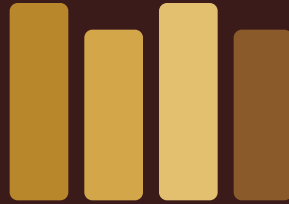


MIDDLE SCHOOL BIBLE STUDY CURRICULUM



The Book of DEUTERONOMY

*Loving God and Loving People
Moses' Farewell Sermons Point to Jesus Christ*

13 Sessions • 45 Minutes Each
Teacher Guides • Student Handouts • PowerPoint Slides

Quantum Reality Programming LLC

Ron Whittam • qrprogramming.com

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Every session includes a teacher guide followed by a one-page student handout.

Welcome, Teacher

Thank you for investing in the next generation. This book is a complete 13-week curriculum on the book of Deuteronomy for middle school students (grades 6–8). Each session fits a 45-minute class and gives you everything in one place: the teaching, a plan for your time, the Scripture to read, discussion questions, historical and cultural background, and a one-page handout for your students.

WHAT YOU'LL FIND IN EVERY SESSION

- **Snapshot** — the big idea, key verse, memory verse, and key people.
- **45-minute plan** — opener, prayer, teaching, activity, discussion, and personal application, with times.
- **The teaching** — written in a warm, conversational style you can teach almost word for word, or put in your own words. Three points, each with a key verse.
- **Jesus in this passage** — a Christ-centered connection so students see Jesus throughout the Bible.
- **Discussion questions** and **Think • Feel • Do** — a three-question personal reflection.
- **Teacher background notes** — the history, culture, geography, and society behind the passage, so you can answer student questions with confidence.
- **A one-page student handout** — ready to photocopy.

COMPANION RESOURCES

Each session has a matching PowerPoint presentation (11 slides with your teaching notes in the speaker notes). A companion web app lets students and teachers browse all 13 sessions, download the handouts, and answer a three-question Think • Feel • Do reflection after each lesson. The app keeps everything on the device; students' reflections are never sent anywhere, and can be backed up to a file.

TEACHING TIPS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOLERS

- **Open Bibles.** Have students read the key passages aloud. Even if they stumble, they are hearing and handling God's Word.
- **Ask, then wait.** After a question, count slowly to seven before you rescue the silence. Middle schoolers need time to think and to risk answering.
- **Use stories.** Moses' sermons are full of images — a father carrying his son, an eagle stirring its nest, a Rock. Let the pictures do the work.
- **Always land on Jesus.** Every session shows how the passage points to Christ. If you only have time for one thing, make it that.
- **Be honest about hard passages.** Deuteronomy has difficult laws. The teacher notes help you answer honestly, with God's patience, justice, and mercy in view.
- **Pray for each student by name.** Your love will teach more than your lesson.

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Deuteronomy at a Glance

THE BOOK

Name. The English title comes from the Greek *deuteronomion*, “second law” (see 17:18). The Hebrew title, *Devarim*, means “words.” Deuteronomy is not a new law; it is Moses preaching the Law again to a new generation.

Author and date. Jewish and Christian tradition, and Jesus and the apostles, attribute the book to Moses (the account of his death in chapter 34 was added by an inspired writer, traditionally Joshua). Using the traditional early date, the sermons were given in about 1406 BC, in the fortieth year after the Exodus.

Setting. The plains of Moab, east of the Jordan River, opposite Jericho. The old generation has died. A new generation is about to enter the Promised Land, and Moses, 120 years old, will not go with them.

Form. Deuteronomy follows the pattern of an ancient covenant (treaty) between a great king and his people: a preamble, a history of the king’s kindness, the stipulations, blessings and curses, witnesses, and a plan for succession. It is a love letter in the form of a treaty.

THE FIVE BIG THEMES

- **Love the LORD.** “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength” (6:5). Jesus called this the greatest commandment.
- **Love your neighbor.** Laws about lost property, fair wages, honest scales, and the care of the poor, the stranger, the widow, and the orphan show love in action.
- **Remember.** “Remember” and “forget not” appear again and again. Faith grows from remembering what God has done.
- **Choose life.** God sets before His people blessing and curse, life and death, and urges them to choose life (30:19).
- **A Prophet is coming.** Moses promises a Prophet like himself (18:15). The New Testament shows this is Jesus.

JESUS AND DEUTERONOMY

When Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness, He answered three times from Deuteronomy (8:3; 6:16; 6:13). When asked for the greatest commandment, He quoted Deuteronomy 6:5. The New Testament sees in Deuteronomy the Prophet (18:15), the Rock (32:4), the curse that Christ bore (21:23; 27:26), and the word that is near (30:14). Keep asking your students: “Where do we see Jesus here?”

The 13-Session Map

#	SESSION	SCRIPTURE	BIG LESSON
1	Remember the Road	1–3	Moses retells the journey: God carried His people, fear cost them forty years, and God still fights for His own.
2	Listen, Learn, Live	4	Moses begs Israel to hear God’s Word, keep it pure, worship the God who has no image, and seek Him with all their hearts.
3	God’s Ten Words for Loving	5	The Ten Commandments given to a new generation: four ways to love God and six ways to love people.
4	The Greatest Commandment	6	The Shema: love the LORD with everything you have, teach it to the next generation, and never forget Him when life is good.
5	Chosen to Remember	7–8	God chose Israel because of His love, not their strength — and the wilderness taught them to live on every word from His mouth.
6	Not Because We Were Good	9–11	Israel receives the land by grace, not goodness. Moses prays for a stubborn people, and God says what He really wants: love.
7	One God, One Way to Worship	12–14	Israel is warned to worship God His way, to test every teacher, and to live as a holy, generous, joyful people.
8	Open Hands, Fair Courts, Humble Kings	15–17	Israel learns to open its hands to the poor, celebrate God’s feasts with everyone, run fair courts, and expect a humble king.
9	A Prophet Like Moses	18–20	God promises a coming Prophet greater than Moses, provides safe cities for the accused, and sets fair rules for witnesses and war.
10	Love Your Neighbor in Real Life	21–25	Practical laws for everyday life: help your neighbor, protect the vulnerable, pay workers fairly, leave something for the needy, and use honest scales.
11	Firstfruits, Blessings, and Curses	26–28	Israel brings its first and best to God, declares the covenant on Mount Ebal, and hears the blessings and warnings of obedience.
12	Choose Life	29–31	Israel renews the covenant on the plains of Moab, hears that God’s Word is near, and is told to choose life — while Joshua is commissioned.
13	The Rock and the Road Home	32–34	Moses sings about the Rock, blesses the tribes, and climbs Mount Nebo to die — and Jesus, the greater Prophet, brings God’s people home.

SESSION 1 OF 13

Remember the Road

Deuteronomy 1–3

Moses retells the journey: God carried His people, fear cost them forty years, and God still fights for His own.

BIG IDEA	Before you walk into tomorrow, look back at how faithful God has been. He carried His people every step of the way — and He will carry you too.
KEY VERSE	“The LORD your God, who goes before you, He will fight for you ... and in the wilderness where you saw how the LORD your God carried you, as a man carries his son, in all the way that you went until you came to this place.” — Deuteronomy 1:30–31
MEMORY VERSE	“The LORD your God carried you, as a man carries his son, in all the way that you went until you came to this place.” — Deuteronomy 1:31
KEY PEOPLE	Moses — 120 years old. Israel’s leader and the preacher of these farewell sermons. Joshua — Moses’ helper and the next leader. His name means “The LORD saves.” Caleb — One of the two spies who trusted God. He “wholly followed the LORD.” Sihon and Og — Two powerful kings east of the Jordan whom God helped Israel defeat.
READ ALOUD	Deuteronomy 1:1–8; Deuteronomy 1:29–33; Deuteronomy 3:21–22

YOUR 45-MINUTE SESSION PLAN

0–5 min	Welcome & Opener Memory Lane (5 min). Give each student an index card. Ask them to write one time this past year when God — or someone He used — helped them through something hard. Collect the cards in a basket. Say: “Today we meet an old man who is about to do exactly this for a whole nation.”
5–8 min	Prayer & Memory Verse Open in prayer. Read the memory verse together (Deuteronomy 1:31), then say it again from memory. Briefly recall last week’s memory verse.
8–28 min	Teaching (open Bibles) Read aloud: Deuteronomy 1:1–8; Deuteronomy 1:29–33; Deuteronomy 3:21–22. Teach three points, about six minutes each: (1) Look Back: God Has Been Faithful; (2) Don’t Let Fear Steal Your Future; (3) Look Ahead: God Fights for You. Then show Jesus in the passage.
28–36 min	Activity Stones of Remembrance (8 min). Give each student a paper “stone” (a gray cut-out). On it they write one way God has been faithful to them or their family. Build a stone pile on a table (like the memorial stones of Joshua 4). Let three students read theirs aloud. Ask: “What happens to our trust in God when we forget these?”
36–41 min	Discuss Choose two or three of the discussion questions below. Let students answer before you do.

41–44 min	Think • Feel • Do Students respond to the three personal-application questions (in the app or on paper).
44–45 min	Closing Prayer Pray for the week. Dismiss with the memory verse.

THE TEACHING

Imagine your grandfather is 120 years old. He gathers the whole family because he knows this is the last time he will ever speak to everyone together. Nobody is on a phone. Everybody leans in. That is the book of Deuteronomy. Moses is standing on the plains of Moab, east of the Jordan River, in the fortieth year since Israel left Egypt. Across the river is the Promised Land. Most of the people listening were children — or not even born yet — when their parents refused to go in. Deuteronomy means “second law,” and the Hebrew name simply means “words.” Moses is not giving a brand-new law; he is preaching it again to a new generation, so that they will love God and live in His land. And notice where he starts. Not with rules. With a story.

1. Look Back: God Has Been Faithful

Deuteronomy 1:1–8, 1:29–33, 2:7

Moses begins with the road they have traveled. Why? Because when you remember what God has done for you, obeying Him makes sense. It is the same reason a good coach replays the game film before the championship.

Moses says God carried Israel “as a man carries his son.” Picture a dad on a long hike carrying a worn-out little kid on his shoulders. The kid doesn’t have to know the map. He just has to hold on. For forty years, in a hot, dry wilderness, God did exactly that. In 2:7 Moses adds, “He knows your trudging through this great wilderness.” God was not distant. He knew every tired step. And then comes the amazing line: “you have lacked nothing.” Forty years, and not one of their needs went unmet.

Here is a tool for your own life: when you are afraid of what is ahead, do not only stare at the future. Turn around and read the road behind you.

“These forty years the LORD your God has been with you; you have lacked nothing.”

— **Deuteronomy 2:7 (NKJV)**

2. Don’t Let Fear Steal Your Future

Deuteronomy 1:19–46

Now Moses tells a painful part of the story. Twelve spies explored the land. Ten came back saying, “The cities are huge, the walls are high, and we saw giants!” Only Joshua and Caleb said, “God is with us. Let’s go.” But the people listened to fear. They sat in their tents and complained that the LORD must hate them. Think about that. The God who had just carried them like a father was accused of hating them! That is what fear does. It makes the problem look big and God look small.

The result? That whole generation wandered in the wilderness until they died. Only Joshua and Caleb were allowed to enter, because Caleb “wholly followed the LORD” (1:36). And when the people tried to fix it by attacking on their own, without God, they were beaten (1:41–45). Obedience that comes late and in your

own strength does not work.

Fear is normal. Moses is not shaming them for feeling afraid. He is warning them what happens when fear gets to make the decisions instead of trust.

3. Look Ahead: God Fights for You

Deuteronomy 2:1–3:29

Moses moves on to the new generation’s victories. God told Israel not to fight Edom, Moab, or Ammon, because He had given those lands to Abraham’s and Lot’s relatives. Israel paid for the food and water they used (2:6, 2:28). God’s people respected other people’s borders. But when King Sihon refused to let them pass peacefully, and later King Og of Bashan came out to fight — Og had a bed of iron-like stone about thirteen feet long! — God gave Israel the victory both times.

Then Moses tells his own sad part. He asked God to let him enter the land, and God said no, “Enough!” (3:26). Moses was allowed to climb a mountain and look. What does Moses do with his disappointment? He spends his last days encouraging Joshua: “You must not fear them, for the LORD your God Himself fights for you” (3:22). A leader who loses something he wanted, and still builds up the next person — that is the heart of a servant.

“You must not fear them, for the LORD your God Himself fights for you.”

— Deuteronomy 3:22 (NKJV)

Here is the question Deuteronomy asks every one of us: will you trust the One who has carried you, or will you let fear drive? The same God who carried Israel is not tired. Take a moment this week to look back at your own road.

JESUS IN THIS PASSAGE

Jesus: The Greater Joshua Who Carries Us

Moses could bring Israel to the edge of the land, but he could not lead them in. Joshua did. And here is something wonderful: Joshua’s Hebrew name, Yehoshua, is the very same name as Jesus. Both mean “The LORD saves.” Hebrews 4:8–9 explains that Joshua could not give God’s people their final rest, but Jesus can.

And remember the picture of a father carrying his son? Jesus told a story of a shepherd who finds his lost sheep. He does not scold it or make it walk home. He lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing (Luke 15:5). When we are too tired, too scared, or too lost to go on, Jesus is the One who carries us. On the cross He fought the real enemies — sin and death — and won, so that we would not have to.

“And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing.”

— Luke 15:5 (NKJV)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think Moses started with a history lesson instead of a list of rules?
2. What do you think it felt like for the people to be reminded that God “carried” them?
3. The ten spies and the two spies saw the same land. Why did they come back with such different reports?
4. Think of a time fear made a decision for you. What happened?
5. Joshua’s name is the same as Jesus’ name. What does it tell us about what Jesus came to do?

PERSONAL APPLICATION: THINK • FEEL • DO

THINK	What was Moses trying to help the people remember, and how can remembering what God has done help us trust Him with what is coming?
FEEL	How do you feel when you picture God carrying you through something hard? What fear is hardest for you to hand over to Him?
DO	What is one way God has been faithful to you that you will write down and share with a friend or family member this week?

TEACHER BACKGROUND NOTES

History, Culture & Society — for you to know before you teach

Who, what, and when

Deuteronomy was written by Moses, as Jewish and Christian tradition has long held, and Jesus and the apostles also attributed it to him. It is a collection of his farewell sermons, given on the plains of Moab east of the Jordan, opposite Jericho, in the fortieth year after the Exodus (1:3). Using the traditional early date for the Exodus (about 1446 BC), this is about 1406 BC. The Hebrew title is Devarim (“Words,” from the first line). The English title comes from the Greek deuteronomion, “second law” or “copy of the law,” based on 17:18.

A treaty in sermon form

Ancient kings made treaties with the nations they ruled. Those treaties usually had a standard shape: a preamble naming the king, a history of the king’s kindness to his people, the rules, blessings and curses for keeping or breaking them, witnesses, and a plan for the next generation. Deuteronomy follows that outline almost perfectly. That is why Moses opens with history (1:6–4:49). In his culture, you begin a covenant by recounting what the great King has already done for you. For your students, the point is that this is a relationship with a Father-King, not a rulebook.

