

This week we are learning about

The Greatest Commandment!

The Greatest Commandment

Matthew 22:34-46

Listen to Jesus and love others.



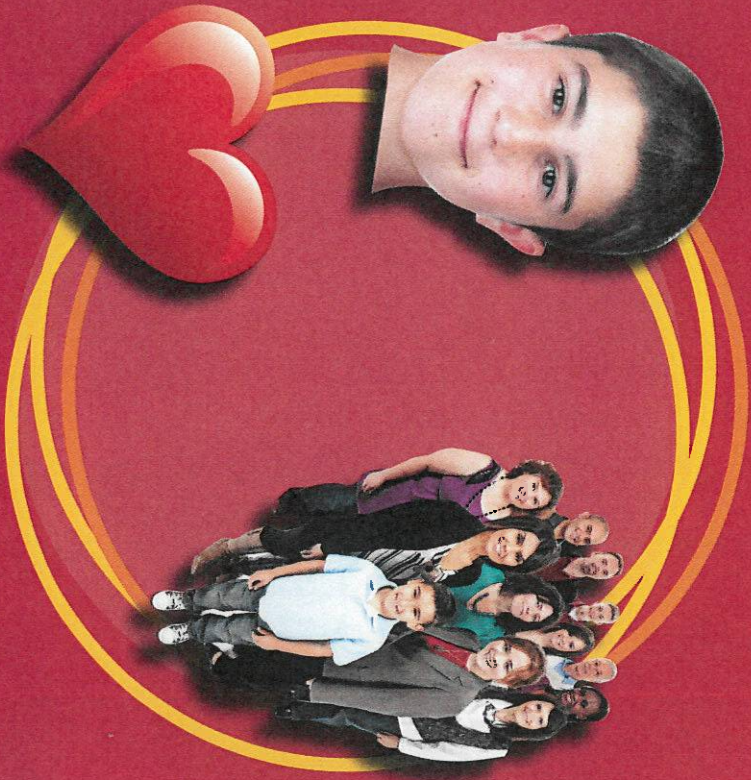
Dropping Jaws

The Pharisees' jaws dropped to the floor. They were shocked to know just how smart Jesus was.

Name _____
SPARK
ACTIVATE FAITH

We Love

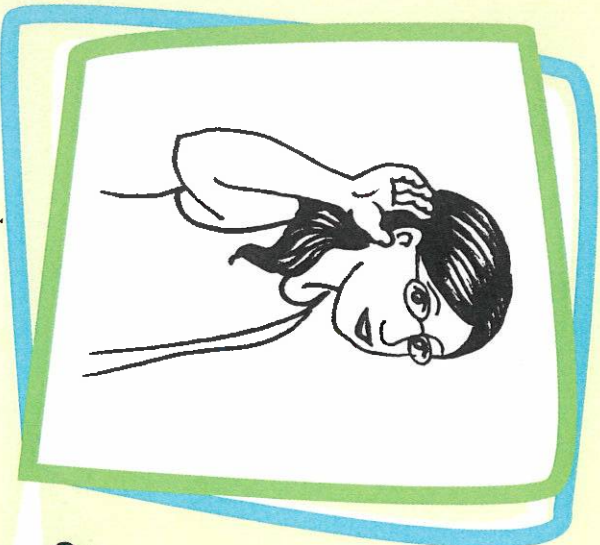
We love with our hearts. We love with our souls and minds. We love other people.



Ages 2-3, Classroom, The Greatest Commandment Leaflet, Spark™ Sundry School
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Sign Time: Listen!

I can listen to Jesus and love others.



FAITHontheGO!

At mealtime, share with each other how you loved other people today.

READ IT

This week's Bible story is
The Greatest Commandment

from Matthew 22:34-46.

Jesus tells us to love God and love our neighbors.

Ask each other what you remember about:

- Law
- Commandment
- Sadducees
- Soul
- Pharisees
- Neighbor

According to Jewish tradition, there are laws and commands in the Old Testament. These laws tell us how to live and behave at home, at church, the temple, and at work. Jesus summed it all up for us in just two commandments.

