

# I Will Obey the Law

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**Purpose**

To help each child understand the importance of respecting and obeying the laws of the land.

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**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study Matthew 22:15–22 and Articles of Faith 1:12.
2. Prepare enough salt dough for each child to have a piece. A salt dough recipe can be found on page 43. (If salt dough is not available, bring crayons and paper for the children to use.)
3. On a sheet of paper, list some situations involving laws and rules that the children are familiar with. Describe at least one situation for each child in the class, and number the situations. Use the situations below or create others more appropriate for the children in your class:
  - You are almost late for school. If you cross the street in the middle of the block instead of at the crosswalk, you will get there sooner. What will you do if you obey the law?
  - You are shopping with your father and ask for a candy bar. Your father says no, but while he is busy paying for the groceries, you see that you could slip the candy into your pocket without anyone noticing. What will you do if you obey the law?
  - You are taking your dog for a walk on a leash. You come to a park and want to stop and play, but there is a sign saying “No Dogs Allowed.” You don’t see any grown-ups around, and you could tie the dog’s leash to a tree while you play. What will you do if you obey the law?
  - You are crossing the street at a corner that has a traffic light. No cars are coming, and no one is around. But your light says to wait. What will you do if you obey the law?
  - You are at the library and have found a book you want to check out, but you left your library card at home. The librarian is not at the front desk and would not see you leave with the book. What will you do if you obey the law?
4. Prepare as many small pieces of paper as you have situations. Number the papers and put them in a bowl or basket.
5. Make a paper badge for each child:



6. Make the following wordstrip:

We believe in obeying the law.

7. Materials needed:

- a. A Bible.
- b. A coin (with a picture of a national leader on it, if possible).
- c. Pins, tape, or yarn to attach the badges to the children's clothing.
- d. Picture 2-53, Render unto Caesar.

8. Make the necessary preparations for any enrichment activities you want to use.

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**Suggested  
Lesson  
Development**

Invite a child to give the opening prayer.

Follow up with the children if you encouraged them to do something during the week.

**Rules and Laws Can Help Us**

Attention activity

Give the children pieces of salt dough and have each one shape a farm animal. (If salt dough is not available or this activity is too difficult for the children in your class, give the children crayons and paper and have them each draw a farm animal. Adjust the discussion accordingly.)

Display all the animals on the table or floor. Explain that farmers must take very good care of their animals and give them food, water, and protection. If the animals wander away, they might get lost or injured.

- What could we do to keep these animals from wandering away? (Build a fence.)

Roll a piece of dough between the palms of your hands and the table to form a long rope. Encircle the animals with it to form a fence. Explain that fences are good because they help keep animals safe. (Leave the animals on display during the rest of the lesson. At the end of the lesson let the children take their animals home.)

Explain that we have things that keep us safe too. These things are called laws and rules. Laws and rules are like fences because they stop us from doing things that are dangerous or that might make us or other people unhappy. When we obey laws and rules, they help keep us safe and happy.

Discussion

Choose a simple game familiar to every child in your class, such as tic-tac-toe. Have the children tell you the rules of the game and discuss what would happen if you tried to play the game without obeying the rules. Help the children see that rules are necessary for games to be successful and fun to play.

- What other kinds of rules are there besides game rules?
- What are some rules in your home?

Have each child tell a rule his or her family follows, such as "Put the toys away when you are finished playing." As each child mentions a rule, ask:

- How does this rule help you?

When each child has told a family rule, point out that we have rules in other places besides our homes.

- What are some of the rules at school? in Primary?
- How do these rules help you?

### **Our Country Gives Us Laws**

Story and discussion

Explain that just as we have rules at home, at school, and in Primary, we have rules for our town and country. These rules are called laws. Laws help and protect us just like our home, school, and Primary rules do. Tell a story about a child who learned how laws protect and help us when we obey them. Use the story below or create one of your own:

Jerry had always wanted a dog of his own, so he was excited when he was given a beautiful puppy for his birthday. He named the dog Pal. Jerry and Pal had a lot of fun together.

Jerry's city had a law that said all dogs must be on leashes when they were not in a fenced yard. One day Jerry decided to take Pal with him to a friend's house. He could not find Pal's leash, and his friend only lived a few houses away, so Jerry decided to take Pal without the leash.

As they walked down the street, Pal saw a cat on the other side of the road. Before Jerry realized what was happening, Pal ran into the road and was hit by a car.

With tears in his eyes, Jerry picked up the dog and carried him home. Jerry's mother took them to the veterinarian, who took care of Pal's broken leg.

When they got home, Jerry's mother told him that Pal could have been killed. Jerry realized that if he had obeyed the law and kept his dog on a leash, Pal would not have been hurt. Jerry realized that the law was there to protect him and his dog, and he decided he would never disobey that law again.

- Why do you think Jerry's city had a law about keeping dogs on leashes?
- How could Pal's accident have been prevented?
- Why do we have laws and rules that we must follow?