Geography and people

Horeb (Mount Sinai) to Kadesh-barnea is only an eleven-day journey (1:2); the forty years were caused by unbelief, not distance. Seir is Edom, the land of Esau’s descendants; Moab and Ammon came from Lot. The Anakim were a tall people who frightened the spies. King Og’s bed (3:11) is described as “iron,” which may refer to black basalt, a very hard volcanic stone common in Bashan; nine cubits is roughly thirteen feet. Don’t let your students argue about giants; steer them back to the point that God is bigger.

Handling Moses’ disappointment

Moses was kept out of the land because of his failure at Meribah (Numbers 20:1–13), though he says here that the people’s rebellion was involved (1:37, 3:26). Middle schoolers often wonder if God is “fair.” Remind them that God forgave Moses, kept using him powerfully, and later brought him into the Promised Land on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:3). Consequences and forgiveness can both be true.

Handout on the next page. Print one copy per student. A PowerPoint deck and the companion web app (with the Think • Feel • Do reflection) go with this session.

Remember the Road

Deuteronomy 1–3

Name: _____

Date: _____

KEY VERSE

“The LORD your God, who goes before you, He will fight for you ... and in the wilderness where you saw how the LORD your God carried you, as a man carries his son, in all the way that you went until you came to this place.”

— Deuteronomy 1:30–31 (NKJV)

THE BIG IDEA

Before you walk into tomorrow, look back at how faithful God has been. He carried His people every step of the way — and He will carry you too.

FILL IN THE BLANK

- Deuteronomy means “second _____.”
- Moses reminded Israel that God _____ them like a father carries his son.
- Ten spies were afraid, but _____ and Caleb trusted God.
- Joshua’s name means “The _____ saves,” the same as Jesus.

THINK IT THROUGH

- Write down one time God has carried you or your family through something hard.

- What fear is trying to steal your future? Write a short prayer giving it to God.

THIS WEEK’S CHALLENGE

Make a “Stones of Remembrance” list of five ways God has been faithful to you. Share one of them with a parent or friend before next week.

MEMORY VERSE — DEUTERONOMY 1:31

“The LORD your God carried you, as a man carries his son, in all the way that you went until you came to this place.”

SESSION 2 OF 13

Listen, Learn, Live

Deuteronomy 4

Moses begs Israel to hear God’s Word, keep it pure, worship the God who has no image, and seek Him with all their hearts.

BIG IDEA	The God who spoke from the fire is near to us, so we listen to His Word, keep it pure, and worship Him alone — never a substitute.
KEY VERSE	“For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the LORD our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him?” — Deuteronomy 4:7
MEMORY VERSE	“You will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.” — Deuteronomy 4:29
KEY PEOPLE	Moses — Preaches his first sermon, urging a new generation to hold on to God’s Word. The people at Horeb — The generation that heard God’s voice from the fire — and their children now listening. The LORD — The God who speaks, has no image, and is both a “consuming fire” and a “merciful God.”
READ ALOUD	Deuteronomy 4:1–2; Deuteronomy 4:9–15; Deuteronomy 4:29–31

YOUR 45-MINUTE SESSION PLAN

0–5 min	Welcome & Opener Whisper Down the Line (5 min). Whisper a complex sentence (for example: “Moses told the people to listen carefully, to teach their children, and never to add or subtract from God’s Word”) down a row of students. Compare the first and last versions. Ask: “How easy is it to change a message?” Say: “Today Moses warns about exactly that.”
5–8 min	Prayer & Memory Verse Open in prayer. Read the memory verse together (Deuteronomy 4:29), then say it again from memory. Briefly recall last week’s memory verse.
8–28 min	Teaching (open Bibles) Read aloud: Deuteronomy 4:1–2; Deuteronomy 4:9–15; Deuteronomy 4:29–31. Teach three points, about six minutes each: (1) Hold On to God’s Word — Don’t Add, Don’t Subtract; (2) Worship the God Who Can’t Be Carved; (3) Seek Him — He Is Near and Merciful. Then show Jesus in the passage.
28–36 min	Activity Draw God? (8 min). Hand out paper and pencils. Say: “Draw what God looks like.” After a minute, stop them. Ask: “Why is this impossible?” Read Deuteronomy 4:12, 15–16. Explain that God did not allow any image because anything we make is too small. Then ask: “So how do we know what God is like?” Hold up your Bible — and promise to show them a better answer by the end.
36–41 min	Discuss Choose two or three of the discussion questions below. Let students answer before you do.

41–44 min	Think • Feel • Do Students respond to the three personal-application questions (in the app or on paper).
44–45 min	Closing Prayer Pray for the week. Dismiss with the memory verse.

THE TEACHING

Moses has just finished retelling the road from Egypt. Now he turns to the people and gives his first great appeal. In chapter 4 one word keeps coming back, and it is the first word of the chapter: “Listen!” Moses is asking the new generation to do what their parents failed to do. Listen to God, learn from His Word, and live. It is the difference between a person with a map who follows it and a person who has the map in the glove box and never opens it.

1. Hold On to God’s Word — Don’t Add, Don’t Subtract

Deuteronomy 4:1–9

Moses says: “You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it” (4:2). Why? Because God’s Word is complete. If we add our own rules, we make ourselves the boss. If we take away the parts we don’t like, we make ourselves the editor. Either way we stop listening to God and start listening to ourselves.

Then Moses says something surprising. Obeying God’s Word will make Israel look wise to the nations around them (4:6). People watching a family who loves God, treats the poor fairly, and tells the truth will say, “What a wise people!” Obedience is not boring. It is attractive.

And in 4:9 he gives a big job for every parent, grandparent, and teacher: “Teach them to your children and your grandchildren.” Faith is not inherited. It has to be told, one generation to the next.

“You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it.”

— Deuteronomy 4:2 (NKJV)

2. Worship the God Who Can’t Be Carved

Deuteronomy 4:10–24

Moses takes them back to Mount Horeb. The mountain burned with fire and was covered with darkness, cloud, and gloom. God spoke out of the fire — and, Moses says, “you saw no form” (4:12). They heard a voice, but they saw no picture. That is why God forbade any image. Every nation around Israel had idols they could see and carry. But how could you carve the God who made the stars? Any statue would be a tiny lie about Him.

Moses calls the LORD a “consuming fire” and a “jealous God” (4:24). “Jealous” doesn’t mean the grumpy, petty kind of jealous. It means the way a loving husband is jealous for his wife — a protective love that will not share her heart with another. God cares so much about us that He will not pretend that anything else can give us what only He can.

3. Seek Him — He Is Near and Merciful

Deuteronomy 4:25–40

Moses is honest: someday Israel will fail, make idols, and be scattered among the nations. But look at what he says next. “From there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart” (4:29). Even in the worst failure, the door home is open. “For the LORD your God is a merciful God; He will not forsake you” (4:31).

Then Moses asks the biggest question: Has anything like this ever happened? Has any god ever spoken from fire, rescued a nation from slavery with a mighty hand, and stayed with them? The answer is no. “The LORD Himself is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other” (4:39). The God who is far above us is also “so near” (4:7). That is the wonder of our God.

“(for the LORD your God is a merciful God), He will not forsake you nor destroy you.”

— Deuteronomy 4:31 (NKJV)

Listen, learn, live. That is the whole sermon. The God who speaks wants to be heard by you, wants to be worshiped by you, and wants to be found by you. And the best news is that He is near.

JESUS IN THIS PASSAGE

Jesus: The Image of the Invisible God

Moses told Israel that they saw no form of God, so they must make no image. But what if God Himself decided to show us what He is like? He did. Colossians 1:15 says Jesus is “the image of the invisible God.” When Philip said, “Show us the Father,” Jesus answered, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (John 14:9). God did not stay hidden in the fire. He became a person, walked through villages, touched lepers, and ate with friends.

Moses asked, “What great nation has God so near?” The answer, in Jesus, is Immanuel — “God with us” (Matthew 1:23). And the cities of refuge Moses sets apart at the end of the chapter (4:41–43) are a picture, too: the safe place where a person could run when in danger. Hebrews 6:18 says we have “fled for refuge” to Jesus, and He is our safe place forever.

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.”

— Colossians 1:15 (NKJV)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think Moses said not to add to or take from God’s Word? What are some ways people do it today?
2. God had no image at Horeb. Why is it dangerous to make up our own picture of God?
3. What does “jealous” mean here? How is it different from the kind of jealousy we normally think of?
4. Moses promised, “You will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart.” What does seeking God look like for a middle schooler?
5. How does Jesus show us what the invisible God is like?

PERSONAL APPLICATION: THINK • FEEL • DO

THINK	What does it mean to “listen” to God, and why do you think Moses begged the people to keep His Word complete and pure?
FEEL	How do you feel knowing the great God who spoke from fire is also near to you and merciful when we fail?
DO	What is one specific way you will seek God with all your heart this week — and who will you teach about Him?

TEACHER BACKGROUND NOTES

History, Culture & Society — for you to know before you teach

Why no images?

In Moses' world, every nation had gods carved in wood, stone, or metal. People believed the god's presence was in the statue, and that rituals could control the god. Egyptians worshiped the sun, animals, and the Nile; Mesopotamians worshiped the sun, moon, and stars (4:19). Israel's God was radically different: He could not be manipulated, He spoke, and He had no form. Students may think images are harmless; the key is that any image shrinks God. Today we make "idols" of phones, status, or sports not by carving them but by trusting them to give us what only God can.

The jealous God

The Hebrew word *qanna* (4:24) comes from a root meaning zealous, passionate. In the covenant picture, God is the husband and Israel is the bride. A husband who didn't care if his wife was unfaithful would not love her. The "consuming fire" (4:24) points back to Horeb and shows God's holiness; Hebrews 12:29 quotes it. Teach this carefully with middle schoolers: God's fire is not temper; it is love that cannot tolerate what destroys the beloved.

Egypt as an "iron furnace" and the warning of exile

Moses uses an image from metalworking (4:20): Egypt was a furnace where a people were refined and hurt. Verses 25–31 predict Israel's eventual scattering. That came true when Assyria took the northern kingdom (722 BC) and Babylon took Judah (586 BC). But the same passage promises a return, which happened under Cyrus (539 BC) and Ezra, and shows God's mercy even in discipline.

Cities of refuge

Verses 41–43 record Moses setting apart three cities east of the Jordan — Bezer, Ramoth in Gilead, and Golan — for people who killed someone accidentally. Three more were added west of the Jordan after the conquest (Joshua 20). In a culture where a relative could take revenge, a person could flee to a city of refuge and get a fair hearing. We'll study the full law in Session 9; here the point is that mercy and justice were built into Israel's life.

Handout on the next page. Print one copy per student. A PowerPoint deck and the companion web app (with the Think • Feel • Do reflection) go with this session.

Listen, Learn, Live

Deuteronomy 4

Name: _____

Date: _____

KEY VERSE

“For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the LORD our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him?”

— Deuteronomy 4:7 (NKJV)

THE BIG IDEA

The God who spoke from the fire is near to us, so we listen to His Word, keep it pure, and worship Him alone — never a substitute.

FILL IN THE BLANK

1. Moses said not to _____ to God’s Word or take from it.
2. At Horeb the people heard a voice but saw no _____.
3. God is “_____” the way a loving husband is for his wife, protective of His people.
4. Jesus is the _____ of the invisible God.

THINK IT THROUGH

1. What “idols” (things we trust more than God) are tempting students today?

2. Write one way Jesus shows you what God is like.

THIS WEEK’S CHALLENGE

Read Deuteronomy 4:29–31 each morning this week. Then tell one person about a time you sought God and found Him near.

MEMORY VERSE — DEUTERONOMY 4:29

“You will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.”

God's Ten Words for Loving

Deuteronomy 5

The Ten Commandments given to a new generation: four ways to love God and six ways to love people.

BIG IDEA	The Ten Commandments are not a list of “don’ts” from a grumpy God. They are a guide for loving God first and loving people well.
KEY VERSE	“I am the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me.” — Deuteronomy 5:6–7
MEMORY VERSE	“You shall have no other gods before Me.” — Deuteronomy 5:7
KEY PEOPLE	The LORD — Speaks the Ten Commandments Himself from the fire. Moses — The go-between who stands between God and the frightened people. The new generation — Moses says, “The LORD did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us” (5:3).
READ ALOUD	Deuteronomy 5:1–7; Deuteronomy 5:16–21; Deuteronomy 5:22–29

YOUR 45-MINUTE SESSION PLAN

0–5 min	Welcome & Opener Rules at School (5 min). Ask: “What is one rule at school you really disliked? Why do you think it exists?” Let students share. Then ask: “If there were no rules at all, what would a school day be like?” Say: “Today we look at God’s ten most famous rules and discover why they exist.”
5–8 min	Prayer & Memory Verse Open in prayer. Read the memory verse together (Deuteronomy 5:7), then say it again from memory. Briefly recall last week’s memory verse.
8–28 min	Teaching (open Bibles) Read aloud: Deuteronomy 5:1–7; Deuteronomy 5:16–21; Deuteronomy 5:22–29. Teach three points, about six minutes each: (1) First, Remember Who Is Speaking; (2) Love God (Commandments 1–4); (3) Love People (Commandments 5–10). Then show Jesus in the passage.
28–36 min	Activity Up and Out Sort (8 min). Write the Ten Commandments (short form) on index cards, one per card. Make two signs on the walls: “Love God” and “Love People.” Students work in pairs to sort the cards. Check together: 1–4 go with Love God; 5–10 go with Love People. Ask: “How does each rule protect something valuable?”
36–41 min	Discuss Choose two or three of the discussion questions below. Let students answer before you do.
41–44 min	Think • Feel • Do Students respond to the three personal-application questions (in the app or on paper).

44–45
min**Closing Prayer**

Pray for the week. Dismiss with the memory verse.

THE TEACHING

Moses calls all Israel together and says, “Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your hearing today, that you may learn them and be careful to observe them” (5:1). Then he says something that makes every student sit up: “The LORD did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, those who are here today, all of us who are alive” (5:3). The Ten Commandments are not old news. This is for you, today. Moses retells the day God spoke from Mount Horeb and wrote ten words on two tablets of stone.

1. First, Remember Who Is Speaking*Deuteronomy 5:1–7, 5:22–33*

Before God gives a single command, He gives His name and His record: “I am the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.” Notice the order. First the rescue, then the rules. God did not say, “Obey Me and I will rescue you.” He said, “I already rescued you. Now here’s how to live as free people.” Obedience is a response to love, not a way of earning it.

When God spoke, the mountain blazed and the people were terrified. They told Moses, “You go near and hear all that the LORD our God may say” (5:27). They needed someone to stand between them and God. God agreed that their request was right (5:28). Keep that in mind; we’ll see why it matters at the end.

“I am the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.”

— **Deuteronomy 5:6 (NKJV)**

2. Love God (Commandments 1–4)*Deuteronomy 5:7–15*

The first four commandments are about our relationship with God. One: no other gods before Him. Two: no carved images. Three: don’t misuse His name (don’t treat God’s name as a throwaway word or use it to cover up lies). Four: remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.

