

The Ten  
Commandments

7th  
Commandment

# TEACHER GUIDE

Luther  
House  
Confirmation  
Curriculum



## You shall not steal.

Essential Question: What does the Seventh Commandment mean for us?

Students will be able to:

- Identify the ways in which we steal from our neighbor, and how they steal from us.
- Examine how God's protection is being extended beyond life and into "things".
- Know that God prohibits taking from our neighbor
- Know that God promotes helping our neighbor and protecting his stuff and means of making a living.
- Distinguish what can be stolen from you from the treasure that cannot be taken away
- Memorize Luther's Explanation of the Seventh Commandment
- Distinguish between our attempts at fulfilling the Seventh Commandment, and what Jesus Christ does

**Lesson Overview:** With the last several Commandments, Commandments 4 through 6, God has been protecting life. The Lord likes "things", too, and He will also protect you from all the ways that others might steal them from you. Think you can handle this Commandment? You're not a thief, after all. Or are you? Martin Luther had this to say about stealing: "There is no more common trade or larger craft on earth than thievery." Let's look into this matter!


### 1. Opening Prayer



Dear Lord, we need your help. Protect the things you give to us, all the things we need from day to day. Prevent us from taking our neighbor's things, too, or trying to get at them in dishonest ways. By your holy will, may we help our neighbors to improve and protect what you have given to them. Amen.

## 2. Essential Vocabulary



 **For Teachers: Words matter! Here are a few that you can explore briefly with your students:**

**Prohibit:** forbid \*this often comes from an authority

**Provide:** to supply something needed or desired

**Daily Bread:** food and clothing, medicine, a place to live, books, training, transportation, relationships with people around you (the things you can't live without, even as you await the new day you've been promised)

**Responsibility:** to take proper care of something; God has given us responsibility for all that He provides

**Steward:** someone responsible for what belongs to another

**Fraud:** faking or deceiving; lying to cheat others out of money or possessions

## 3. Video Lesson: Seventh Commandment




This video offers some words about what the Seventh Commandment is all about.

There will be “knowledge check” questions after the video.

- Which examples would be considered stealing?
  - **You take a \$50 bill for yourself that someone in front of you drops**
  - **You secretly transfer company funds into your own bank account**
  - **You don't let your friend have any of your lunch, so you can have all of it to yourself**
- Why does God command us to not steal?
  - **So we can establish trusting relationships with our neighbors**
  - Because stealing is against the law
- **True/False:** God likes material things.

## 4. SING BOLDLY: Hymn Connection




 ***There is a video that explores a hymn that can be sung during worship, and how the hymn connects to what we believe. The students will learn how this ties into the subject of our lesson, some background of the hymn, and the video will even teach us how to sing it boldly!***

*Teachers:* At this point in the lesson, there will be an option to skip ahead to the **“Memory Work and Wrap Up”** portion. Alternatively, you may lead your group through all or part of **“Here I Hear & Speak”**. This section will equip you to lead group discussion and achieve the lesson’s learning goals. We advise that you explore this option with your small group (or as an individual). This guide has been created primarily to help you as you facilitate the “Hear I Hear & Speak” section. You will be learning about this part of Martin Luther’s Small Catechism, how it comes out of God’s Word in Scripture, and even how to equip our learners how to give that Word to others.

## 5. HERE I HEAR & SPEAK: Discussions and Activities



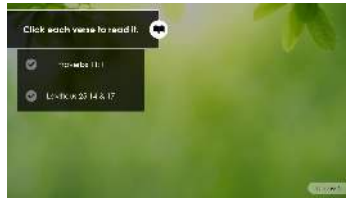
**Group Activity:** THEFT. Have you ever had something stolen from you? Have you taken something from someone else? When does this happen? Why does this happen? What happens to the relationship when one person takes from another?