Discussion

Explain that laws are made to help and protect us. Ask the children to name some basic laws in your area. Discuss each law and why it was created. Help the children see how each law is helpful.

You may want to use some of the following ideas if they apply in your area:

#### *Traffic Laws*

- Stop at all stop signs. This helps us avoid accidents.
- Observe speed limits. Speed limits are set so people can drive safely and be able to stop quickly in an emergency.

### *Laws Regarding Pets*

- Keep your pet on a leash when it is out of your yard. Leash laws can protect animals from getting hurt (like Jerry's dog, Pal) and protect people's property from damage caused by animals.
- Don't be cruel to animals. This kind of law protects animals from being hurt.

### *Laws Regarding Personal Property*

- Do not steal. If we take things that belong to someone else, everyone will be unhappy.
- Do not litter. If everyone litters, then our city or town will be ugly and untidy. Our parents may have to pay (through taxes) to have it cleaned up.

## **Jesus Christ Wants Us to Obey the Law**

### Discussion

- What are taxes?

Explain that taxes are money we give to our state or country to help pay for things that benefit everyone, such as police officers, firefighters, roads, and schools. Briefly discuss what it would be like not to have these things. Explain that we have tax laws to make sure everyone helps pay for these things.

### Scripture story

Explain that the people in Jesus Christ's time also had tax laws. Show picture 2-53, *Render unto Caesar*, and tell the story found in Matthew 22:15–22.

Explain that the people asked Jesus if they should pay tribute money to their country. Tribute money is like tax money.

Show the coin you brought. Explain that Jesus asked the people to show him a coin. He pointed out that the coin had on it a picture of Caesar, the leader of the country. (If the coin you brought has a picture of a national leader on it, point it out.) Read aloud what Jesus told the people, as found in Matthew 22:21 (beginning with *Then saith he*). Explain that Jesus told the people that they should obey their country's laws *and* Heavenly Father's laws. Jesus taught the people that it was important to obey the laws of their country.

## **We Believe in Obeying the Law**

### Wordstrip

Read aloud the sentence on the wordstrip. Explain that this is part of the twelfth article of faith, one of the Church's statements of belief.

Have the class repeat the sentence together a few times.

### Game

Place the list of situations and the bowl or basket of numbers on a table or the floor. Tell the class that they can now play the "Obeying the Law" game. Then sit back and wait a moment or two. If no one responds, ask:

- Why isn't anyone playing the game? (No one knows the rules.)

If the children have tried to make sense of the situation, perhaps by putting the numbered papers in order, compliment them for trying, and then ask:

- Are you playing the "Obeying the Law" game?
- Why not?

Point out that rules and laws help guide us and give us direction. Explain the rules of the game:

1. Pick a number from the bowl (or basket).
2. Take your turn in order, starting with the person who picked number one.
3. Stand during your turn.
4. Give your number to the teacher, and then answer the teacher's question without help from the other children.
5. Sit quietly in your chair before and after your turn.

Play the game, letting each child pick a number from the bowl or basket. Read to each child the situation that corresponds with his or her number.

When each child has answered a question, give the badges to the children. Praise the children for their good ideas and answers.

### **Summary**

Child participation Ask the children what they will say when their families ask about their badges. As they share their answers, stress the importance of obeying the laws so we can live together in happiness.

Testimony Testify that laws are created for our good. You may want to share a personal experience when you were thankful that you obeyed the law. Remind the children to obey Heavenly Father's laws and their country's laws.

Encourage each child to choose one law to obey carefully this week.

Invite a child to give the closing prayer. Suggest that the child ask Heavenly Father to help the children remember and obey the laws.

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### **Enrichment Activities**

Choose from the following activities those that will work best for the children in your class. You can use them in the lesson itself or as a review or summary. For additional guidance, see "Class Time" in "Helps for the Teacher."

1. Help the children memorize the twelfth article of faith: "We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law." Explain any words unfamiliar to the children.

Younger children can memorize the part of the article of faith written on their badges: "We believe in obeying the law."

You may want to sing "The Twelfth Article of Faith" (*Children's Songbook*, p. 131) to help the children memorize.

2. Ask the class to think of five rules families might have that help keep family members safe and happy. Have each child hold up a finger as each rule is named. When five rules have been named and each child has five fingers extended, trace each child's hand on the chalkboard. Label each tracing with the child's name. Thank the children for their helping hands, and encourage them to remember and obey their own family rules.

3. Do the following finger play with the children:

I stop (*hold both hands up, palms forward as if to stop something*),  
I look (*put hand over eyes as if to shade them*),  
I listen (*cup hand behind ear*),  
And then I'm sure to know (*wave finger back and forth*)  
That I (*point to self*) am acting safely,  
No matter where I go (*spread arms outward to indicate space*).  
I only cross at crossings (*cross arms across chest*),  
Not halfway up the street (*shake head*);  
I look ahead (*put hand over eyes as if to shade them*),  
I think ahead (*tap side of head*),  
And then I use my feet (*walk in place*).

Remind the children of the importance of obeying traffic laws.