenge. These feelings are murders at the level of intent even if not in act. If fear of the law, retribution, or revenge were taken away, these feelings would burst into action, especially if the intent involved deception or savagery.

See *True Christian Religion*
309

A retelling of the story for children

Adam and Eve had two sons. Cain was the oldest. He worked the ground to grow food like vegetables and grain. Abel was the youngest. He was a shepherd and took care of the sheep. The Lord gave Cain and Abel many things. They had food, clothing, and a place to live. One day they each brought an offering to the Lord to thank Him for all that they had.

The two brothers brought different offerings. Cain brought some of the produce he had grown. Abel brought a lamb from his flocks. The Lord accepted Abel's offering but not Cain's. Abel was truly thankful and loved the Lord with all his heart. Cain did not really love the Lord. Cain brought his offering to the Lord pretending that he loved Him. But actually Cain was thinking more about himself than about the Lord. The Lord sees everyone's heart and knew that Abel was truly worshiping Him while Cain was not.

Cain was angry. He looked unhappy. The Lord said, "If you do well, will you not be accepted?" This meant that if Cain obeyed the Lord's commandments, his offering would also be accepted and he would be happy. But if he did not obey, then sin would rule over him. Sin means purposely disobeying the Lord. When people disobey on purpose, it becomes easier and easier to do even more wicked things. The Lord told Cain that he should get rid of his selfish desires so that they would not take control of him.

But Cain was not satisfied. He was jealous. It made him angry to think that Abel's offering was accepted, but his was not. He became so angry that he forgot about loving and obeying the Lord. He also forgot about loving his brother. At last he became so angry that when they were alone in the field, Cain killed Abel.

Cain did a very wicked thing, didn't he? Then, when the Lord asked where Abel was, he said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" It is easy for one wrong thing to lead to another, like Cain's murder led to his lying. But the Lord knew that Cain was lying, that he had killed his brother and that Cain must be punished.

Cain could not be a farmer. The ground was cursed and plants would no longer grow for him. He would have to wander around looking for food. Cain thought his punishment was more than he could bear. He was also afraid that someone might kill him because of the terrible wrong that he had done. So the Lord put a mark on him so that nobody would hurt him.

Reading Ages 11-14: Cain Kills Abel

Read Genesis 4:3-16 or use the retelling above.

Questions Ages 3-6

1. Who were the two brothers in our story? (Cain and Abel)
2. What offerings did they bring to the Lord? (They brought plant food and flocks of animals)
3. How did Cain feel when his offering was not accepted? (He was angry)
4. What did Cain do? (He killed Abel)
5. How did the Lord punish Cain? (He couldn't grow food any more. He wandered the earth.)

Questions Ages 7-10

1. What offering did Cain bring? (Cain was a farmer. He brought the fruit of the ground.)
2. What offering did Abel bring? (Abel was a shepherd. He brought the young animals from his flock.)
3. Whose offering did the Lord accept? (Abel's offering)
4. Why didn't the Lord accept Cain's offering? (Cain only pretended to love the Lord. The Lord could see that in his heart he was angry and jealous of his brother. Another word for this is being selfish.)
5. Why did Cain kill Abel? (to pay him back or take revenge)
6. What did Cain do next? (Cain lied to the Lord. He said, "Am I my brother's keeper?")
7. Have you ever felt angry, like Cain? What does the Lord want us to do if we feel like this? (We are to try our best to love our neighbor, not to "kill" or "murder" them in any way, for example by saying mean things.)

Questions Ages 11-14

1. The story of Cain and Abel is an allegory. It is a parable from the Ancient Word written long ago. It is about things that happen in our own lives. Today's story is about how one kind of disobedience leads to another.
2. What did Cain pretend to do? (Cain pretended to worship the Lord.) True worship comes from the heart, and Cain did not love the Lord in his heart.
3. Cain let his anger grow inside him until he killed Abel. In what ways might we let anger build inside us?
4. Murder is not just physical killing. What kinds of things can happen when we let anger build up inside us? In what ways might we "murder" other people? (We can tear other people apart or "murder" them by destroying their hopes, their dreams, their confidence, their friendships, and their spirit. We do this by gossiping, being sarcastic, putting people down, or simply by rolling our eyes or looking at them in hurtful ways.)
5. How did Cain respond to the Lord's question about his brother? (He lied and said, "Am I my brother's keeper?")
6. It is important to work to stop our anger because we have to stop doing what is wrong before we can do what is right. Cain's answer to the Lord actually shows us how we can be *life-givers* instead of murderers. In what ways can we be "our brothers keepers"—looking after their life and well-being? (We can treat others with love and kindness. We should realize that other people's well-being and happiness is just as important as our own.)