Read the whole story together in the Bible!

Spark Story Bible pages 308-311

Spark Bible page 1087

Family Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank you for giving us a guide to live by. We want our lives to be pleasing to you. Amen.

TALK ABOUT IT



Family Conversations

- 1 What is the greatest commandment?
- 2 Why do you think Jesus said the second greatest commandment is to "love your neighbor as yourself"?
- 3 Who was trying to trick Jesus?
- 4 Find a few riddles to ask each other. What makes a riddle difficult to answer?



Eye Spark

Keep an eye out for Bibles this week. Each time you see a Bible, remember that everything in it is summed up in the two commandments Jesus talked about in Matthew 22.



Ear Spark

Open your ears to buzzes this week. Whenever you hear an alarm clock, a kitchen timer, or buzzer of any type, stop and read Matthew 22:37 out loud. (Hint: write it on a note card and carry it with you.) In a few days you will have it memorized!

LIVE IT

For families to do together

Work together to make a neat family poster that can remind you of this great story. Print the greatest and second greatest commandment on a poster board using very large letters. Then, invite everyone in your family to help decorate it. Use markers, crayons, gel pens, stickers, whatever! Hang it in the kitchen or family room as a reminder of how God wants us to live.

For younger kids

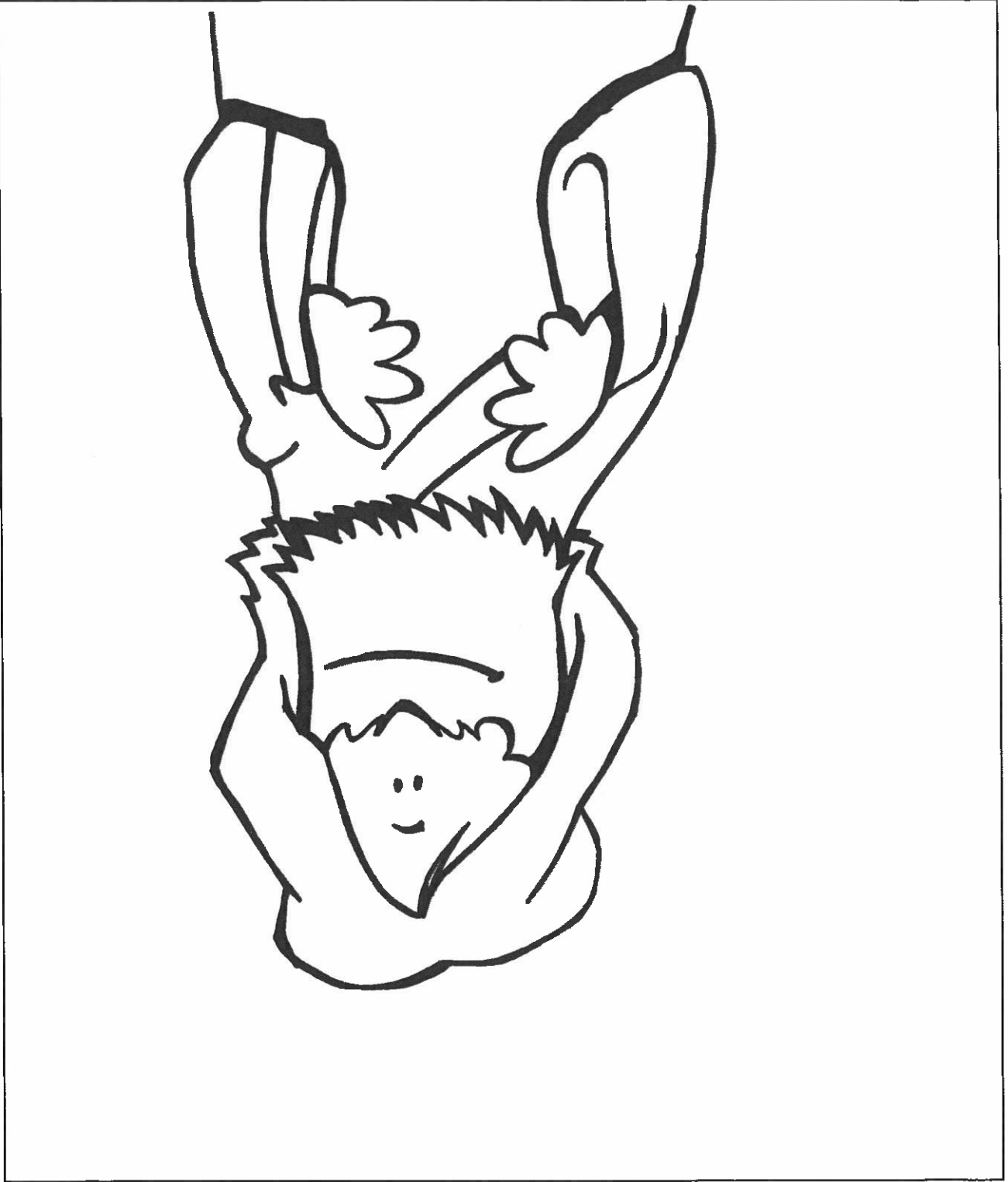
Is there someone at school you have trouble being kind to? Someone you don't get along with at church or in your neighborhood? Make a list of these "neighbors." Do your best to be kind to these neighbors this week and remember Jesus' great commandments.

