

# PROPER 25:

## THE GREATEST COMMANDMENTS

### THE STORY: MATTHEW 22:34-46

Today's lesson is found near the end of Matthew as conflict between Jesus and the people around him reaches its height. Those that oppose his ministry are still trying to get him to trip up - to go against the religious or secular laws and Jesus will not fall into that trap. Today's question from them is no different. The Pharisees ask which commandment is the greatest and Jesus responds with Judaism's most fundamental passage known as the Shema: "you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." (Deuteronomy 6:5) However he does not leave it at that. He adds that another scripture is "like it," "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Leviticus 19:18) "On these two commandments hand all the law and the prophets."

## YOUNGER CHILDREN

### Reflection Questions:

- I wonder what you remembered most about this story?
- The Pharisees asked Jesus what is the greatest commandment. I wonder what a commandment is?
- I wonder if you remember the commandments that Jesus told them?
- I wonder why Jesus said that those were the greatest?
- I wonder how we can live out these commandments?

## OLDER YOUTH

How can you demonstrate love for God who is untouchable and cannot be seen? In this context what does the word "Lord" mean? What does this show about our relationship with God?

How about the word "your?" In what way is God "your God?"

How do you love God with ALL of heart, soul and mind? Can you give any examples of what loving God with only part might look like?

Are there any differences between heart, soul, and mind? Why do you think all three are emphasized here?

## ACTIVITIES

1. Create a love chain to help us see ALL the ways in which we can love God and love each other. Cut strips of colored paper to fit around your wrist, then decorate and write upon these slips of paper. When you are done, attach the ends together to create a circle. Do the next slip and attach it to the other by passing the slip through the circle before you attach the ends together.

**ACROSTIC Poem:** Write the letters of the word "greatest" vertically on a page. For each letter, provide a word or phrase that begins with the letter while expressing the greatness of God and his people.