 **TEACHER NOTE:** You could have the kids split up into a couple of teams, if they’d be more willing to share in a small group. There are probably times during school that the students could mention. Stuff gets taken from lockers. A friend takes your last tater tot. Perhaps their cell phone gets hijacked, and in addition to the phone itself, one’s identity is stolen, too - text messages or social media posts are sent out in your name. Sometimes something of little consequence is stolen, and it might not hurt very much. Other times, the pain is immediate and long-lasting. In either case, the trust between two people is damaged. The relationship can become broken. Remind the students that God knows that you need certain things while you await the new day and kingdom, and that He will provide those things to you. When you trust God, you don’t have to steal from another. When you don’t trust that God will provide you with what you need, the unbelief turns you into a thief. You try to get what you can unfairly.

The Old Adam in you always wants something for nothing. The New Christian in you knows that God will provide you with what you need.



**In the Word:** Let’s see how Scripture passages relate to what we’ve discussed so far!



- Read: Proverbs 11:1 and Leviticus 25:14 & 17.
- Discuss: Do you ever make deals with your friends, siblings, or parents?
- What makes the trade a “good” one? Who “wins” in the deals we make?

**TEACHER NOTE:** We live in an economy, a place in which we exchange one thing for another. Often there is an exchange of money for a good or service. Sports teams often make “trades”, too, and in a competitive atmosphere we often look for the exchange that helps us and might hurt the other. Often these trades are “won” dishonestly, when we give less than what is fair. And this might help you or people on your side! Can you see how “winning” in this way, might cause pain to somebody else? And if you don’t get the best deal, it could hurt you, too! The verses here indicate that the deals we make should be “just” or “fair”, but the “fairness” of any trade is really tricky! In the end, we can be thankful that our righteousness doesn’t come to us by our “deals” with others. Jesus Christ does take your sins from you, and gives you His righteousness. Now THAT’S A DEAL.


- NOT JUST A “THIEF”. Stealing seems pretty clear to identify. But this commandment goes further. It isn’t just a “thief” that steals. Anyone who *cheats* is stealing. Anyone who makes an *unfair deal* - one that only benefits themselves - is stealing, too. Label the following examples as “Unfair Deal”, “Theft”, or “Cheating”.

**TEACHER NOTE:** What you see below is a completed chart. You may put forth each example in any order you’d like to. Some of these can be difficult to categorize.

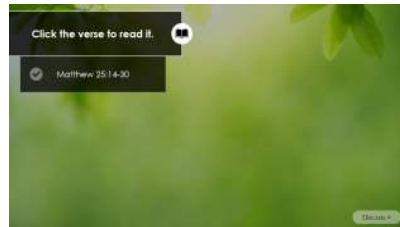
Theft	Cheating	Unfair Deal
When your friend is looking away, you take a piece of gum from him.	Your project wins first prize because your best friend is the judge.	You trade a card of a relatively unknown player for a Patrick Mahomes rookie card.
You use your friend’s ID to get into a game for free.	You secretly re-roll the dice to get a better result in the board game.	An employer keeps paying an employee far less than what they deserve.
You see a friend steal money from someone, and you don’t tell that person the truth.	You accept thanks for doing work that someone else actually did.	An employee starts working slower than what they’re capable of so they get paid the same for doing less work.
You shoplift a tootsie roll from the candy store.	An employee takes a longer lunch break than they’re allowed.	Selling a car to someone without disclosing the problems with the car.
	You tell your friend you “forgot” to bring money, even though that was your plan all along.	

DEBRIEF: These are really difficult to sort out. It doesn't matter too much how one classifies them, because ALL of them are examples of stealing. They are all unfair deals in which one person benefits and another is hurt. It comes out of unbelief that you have what you need, and it is aptly named as "sin".


- If all of these are "unfair deals", what does a fair deal look like?


 **TEACHER NOTE:** It is much more difficult to come up with fair deals than jaded ones. This is where both benefit. You do or provide something that someone else needs, and he/she gives you a fair price for it. You pay an amount that the good or service is worth to you, and at a price that the person is willing to sell it for.


THINK ABOUT IT... Hmm. You're probably thinking, "How can I keep from making unfair deals and stealing from my neighbor? How can I make sure my things are protected from others? Should I just avoid these interactions with people altogether? How can I avoid the risks in a world full of burglars and thieves?!"