For older kids

With adult permission, use an online search engine to learn more about the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Who were these people? Compare how they were similar to and different from each other. Remember that they were neighbors.

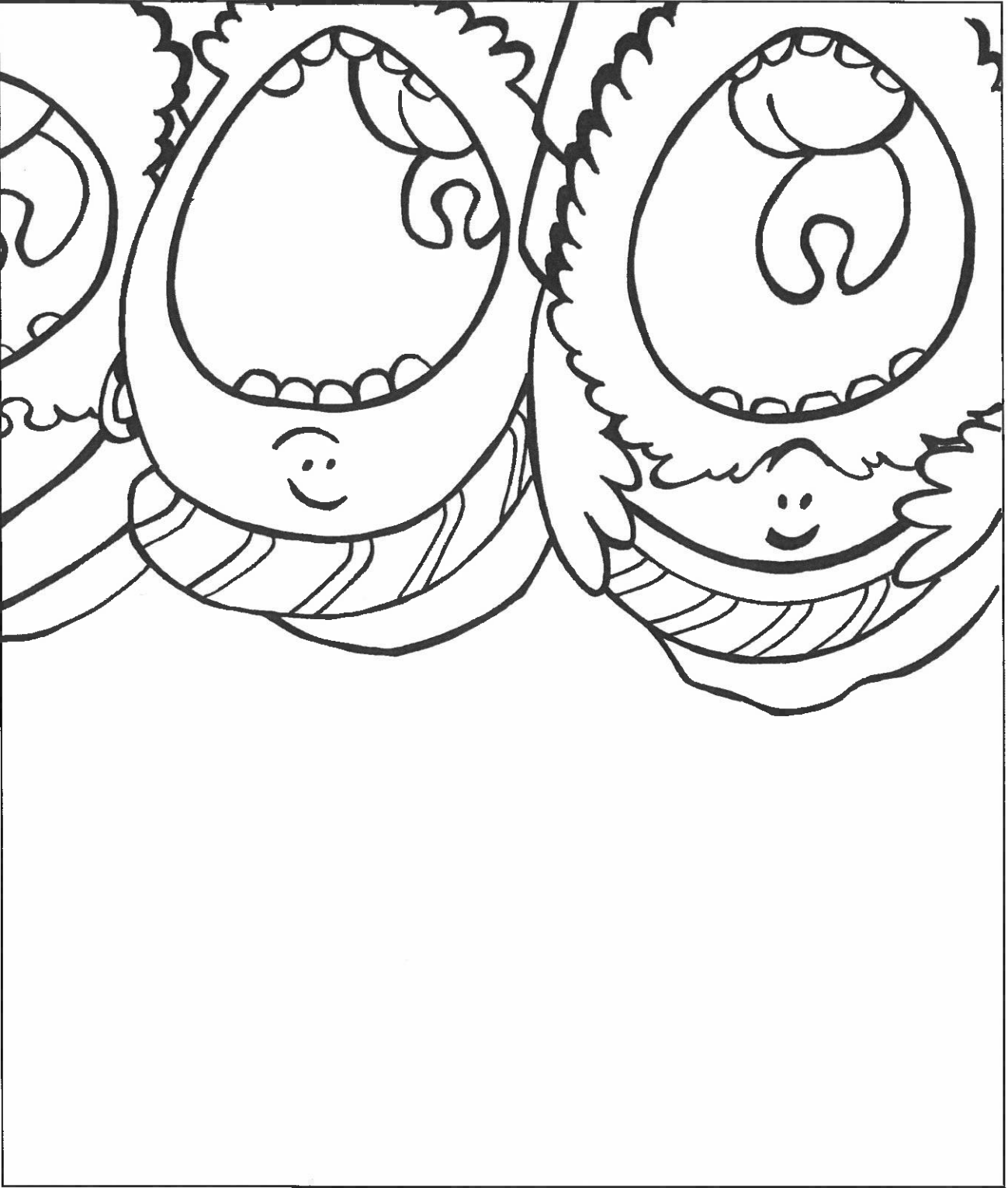


The Greatest Commandment



Jesus smiled. "Love God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind."

The Pharisees' jaws dropped to the floor!



The Greatest Commandment

Always Love

The Pharisees were sometimes angry with Jesus, but Jesus always told them the right things about God's love. Find the seven hearts hidden in this picture of Jesus and the Pharisees.



The Greatest Commandment



Love God and love others.

Love Me, Love Them

Jade isn't exactly thrilled about this whole operation. First, there's the dress her mom is making her wear to be a bridesmaid: her mom claims it is "seafoam," but it's really the color of puke. And Jade has to stand next to her. "Her" is Brittany. The two girls are the same age, but Brittany is about a foot taller and 30 times more popular. She's also a prissy snob. Jade has never liked Brittany or her clique of friends at school. And they sure don't like Jade either, if they even knew she existed before Jade's mom decided to marry Brittany's dad. So the queen of the snobs is going to be Jade's step-sister. They're going to live in the same house. Eat at the same table. Ride in the same car. And that's not all; there are two mildly annoying younger brothers included in this deal. It's bad enough her mom has to get married again, but this is more than Jade can handle. Her mom knows she's not happy about the wedding or the families merging. Finally, her mom lays it on the line: Jade doesn't have to like any of them, but she loves her mom and her mom is asking her to make an effort to love them too. It'll be hard, but Jade says she'll try.