Ages 3-6: Two Offerings

Materials Needed

Two Offerings Template for each child, cotton balls, glue, dried grains and/or beans, crayons or markers

Prepare in Advance

Print a copy of the *Two Offerings Template* for each child. Gather other supplies.

New Church Concept

Teacher Background

'And...Cain brought forward some of the fruit of the ground as an offering to Jehovah.' The fruit of the ground means doing what faith requires without loving others. An offering to Jehovah means the worship rising out of those deeds. See *Arcana Coelestia* 346

'And Abel...brought forward some of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And Jehovah looked on Abel and on his offering.' Abel here symbolizes charity.... The firstborn of the flock symbolize holiness, which is exclusively the Lord's. The fat symbolizes the actual quality of heaven, which is also the Lord's. Jehovah looked on Abel and on his offering means that everything connected with charity was pleasing to the Lord, as was all worship springing from charity. See *Arcana Coelestia* 350

Two brothers, Cain and Abel, brought offerings to the Lord. Cain was a farmer. He brought crops that grew in the ground. Abel was a shepherd. He brought an animal from his flocks. Children will create a project that shows what Cain and Abel brought to the Lord.



1. One day, Cain and Abel both brought offerings to the Lord to thank Him for all the wonderful things He had given them. They each brought something that came from the kind of work they did.
2. Cain was a farmer. He grew food in the ground. What kinds of food grow in the ground? (vegetables such as beans and grains such as rice or wheat)
3. Abel was a shepherd. He tended flocks. Flocks are gentle animals like sheep.
4. Give children the *Two Offerings* template and crayons or markers. Color the plant stem and the lamb's head and legs.
5. Hand out glue and instruct the children to put glue on the tops of the stems. Sprinkle the grains/beans on the glue.
6. Give children cotton balls. Invite them to pull the balls apart to make a woolly coat for the lamb. Then spread glue on the lamb and place the woolly coat on it.

New Church Concept

Teacher Background

"'Cain's anger was set ablaze' means that charity had departed. This becomes clear...where it is said that he killed Abel his brother, who means charity. Anger is the general emotion that results from anything which gets in the way of self-love and its desires. In the world of evil spirits this is perceived plainly. Indeed general anger against the Lord prevails, because they are not moved at all by charity, but only by hatred. Anything that is unfavorable to self-love and the love of the world arouses opposition, which manifests itself in anger." *Arcana Coelestia* 357

"'Jehovah said to Cain' was the dictate of conscience. 'Anger has been set ablaze and the face has fallen' means... the departure of charity and the change that took place in interiors." *Arcana Coelestia* 359



Ages 7-10: The Offerings of Cain and Abel

Materials Needed

copies of *The Offerings* and *The Altar* printed in color on stiff paper for each student; scissors; split pins, brads or paper clips
optional: colored pencils or crayons if color printing is not available

Prepare in Advance

Print *The Offerings* and *The Altar* on stiff paper. Gather other supplies.

New Church Concept Teacher Background

When they were in the field, Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him. The meaning is that while both faith and charity grew out of the doctrine concerning faith, faith detached from love could not help completely devaluing charity and in this way extinguishing it. People do the same thing today when they claim that faith alone will save them even if they never perform a single act of neighborly love. So their theory itself annihilates charity, even though they recognize and pay lip service to the idea that faith does not save unless there is love. See *Arcana Coelestia* 369

Children will create a moving project to show that Cain brought a food offering, and Abel brought an animal offering to the Lord.

1. Cain and Abel brought offerings to the Lord. Why did the Lord accept Abel's offering, but not Cain's? (Abel's worship of the Lord was genuine, and Cain's was not.)
2. Cain's offering represents doing something you know is right, but not because you love others. Abel's offering represents doing what is right because you love the Lord and love others. Can you think of examples like this in our own lives? For example, think of a time when you were asked to say "thank you". Did you really mean it? Or did you just say "thanks" because you had to?
3. We will make a moving project of the offerings to help remember this story. Hand out *The Offerings* and *The Altar* pages. *Optional*: If color printing was not available, hand out colored pencils or crayons to add color to the pictures.
4. Distribute scissors and have students cut out *The Altar* on the pale gray lines.
5. Puncture a hole in the black dot in the center of *The Altar* with a split pin. Alternatively, unbend a paper clip and stick one end through the black dot.
6. Puncture a hole through the black dot at the center of *The Offerings* page. Push the ends of the split pin through this hole as well and spread it out to hold the two pieces together. Alternatively, bend the paperclip on the front and back to hold the pieces in place.
7. Rotate the altar to show Abel's name, with his offering, or Cain's name, with his offering. As you move the circle, think about why the Lord could accept Abel's offering, but not Cain's offering.