In Deuteronomy, the reason for the Sabbath is special. Moses says to rest “and remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt” (5:15). Slaves never get a day off. God gave His people a weekly reminder that they were free. Rest is a gift, not a burden. When we stop working, we say with our lives, “God takes care of me; I don’t have to earn everything.”

3. Love People (Commandments 5–10)*Deuteronomy 5:16–21*

The next six are about how we treat each other. Honor your father and mother. Don’t murder. Don’t commit adultery. Don’t steal. Don’t lie about your neighbor. Don’t covet — don’t let wanting what someone else has eat you up inside.

Look at what each one protects. Parents are protected by honor, life by the sixth, marriage and trust by the seventh, property by the eighth, reputation by the ninth, and our hearts by the tenth. Notice that the last one isn’t about an action but about a desire. God cares about what happens inside us, not just what people can see.

Jesus later said every one of these comes down to love. If you love your neighbor, you won't steal from him, lie about him, or want to hurt him. The commandments are love, written down.

“Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may be well with you.”

— Deuteronomy 5:16 (NKJV)

Moses ends the chapter with a longing in God's voice: “Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments” (5:29). God doesn't want robotic rule-followers. He wants hearts that love Him. The rest of Deuteronomy shows how that happens.

JESUS IN THIS PASSAGE

Jesus: The Mediator Who Keeps and Fulfills the Law

The people said, “Moses, you go near for us.” They needed a mediator. 1 Timothy 2:5 tells us there is “one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.” Moses stood between God and the people at the mountain; Jesus stands between God and us forever.

Here is another hard truth: nobody keeps all Ten Commandments perfectly. Galatians 3:24 says the law was “our tutor to bring us to Christ.” It shows us how much we need a Savior. Jesus, the only person who ever kept every commandment perfectly, said, “I did not come to destroy but to fulfill” (Matthew 5:17). He took our failures on the cross and gives us His perfect record. And then He gives us His Spirit to help us love the way these commandments describe.

“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.”

— Matthew 5:17 (NKJV)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think God began with “I brought you out of Egypt” before giving the rules?
2. How does knowing the reason for the Sabbath (you were a slave) change how we see rest?
3. Pick one of commandments 5–10. What does it protect, and how can you show that in your own life this week?
4. Why does God care about what we want (coveting) and not just what we do?
5. How does Jesus fulfilling the law change the way we think about the Ten Commandments?

PERSONAL APPLICATION: THINK • FEEL • DO

THINK	Why do you think God gave the Ten Commandments — what do they teach us about loving God and loving people?
FEEL	How do you feel when you read the Ten Commandments honestly? How does it feel to know Jesus keeps them for you and helps you?

DO

Which commandment is the hardest for you to keep right now, and what will you do this week to honor God in that area?

TEACHER BACKGROUND NOTES

History, Culture & Society — for you to know before you teach

The “Ten Words”

In Hebrew the Ten Commandments are called aseret ha-dibrot — “the ten words” (see 4:13, 10:4). They are written like the main stipulations of an ancient treaty: short, memorable, and foundational. Many scholars believe the two tablets were two full copies of the covenant, one for each party, rather than five commandments on each tablet. Both were kept in the ark (10:1–5). That is a fascinating way to picture a covenant between God and His people.

Differences from Exodus 20

Deuteronomy’s version is nearly identical to Exodus 20 with a few differences. The Sabbath’s reason is not creation but Egypt (5:15), the commands to honor parents and keep the Sabbath add “as the LORD your God commanded you,” and in the tenth commandment the wording shifts slightly. Moses is applying God’s words to a new generation about to enter the land. Take comfort: teachers have always adapted and applied the same truth for new audiences.

Word studies

“Murder” (ratsach) is not the general word for killing; it refers to unlawful killing, which is why the law allowed for capital justice, war, and accidental deaths (see Session 9). “Honor” (kaved) means to give weight or importance to someone. “Covet” (chamad) means to desire something so strongly that you plan to take it. “House of bondage” can also be translated “house of slaves.” The LORD is Yahweh, the covenant name connected to “I AM” (Exodus 3:14).

Fear at the mountain

The sights and sounds of Sinai — fire, thunder, a trumpet, darkness (Exodus 19–20) — were overwhelming. The people asked Moses to be their go-between (5:23–27) and God approved (5:28; see also 18:17). Hebrews 12:18–24 contrasts Sinai with Mount Zion, where Jesus the mediator of the new covenant invites us in. This is a good moment to point out that God’s holiness is real and His invitation is real.

Handout on the next page. Print one copy per student. A PowerPoint deck and the companion web app (with the Think • Feel • Do reflection) go with this session.

God's Ten Words for Loving

Deuteronomy 5

Name: _____

Date: _____

KEY VERSE

"I am the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me."

— Deuteronomy 5:6–7 (NKJV)

THE BIG IDEA

The Ten Commandments are not a list of "don'ts" from a grumpy God. They are a guide for loving God first and loving people well.

FILL IN THE BLANK

1. The Ten Commandments begin with God's rescue from _____ .
2. Commandments 1–4 teach us to love _____ .
3. Commandments 5–10 teach us to love _____ .
4. Jesus is the one _____ between God and people.

THINK IT THROUGH

1. Which commandment protects the most important thing in your life right now? Why?

2. How can you show honor to a parent, guardian, or teacher this week?

THIS WEEK'S CHALLENGE

Write the Ten Commandments in your own words as "ways to love." Place the list where you will see it every day.

MEMORY VERSE — DEUTERONOMY 5:7

"You shall have no other gods before Me."

The Greatest Commandment

Deuteronomy 6

The Shema: love the LORD with everything you have, teach it to the next generation, and never forget Him when life is good.

BIG IDEA	Love God with everything you are, and let that love overflow into your home, your words, and your habits. This is the commandment Jesus called the greatest.
KEY VERSE	“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.” — Deuteronomy 6:4–5
MEMORY VERSE	“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.” — Deuteronomy 6:5
KEY PEOPLE	Moses — Teaches the heart of the whole book. Parents and children — The next generation: “When your son asks you in time to come...” (6:20). Jesus — Quotes Deuteronomy 6 when tempted and when asked about the greatest commandment.
READ ALOUD	Deuteronomy 6:1–9; Deuteronomy 6:10–15; Deuteronomy 6:20–25

YOUR 45-MINUTE SESSION PLAN

0–5 min	Welcome & Opener What’s Your Favorite? (5 min). Quickly ask students to name their favorite food, song, and person. Then ask: “If someone asked you to love something with everything you have, what would that look like?” Say: “Today we hear the most important sentence in the Old Testament, the one Jesus called the greatest.”
5–8 min	Prayer & Memory Verse Open in prayer. Read the memory verse together (Deuteronomy 6:5), then say it again from memory. Briefly recall last week’s memory verse.
8–28 min	Teaching (open Bibles) Read aloud: Deuteronomy 6:1–9; Deuteronomy 6:10–15; Deuteronomy 6:20–25. Teach three points, about six minutes each: (1) Love God With Everything You Have; (2) Make It a Daily Habit and Pass It On; (3) Don’t Forget Him When Life Is Good. Then show Jesus in the passage.
28–36 min	Activity Heart, Soul, Strength (8 min). Have three students stand and act out (silently or with a few words) ways to love God with the heart (what you want and value), the soul (your whole life), and strength (your energy and resources). Let the class guess. Then everyone writes one concrete way they can love God in each category this week. Ask: “Which is hardest?”
36–41 min	Discuss Choose two or three of the discussion questions below. Let students answer before you do.

41–44 min	Think • Feel • Do Students respond to the three personal-application questions (in the app or on paper).
44–45 min	Closing Prayer Pray for the week. Dismiss with the memory verse.

THE TEACHING

If you could pick one sentence out of the entire book of Deuteronomy to memorize, this would be it. Jewish families have said this verse every morning and every evening for thousands of years. It is called the Shema, from the first Hebrew word, which means “Hear.” And when someone asked Jesus, “What is the greatest commandment?” He quoted it. Moses is about to tell Israel how to live in the land, and he begins here, because everything depends on this: loving the LORD.

1. Love God With Everything You Have

Deuteronomy 6:4–5

First, “The LORD our God, the LORD is one.” In a world with hundreds of gods, Israel says there is one God, and He is worth everything. Then Moses says what a right response is: love. Not just obey, not just respect — love.

Heart, soul, strength. In Hebrew the “heart” is the center of your thinking and choosing. The “soul” is your whole life, your very self. “Strength” in Hebrew is a word that means “very much,” your muchness. Moses is saying: all of you, every bit. Not 80 percent on Sunday and 20 percent the rest of the week. When Jesus quoted this verse, He added “mind” to be clear that our thinking counts, too.

Imagine loving your best friend by never speaking to them except on Sunday. That’s not love. Love is something you show every day, and that is exactly what Moses describes next.

“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.”

— Deuteronomy 6:5 (NKJV)

2. Make It a Daily Habit and Pass It On

Deuteronomy 6:6–9, 6:20–25

How do you keep love for God alive? Moses gives a plan: put God’s words in your heart, then talk about them “when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up” (6:7). In other words, bedtime, breakfast, car rides, and walks. God’s Word was meant to be part of ordinary life, not locked in a church building.

Many Jewish families took verses 8–9 literally. They wear small boxes with Scripture on their arm and forehead (called tefillin) and attach a small case called a mezuzah to their doorposts. The point isn’t the box; it’s that God’s words shape what we see, do, and where we walk through.

And when your child asks, “What does all this mean?” you tell the story: “We were slaves in Egypt, and the LORD brought us out with a mighty hand” (6:20–21). Faith lives when we tell the story of what God has done.

3. Don't Forget Him When Life Is Good

Deuteronomy 6:10–19

Moses warns about something sneaky. When Israel enters the land, they will find houses they did not build, wells they did not dig, and vineyards they did not plant. The danger isn't hardship; it's comfort. "Beware, lest you forget the LORD" (6:12). It's easy to pray when we're desperate and forget Him when we're comfortable.

The cure is to "fear the LORD your God and serve Him" (6:13) and not to test Him (6:16). Testing means demanding that God prove Himself on our terms, like Israel did at Massah when they complained, "Is the LORD among us or not?" God is not on trial; He has already proven Himself again and again. Remember that Jesus used these very verses when He was tempted in the wilderness.

"Then beware, lest you forget the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage."

— Deuteronomy 6:12 (NKJV)

Heart, soul, strength. Everything. Talk about Him. Teach your children. Don't forget Him. That is a life worth living, and you can start today.

JESUS IN THIS PASSAGE

Jesus: The One Who Loved God Perfectly

In Matthew 22, a lawyer asked Jesus, "Which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus answered with Deuteronomy 6:5 and then added Leviticus 19:18: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." He said, "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." Everything in the Bible, He said, hangs on love for God and love for people.

When Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness, Jesus answered each time with Deuteronomy. He said, "You shall not tempt the LORD your God" (Matthew 4:7), and "You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve" (Matthew 4:10). Where Israel forgot God, Jesus held on. He is the only person who has ever loved God with all His heart, soul, mind, and strength. And He says, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). Our love for God grows because He loved us first (1 John 4:19).

"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment."

— Matthew 22:37–38 (NKJV)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think this is the greatest commandment? What would change if everyone obeyed it?
2. What is the difference between obeying God and loving God?
3. What are some ordinary moments (morning, bedtime, car rides) when you could talk about God?
4. Why is comfort more dangerous than hardship for our faith?
5. How can Jesus' example in the wilderness help you when you are tempted?

PERSONAL APPLICATION: THINK • FEEL • DO

THINK	What does it mean to love God with all your heart, soul, and strength, and why did Jesus call it the greatest commandment?
FEEL	When you think about loving God with everything, do you feel excited, afraid, convicted, or something else? Why?
DO	What is one daily habit — morning, evening, or in between — that you will start this week to keep God's Word in your heart?

TEACHER BACKGROUND NOTES

History, Culture & Society — for you to know before you teach

The Shema

The Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4–9, with 11:13–21 and Numbers 15:37–41) has been recited by observant Jews at morning and evening prayer since long before Jesus’ day. The Hebrew word *shema* means both “hear” and “obey.” “The LORD is one” (*echad*) can mean the LORD alone, and also speaks of unity — the same word is used when a man and wife become “one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). Christians have long seen this as consistent with the New Testament revelation of one God in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Don’t go deep with middle schoolers; keep the focus on loving God.

Heart, soul, strength

In Hebrew thought the mind and the will live in the “heart” (*lev*), which includes thinking, planning, and deciding. The “soul” (*nefesh*) means the whole living person. “Strength” (*me’od*) is “muchness,” everything you have. By the first century, rabbis taught that “strength” could include possessions and money. Mark 12:30 adds “mind” to help Greek speakers understand.

Tefillin and mezuzah

By Jesus’ day, many Jews wore tefillin (called “phylacteries,” Matthew 23:5) — small leather boxes holding verses (Exodus 13, Deuteronomy 6 and 11) — on the arm and forehead. A mezuzah (“doorpost”) is a small case with the Shema on a scroll, attached to the right doorpost. Jesus criticized showy religion, not the practice itself. The heart of Moses’ command is internal first (6:6).

Inheriting cities, and Massah

Canaan already had cities, wells, vineyards, and olive groves (6:10–11). Moses warns that Israel will inherit a developed land and be tempted to credit themselves. “Massah” (6:16) is the place where the people tested God when they had no water (Exodus 17:1–7). The family question in 6:20–25 resembles the question asked at the Passover meal (Exodus 12:26–27), and Jewish families still use question-and-answer teaching at the Seder.

Handout on the next page. Print one copy per student. A PowerPoint deck and the companion web app (with the Think • Feel • Do reflection) go with this session.

The Greatest Commandment

Deuteronomy 6

Name: _____

Date: _____

KEY VERSE

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.”

— Deuteronomy 6:4–5 (NKJV)

THE BIG IDEA

Love God with everything you are, and let that love overflow into your home, your words, and your habits. This is the commandment Jesus called the greatest.

FILL IN THE BLANK

1. The first word of the Shema, “Hear,” also means to _____ .
2. We are to love God with all our heart, soul, and _____ .
3. Moses said to talk about God’s Word when you sit, walk, lie down, and _____ up.
4. Jesus called this the _____ and great commandment.

THINK IT THROUGH

1. Write one way you can love God with your heart, one with your soul, and one with your strength.

2. What “good things” in your life might make you forget God? How can you remember Him?

THIS WEEK’S CHALLENGE

Memorize Deuteronomy 6:5 this week. Say it out loud each morning and each night, and teach it to someone else.

MEMORY VERSE — DEUTERONOMY 6:5

“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.”

SESSION 5 OF 13

Chosen to Remember

Deuteronomy 7–8

God chose Israel because of His love, not their strength — and the wilderness taught them to live on every word from His mouth.