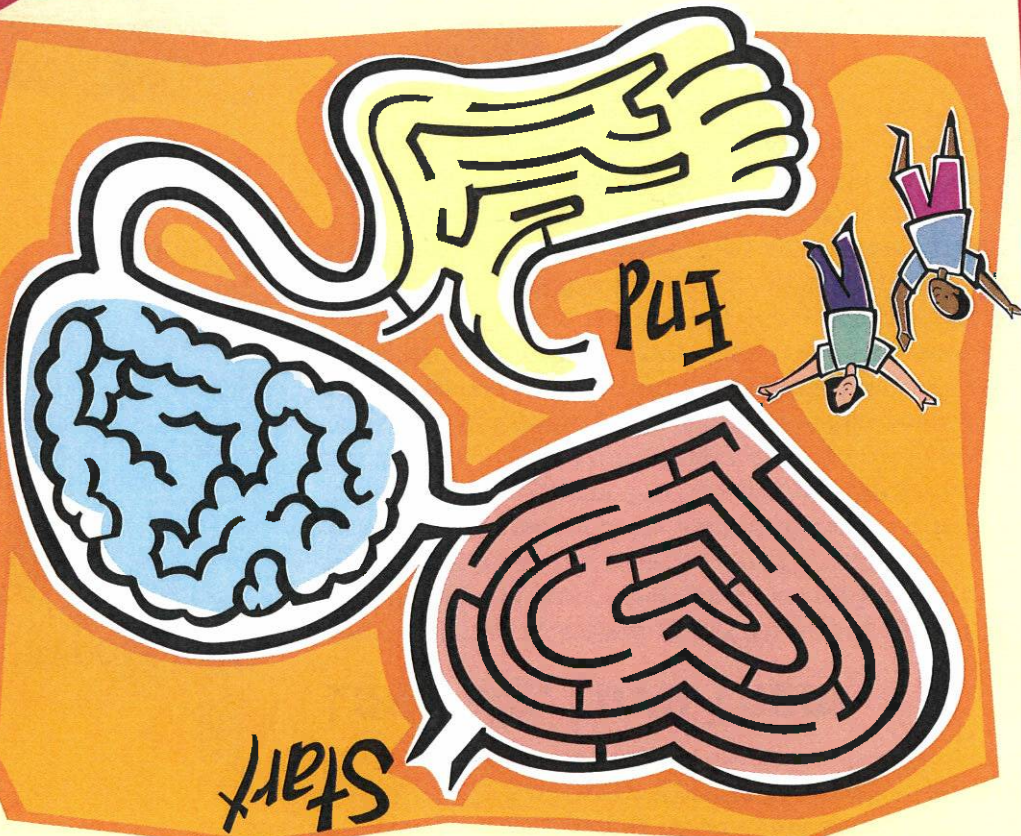
I wonder...

- What the people fasting Jesus thought he would say.
- If the Pharisees believed it's easy to love God and neighbor.
- Why Jesus ranked loving others as something important.

Matthew 22:34-46

Is My Soul in My Sole?

Jesus taught that we should love God with heart, mind, and soul, and love others. See if you can make it through the maze of all of those things. (Your soul really isn't on the bottom of your foot like your sole, but the soul is a tough thing to draw!)



Look it up!

What does love in action look like? Read **John 21:15-17** to find out what Jesus had in mind.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. **Matthew 22:37**

Memory Verse

Fun Facts

Scripture says if any body part is **oozing**, anyone who touches you has to bathe. The Bible tells us that **eating blood** is a big no-no. According to the Bible, no one with a **zit** should offer food sacrifices to God. If any of your family members go **broke**, the Bible says to support them. The Bible says you **can't eat** owls, storks, herons, eagles, ravens, or ostrich. Scripture says no eating bacon, but **bugs** that walk with four jointed legs are okay.

Fortunate Faith

What does it mean to love God and love neighbor? That's your challenge right now! Cut out and fold the origami fortune teller below. Grab a partner to play.





Rake, shovel, **pull weeds**, clean, or haul recycling for a neighbor who can't.
Write "HDTSMLFG" (How does this show my love for God?) on your hand.