- Read: Matthew 25:14-30

 **TEACHER NOTE:** If you'd rather have the kids act this out, that could be fun. You could pick a modern day scenario in which the owner/master/landlord entrusts laborers with something very valuable. In the skit - as it is with the parable - make sure each "servant" is interviewed. The most important question for the servants is this: Who is your master? What is he like? The servants who know their master is a giver, the one who knows their work and investment strategies cannot damage or help the relationship they have, operate in freedom. The servant who thinks his master is an angry, expectant judge and jerk will operate in crippling fear.

- Discuss: For "Old One Coin" - what does he think of the master?  He believes his master is an angry, jerk of a judge.
- How does his belief - about who his master is - have him acting in the world?

 **TEACHER NOTE:** He avoids the world. He buries the treasure in the ground. He doesn't participate with or share with others because he's scared.

- Mr. 5 Coin and Sir 2 Coin - what do they think of their master?  They know their master to be a Giver. He gave them everything they have, and they know they're well taken care of by him.
- When they know their master like this, how does that affect their actions in the world?

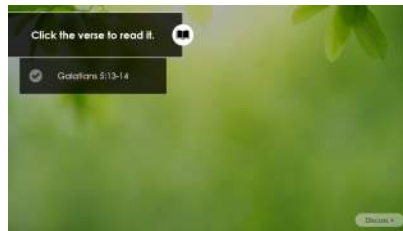
 **TEACHER NOTE:** They are quite active. They're free. They're making deals and participating in the economy of the world.



- Does God want us to hoard the gifts He’s given us? Should we avoid participating in the economy of the world?

**TEACHER NOTE:** No, and no. It’s hard to love your neighbor (which is at the heart of the Commandments) if you’re constantly avoiding them! The next verse of Scripture we read together might help with this.

**LUTHER’S EXPLANATION:** In the explanation of this Commandment, Martin Luther (confessing along with Scripture that we’ve read) says that we should “not take our neighbor’s money or property, or get them in any dishonest way”. And then he goes even further! “But help him to improve and protect his property and means of making a living.” How can one possibly do all that?! After all, you have a lot of neighbors!



- Read: Galatians 5:13-14
- Here we get a sense of WHO is supposed to serve one another humbly in love - who could possibly love their neighbor in a way to help him improve and protect his property and means of making a living. Who does this – the free person or the one who is captive?

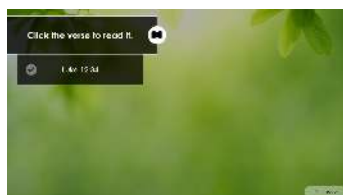
**TEACHER NOTE:** Only the forgiven person can love someone else like this. The one who is free from sin will actually hear their neighbor in need. Only the free, forgiven person will stop taking from others.

- How are you made free?

**TEACHER NOTE:** As this passage in Galatians says, you’re called into freedom. It’s a Word that you hear and believe. It says that God Himself has made you His child, free from sin. You can’t make yourself free, so God is the one who actually does this by speaking His promise to you.

- Can you fulfill this commandment yourself?


**TEACHER NOTE:** Nope. Left to yourself, you don’t have the word of freedom. Left to yourself, you’re bound to your Old Adam’s selfish desires.



- Read: Luke 12:34
- Discuss: What is your biggest and best treasure?

**TEACHER NOTE:** God’s decision to be yours - the one that grants you eternal life and salvation. Jesus Christ and His word of forgiveness. It’s better than you can imagine.

- Can a thief take it away from you?

 **TEACHER NOTE:** The devil will try. So will the world. So will your sinful self. But they can't take it away - Nothing will separate you from the love of Christ Jesus.




OUR TREASURE: God has given you a treasure that beats all other treasures. He gives you Himself in His Son, Jesus Christ. He gives you a new, clean heart and the faith to believe what He says. He gives you forgiveness. With His mercy comes everlasting life and salvation. That is a treasure that can't be stolen from you, and God is also the one who protects it. When you believe this - that this is the Lord YOUR God (1st Commandment) - you have the faith that has you helping your neighbor instead of stealing from him.