BIG IDEA	God’s love, not our performance, is the reason He chooses us — so we remember Him, depend on Him, and never say, “I did this by myself.”
KEY VERSE	“The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the LORD loves you ...” — Deuteronomy 7:7–8
MEMORY VERSE	“Man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.” — Deuteronomy 8:3
KEY PEOPLE	Israel — A “holy people,” chosen not for size but because God loved them. The seven nations — Canaanite peoples whose practices, including idol worship and child sacrifice, God was bringing to judgment. Moses — Warns the people not to forget God when they are full.
READ ALOUD	Deuteronomy 7:6–9; Deuteronomy 8:1–6; Deuteronomy 8:10–18

YOUR 45-MINUTE SESSION PLAN

0–5 min	Welcome & Opener Pick Teams (5 min). Pick two students to be team captains and let them choose teams the usual way. Afterward, ask the last chosen: “How did it feel?” and the first chosen: “Did you earn it?” Then ask: “What would it feel like to be chosen not because of what you can do, but because someone simply loves you?” Say: “That’s what Moses tells Israel today.”
5–8 min	Prayer & Memory Verse Open in prayer. Read the memory verse together (Deuteronomy 8:3), then say it again from memory. Briefly recall last week’s memory verse.
8–28 min	Teaching (open Bibles) Read aloud: Deuteronomy 7:6–9; Deuteronomy 8:1–6; Deuteronomy 8:10–18. Teach three points, about six minutes each: (1) Chosen by Love, Not by Strength; (2) The Wilderness Was a Classroom; (3) Beware of the Full Stomach. Then show Jesus in the passage.
28–36 min	Activity Manna Taste Test (8 min). Give each student a small wafer or cracker and a bit of honey. Say: “The Israelites ate manna every morning for forty years — described as tasting like wafers made with honey (Exodus 16:31). Imagine eating this every day for forty years.” Discuss: Why did God give them just enough for one day at a time? Read Deuteronomy 8:3. What does it mean to live by “every word”?
36–41 min	Discuss Choose two or three of the discussion questions below. Let students answer before you do.

**41–44
min****Think • Feel • Do**

Students respond to the three personal-application questions (in the app or on paper).

**44–45
min****Closing Prayer**

Pray for the week. Dismiss with the memory verse.

THE TEACHING

Moses has told Israel to love the LORD and to teach their children. Now he gets ready for the moment they cross the Jordan. In chapters 7 and 8 he makes two things clear: why God chose them, and what the wilderness was for. If you have ever wondered, “Why does God love me?” or “Why did God let me go through that?”, these chapters have answers.

1. Chosen by Love, Not by Strength*Deuteronomy 7:1–11*

Moses calls Israel “a holy people” and “a special treasure” (7:6). The word “holy” means set apart for God. Then he asks the obvious question: Why them? Not because they were big or strong. “You were the least of all peoples” (7:7). The only reason is: “because the LORD loves you.” That’s it. God’s love is not a reward for being impressive.

Because God loved them, Israel was to stay faithful to Him and not to adopt the idols of the Canaanites. Why such strong language about driving out those nations? Genesis 15:16 says God waited hundreds of years until the “iniquity of the Amorites” was complete. These nations burned their children as sacrifices and filled their land with violence (12:31). God’s command was a one-time judgment on a very evil culture, not a pattern for how we treat people today. We also see God’s mercy: Rahab, who believed, was saved (Joshua 2).

Verse 9 is a promise to treasure: “Know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations.”

“The LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments.”

— Deuteronomy 7:9 (NKJV)

2. The Wilderness Was a Classroom*Deuteronomy 8:1–6*

Next Moses explains why God led Israel through forty years in the wilderness: “to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart” (8:2). God wasn’t testing so He could find out; He knew. He was testing so that Israel could find out what was in their own hearts.

Then he tells how God taught them. “He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna ... that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD” (8:3). Every morning, manna appeared on the ground. They couldn’t store it up, except on the sixth day for the Sabbath. They were learning to trust God one day at a time. Moses also notes: “Your garments did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years” (8:4). God provided in ways they hardly noticed.

Verse 5 compares God’s discipline to a father: “as a man chastens his son, so the LORD your God chastens you.” A good father corrects because he loves, not because he is angry.

“Man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.”

— Deuteronomy 8:3 (NKJV)

3. Beware of the Full Stomach

Deuteronomy 8:7–20

Moses paints a picture of the land: brooks of water, wheat and barley, vines, fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil, and honey, a land where they will “lack nothing” (8:9). But he warns of a new danger: success. “Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God” (8:11). When you build good houses, your herds grow, and your bank account swells, you may say, “My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth” (8:17).

The cure is to remember: “You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth” (8:18). Everything we have — our talents, our family, our health, our food — is a gift. Thankfulness is the antidote to pride. And forgetting God doesn’t only happen by walking away; it happens slowly when we start to think we did it all ourselves.

“And you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth.”

— Deuteronomy 8:18 (NKJV)

You were chosen by love. You were taught by the wilderness. And you are called to remember. Thank God today for something you didn’t earn.

JESUS IN THIS PASSAGE

Jesus: Passing the Test Israel Failed

Israel spent forty years in the wilderness and often failed. When Jesus went into the wilderness for forty days, the devil tempted Him to turn stones into bread. Jesus answered with the very verse we studied: “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God’” (Matthew 4:4). He passed the test Israel failed. And He did it for us.

Jesus is also the true manna. In John 6:35 He says, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.” Manna kept people alive for a day. Jesus gives life that lasts forever. And the love in chapter 7? Romans 5:8 says God showed His love for us “in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” He didn’t choose us because we were impressive. He chose us because He loves us.

“I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.”

— John 6:35 (NKJV)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think God chose Israel when they were “the least of all peoples”?
2. What do you think it means that “man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD”?
3. What is something God has given you that you didn’t earn? How can you thank Him?
4. Why is success sometimes more dangerous than hardship for our faith?
5. What does it mean to you that Jesus passed the wilderness test for us?

PERSONAL APPLICATION: THINK • FEEL • DO

THINK	Why did God choose Israel, and what was the wilderness meant to teach them about trusting Him?
FEEL	How does it feel to know God loves you not because you are impressive, but simply because He loves you?
DO	What is one thing you will thank God for this week that you didn’t earn, and one way you will depend on His Word more?

TEACHER BACKGROUND NOTES

History, Culture & Society — for you to know before you teach

The seven nations and the command to destroy

This is the hardest part of the chapter, and your students may ask. The seven nations (7:1) were Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. Their religion, known from texts at Ugarit and from the Bible, included worship of Baal and Asherah, ritual immorality, and child sacrifice (12:31). God had waited more than four hundred years (Genesis 15:13–16). The command was specific to that moment in history, tied to entering the land, and is not a model for believers today. Rahab (Joshua 2) and the Gibeonites (Joshua 9) show that people who turned to God were spared. Present this age-appropriately: God is both patient and just.

Not intermarriage as ethnicity

The ban on intermarriage (7:3–4) was about idolatry, not race. Rahab and Ruth, both outsiders, became part of the line of David and of Jesus. The concern is that a spouse who worships other gods will turn the heart away. In the New Testament the principle shows up in 2 Corinthians 6:14.

Manna and the wilderness

Manna (Hebrew man hu, “What is it?”) appeared each morning; it was like coriander seed, white, and tasted like honey wafers (Exodus 16:31). It could not be stored overnight (except for the Sabbath). The point in Deuteronomy 8:3 is dependence. Notice that Jesus quotes the verse in Matthew 4:4 and Luke 4:4 when facing hunger after forty days of fasting.

The land, and the danger of prosperity

The description in 8:7–10 is a farmer’s dream: wheat, barley, vines, figs, pomegranates, olives, and honey (probably date honey). Iron and copper were mined in the region. Moses uses a contrast with the barren wilderness. Ancient treaties warned vassals not to forget the king’s kindness after receiving his gifts; Moses is applying that pattern. For teens, relate it to forgetting God when everything is going well: grades, friends, a team, a phone.

Handout on the next page. Print one copy per student. A PowerPoint deck and the companion web app (with the Think • Feel • Do reflection) go with this session.

Chosen to Remember

Deuteronomy 7–8

Name: _____

Date: _____

KEY VERSE

“The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the LORD loves you ...”

— Deuteronomy 7:7–8 (NKJV)

THE BIG IDEA

God’s love, not our performance, is the reason He chooses us — so we remember Him, depend on Him, and never say, “I did this by myself.”

FILL IN THE BLANK

1. God chose Israel because He _____ them, not because they were strong.
2. God fed Israel in the wilderness with _____ .
3. “Man shall not live by _____ alone.”
4. Jesus called Himself the _____ of life.

THINK IT THROUGH

1. Name three gifts from God that you did not earn.

2. When have you been tempted to say, “I did this all by myself”?

THIS WEEK’S CHALLENGE

Write a thank-you note to God listing ten gifts you didn’t earn. Read one of them aloud at dinner.

MEMORY VERSE — DEUTERONOMY 8:3

“Man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.”

Not Because We Were Good

Deuteronomy 9–11

Israel receives the land by grace, not goodness. Moses prays for a stubborn people, and God says what He really wants: love.

BIG IDEA	We don't earn God's blessing by being good. He gives it by grace, and what He asks in return is to love and to walk with Him — and to love the stranger, too.
KEY VERSE	"And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul..." — Deuteronomy 10:12
MEMORY VERSE	"What does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul..." — Deuteronomy 10:12
KEY PEOPLE	Moses — Intercedes forty days and forty nights for a stiff-necked people. Aaron — Made the golden calf, yet Moses prayed for him (9:20). The stranger, the fatherless, and the widow — The people God especially watches over (10:18).
READ ALOUD	Deuteronomy 9:4–6; Deuteronomy 9:18–20; Deuteronomy 10:12–22

YOUR 45-MINUTE SESSION PLAN

0–5 min	Welcome & Opener Earn It? (5 min). Ask: "Name something you got that you did NOT earn: a birthday gift, a hug, a ride, a kind word." Let students share. Then ask: "What's the difference between a wage and a gift?" Say: "Today Moses tells Israel the land is a gift, not a paycheck."
5–8 min	Prayer & Memory Verse Open in prayer. Read the memory verse together (Deuteronomy 10:12), then say it again from memory. Briefly recall last week's memory verse.
8–28 min	Teaching (open Bibles) Read aloud: Deuteronomy 9:4–6; Deuteronomy 9:18–20; Deuteronomy 10:12–22. Teach three points, about six minutes each: (1) You Didn't Earn This; (2) A Second Chance; (3) What Does God Really Want?. Then show Jesus in the passage.
28–36 min	Activity The Broken Tablets (8 min). Give each student a piece of cardstock and ask them to write on it one thing they sometimes do that breaks God's heart. Tear it in half. Then give them a new piece of paper and write, "What God requires: Fear Him. Walk with Him. Love Him. Serve Him." Place torn pieces and new pages in separate baskets. Read Deuteronomy 10:1–5. Say: "God gave Israel a second set of tablets. That is grace."
36–41 min	Discuss Choose two or three of the discussion questions below. Let students answer before you do.

41–44 min	Think • Feel • Do Students respond to the three personal-application questions (in the app or on paper).
44–45 min	Closing Prayer Pray for the week. Dismiss with the memory verse.

THE TEACHING

Imagine the strongest, scariest kid in school is standing in the way of something you really want, and you win. What would you say? “I earned this!” Israel was about to win battles against bigger, stronger nations. Moses knew they might say, “It’s because we’re so great.” So he shuts that thought down right away. In chapters 9–11, Moses teaches the most important lesson in the book: it’s all grace.

1. You Didn’t Earn This

Deuteronomy 9:1–6, 9:7–29

Moses says plainly: “Understand that the LORD your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a stiff-necked people” (9:6). A “stiff-necked” animal won’t turn where its master pulls the rope. Then Moses proves it by telling them stories from their own record.

He reminds them of the golden calf. While Moses was on the mountain forty days receiving God’s written law, the people made an idol. Moses threw down and broke the stone tablets, ground the golden calf to powder, and threw it in the brook. But then look at what Moses did next: he lay on his face before the LORD for forty days and forty nights, praying for them (9:18, 25). He even prayed for Aaron, who had made the calf (9:20). Moses stood in the gap for people who didn’t deserve it.

His prayer is beautiful: “Remember Your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” (9:27). He didn’t say, “Look how good they are.” He asked God to remember His promise.

“The LORD your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a stiff-necked people.”

— Deuteronomy 9:6 (NKJV)

2. A Second Chance

Deuteronomy 10:1–11

God did not give up on His people. He told Moses to cut two new stone tablets and make a wooden chest, the ark, to hold them. The ark was made of acacia wood, the desert tree. God wrote the same words again (10:4). Think about that: the people broke the covenant, and God said, “Let’s write it again.” That is who God is. He is the God of second chances.

And the ark became the center of Israel’s worship. Inside were the tablets of the law. Later the lid of the ark, the mercy seat, was where the high priest sprinkled blood on the Day of Atonement. Even in the box that held the law, mercy was built in.

3. What Does God Really Want?

Deuteronomy 10:12–11:32

Now comes one of the most important questions in the Bible: “And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you?” (10:12). Here is the answer: fear Him (awe and respect), walk in His ways, love Him, and serve Him with all your heart and soul. Not a thousand sacrifices. Not a performance. A life of love.

And look who this God is: He is “God of gods and Lord of lords,” who “shows no partiality nor takes a bribe,” and He “administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger” (10:17–18). The greatest being in the universe pays special attention to the people with the least power. So Moses concludes: “Therefore love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (10:19). If God loves the outsider, so should we.

Chapter 11 closes with a choice: a blessing if they obey, a curse if they turn away. And Moses tells them that, unlike Egypt, where farmers watered fields by foot-powered pumps, the land will drink water from the rain of heaven (11:10–12). They’ll have to depend on God.

“Therefore love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.”

— **Deuteronomy 10:19 (NKJV)**

Grace first. Then love. God did not say, “Be perfect and I will bless you.” He said, “I already love you. Now walk with Me, and love the people I love.”

JESUS IN THIS PASSAGE

Jesus: Our Intercessor and Our Grace

Moses lay on his face forty days to pray for a rebellious people. That is a beautiful picture of Jesus, who “always lives to make intercession for” us (Hebrews 7:25). Moses had to go back down the mountain. Jesus never stops praying for us.

And the lesson “not because of your righteousness” is the heart of the gospel. Ephesians 2:8–9 says, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” You can’t earn it, only receive it. Then when Jesus was asked what God requires, He gave the same answer: love God, and love your neighbor. And when we love the stranger, the poor, and the outsider, we look like Jesus, who welcomed the people no one else wanted.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”

— **Ephesians 2:8–9 (NKJV)**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think Moses told Israel the unflattering story of the golden calf?
2. How does Moses' prayer show us how to pray for people who have let us down?
3. What does it mean that God gave a second set of tablets? What does it tell you about Him?
4. Look at 10:12–13. What do you think it means to “fear” the LORD and love Him at the same time?
5. Who is the “stranger” in your school or community, and how can you love them?

PERSONAL APPLICATION: THINK • FEEL • DO

THINK	Why did Moses remind Israel of the golden calf, and what does that teach us about grace?
FEEL	How do you feel knowing you can't earn God's love, but He gives it freely?
DO	Who is a “stranger” or outsider you could welcome or help this week? What will you do?