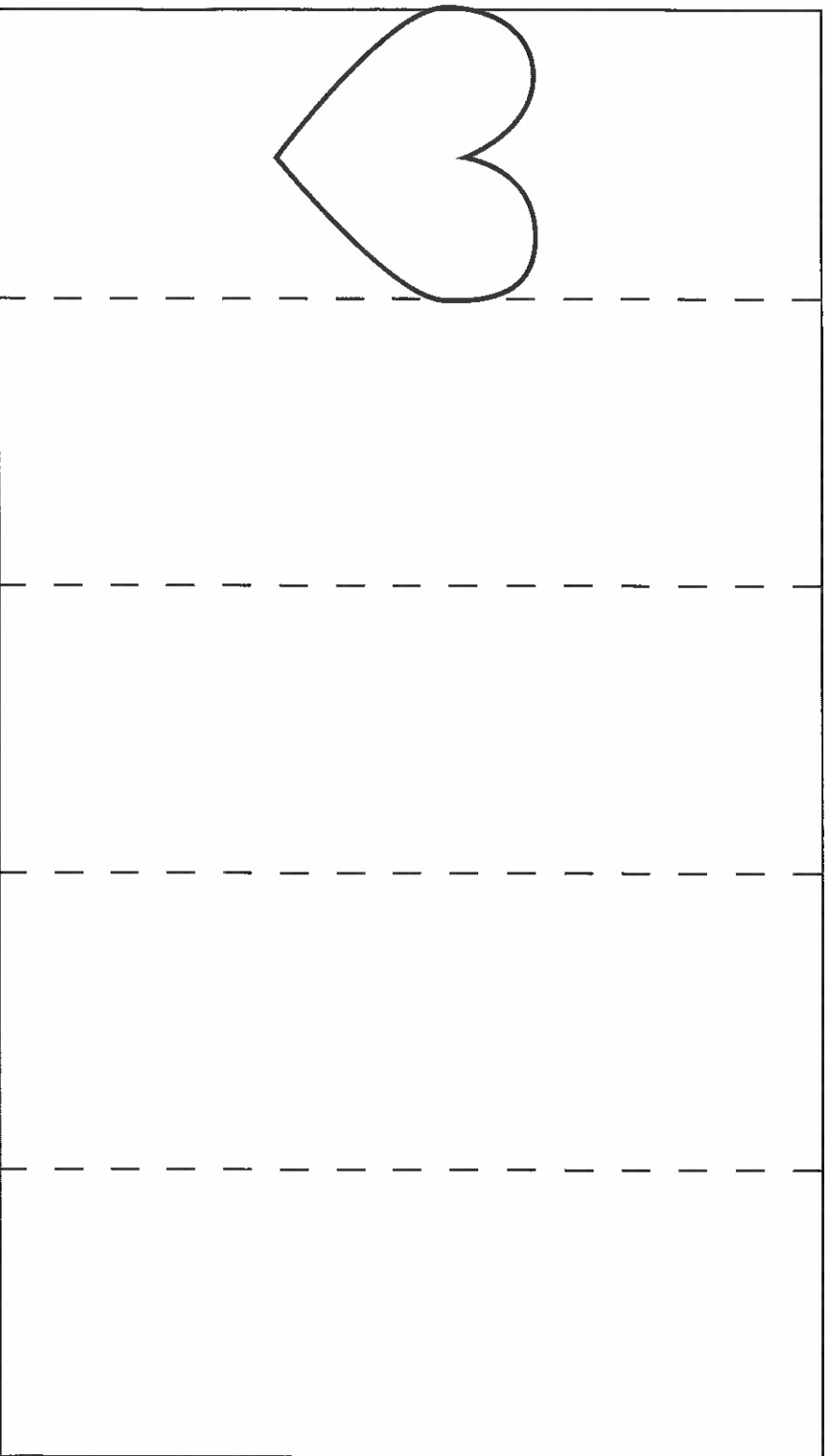
Post the BMW (Matthew 22:37) on a mirror in your home.

Recycle your old soles: check the local sporting goods store for a sneaker collection bin.

Go online to **read** about neighbors in another country.

Unfold God's Love

Jesus tells us that the greatest commandment is to love God with all your heart and to love your neighbors as yourselves. As a reminder of the importance of love, make a string of folding hearts. (Using the space above or below the heart, you can also...you can also cut out another shape that reminds you of God's love.) First, fold your paper like an accordion on the dotted lines. Make sure the heart shape is on top. Then, cut around the heart shape, keeping the edges connected. Finally, unfold your set of hearts and decorate them to remind you of God's love!



Grades 5-6, Classroom, The Greatest Commandment Leader, Spark! Activate Faith
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Whom do you know
that you would
consider **great**?



If you want to be great,
follow the **Greatest**
Commandment!

The Greatest
Commandment

Matthew 22:34-46



Who's the Greatest?



Write about someone who, to you, embodies greatness—and detail why you picked that person. How do they make greatness visible to others?

