

Taking His name

King James Version:

Exodus 20:7 Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.

New American Standard Version:

Exodus 20:7 You shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain.

New International Version:

Exodus 20:7 You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses His name.

Amplified Version:

Exodus 20:7 You shall not use or repeat the name of the Lord your God in vain [that is, lightly or frivolously, in false affirmations or profanely]; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless, who takes His name in vain.

James 5:12 Above all, my brothers, do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. Let your “Yes” be yes, and your “No,” no, or you will be condemned.

Read all four versions of Exodus 20:7. Three of the four translations use the word “vain” while the NIV chooses the word “misuse”.

Match the word to a synonym:

(Draw a line from the word on the left to it’s meaning on the right)

Vein

Vane

Vain

Conceited

Ineffective

Deposit

Weather

Futile Unproductive

Direction

Blood

There are plenty of verses in the Bible about “unwholesome talk,” or not saying *bad* words. This could be one interpretation of this commandment. To not say *swear* words is well within our ability to do. By not doing so we could feel like we are completely observing this commandment. However, that is just the beginning of its meaning.

Discuss ways we “misuse” the name of God.

Obviously the word “conceited” would not be a good choice as a synonym for the word *vain* in this commandment.

Discuss the impact of the remaining synonyms toward the observance of this law (ineffective, unproductive, futile).

James states this commandment in a different way. It is a good character trait to build into our lives.

What impact would this have on your daily life?



Lesson Plan: Taking His Name

One Page Lesson, Allow 20 minutes.

The Goal:

The goal of this lesson is to expand the kids understanding of all the implications of this simple commandment. The meaning of this command is to not make an oath sealed with God's name and then not keep your promise. But by expanding on the meaning of the word "vain", we see that if we do something in vain it can mean that we did something for nothing. The goal is to help them understand that if they are going to call themselves Christians (followers of Christ, [His name]) they ought to be Christians. That is, letting their faith have an impact on the way they live their lives.

Pre-Lesson Activity: I showed a clip from Kevin Costner's film, "Dances With Wolves." At one hour and forty nine minutes the lead female actor explains how she got her Native-American name. The movie is named after the lead characters name he was given by the tribe. While much of the movie is not appropriate for younger viewers, it does really illustrate the point that if we are going to be known as Christians people should be able to tell we are Christians by our actions.

Leading the lesson:

Begin by having different kids read all the versions of the verse. Next, explore the different meaning of the word "vain" by playing the match game.

Our parents used to angrily beat us over the head with this verse when we said a bad word. That severely limited our understanding, and even our willingness to dig deeper for more meaning from The Word. Guide a brief discussion on the actual Biblical meaning of the commandment. The Amplified Version explains it best. Think of some examples of how we cheapen God's name in the way we use it today. I use the example of swearing in a witness in court, "Do you swear to tell the truth, so help you -God." That has zero impact today. Other examples might be "...one nation under God..", or, "In God we Trust."

Finally, discuss the meaning of the word "vain" as futile, unproductive, and ineffective. What does it mean to do something in vain? Suggest that it may mean that just saying you are a Christian (you believe) is not enough. Your belief has to have an impact on your life and the lives of others. Jesus said the kingdom of God was like a mustard seed or yeast. It starts small but has a huge impact. I say: "Don't call yerself a Christian if ya aina gonna be one!" They remember that silly phrase for years.

I added that final verse as an additional twist to end the discussion by talking about what it would mean if people kept their word and did what they said they would do. Examples: "I will show up on time for work every day." "I'm not going to get drunk." This is a foundational character trait. It's a good New Years resolution topic for January.

Take Prayer Requests

Always ask the kids for prayer requests for the next week. Check how things have turned out from the previous week's concerns.

Extra: Since this a one sided lesson sheet fill the other side with pictures you've taken of the kids. This will make the page valuable to them and they'll probably take it home. That increases the chances that the lesson might pass through their brains again and that parents might also view the lesson.

Note: The photo is one of my former students being baptized. She was making a commitment to **BE** a Christian.

Follow-up Lesson: In a similar vein, and using the same movie clip, I have taught the lesson, "I Am God's Son"