TEACHER BACKGROUND NOTES

History, Culture & Society — for you to know before you teach

The golden calf

While Moses was on Sinai (Exodus 32), the people, and Aaron, made a gold calf and said, “This is your god.” Calf or bull images were common in Egypt (the Apis bull) and Canaan (Baal was often pictured on a bull). Whether the calf was meant to represent the LORD or another god, it broke the first two commandments. Moses’ forty days of prayer (9:18, 25) are a powerful picture of intercession. Note that Aaron was forgiven (9:20) and became the first high priest.

The ark and the tablets

The ark (10:1–5) was a chest of acacia (shittim) wood overlaid with gold, about 3¾ feet long (Exodus 25:10–22), with a golden lid called the mercy seat. The tablets inside were the covenant document. Verses 6–9 mention Aaron’s death at Moserah and the setting apart of the Levites (who got no land; the LORD was their inheritance). These details interrupt Moses’ sermon and likely give a historical update.

The stranger, the fatherless, and the widow

The Hebrew *ger* means a resident foreigner, someone living in Israel without tribal land. The fatherless and widows had no male protector or means of income. Israel’s law repeatedly commanded care for them (see 14:29; 24:17–22; 26:12). God’s “no partiality” (10:17) means He does not favor the powerful. These three groups appear often in the prophets and in James 1:27.

Egypt versus Canaan

Egypt’s agriculture depended on the Nile’s predictable flooding and irrigation channels turned by foot-driven water wheels (11:10). Canaan depended on seasonal rains: the “former rain” in autumn and the “latter rain” in spring (11:14). In the Canaanite religion the storm god Baal was credited for rain. Moses is saying: Only the LORD sends the rain. Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal (11:29) are near Shechem, in the center of the land; see Session 11.

Handout on the next page. Print one copy per student. A PowerPoint deck and the companion web app (with the Think • Feel • Do reflection) go with this session.

Not Because We Were Good

Deuteronomy 9–11

Name: _____

Date: _____

KEY VERSE

“And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul...”

— Deuteronomy 10:12 (NKJV)

THE BIG IDEA

We don’t earn God’s blessing by being good. He gives it by grace, and what He asks in return is to love and to walk with Him — and to love the stranger, too.

FILL IN THE BLANK

1. The land was a gift, not a reward for their _____ .
2. Moses prayed _____ days and nights for the people.
3. God gave Moses a _____ set of tablets.
4. God told Israel to love the _____ because they were strangers in Egypt.

THINK IT THROUGH

1. Why is it hard to believe we can’t earn God’s love?

2. Write the names of two people who might feel like outsiders. How can you include them?

THIS WEEK’S CHALLENGE

Pray for someone who has let you down, like Moses prayed for Aaron. Then do something kind for a classmate who’s left out.

MEMORY VERSE — DEUTERONOMY 10:12

“What does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul...”

One God, One Way to Worship

Deuteronomy 12–14

Israel is warned to worship God His way, to test every teacher, and to live as a holy, generous, joyful people.

BIG IDEA	We worship God the way He has asked, not the way we feel like; we test every voice against His Word; and we live as His set-apart, generous, joyful people.
KEY VERSE	“You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice, you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him.” — Deuteronomy 13:4
MEMORY VERSE	“You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice, you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him.” — Deuteronomy 13:4
KEY PEOPLE	The Levites — Priests’ helpers with no land; supported by the people’s gifts (12:12, 14:27). False prophets — Dreamers who give signs but lead people away from the LORD (13:1–5). The stranger, the fatherless, the widow — Fed from the third-year tithe (14:28–29).
READ ALOUD	Deuteronomy 12:1–7; Deuteronomy 13:1–4; Deuteronomy 14:1–2, 14:28–29

YOUR 45-MINUTE SESSION PLAN

0–5 min	Welcome & Opener Spot the Fake (5 min). Show two \$5 bills or two photos — one real and one fake (a play-money version). Ask students how they would tell the difference. Say: “The real thing teaches you to spot the fake. Today, Moses will tell us how to spot a fake teacher and how to worship the real God.”
5–8 min	Prayer & Memory Verse Open in prayer. Read the memory verse together (Deuteronomy 13:4), then say it again from memory. Briefly recall last week’s memory verse.
8–28 min	Teaching (open Bibles) Read aloud: Deuteronomy 12:1–7; Deuteronomy 13:1–4; Deuteronomy 14:1–2, 14:28–29. Teach three points, about six minutes each: (1) Worship God His Way; (2) Test Every Voice; (3) Live as God’s Special People. Then show Jesus in the passage.
28–36 min	Activity Test the Teacher (8 min). Read three short statements aloud (for example, “God wants you to be happy no matter what,” “Jesus is just one of many ways to God,” “God’s Word is true and gives life”). Students stand if they think it matches the Bible and sit if not. Then look up verses to check. Say: “Anyone can sound convincing. We test everything against God’s Word.”
36–41 min	Discuss Choose two or three of the discussion questions below. Let students answer before you do.
41–44 min	Think • Feel • Do Students respond to the three personal-application questions (in the app or on paper).

**44–45
min**

Closing Prayer

Pray for the week. Dismiss with the memory verse.

THE TEACHING

Imagine you are about to move to a new country. Everyone in your new neighborhood does things differently than you. They pray differently, eat differently, even dress differently. How do you stay yourself? That is the situation Israel was about to face in Canaan. In chapters 12–14, Moses gives practical instructions on how to stay faithful to God in the middle of a culture that does the opposite. The theme is simple: worship Him alone, worship Him His way, and be His people.

1. Worship God His Way

Deuteronomy 12

Canaanites worshiped on hilltops, under big trees, at altars and sacred stones. Moses tells Israel to tear down every one of those places (12:2–3). Then he says something important: do not worship the LORD the way the pagans worship their gods (12:4). God is not like Baal. We don’t get to invent our own ways of worship and just call it “God.”

Instead, God would choose “the place where the LORD your God chooses, to put His name” (12:5) for sacrifices and offerings. That place was first at the tabernacle and later Jerusalem. This kept Israel from scattering into a hundred local shrines and slowly mixing in pagan ideas. And notice the tone: “You shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you and your households” (12:7, 12). Worship is meant to be a joyful family meal in God’s presence, not a gloomy duty.

One more warning: Canaanites sacrificed their sons and daughters in the fire (12:31). God hates that. He asks for our hearts, not harm to our children. And Moses closes the chapter: “Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it” (12:32).

“Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.”

— Deuteronomy 12:32 (NKJV)

2. Test Every Voice

Deuteronomy 13

Moses then tells how to handle a tough situation: what if someone shows up doing amazing things — predicting the future or performing signs — but tells you to follow other gods? Moses says don’t listen, “for the LORD your God is testing you to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul” (13:3). A miracle does not prove a message is true. The message has to match what God has already said.

He adds that this test applies even when the voice is someone close to you, a brother or a friend (13:6–11), or a whole city that goes astray (13:12–18). The punishments in this chapter were severe because Israel was a nation under God as its King, and turning people to idols was like treason, destroying the covenant community. We are not a nation-state under that law; in the church, we respond to false teaching by testing it, correcting in love, and, if necessary, separating from it. But the principle holds: loyalty to God comes first, even above our closest relationships.

Verse 4 gives the positive side: walk after the LORD, fear Him, keep His commands, obey His voice, serve Him, and hold fast to Him. Six actions of a faithful life.

3. Live as God's Special People

Deuteronomy 14

Chapter 14 opens with a beautiful identity statement: “You are the children of the LORD your God” (14:1) and “You are a holy people to the LORD your God” (14:2). Because they belong to Him, Israel didn’t imitate pagan mourning customs like cutting themselves, and they ate only the animals God called clean. Whatever the reasons for each food rule, they all served one purpose: to make Israel look different from the nations as a daily reminder, “I belong to God.”

The chapter ends with a generous heart. Every year, Israel set aside a tenth of their harvest, and ate it in joy at the place God chose (14:22–27). And every third year the tithe was stored in their towns for “the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow” (14:28–29) “that the LORD your God may bless you.” God’s people give — joyfully, regularly, and for the vulnerable.

“For you are a holy people to the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.”

— Deuteronomy 14:2 (NKJV)

Worship Him alone, worship Him His way, test every voice, and live as someone who belongs to Him. The result isn’t a burden; it’s joy.

JESUS IN THIS PASSAGE

Jesus: The True Place of Worship and the Final Sacrifice

Moses said God would choose the place for worship. When a woman asked Jesus where to worship, He said, “The hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him” (John 4:23). The place has become a Person. We meet God through Jesus, in any place, with sincere hearts.

Deuteronomy 12:23 says the blood is life, and the sacrifices pointed forward to one perfect sacrifice. Hebrews 9:22 says, “Without shedding of blood there is no remission.” Jesus shed His blood once for all. And on testing prophets, 1 John 4:1 echoes Moses: “Test the spirits, whether they are of God.” As for clean and unclean foods, Jesus later declared all foods clean (Mark 7:19), and Peter learned in Acts 10 that God shows no partiality. What matters now is a clean heart, and Jesus gives it.

“The true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.”

— John 4:23 (NKJV)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think God cared so much about how Israel worshiped?
2. How can we tell the difference between a true and a false teacher today?
3. Why does Moses say that a miracle isn't enough proof that a message is from God?
4. What are some ways believers today are "set apart" from the culture around them?
5. Why do you think God cared about the poor, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow in the tithe?

PERSONAL APPLICATION: THINK • FEEL • DO

THINK	Why does God care how we worship and what we listen to, and how can we test whether a message is true?
FEEL	How do you feel when you realize others around you believe things that go against God's Word? Are you confident, nervous, or something else?
DO	What is one voice (a video, a person, a post, a song) that you will test against the Bible this week?

TEACHER BACKGROUND NOTES

History, Culture & Society — for you to know before you teach

Canaanite worship

Canaanites worshiped Baal (storm and fertility god), Asherah (a goddess often represented by a wooden pole or tree), and others at “high places” (hilltop shrines), under oaks, with standing stones. Worship often included ritual immorality and, sometimes, child sacrifice (12:31). Moses commands Israel to destroy these sites (12:2–3). The phrase “the place where the LORD your God chooses” (12:5) is repeated again and again in Deuteronomy. It was first Shiloh, later Jerusalem (1 Kings 8:29). This central worship site protected Israel’s faith from being diluted.

Eating meat, blood, and joy

Deuteronomy 12:15–25 permits ordinary slaughter of animals for meat at home, but forbids eating blood because “the blood is the life” (12:23). Blood was God’s gift for atonement (Leviticus 17:11). The chapter repeats “rejoice before the LORD” (12:7, 12, 18) — worship included feasting, family, and joy.

Hard teaching in chapter 13

Teachers often struggle with chapter 13’s severe penalties. Explain: Israel was a covenant nation, and in that context idolatry — actively leading people to worship other gods — was treason against the King and a danger that could destroy the community. These civil penalties do not apply to the church today. The New Testament response to false teachers is to mark them, warn them, and avoid them if they refuse correction (Titus 3:10; 2 John 10; Romans 16:17). The core principle in 13:3: a sign does not prove the message; God uses these tests to reveal our love.

Clean and unclean; tithes

The lists of clean and unclean animals (14:3–21; also Leviticus 11) include pigs, shellfish, and certain birds. Scholars suggest several reasons: holiness (being different), some health benefits, and rejecting animals tied to pagan rituals. “You shall not boil a young goat in its mother’s milk” (14:21) may have contrasted with a Canaanite practice. The tithe (14:22–29) was a tenth of the harvest. In the third year (14:28–29), it went to the poor and Levites. Levites had no land inheritance, so they relied on tithes and gifts. Peter’s vision (Acts 10) and Jesus’ teaching (Mark 7:19) show that the food laws marked Israel’s distinct identity until Christ.

Handout on the next page. Print one copy per student. A PowerPoint deck and the companion web app (with the Think • Feel • Do reflection) go with this session.

One God, One Way to Worship

Deuteronomy 12–14

Name: _____

Date: _____

KEY VERSE

“You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice, you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him.”

— Deuteronomy 13:4 (NKJV)

THE BIG IDEA

We worship God the way He has asked, not the way we feel like; we test every voice against His Word; and we live as His set-apart, generous, joyful people.

FILL IN THE BLANK

1. Israel was told to tear down Canaanite altars and _____ .
2. A miracle doesn't prove a message is true; it must match God's _____ .
3. Israel was God's “special _____ ” (14:2).
4. Every third year the tithe went to the Levite, stranger, fatherless, and _____ .

THINK IT THROUGH

1. Name one voice influencing you (a show, an influencer, a friend). Does it match God's Word?

2. How can you be generous to someone in need this week?

THIS WEEK'S CHALLENGE

Pick one thing you watch, read, or listen to. Compare it with a Bible passage. Share what you learn with a parent or friend.

MEMORY VERSE — DEUTERONOMY 13:4

“You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice, you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him.”

Open Hands, Fair Courts, Humble Kings

Deuteronomy 15–17

Israel learns to open its hands to the poor, celebrate God’s feasts with everyone, run fair courts, and expect a humble king.

BIG IDEA	God’s people have open hands for the poor, joyful hearts at God’s feasts, honest courts, and leaders who stay humble before God’s Word.
KEY VERSE	“For the poor will never cease from the land; therefore I command you, saying, ‘You shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor and your needy, in your land.’” — Deuteronomy 15:11
MEMORY VERSE	“You shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor and your needy, in your land.” — Deuteronomy 15:11
KEY PEOPLE	The poor and debtors — Protected by the seventh-year release (15:1–11). The Hebrew servant — Freed in the seventh year with generous gifts (15:12–18). Judges and officers — Appointed in every town to judge fairly without bribes (16:18–20). The future king — Must be chosen by God, must copy the law, and must stay humble (17:14–20).
READ ALOUD	Deuteronomy 15:7–11; Deuteronomy 16:18–20; Deuteronomy 17:14–20

YOUR 45-MINUTE SESSION PLAN

0–5 min	Welcome & Opener Open or Closed? (5 min). Have students make a tight fist and try to receive a small candy. Then have them open the hand and try again. Ask: “What do open hands let you do that closed hands can’t?” Say: “Today God teaches us to open our hands.”
5–8 min	Prayer & Memory Verse Open in prayer. Read the memory verse together (Deuteronomy 15:11), then say it again from memory. Briefly recall last week’s memory verse.
8–28 min	Teaching (open Bibles) Read aloud: Deuteronomy 15:7–11; Deuteronomy 16:18–20; Deuteronomy 17:14–20. Teach three points, about six minutes each: (1) Open Your Hand; (2) Celebrate Together and Judge Fairly; (3) Expect a Humble King. Then show Jesus in the passage.
28–36 min	Activity Fair Court (8 min). Set up a simple role-play: a student claims another took their pen. Two classmates are witnesses who tell different stories. Ask the class: “What would a fair judge do?” Then read Deuteronomy 16:19, 17:6. Ask: “Why does God hate bribes?” Say: “A fair court protects those who have the least power.”
36–41 min	Discuss Choose two or three of the discussion questions below. Let students answer before you do.

41–44 min	Think • Feel • Do Students respond to the three personal-application questions (in the app or on paper).
44–45 min	Closing Prayer Pray for the week. Dismiss with the memory verse.

