**Rules to Live By**

**Goals:**

* Talk about the rules God asks us to live by.
* Learn how to make up with others we may have hurt.

**Materials:** Story of Zacchaus (The Adventure Story Picture Bible), poster paper, art materials, poster of 10 commandments, Flower of Forgiveness

**Engage (Large Group)**

1. Begin by welcoming families into “story circle.”
2. Invite children to sit on the floor.
3. Tell students you are going to read a story about loving and unloving choices. At the end you will ask them who made loving choices and who made unloving choices.
4. Read aloud “The Man in the Tree” from the Adventure Story Picture Bible.
5. After you are finished reading, ask the following questions
   1. When Zacchaus loved and cheated did he make a loving or unloving choice?
   2. When people made fun of Zacchaus did they make loving or unloving choices.
   3. What kind of choice did Jesus make? Why would he go to the house of a sinner?
6. Say “Jesus calls us to make loving choices every day and he even gives us some rules to help us make loving choices. We are going to learn more about that with our families today.”

**Explore: (Breakout Sessions)**

1. Begin by welcoming families to the room. Tell them you are going to discuss the rules God gives us to live by.
2. Hand out a sheet of paper to each table. Ask families to work together to write down some of the most important rules their family has. After each rule write what happens when these rules are broken.
3. If there is time the sheets may be decorated.
4. After about 7 minutes have each group share.
5. Ask the questions: Why do families have rules? What happens when family members don’t follow these rules? Listen to responses.
6. Tell families God has rules just like families have rules.
7. Ask each family to write God’s rules on a piece of paper.
8. After about 7 minutes have groups share.
9. Ask children if they learned about God’s list of rules in class? (The Ten Commandments.)
10. **Briefly** display a poster of the 10 commandments and compare what the families wrote with the poster. Affirm what they have in common.
11. Tell parents and children God and family rules guide our lives and help us to make loving choices.
12. Stress the following points in group discussion

* Sometimes we make mistakes. At times accidents happen and we feel responsible. These are not sins because we did not choose to do wrong. Choosing to do something we know is wrong is a sin. (Ask students to give examples of some examples of mistakes, accidents and sins so they know the difference.)

1. Write the following points on the board
   1. A sin is an unloving choice we know is wrong when we do it.
   2. A sin is something we do on purpose.
   3. A sin hurts our friendship with God.

**Reflect/Respond:**

1. Say when we sin, we can always ask for forgiveness. God and the people we love will forgive us if we are truly sorry. Just like Jesus forgave Zacchaeus.
2. Hand out the Flower of Forgiveness. Have children and parents complete the sentences at the top of the page together and color in the flower as they go.
3. If time allows, have them share some of their responses.
4. Thank families for coming and remind them about completing their book for the retreat.

**Flower of Forgiveness**

Zacchaeus was forgiven. He made up for any wrong he had done by paying back what he had taken. We can make up with the people we love when we sin too!

Complete the following sentences and then **color in 2 flower** petals for each sentence you complete.

1) When I hurt someone in my family, I can make up by:

2) When I don’t follow a family rule, I can make up by:

3) When I am mean to a friend at school, I can make up by:

4) When I lie about something I did so I won’t get in trouble, I can make up by:

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