Jesus Brain teaser Untangled

We know Jesus as a savior, a teacher, and a healer—but a tricky word guy? That's exactly the role he plays here, as he shows a thing or two to the Pharisees who try to trick him first. Here's the play-by-play, close up. Complete the action by filling in the blanks.



Verse 34: The Pharisee who tries to trick Jesus is a _____. And we know people who do this for a living are really good at asking tough, clever questions.

Verses 37 and 38: Jesus replies that you should love _____ and love _____. So he's not only giving one answer to the question, but two!

Verses 41 and 42: No one said Jesus couldn't ask a question, so he does. He asks them about whose son the _____ is.

Verses 43, 44 and 45: When the Pharisees give the correct answer, Jesus ties them in a knot—asking how it would be possible that this person is both the _____ and _____ to a famous Bible figure.

After that, as **verse 46** notes, the Pharisees not only couldn't answer, but



The word "great" traces its origins back to before the 12th century and the Old English word "great," which at one point primarily meant "thick" or "coarse." In Middle English, "grete" became associated with "large," and thus it is related closely to the German "gross," the French "grande" and the Dutch "groot," which mean the same thing.

Did You Know?

Jesus has many religious debates with the Pharisees in the New Testament, which the Pharisees never win. But sometimes, the Pharisees are good guys. To find an example of a very good deed performed by a Pharisee named Nicodemus, turn to **page 1198** in your Spark Bible.

Pharisees and Sadducees

Ever wonder what the differences are between the two groups? You're not alone. Here's a quick guide:

Pharisees were at various times a political party, a social movement, and a school of thought among Jews. The Roman historian Josephus talks about three such schools, which also included the Essenes. Pharisees and Sadducees didn't like each other!

Pharisees, who dated to at least the 1st century B.C.E., believed Jews had to observe the purity laws (which applied to the Temple service) outside the Temple. They were also considered the foremost experts on Jewish law—which likely explains why they so rigorously questioned Jesus. Their form of belief created the basis for modern mainstream Judaism.

Sadducees were more associated with the elite classes, a priestly group associated with the leadership of the temple in Jerusalem. They were founded in the 2nd century B.C.E. and believed that God was not concerned in humans doing or not doing evil things—that people could choose as they pleased. Yet they also believed in punishments (or rewards) in the afterlife.

The Sadducees ceased to exist after the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem, in 70 C.E.

They're the Greatest

Listen as your leader reads accomplishments of people who embody the Greatest Commandments to love God and neighbor. See if you can match the person with the accomplishment.



Clara Barton



Dietrich Bonhoeffer



Mother Teresa



Lech Walesa



Nelson Mandela

You're the greatest!

How can you—

or will you—live up to the spirit of the Greatest Commandment?
You can start figuring it out by completing the exercise below:

My great qualities are: _____

Things I do well include: _____

These are ways I show my faith that make a difference: _____

I could start living the Greatest Commandment this way: _____

Faith on the go!

The Greatest Commandment contains a hint word
in it: "Command." Jesus is telling us to do something
Loving God and our neighbors requires action. Pray,
praise, lift a hand, help someone in need; show your parents how
much they mean to you: The ways to live out the Greatest Commandment,
and its twin, are countless. And often, they're fun, but they require effort.
So get going. Jesus is standing by to help.

Memory Verse

He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your
God with all your heart, and with all your soul,
and with all your mind." Matthew 22:37



Great News

When the Pharisees tried to trick Jesus, he gave them a good answer for their question about the most important commandment. It centers around one thing: can you figure out what it is? Connect these numbers with lines to discover the good news.

23 to 52 125 to 58 55 to 26 52 to 125
 27 to 58 55 to 24 23 to 34 17 to 16

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70
71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109	110
111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120
121	122	123	124	125	126	127	128	129	130
131	132	133	134	135	136	137	138	139	140

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121	122	123	124	125	126	127	128	129	130
111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120
101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109	110
91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70
51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
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