THE TEACHING

If you could design a perfect society, what would it look like? Moses is doing exactly that, but under God’s direction. In chapters 15–17 he tells Israel how to take care of the poor, how to celebrate God’s feasts, how to run courts, and what kind of king to expect. And everywhere you look, one word shows up: brother. Israel was to treat each other like family.

1. Open Your Hand

Deuteronomy 15

Every seventh year, Israel canceled debts and released Hebrew servants. It was a reset button that kept anyone from being trapped forever in poverty. Moses tells them: “If there is among you a poor man ... you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother, but you shall open your hand wide to him” (15:7–8).

Moses even anticipates the sneaky thought: “The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand, so I won’t lend.” He says don’t think that! Give anyway, and “your heart should not be grieved when you give” (15:9–10). God wanted generous hearts, not grudging ones. And he’s honest: “The poor will never cease from the land” (15:11). That’s why we always keep our hands open.

When a servant was set free, the master didn’t send him away empty-handed. He was to “supply him liberally” from his flock, threshing floor, and winepress (15:13–14). Why? “Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you” (15:15). Generosity grows out of remembering how God treated us.

“You shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother, but you shall open your hand wide to him.”

— Deuteronomy 15:7–8 (NKJV)

2. Celebrate Together and Judge Fairly

Deuteronomy 16:1–22

Three times a year, all Israel gathered at the place God chose for the great feasts: Passover (remembering the rescue from Egypt), the Feast of Weeks (a thanksgiving for the wheat harvest, later called Pentecost), and the Feast of Booths (living in temporary shelters to remember the wilderness). And notice who is invited to the party: “you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow” (16:14). Everybody gets to rejoice. Verse 17 adds that each should give “as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD.”

Then Moses moves to the courthouse. Judges were appointed in every town and had one job: “You shall follow what is altogether just” (16:20). No bribes, no favorites. “A bribe blinds the eyes of the wise.” Fair courts mean the poor can get justice, too.

“You shall follow what is altogether just, that you may live and inherit the land which the LORD your God is giving you.”

— Deuteronomy 16:20 (NKJV)

3. Expect a Humble King

Deuteronomy 17

Chapter 17 includes a surprising prediction. Israel did not have a king yet, but Moses knew that one day they would ask for one, “like all the nations” (17:14). He gave rules for a king that are very different from other kings in the ancient world. The king must be chosen by God and be an Israelite. He must not gather lots of horses (a military buildup), many wives (political alliances), or huge piles of silver and gold (17:16–17).

Then comes the best rule: the king must write out his own copy of the law, keep it with him, and “read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God” (17:19). Why? “That his heart may not be lifted above his brethren” (17:20). A leader who reads God’s Word every day stays humble. Sadly, Solomon, wise as he was, broke all three: he imported horses from Egypt, married seven hundred wives, and piled up gold. The warning was right.

“He shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law.”

— Deuteronomy 17:19 (NKJV)

Open hands. Honest courts. Humble leaders. This is what it looks like when people live under God’s rule. Where in your life can you open your hand?

JESUS IN THIS PASSAGE

Jesus: The Generous Redeemer and the Humble King

Moses told Israel to open their hands because the LORD redeemed them. Jesus took it further. 2 Corinthians 8:9 says, “Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.” He opened His hands on the cross and gave everything. And He taught us to pray, “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors” (Matthew 6:12). In the synagogue at Nazareth He read Isaiah’s promise to “set at liberty those who are oppressed” (Luke 4:18) and said it was fulfilled in Him.

Jesus is also our Passover. “Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us” (1 Corinthians 5:7). And Jesus is the perfect King Moses pointed to: He rode into Jerusalem not on a warhorse but on a donkey (Matthew 21:5), gentle and humble. He never needed an army or a treasury. He reads and lives the Word perfectly, and one day He will judge every case with perfect fairness.

“Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.”

— 2 Corinthians 8:9 (NKJV)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think God made a special “reset” every seventh year for the poor?
2. What does it mean to give “without a grudging heart”? Why does that matter to God?
3. Why would God invite servants and strangers to the feasts?
4. What happens in a society when judges take bribes? Where do we see that today?
5. Why do you think God told the king to write out his own copy of the law?

PERSONAL APPLICATION: THINK • FEEL • DO

THINK	Why did God want His people to be generous, fair, and humble, and how do those things reflect His own character?
FEEL	How do you feel when you think about giving away something you have to help someone else? Is it exciting, hard, or both?
DO	What is one way you can “open your hand” this week, with your time, money, or kindness?

TEACHER BACKGROUND NOTES

History, Culture & Society — for you to know before you teach

The seventh year

The sabbatical year (shemitah) came every seventh year. It included rest for the land (Leviticus 25:1–7) and, in Deuteronomy, the release of debts (15:1–6) and of Hebrew servants (15:12–18). Hebrew servitude was usually debt-servitude, a way to work off a debt, not permanent slavery. After six years of service, a servant went free in the seventh year with gifts (15:13–14) so he could start again. If a servant loved his master’s household and chose to stay, an awl was pushed through his ear lobe into the doorpost (15:16–17) as a sign of permanent, voluntary service.

The three pilgrim feasts

Passover and Unleavened Bread (spring, remembering the Exodus), the Feast of Weeks (Shavuot, seven weeks later, the wheat harvest, known in the New Testament as Pentecost), and the Feast of Booths (Sukkot, in the fall, living in shelters for seven days). Every male was to come to the central sanctuary (16:16), and families joined in celebration. The feasts taught Israel to remember history, to be thankful, and to rejoice together.

Courts at the city gates

The city gate was Israel’s courthouse (16:18; Ruth 4). Judges and officers decided local disputes; hard cases went to the priests and the judge at the central sanctuary (17:8–13). Two or three witnesses were required (17:6; see 19:15). This was a remarkably fair system for the ancient world, where kings could rule by whim.

The law of the king

Deuteronomy predicts a king about 400 years before Saul (1 Samuel 8). The three restrictions in 17:16–17 were aimed at the typical dangers for ancient monarchs: military power (horses and chariots, often imported from Egypt), foreign alliances through marriage, and wealth. Solomon broke all three (1 Kings 10:26–11:8). The king’s copy of the law was to be made “in the presence of the priests” (17:18), meaning from the official copy. Kings who read the law were meant to rule like servants.

Handout on the next page. Print one copy per student. A PowerPoint deck and the companion web app (with the Think • Feel • Do reflection) go with this session.

Open Hands, Fair Courts, Humble Kings

Deuteronomy 15–17

Name: _____

Date: _____

KEY VERSE

“For the poor will never cease from the land; therefore I command you, saying, ‘You shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor and your needy, in your land.’”

— Deuteronomy 15:11 (NKJV)

THE BIG IDEA

God’s people have open hands for the poor, joyful hearts at God’s feasts, honest courts, and leaders who stay humble before God’s Word.

FILL IN THE BLANK

1. Every seventh year Israel was to _____ debts.
2. Moses said, “You shall open your _____ wide to your brother.”
3. A fair judge doesn’t take a _____ .
4. The king was to read God’s _____ every day of his life.

THINK IT THROUGH

1. Who in your community has a need you could meet? How can you help?

2. Why do you think leaders who read God’s Word are less likely to become proud?

THIS WEEK’S CHALLENGE

Give something away this week — your time, a snack, a gift, or money to help someone. Do it without grumbling, and tell no one except God.

MEMORY VERSE — DEUTERONOMY 15:11

“You shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor and your needy, in your land.”

SESSION 9 OF 13

A Prophet Like Moses

Deuteronomy 18–20

God promises a coming Prophet greater than Moses, provides safe cities for the accused, and sets fair rules for witnesses and war.

BIG IDEA	Don't look for answers in the occult or in fear. God promised one true Prophet — Jesus — and told us to hear Him. He also gave us justice, refuge, and courage.
KEY VERSE	"The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear..." — Deuteronomy 18:15
MEMORY VERSE	"The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear." — Deuteronomy 18:15
KEY PEOPLE	The Prophet — The coming Messenger Moses promised, who is Jesus. The Levites — Priests who live from the offerings because "the LORD is their inheritance" (18:2). Accidental killers — People who fled to the cities of refuge for a fair hearing (19). The priest in battle — Speaks courage to the army: "Do not let your heart faint" (20:3).
READ ALOUD	Deuteronomy 18:9–15; Deuteronomy 18:18–22; Deuteronomy 19:1–7, 19:15; Deuteronomy 20:1–4

YOUR 45-MINUTE SESSION PLAN

0–5 min	Welcome & Opener Whose Voice? (5 min). Ask three volunteers to stand behind a screen (or turn their backs) and say, "Follow me!" Have the class guess who is speaking. Ask: "How do you know the voice you can trust?" Say: "God promised one voice above all others."
5–8 min	Prayer & Memory Verse Open in prayer. Read the memory verse together (Deuteronomy 18:15), then say it again from memory. Briefly recall last week's memory verse.
8–28 min	Teaching (open Bibles) Read aloud: Deuteronomy 18:9–15; Deuteronomy 18:18–22; Deuteronomy 19:1–7, 19:15; Deuteronomy 20:1–4. Teach three points, about six minutes each: (1) Don't Go to the Occult — God Will Send His Prophet; (2) Justice and Mercy: Refuge and Witnesses; (3) Courage in Battle: God Goes With You. Then show Jesus in the passage.
28–36 min	Activity City of Refuge Game (8 min). Make a "safe zone" in the corner of the room. Play a gentle game of tag where a safe zone is available for anyone who is "accidentally" tagged. Ask: "What does it feel like to have a safe place?" Then read Deuteronomy 19:1–7 and explain that God designed cities where a person who caused an accident could run for fair treatment. Say: "God cares about justice and mercy."
36–41 min	Discuss Choose two or three of the discussion questions below. Let students answer before you do.

41–44 min	Think • Feel • Do Students respond to the three personal-application questions (in the app or on paper).
44–45 min	Closing Prayer Pray for the week. Dismiss with the memory verse.

THE TEACHING

Everyone wonders what the future holds. Who will I become? What will happen? In Moses’ day, the nations around Israel had a thousand ways of trying to find out: reading stars, calling up the dead, casting spells. In chapters 18–20 Moses says: don’t go there. God has something much better. He will send a Prophet who speaks His words. And along the way, Moses gives guidance for justice, safe places, and courage in battle.

1. Don’t Go to the Occult — God Will Send His Prophet

Deuteronomy 18

First, Moses gives a list of practices God hates: child sacrifice, divination, sorcery, interpreting omens, casting spells, consulting mediums and spiritists, and trying to talk to the dead (18:10–11). Today, it looks like ouija boards, séances, tarot cards, and horoscopes. Moses says these are “an abomination to the LORD.” Why? Because they look for answers somewhere other than God, and they open the door to powers that deceive. God’s people don’t need them. God speaks.

Then Moses makes the greatest promise of the chapter: “The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear” (18:15). God would one day send another prophet. Remember that at Sinai the people were terrified of God’s voice and asked for a mediator? God said, “I will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him” (18:18).

Verses 20–22 give a test for false prophets. If a prophet speaks in God’s name and what he says doesn’t come true, God did not send him. Combine that with chapter 13: the message must also match what God already said.

“I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him.”

— **Deuteronomy 18:18 (NKJV)**

2. Justice and Mercy: Refuge and Witnesses

Deuteronomy 19

God commanded Israel to set up cities of refuge, safe cities where a person who accidentally killed someone could run for protection. Moses gives an example: two men are chopping wood, and the axhead flies off the handle and kills a neighbor (19:5). In that time, a relative might chase down the person to take revenge. The city of refuge gave the person a fair hearing. The roads to the cities had to be kept in good repair (19:3). Mercy had to be easy to reach.

Then Moses sets a rule that protects everyone: “One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity... by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established” (19:15). One person’s word is not enough. And if a witness lies on purpose, he receives the punishment he tried to put on the other

person (19:16–21). That’s what “an eye for an eye” was about: a limit on punishment and a warning against lying, not a license for revenge.

Also, don’t move your neighbor’s boundary stone (19:14). That’s a way of stealing land. God cares about fair property, fair courts, and the weak.

“By the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established.”

— Deuteronomy 19:15 (NKJV)

3. Courage in Battle: God Goes With You

Deuteronomy 20

Finally, war. Moses begins with a huge promise: “When you go out to battle against your enemies, and see horses and chariots and people more numerous than you, do not be afraid of them; for the LORD your God is with you, who brought you up from the land of Egypt” (20:1). Before the fight, the priest would speak to the army: “Do not let your heart faint, do not be afraid... for the LORD your God is He who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you” (20:3–4).

Then something surprising. Some men were sent home: the man with a new house he hadn’t dedicated, the man with a new vineyard, the man engaged to be married, and the man who was afraid. God cares about people’s lives, not only the battle. And Israel was to offer peace to a city before attacking (20:10). Even in war, they were not to cut down fruit trees, because the trees were food, not enemies (20:19–20). God’s people were to fight with restraint, courage, and respect.

“For the LORD your God is He who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.”

— Deuteronomy 20:4 (NKJV)

Whose voice will you listen to? Not horoscopes, not rumors, not fear. God has spoken, and He has sent His Prophet. Hear Him.

JESUS IN THIS PASSAGE

Jesus: The Prophet Like Moses — and Our City of Refuge

The Jewish people were waiting for “the Prophet.” When John the Baptist was asked, “Are you the Prophet?” he said no (John 1:21). But after Jesus fed more than five thousand people, the crowd said, “This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world” (John 6:14). Peter preached in Acts 3:22–23 that Jesus is the fulfillment of Deuteronomy 18. Like Moses, Jesus escaped a king’s plot to kill babies, passed through water, spent forty days in the wilderness, gave teachings on a mountain, and did great signs. But He is greater: Moses spoke God’s words, Jesus is God’s Word (John 1:1).

At His transfiguration, the Father spoke from the cloud: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!” (Matthew 17:5). That is Deuteronomy 18:15 coming true: “Him you shall hear.” And the cities of refuge picture Jesus, the One we run to when we know we deserve judgment. “We who have fled for refuge” can hold on to the hope set before us (Hebrews 6:18).

“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!”

— **Matthew 17:5 (NKJV)**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why does God warn so strongly against horoscopes, mediums, and spells?
2. How is Jesus like Moses? How is He greater?
3. What do the cities of refuge teach us about God’s heart for justice and mercy?
4. Why did God require two or three witnesses? How does that protect people today?
5. What gives you courage when you’re outnumbered or afraid?

PERSONAL APPLICATION: THINK • FEEL • DO

THINK	Why does God want us to listen to Him instead of looking for answers from horoscopes or the occult, and what does it mean that Jesus is the Prophet we must hear?
FEEL	How do you feel when you’re afraid of the future? How does it feel to know God has spoken and goes with you?
DO	What is one specific way you will “hear Jesus” this week, such as reading one of the Gospels, and who will you invite to join you?

TEACHER BACKGROUND NOTES

History, Culture & Society — for you to know before you teach

The Levites and God’s portion

The Levites had no tribal land. “The LORD is their inheritance” (18:2). They lived off the tithes and the portions of the offerings (18:1–8). A Levite who moved to the central sanctuary was to share equally in its provision. This ensured that religious leaders were cared for by the community and didn’t need to hold land or power.