New Church Concept

Teacher Background

'Murders of every kind' include enmity, hatred, and revenge of every kind, which breathe murder, for murder lies hidden in them, like fire in wood underneath the ashes. Infernal fire is nothing else, and this is the origin of the expressions to 'kindle with hatred,' and to 'burn with revenge.' All these are 'murders' in the natural sense. But in the spiritual sense 'murders' mean all methods of killing and destroying the souls of people, which are varied and many. And in the highest sense 'murder' means to hate the Lord. These three kinds of 'murder' form a one, and cleave together, for someone who wills the murder of a person's body in this world, after death wills the murder of their soul, and wills the murder of the Lord, for they burn with anger against Him and desire to blot out His name. See *Doctrine of Life* 67





Ages 11-14: Being a Life-Giver

Materials Needed

Set of *Being a Life-Giver Scenarios* for each student.

Prepare in Advance

Print *Being a Life-Giver Scenarios* (2 pp).

New Church Concept Teacher Background

You shall not kill means not to take away spiritual life from anyone, not to extinguish faith and charity, and also not to hold the neighbor in hatred. This is evident from the meaning of "killing," as being to deprive of spiritual life. That "killing" means this is because in this sense spiritual life, or the life of heaven with people, is dealt with; and spiritual life is the life of faith and of charity. The reason why "not to kill" is also in the internal sense not to hold the neighbor in hatred, is that those who hold others in hatred continually wish to kill, and would kill in act unless prevented by the fear of the penalty, of the loss of life, of reputation, and the like. For hatred is of evil, is contrary to charity, and breathes nothing but the murder of those whom it hates: in the world the murder of the body; in the other life the murder of the soul." See *Arcana Coelestia* 8902

While many of the commandments start with "You shall not", it is important to remember that each commandment has a positive side too. First, we need to stop doing what hurts ourselves and other people. Then we can start doing what is good.

This activity presents a dozen scenarios people might encounter. Three possible responses are offered after each situation. Students will read a situation and discuss the impact of the different possible responses.



1. In what ways might a person take someone else's life without even touching them?
2. Have you ever felt your life was being taken from you? If so, what made it feel that way?
3. Give each student a copy of *Being a Life-Giver Scenarios*. Invite a student to choose one card. Read the first statement aloud.
4. Invite students to look at the possible responses. Ask them to evaluate whether each response is 1. true, 2. kind, or 3. useful. Some responses may be true, but not kind. Or useful, but not true.
5. There may be disagreements. Some of the possible responses are ambiguous, depending on what is motivating someone. Discuss these situations. What makes something truly life-giving versus murderous?
6. Students may also come up with additional possible responses for the scenarios.

New Church Concept

Teacher Background

"'The voice of blood' means violence done to charity is clear from many places in the Word where 'voice' stands for everything that accuses, and 'blood' for all sin, especially hatred. For anyone who hates his brother murders him in his own heart. You have heard that it was said to the men of old, You shall not kill, and whoever kills will be liable to judgement. But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without cause will be liable to judgement. Whoever indeed says to his brother, Raca! will be liable to the Sanhedrin. And whoever says You fool! will be liable to the Gehenna of fire. Matthew 5:21-22.

These sayings denote degrees of hatred. Hatred is contrary to charity; and though a person does not actually commit murder, the intention to do so is still there, and by whatever possible method. It is external restraints alone which prevent murder actually being committed." *Arcana Coelestia* 374

RECYCLED CAKE

Your mom is too busy to make your sister a birthday cake. So, she re-iced cake left over from your birthday, the day before, hoping your sister won't notice.

1. Tell your sister that mom didn't love her enough to make a cake for her.
2. Appreciate your mother's creative solution and compliment your sister on her pretty cake.
3. Ask loudly, "Has anyone seen this cake before?"

MY TEACHERS ARE JERKS

I hate doing homework and often forget to do it. My teachers nag me about it. They say I'll fail my courses.