Other Discussion Options:

- In baseball, players will try to steal the other team's signs, and it's a good thing (at least for your team) to steal bases. In football, you want to intercept the ball and cause fumbles. Maybe a defensive player could even get a "pick-6". In basketball, good defenders get steals, not only to keep the other team from scoring, but to get a good opportunity for your team to score at the other end. In this context, you might be wondering something. "If you're Christian, should you play sports that promote this kind of stealing?" What do you think?

 **TEACHER NOTE:** Christian, you're free to play these games with others, knowing that your performance (good or bad) does not do a thing for the relationship with God that He's already established for you. We *are* to be thoughtful of others. We are to be kind and empathetic. But, in the case of many competitive sports, all the players and teams have come to an agreement. You've agreed to play by the rules. You've agreed to do the best you can for your team. You've agreed, in competition, that you're going to try to win. So, you'll win some, and then you'll lose some, too. These competitive games can be great fun. Too often, though, the athletes begin to think their identities are tied directly to their performance. In that case, sports have assumed a power that is not true, and it can be destructive. You aren't what you do at all, let alone how you perform in sports. You are who God calls you - His Child. So go ahead, play hard and have some great fun. You can even steal some bases, as long as the game doesn't try to steal your heart that God has already claimed!

- Acts 20:35 quotes Jesus as saying "It is more blessed to give than to receive."
  - Do you think this is true?
  - What's the best gift you've received from someone else?
  - What is the best gift you've given?
  - When is it difficult to give? (Are there instances when you'd rather steal?)
  - When you don't think you have "enough", what does that feel like?

 **TEACHER NOTE:** The students are probably at an age where they're more into receiving gifts than giving them. However, they've probably all had the feeling of giving something to someone else, and how exciting that can be, too. This discussion can help build some empathy or understanding why a person decides to steal. They're probably acting from a very

difficult circumstance. When I had my wallet stolen, it didn't feel so good. I don't know if this helped me feel much better, but my grandma said "Well, that's too bad, but I know you're gonna be OK. I feel really bad for the person who stole it. They must have felt so terrible if they thought it would be better for them to steal what had been yours." Much of the lesson points out that the "infractions" of this Commandment really stem from unbelief.

## 6. MEMORY WORK



The words in Luther's Small Catechism are worth memorizing. In this lesson, there could be tools, including songs, that will equip students to find some success.

- *The Seventh Commandment.* You shall not steal.
- *What does this mean for us?* We are to fear and love God so that we do not take our neighbor's money or property, or get them in any dishonest way, but help him to improve and protect his property and means of making a living.

## 7. LEARNING CHECK



- The 7th Commandment is about
  - **Protecting the things that God has given to people**
  - Maintaining honor and respect in the home
  - Developing trust between husband and wife in marriage
  - Killing and all the ways in which people could hurt one another



- Which of the following are examples of stealing?
  - Burglary
  - Fraud
  - Shoplifting
  - Plagiarism
  - **All of the above**



- In which book of the Bible does the command, "You shall not steal" come from?
  - Galatians
  - **Exodus**
  - John
  - Malachi.





- Who is the true owner or master of the things you have?
  - You
  - Your Neighbor
  - **God**
  - Elon Musk



- Who ends up helping his/her neighbor rather than stealing from them?
  - The one who can recite this command
  - The one who prays consistently for the power to share
  - **The one who has been made free and forgiven by God**
  - The one who is organized and diligent



- Who has fulfilled (or completed) the 7th commandment?
  - I have, so far.
  - Mother Teresa
  - **Jesus Christ**

## 8. WRAP UP

### Closing Prayer & Benediction



- Dear Lord, you give us all we need from day to day. We thank you for these wonderful gifts. Help us not to be dishonest in our relationships. Use us to help others and share your blessings with them. Amen.

It is good practice to give a blessing to each individual student before they leave you! (You might also select one of them to give this spoken benediction to you.) Our Lord uses baptized believers to give this, God's message, to one another. Here is a Benediction that you could use this week:

(Name), God protects the treasure He's given you.



**Luther House**  
of Study