The occult in the ancient world

Verses 10–11 list nine practices: child sacrifice (“pass through the fire”), divination, soothsaying, interpreting omens, sorcery, casting spells, consulting mediums, spiritists, and necromancy. Canaanites and Egyptians used these to find guidance and power. King Saul’s visit to the medium at Endor (1 Samuel 28) is a sad example. For teens, keep it factual: the Bible treats these as real spiritual danger, not harmless fun. Offer the positive alternative in verse 15: God speaks, and Jesus is His full revelation (Hebrews 1:1–2).

The Prophet and the New Testament

Jews in Jesus’ day expected “the Prophet” (John 1:21, 6:14, 7:40). Peter (Acts 3:22–23) and Stephen (Acts 7:37) quote Deuteronomy 18:15–19 as fulfilled in Jesus. In 18:16–17, the promise ties back to Sinai (5:23–27) when the people begged for a mediator. The test for a false prophet (18:20–22) must be read with chapter 13: both fulfillment and faithfulness to God’s revealed Word are required.

Refuge, witnesses, and war

Six cities of refuge were set up in all (three east of the Jordan in 4:41–43, and three west in Joshua 20). A person fleeing from a “blood avenger” (a relative seeking revenge) got a hearing; if the killing was accidental, he lived in the city until the high priest’s death (Numbers 35:25). The “eye for eye” principle (19:21) limited punishment to fit the crime; Jesus later taught a higher path (Matthew 5:38–39). In battle (20:5–9), exemptions for new homes, vineyards, and betrothals show God valued ordinary family life. The offer of peace (20:10) applied to distant cities; the nations within Canaan were subject to the special judgment described in Session 5 (20:16–18). Protecting fruit trees (20:19–20) is an ancient example of conservation.

Handout on the next page. Print one copy per student. A PowerPoint deck and the companion web app (with the Think • Feel • Do reflection) go with this session.

A Prophet Like Moses

Deuteronomy 18–20

Name: _____

Date: _____

KEY VERSE

“The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear...”

— Deuteronomy 18:15 (NKJV)

THE BIG IDEA

Don’t look for answers in the occult or in fear. God promised one true Prophet — Jesus — and told us to hear Him. He also gave us justice, refuge, and courage.

FILL IN THE BLANK

1. God promised to raise up a _____ like Moses.
2. A person who killed by accident could flee to a city of _____ .
3. A matter had to be established by two or three _____ .
4. At the transfiguration, the Father said of Jesus, “ _____ Him!”

THINK IT THROUGH

1. Where do people today look for answers in the future besides God? What does God offer instead?

2. What do you do when you’re afraid? How can you remind yourself that God goes with you?

THIS WEEK’S CHALLENGE

Read one chapter of Mark this week. As you read, write down one thing Jesus says that you want to obey.

MEMORY VERSE — DEUTERONOMY 18:15

“The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear.”

Love Your Neighbor in Real Life

Deuteronomy 21–25

Practical laws for everyday life: help your neighbor, protect the vulnerable, pay workers fairly, leave something for the needy, and use honest scales.

BIG IDEA	Loving your neighbor isn't a feeling; it's what you do. God's everyday laws show what love looks like: help, protect, pay fairly, share, and be honest.
KEY VERSE	"You shall not see your brother's donkey or his ox fall down along the road, and hide yourself from them; you shall surely help him lift them up again." — Deuteronomy 22:4
MEMORY VERSE	"You shall not see your brother's donkey or his ox fall down along the road, and hide yourself from them; you shall surely help him lift them up again." — Deuteronomy 22:4
KEY PEOPLE	Your neighbor — Anyone near you who needs help — a brother, a friend, even a stranger. The hired worker — A poor man who needs his pay today (24:14–15). The widow, orphan, and stranger — Protected by God; allowed to gather leftover grain (24:19–22). Ruth and Boaz — A later story of gleaning and kindness (Ruth 2).
READ ALOUD	Deuteronomy 22:1–4, 22:8; Deuteronomy 24:14–22; Deuteronomy 25:13–16

YOUR 45-MINUTE SESSION PLAN

0–5 min	Welcome & Opener Spot the Need (5 min). Show a quick slide or picture of everyday situations: a backpack left on a bus seat, a classmate sitting alone at lunch, a lost wallet. Ask: "What should you do?" Say: "Today we look at how God taught His people to love their neighbors in everyday moments."
5–8 min	Prayer & Memory Verse Open in prayer. Read the memory verse together (Deuteronomy 22:4), then say it again from memory. Briefly recall last week's memory verse.
8–28 min	Teaching (open Bibles) Read aloud: Deuteronomy 22:1–4, 22:8; Deuteronomy 24:14–22; Deuteronomy 25:13–16. Teach three points, about six minutes each: (1) Help and Protect Your Neighbor; (2) Pay Fairly and Treat Workers Right; (3) Share the Harvest and Use Honest Scales. Then show Jesus in the passage.
28–36 min	Activity Neighbor Scenarios (8 min). Split into small groups. Give each a card with a scenario (lost phone, a classmate being bullied, a younger sibling who needs help, a friend who got paid too little for a job). Groups decide what "love your neighbor" looks like and then act it out. Then read Luke 10:36–37 together.
36–41 min	Discuss Choose two or three of the discussion questions below. Let students answer before you do.
41–44 min	Think • Feel • Do Students respond to the three personal-application questions (in the app or on paper).

**44–45
min**

Closing Prayer

Pray for the week. Dismiss with the memory verse.

THE TEACHING

If you wanted to know what a country really believes, you wouldn't just look at its speeches. You'd look at its laws, because laws show what a country actually cares about. Chapters 21–25 of Deuteronomy are a long list of everyday laws, some that sound strange to us. But if you listen carefully, you hear a heartbeat: protect people, especially the weak. This is love for your neighbor, put into practice.

1. Help and Protect Your Neighbor

Deuteronomy 22:1–8, 23:15–16, 24:6

The first rule is simple and hard: don't look the other way. "You shall not see your brother's ox or his sheep going astray, and hide yourself from them; you shall certainly bring them back" (22:1). If you don't know whose animal it is, take it home and keep it until the owner comes. And if a donkey or ox falls on the road, "you shall surely help him lift them up again" (22:4). You can't say, "Not my problem."

Next, a rule about roofs: "When you build a new house, then you shall make a parapet for your roof, that you may not bring guilt of bloodshed on your household if anyone falls from it" (22:8). In Israel, the roof was like a patio, where people sat, slept, and worked. Build a railing. Think ahead about others' safety. God even cares about birds. If you find a nest, let the mother go (22:6–7), and even about the poor: you can't take a man's millstone as a pledge, because it's how he makes his daily bread (24:6).

"When you build a new house, then you shall make a parapet for your roof, that you may not bring guilt of bloodshed on your household if anyone falls from it."

— **Deuteronomy 22:8 (NKJV)**

2. Pay Fairly and Treat Workers Right

Deuteronomy 24:14–18, 25:1–4

"You shall not oppress a hired servant who is poor and needy... Each day you shall give him his wages, and not let the sun go down on it, for he is poor and has set his heart on it" (24:14–15). A day laborer might need that money to feed his family tonight. Paying late can mean hunger.

Justice must be fair to all: "You shall not pervert justice due the stranger or the fatherless, nor take a widow's garment as a pledge" (24:17). And each person is responsible for his own wrongs. "Fathers shall not be put to death for their children" (24:16). God doesn't punish kids for what their parents did.

Even animals get fair treatment: "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain" (25:4). A working ox should be allowed to eat. If animals deserve fairness, how much more people? And whenever the memory of Egypt comes up, Moses says: "Remember that you were a slave in Egypt" (24:18, 22). You know what it feels like to be mistreated; don't do it to others.

"Each day you shall give him his wages, and not let the sun go down on it, for he is poor and has set his heart on it."

— **Deuteronomy 24:15 (NKJV)**

3. Share the Harvest and Use Honest Scales

Deuteronomy 24:19–22, 25:13–16

God built generosity into farming. When you harvest your field and forget a sheaf of grain, don't go back for it. "It shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow" (24:19). The same goes for olive trees and grapevines. Leaving the edges and the leftovers for the poor was God's welfare system, but it involved work: the poor had to gather it themselves, with dignity. A woman named Ruth did exactly this, and it led her to Boaz (Ruth 2).

Finally, honest scales. "You shall not have in your bag differing weights, a heavy and a light" (25:13). Merchants in ancient markets could carry two sets of weights, one to buy and one to sell, to cheat people. God says, "You shall have a perfect and just weight" (25:15). Honesty in business, school, and online isn't optional. Cheating on tests, tricking people, or giving less than you promised — those are just differing weights.

"You shall have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure, that your days may be lengthened in the land which the LORD your God is giving you."

— Deuteronomy 25:15 (NKJV)

Love your neighbor isn't just a nice idea. It's a barn railing, a returned lost phone, a paycheck delivered on time, and a handful of grain left in the field.

JESUS IN THIS PASSAGE

Jesus: The Best Neighbor Who Bore the Curse

A lawyer asked Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan, a man who stopped to help a wounded stranger when two religious leaders walked by. Then Jesus asked, "Which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?" The lawyer said, "He who showed mercy." Jesus said, "Go and do likewise" (Luke 10:36–37). That is Deuteronomy 22:1–4 with a face on it. Jesus is the ultimate neighbor. We were the ones lying on the road, and He stopped.

Jesus also summed up all these laws in one sentence: "Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 7:12). And there's a hidden connection in this section. Deuteronomy 21:22–23 says a man hanged on a tree is under God's curse. Galatians 3:13 says, "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us." Jesus took the curse that belonged to us, so we could be forgiven and learn to love our neighbors for real.

"So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves? And he said, 'He who showed mercy on him.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'"

— Luke 10:36–37 (NKJV)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think God included laws about lost animals and roof railings in the Bible?
2. What would happen in our world if employers paid workers on time and fairly?
3. How is leaving grain for the poor different from just handing out money?
4. Where do you see “differing weights” (cheating or dishonesty) in school or online?
5. How does the Good Samaritan story connect with these laws?

PERSONAL APPLICATION: THINK • FEEL • DO

THINK	What do these everyday laws teach us about what it means to love our neighbor, and how did Jesus show us the best example?
FEEL	How do you feel when you see someone in need and you could help but it’s inconvenient? What makes it hard?
DO	Who is one “neighbor” you will help this week, and what exactly will you do?

TEACHER BACKGROUND NOTES

History, Culture & Society — for you to know before you teach

A variety of laws

Chapters 21–25 are a collection of case laws covering family, community, and justice. Some seem strange: the unsolved murder in 21:1–9 (elders offered a heifer to clear the community of guilt), regulations about captured women (21:10–14), a father’s firstborn inheritance (21:15–17), the stubborn and rebellious son (21:18–21), and rules about marriage and divorce (22:13–24:5). These laws regulated sinful situations to protect the weak, especially women and children, in a harsh ancient world. Jesus said Moses allowed divorce “because of the hardness of your hearts” (Matthew 19:8). Teach these with care: they show God restraining sin and protecting the vulnerable, not endorsing every situation.

The hanged man and the curse

Deuteronomy 21:22–23 required that the body of someone executed and hung be buried before nightfall, “for he who is hanged is accursed of God.” Paul applies this to Jesus in Galatians 3:13. It helps students see why Jesus’ death on a cross was so shocking to Jews, and so powerful: He took the curse for us.

Everyday ancient life

Roofs in Israel were flat and used as living space (Joshua 2:6; 2 Samuel 11:2). A millstone (24:6) was the household’s means of making flour; taking it as a pledge would leave a family without bread. A cloak was a poor man’s blanket, so it had to be returned by sunset (24:10–13). Hired laborers lived day to day, which is why wages were due the same day (24:14–15). Gleaning (24:19–22) let the poor harvest with dignity; see Ruth 2. Flogging was limited to forty stripes (25:1–3); Paul’s “forty stripes minus one” (2 Corinthians 11:24) shows the Jews kept a safety margin.

Honest weights and the first-century echoes

Dishonest weights and measures were a widespread problem (Proverbs 11:1, 20:10; Amos 8:5; Micah 6:11). A merchant might use a heavy stone to buy and a light one to sell. 25:5–10 describes levirate marriage, where a brother of a deceased man married his widow to preserve his name and care for her, as in the story of Ruth and Boaz. Verses 17–19 command Israel to remember Amalek, who attacked the weak stragglers at the rear of the Israelite line (see Exodus 17:8–16). God notices how people treat the vulnerable.

Handout on the next page. Print one copy per student. A PowerPoint deck and the companion web app (with the Think • Feel • Do reflection) go with this session.

Love Your Neighbor in Real Life

Deuteronomy 21–25

Name: _____

Date: _____

KEY VERSE

“You shall not see your brother’s donkey or his ox fall down along the road, and hide yourself from them; you shall surely help him lift them up again.”

— Deuteronomy 22:4 (NKJV)

THE BIG IDEA

Loving your neighbor isn’t a feeling; it’s what you do. God’s everyday laws show what love looks like: help, protect, pay fairly, share, and be honest.

FILL IN THE BLANK

1. If you see your brother’s ox or donkey fall, you must help him _____ it up.
2. Workers must be paid _____, before the sun goes down.
3. The poor were allowed to _____ leftover grain from the fields.
4. God wants a perfect and just _____ and measure.

THINK IT THROUGH

1. Write about a time someone helped you when it would have been easier to look away.

2. In what area (school, sports, online, work) do you most need to be honest?

THIS WEEK’S CHALLENGE

Do one hidden act of love this week: return something, pay someone back, pick up trash, or help a classmate. Don’t tell anyone why.

MEMORY VERSE — DEUTERONOMY 22:4

“You shall not see your brother’s donkey or his ox fall down along the road, and hide yourself from them; you shall surely help him lift them up again.”

Firstfruits, Blessings, and Curses

Deuteronomy 26–28

Israel brings its first and best to God, declares the covenant on Mount Ebal, and hears the blessings and warnings of obedience.