1. Next time someone asks about homework I'll tell them their assignment was stupid! Why should I do stupid assignments?
2. I'll listen to their lectures if I have to, but they won't change my mind. They're all stupid jerks.
3. I've been fooling myself. I think my teachers really care.

TELL ME ALL

I want to be connected with my friends, to know what's going on. There's nothing wrong with that. But some friends only want to criticize others, and I find myself gossiping about everyone. What can I do? If I say nothing, I am a bystander. This is as bad as saying something bad myself.

1. I could redirect the conversation.
2. I can walk away and say nothing.
3. What if the people I was talking about were right here?

ASSASSIN

At your classmate's birthday, someone gives them a gift of a sweatshirt with a huge picture of their face on it. Most people are happy for them.

1. You say, "What an awesome way to feed your great big ego!"
2. You say, "Great, who decided we have to deal with two of you?"
3. You say, "That's a nice gift."

A CHANCE IN A MILLION

You have a classmate who dreams of being an Olympic figure skating champion. Trouble is they can't even stand up on ice! You're exhausted from listening to their dreams.

1. Say, "Whatever gave you the idea that you could do that?"
2. Say, "I admire you. I can see you're doing a lot of hard work to make your dream come true!"
3. Say, "Wow! Can't wait to see you thrash the competition!"

BET YOU'LL MESS UP!

Your friend is going for an important try-out. They've been talking about nothing else for weeks. They work hard every day, but aren't sure they'll be good enough to get in.

1. You tell them, "Bet you'll mess up!"
2. Say, "Good luck! I hope things go well."
3. Say, "I hear it's really difficult to get in. I know three people who were much better than you that didn't make it!"

A SHOT AT THE GOAL

Your soccer team has made it to the finals and your team is winning! You want the MVP award and are doing all you can to get yourself in the best position to win it.

1. Keep control of the ball for as long as you can by not passing it to other players.
2. Recognize the whole team needs to work together to win. Trust your teammates and include everyone in the game.
3. You see someone else lining up a goal shot and jump in so you get the goal.

I COULD DO IT BETTER

You have many talents. You write and draw well. You are doing a group project with people less talented than you. You think the girl who is writing the assignment is doing a terrible job.

1. Tell her that her writing is terrible but she shouldn't worry, you'll re-do it for her.
2. Stop and think about your classmate and accept that this is her best work. Acknowledge the best elements of her efforts.
3. Change what she has written without telling her.

GREEN SLIME

Your younger brother is always following you around and asking stupid questions. He listens in when you are talking to your friends and ruins your conversations.

1. Start calling him "green slime".
2. Lie to your friends. Tell them your brother still wets his bed.
3. See that your brother is lonely and wants your company. Do something with him.

MY SIBLING IS THE WORST

You are chatting on the phone with a friend. Your younger sibling is in the room. Your sibling says stupid things about you that you don't want your friends to know, e.g. you still suck your thumb.

1. Loudly tell your sibling to be quiet.
2. Leave or mute and tell your sibling what they are saying is hurting you.
3. Tell your friends mean things about your sibling so they won't believe what he/she is saying about you.

HEY, I WAS TALKING

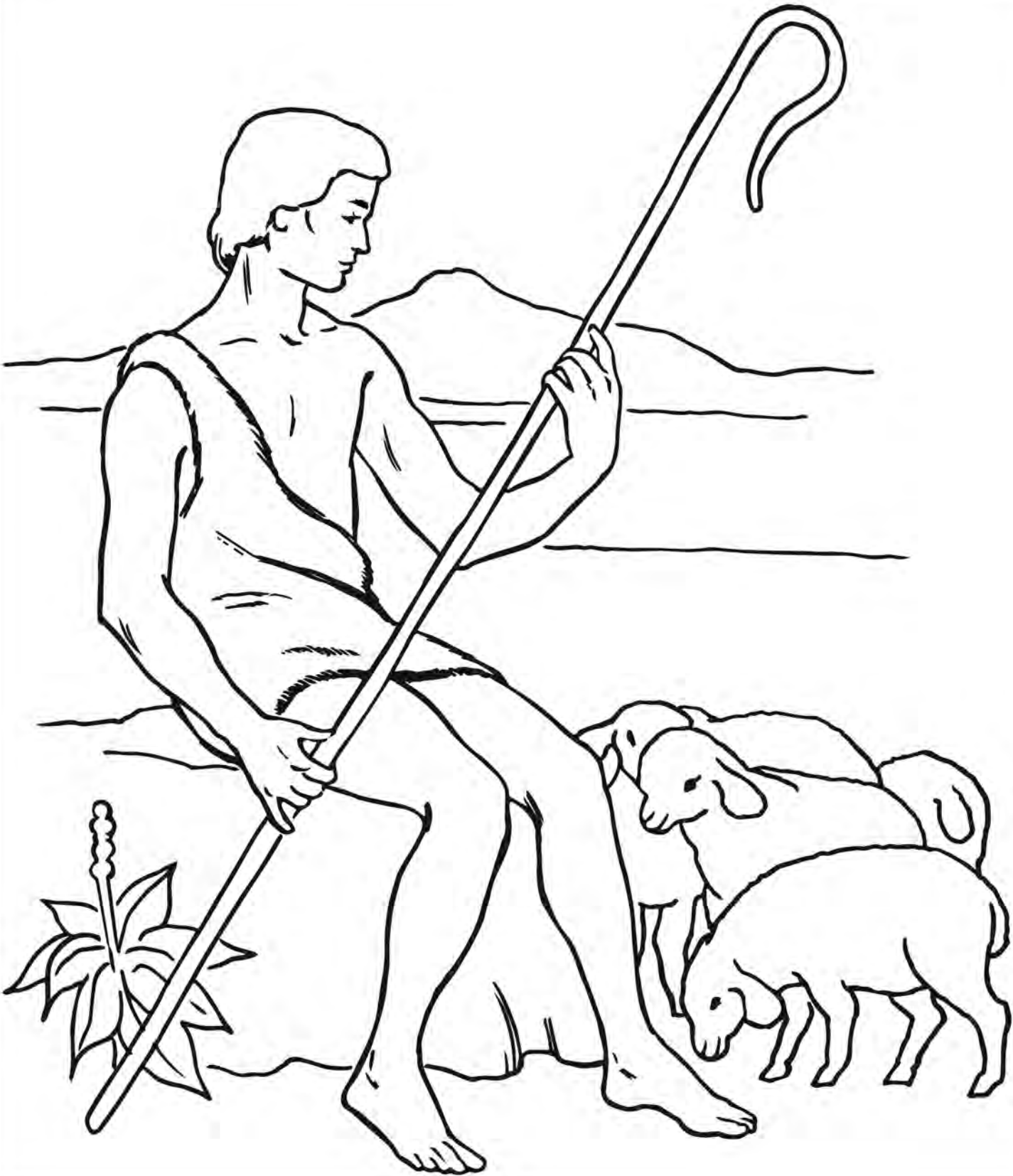
You have a lot to say in an online conversation you started with a group of friends. After ten minutes someone else tries to say something that is unrelated to what you were saying.

1. Mute all. Tell people you have not finished and continue speaking.
2. Mute yourself and listen to what they have to say but mute them as soon as it's quiet and start talking again.
3. Apologize for talking so long and let someone start a new topic.

MY WORLD

You're great at online gaming. The best part is when others invite you to play in their world so you can destroy their stuff. You distract them so they don't notice what you're doing.

1. Tell people you think destroying their stuff is funny.
2. Pay attention to the fact that your friends have stopped telling you when they're playing.
3. Tell people they should grow up. It's only a game.



Closing & Recitation

The fifth commandment, “You shall not murder” means we are not to take another person’s life, physically or spiritually. If we start to feel we are jealous or want to pay someone back, we can stop ourselves and remember that the Lord wants us to love others instead.

Today we add the fifth commandment to the commandments which we have already learned. You shall not murder. Let’s say it together now. Take home a recitation slip and practice the first five commandments each day.

1. You shall have no other gods before My face.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
3. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.
4. Honor your father and your mother.
5. You shall not murder.

Exodus 20:3-13

1. You shall have no other gods before My face.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
3. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.
4. Honor your father and your mother.
5. You shall not murder.

Exodus 20:3-13

Online Extras

Looking for something “extra”? Try these online ideas!

Ages 3-6 *Song Video: The Ten Commandments* <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/video-the-ten-commandments-song/>

Ages 7-10 *Cain and Abel Crossword*

<https://www.dltk-kids.com/t.asp?t=https://www.dltk-kids.com/bible/crosswords/b-crossword-cain.gif>

Ages 11-14 *Does the Lord Get Angry?* This lesson offers a choice of activities on anger. <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/dnc-lord-1-does-the-lord-get-angry.pdf>