BIG IDEA	We give God our first and best with thankful hearts, and we take His Word seriously because obeying leads to life. Jesus took the curse so we could receive the blessing.
KEY VERSE	“So you shall rejoice in every good thing which the LORD your God has given to you and your house, you and the Levite and the stranger who is among you.” — Deuteronomy 26:11
MEMORY VERSE	“So you shall rejoice in every good thing which the LORD your God has given to you and your house.” — Deuteronomy 26:11
KEY PEOPLE	The worshiper — Brings a basket of firstfruits and tells the story of what God has done (26:1–11). The Levites — Speak the curses from Mount Ebal while the people answer “Amen!” (27:14–26). The twelve tribes — Six stand on Mount Gerizim for blessing, six on Mount Ebal for curse (27:11–13).
READ ALOUD	Deuteronomy 26:1–11; Deuteronomy 27:1–8; Deuteronomy 28:1–6; Deuteronomy 28:47

YOUR 45-MINUTE SESSION PLAN

0–5 min	Welcome & Opener Firstfruits Basket (5 min). Bring a basket with a few pieces of fruit. Ask: “If you were given a gift of fruit, which one would you give first to someone else, the best or the leftovers?” Say: “Israel was taught to give God the first and the best. Let’s see why.”
5–8 min	Prayer & Memory Verse Open in prayer. Read the memory verse together (Deuteronomy 26:11), then say it again from memory. Briefly recall last week’s memory verse.
8–28 min	Teaching (open Bibles) Read aloud: Deuteronomy 26:1–11; Deuteronomy 27:1–8; Deuteronomy 28:1–6; Deuteronomy 28:47. Teach three points, about six minutes each: (1) Give God Your First and Best; (2) Write It Down: Stones, an Altar, and Two Mountains; (3) Blessings and Warnings. Then show Jesus in the passage.
28–36 min	Activity Yes and Amen (8 min). Divide the class into two halves facing each other. Read a short list of “blessings” (“Blessed is the one who tells the truth” etc.) and “curses” (“Cursed is the one who cheats”). After each, the class responds “Amen!” as Israel did. Afterward, talk about how it feels to say “Amen” to God’s words together.
36–41 min	Discuss Choose two or three of the discussion questions below. Let students answer before you do.

41–44 min	Think • Feel • Do Students respond to the three personal-application questions (in the app or on paper).
44–45 min	Closing Prayer Pray for the week. Dismiss with the memory verse.

THE TEACHING

Moses is almost at the end of the main body of his sermon. The long list of laws is finished. Now he turns to what Israel will do once they cross the Jordan. They will give God their first and best. They will gather around two mountains and promise to obey. And they will hear what happens when people keep or reject God’s covenant. Think of it as signing a contract in front of the whole nation, with a ceremony.

1. Give God Your First and Best

Deuteronomy 26

When Israel entered the land and harvested their first crops, they were to put some of the first fruit in a basket and bring it to the place God chose. They would hand it to the priest and say a short statement of faith, the oldest creed in the Bible: “My father was a Syrian, about to perish, and he went down to Egypt... So the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand” (26:5–8). Then: “Now behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land which you, O LORD, have given me” (26:10).

Look at what happens. The worshiper tells the whole story. He remembers that Jacob was homeless, that Israel was enslaved, and that God rescued them. Giving wasn’t a tax. It was thankfulness. And then comes a celebration: “So you shall rejoice in every good thing which the LORD your God has given to you” (26:11) — together with the Levite and the stranger.

At the end of the chapter (26:16–19), God and Israel make a mutual declaration. Israel says the LORD is their God. And God declares that Israel is His special people. A covenant is a two-way promise.

“And now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land which you, O LORD, have given me.”

— **Deuteronomy 26:10 (NKJV)**

2. Write It Down: Stones, an Altar, and Two Mountains

Deuteronomy 27

Moses tells the people exactly what to do on the day they cross the Jordan. First, set up large stones, cover them with plaster, and write all the words of this law on them “very plainly” (27:8). God’s Word is meant to be clear, public, and easy to read. Second, build an altar of uncut stones on Mount Ebal, and offer burnt offerings and peace offerings and “rejoice before the LORD” (27:5–7).

Third, a great ceremony at the two mountains near Shechem. Six tribes stood on Mount Gerizim to bless. Six stood on Mount Ebal to curse. The Levites between them read twelve “curses” on specific sins like idolatry, dishonoring parents, moving a boundary stone, mistreating the stranger or the widow, and secret sin. After each, all the people answered, “Amen!” (27:15–26). That means, “So be it. We agree.” This was public agreement, not private feeling.

The last curse (27:26) closes the loop: “Cursed is the one who does not confirm all the words of this law by observing them.” Every person listening could feel it: who can keep it all?

“Cursed is the one who does not confirm all the words of this law by observing them.”

— Deuteronomy 27:26 (NKJV)

3. Blessings and Warnings

Deuteronomy 28

Chapter 28 begins with a promise: “If you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments... all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you” (28:1–2). The blessings cover everything: the city and the field, children, crops, animals, enemies defeated, rain, and being “the head and not the tail” (28:13). Notice that they “overtake” you. Like blessings running you down from behind!

Then the chapter turns to curses, a lot more of them, describing what would happen if Israel turned away: drought, disease, defeat, and exile. Why so many? Because an ancient treaty spelled out the consequences, and God was serious about love. These weren’t random threats. They were the natural result of turning from the Source of life.

The chapter explains the root problem in verse 47: “Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joyfulness and gladness of heart.” Not just the wrong actions, but the wrong heart. God wants joyful service, not grumpy rule-keeping.

“And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the LORD your God.”

— Deuteronomy 28:2 (NKJV)

Give God your first. Say “Amen” to His Word. Serve Him with joy. And remember, the blessings and curses weren’t a vending machine; they were a map of life with God and life without Him.

JESUS IN THIS PASSAGE

Jesus: The Firstfruits Who Took Our Curse

The most important sentence in these chapters might be 27:26: “Cursed is the one who does not confirm all the words of this law.” Nobody could do it. Paul quotes this in Galatians 3:10 to show we all stand under the curse. But then comes the good news: “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us” (Galatians 3:13). Jesus hung on a tree, under the curse of Deuteronomy 21:23, so that the blessing promised to Abraham would come to us.

Jesus is also our firstfruits. 1 Corinthians 15:20 says, “But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.” Just as the first fruit promised the whole harvest, Jesus’ resurrection promises that everyone who trusts Him will be raised too. Our response? Joy. “You shall rejoice in every good thing.”

“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us.”

— Galatians 3:13 (NKJV)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think God asked for the first part of the harvest instead of leftovers?
2. Why did Israel retell their history as they gave? What difference does that make?
3. What does it mean to say “Amen” to God’s Word? Is that easy or hard?
4. How do you think the blessings and curses are connected to our choices?
5. How does Jesus take the curse of the law for us? Why is that such good news?

PERSONAL APPLICATION: THINK • FEEL • DO

THINK	What does it mean to give God your first and best, and why did God make the consequences of obeying and disobeying so clear?
FEEL	How do you feel when you hear that Jesus took the curse that belonged to us?
DO	What is one “first and best” thing you will give to God this week, such as time, talent, money, or attention?

TEACHER BACKGROUND NOTES

History, Culture & Society — for you to know before you teach

Firstfruits and the first creed

Bringing the firstfruits (26:1–11) acknowledged that the land and harvest belonged to God. The statement in 26:5–10, “a Syrian, about to perish” (Hebrew *arami oved*, “a perishing Aramean,” often understood as Jacob, who lived in Aram with Laban), is thought to be one of Israel’s oldest confessions of faith. Every year the farmer retold salvation history. In the third year, the tithe went to the poor (26:12–15). Verses 16–19 are a covenant ratification: both sides declare their commitment.

Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim

Ebal and Gerizim stand on either side of a narrow valley near Shechem (modern Nablus) in the heart of the land, where Abraham first built an altar (Genesis 12:6–7). The natural amphitheater helps sound carry. Joshua 8:30–35 records Israel doing exactly what Deuteronomy 27 commanded. Some archaeologists have proposed that a stone structure found on Mount Ebal in the 1980s is an early Israelite altar, but scholars still debate this. The plastered stones echo a known ancient practice of writing treaties on plastered surfaces.

The twelve curses

Chapter 27’s curses target sins done in secret, those that wouldn’t be caught by a court: idolatry, dishonoring parents, moving a boundary stone, misleading a blind man, perverting justice for the stranger, orphan, or widow, sexual sins, secret murder, and taking bribes. The people’s “Amen” made them accountable. The list ends with a general curse (27:26).

Understanding chapter 28

The blessings are 14 verses; the curses are 54. Ancient Near Eastern treaties, like those of the Assyrian king Esarhaddon, also had long lists of curses. These curses were fulfilled in Israel’s history: the Assyrian and Babylonian conquests, the siege of Jerusalem (Lamentations 4:10 echoes 28:53–57), and the exile. Be careful to teach that this is not a “prosperity gospel.” Blessing in the land under the Mosaic covenant was tied to national obedience. Jesus said the Father “makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good” (Matthew 5:45), and the New Testament shows believers can suffer faithfully. The deepest blessing is a relationship with God through Christ.

Handout on the next page. Print one copy per student. A PowerPoint deck and the companion web app (with the Think • Feel • Do reflection) go with this session.

Firstfruits, Blessings, and Curses

Deuteronomy 26–28

Name: _____

Date: _____

KEY VERSE

“So you shall rejoice in every good thing which the LORD your God has given to you and your house, you and the Levite and the stranger who is among you.”

— Deuteronomy 26:11 (NKJV)

THE BIG IDEA

We give God our first and best with thankful hearts, and we take His Word seriously because obeying leads to life. Jesus took the curse so we could receive the blessing.

FILL IN THE BLANK

1. Israel brought a basket of _____ to the priest.
2. The people answered the curses with “_____ !”
3. Israel stood on two mountains: Gerizim and _____ .
4. Jesus redeemed us from the _____ of the law.

THINK IT THROUGH

1. What is your “first and best”? What would it look like to give it to God?

2. Why do you think God wants us to serve Him with joyfulness (28:47)?

THIS WEEK'S CHALLENGE

Start your week by giving God the first part of your morning. Read a psalm, say thank you, and tell someone how God has blessed you.

MEMORY VERSE — DEUTERONOMY 26:11

“So you shall rejoice in every good thing which the LORD your God has given to you and your house.”

SESSION 12 OF 13

Choose Life

Deuteronomy 29–31

Israel renews the covenant on the plains of Moab, hears that God’s Word is near, and is told to choose life — while Joshua is commissioned.

BIG IDEA	God sets before us life and death, and urges us to choose life. His Word is near, His mercy is real, and He promises never to leave or forsake us.
KEY VERSE	“I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days...” — Deuteronomy 30:19–20
MEMORY VERSE	“I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live.” — Deuteronomy 30:19
KEY PEOPLE	All Israel — Men, women, children, strangers, even woodcutters and water carriers stand before the LORD (29:10–11). Moses — At 120 years, says, “I can no longer go out and come in” (31:2). Joshua — Commissioned in front of all Israel; told, “Be strong and of good courage.” The Levites — Carry the ark and keep the book of the law beside it (31:9, 26).
READ ALOUD	Deuteronomy 29:10–15, 29:29; Deuteronomy 30:11–20; Deuteronomy 31:1–8

YOUR 45-MINUTE SESSION PLAN

0–5 min	Welcome & Opener Fork in the Road (5 min). Draw two paths on the board, one marked “Life” and one “Death.” Ask: “Name some small choices that lead one way or the other: a habit, a friend, a click.” Write answers under each path. Say: “Moses is going to show us the biggest fork in the road.”
5–8 min	Prayer & Memory Verse Open in prayer. Read the memory verse together (Deuteronomy 30:19), then say it again from memory. Briefly recall last week’s memory verse.
8–28 min	Teaching (open Bibles) Read aloud: Deuteronomy 29:10–15, 29:29; Deuteronomy 30:11–20; Deuteronomy 31:1–8. Teach three points, about six minutes each: (1) A Covenant for Everyone; (2) The Word Is Near — Choose Life; (3) Be Strong — He Will Not Leave You. Then show Jesus in the passage.
28–36 min	Activity Choose Life Walk (8 min). Tape a line down the middle of the room: one side is “Life,” the other side “Death.” Read short scenarios (“You can tell a lie to get out of trouble...” “A friend invites you to something harmful...”). Students move to the side they think is right and say why. Then read Deuteronomy 30:19 together. Ask: “What helps us choose well?”
36–41 min	Discuss Choose two or three of the discussion questions below. Let students answer before you do.

41–44 min	Think • Feel • Do Students respond to the three personal-application questions (in the app or on paper).
44–45 min	Closing Prayer Pray for the week. Dismiss with the memory verse.

THE TEACHING

Imagine you’re standing at the top of a hill and Moses is about to hand you the map for the rest of your life. He’s 120 years old, he knows he’s going to die soon, and he is making one last appeal to the people he loves. In these chapters, he renews the covenant, tells them that God’s Word is not far away or hard to understand, and sets before them the biggest choice: life or death. And then he does something beautiful: he passes the baton to Joshua.

1. A Covenant for Everyone

Deuteronomy 29

Moses gathers every single person: leaders, tribes, elders, officers, men, little ones, wives, and “the stranger who is in your camp, from the one who cuts your wood to the one who draws your water” (29:11). Even the lowest-paid worker was invited. God’s covenant wasn’t just for the important people. It was for everyone, and it included the children and even those who weren’t there yet (29:14–15).

Moses warns of a “root of bitterness” (29:18), someone who hears the covenant but secretly says, “I’ll be fine doing my own thing.” Hidden sin spreads like poison. Then verse 29 is a gem: “The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.” We don’t have all the answers. We do have enough to obey.

“The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.”

— Deuteronomy 29:29 (NKJV)

2. The Word Is Near — Choose Life

Deuteronomy 30

Moses predicts Israel will fail and be scattered. But then he promises mercy: if they return to the LORD, He will bring them back, and He “will circumcise your heart... to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live” (30:6). That means God Himself will change their hearts. This is the same promise as the New Covenant.

Then Moses blows away the excuse that God’s Word is too hard: “This commandment which I command you today is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us?’... But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it” (30:11–14). You don’t have to climb to the sky or cross an ocean. God has put it within reach.

And then the choice: “I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life” (30:19). Choose life means to love the LORD, obey His voice, and cling to Him “for He is your life” (30:20). Not just what you do, but whom you hold onto.

“I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live.”

— Deuteronomy 30:19 (NKJV)

3. Be Strong — He Will Not Leave You

Deuteronomy 31

Moses says, “I am one hundred and twenty years old today. I can no longer go out and come in” (31:2). He wasn’t sick; God had told him it was time to hand over leadership. Then he does what a great leader does: he builds up his successor in public. He calls Joshua in front of all Israel and says, “Be strong and of good courage... for you must go with this people to the land” (31:7). And to everyone: “Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you” (31:6). He says it again to Joshua (31:8).

Moses also writes down the law and gives it to the priests to keep beside the ark. Every seventh year, at the Feast of Booths, they were to read it aloud to everyone: men, women, children, and strangers, “that they may hear and that they may learn to fear the LORD” (31:10–13). Faith has to be passed on. And God tells Moses honestly that the people will rebel, so He gives them a song as a witness. We’ll hear it next week.

“Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you.”

— Deuteronomy 31:6 (NKJV)

Life and death, blessing and cursing. The choice is real, and God says, “Choose life.” You are not choosing alone. The Word is near and God goes with you.

JESUS IN THIS PASSAGE

Jesus: The Word That Is Near and the Life We Choose

Paul quotes Deuteronomy 30 in Romans 10:6–9 and says it points to Jesus: “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart... that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” We don’t have to ascend to heaven to bring Christ down, because He came down. We don’t have to descend into the grave to bring Him up, because He rose. The Word became flesh and lives near us (John 1:14).

“Choose life.” Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6), and “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). And the promise God gave Joshua is repeated to every believer. Hebrews 13:5 says, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” And before He returned to heaven, Jesus said, “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20). The name Joshua is the same as Jesus, and Jesus is the Leader who goes with us.

“I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”

— John 10:10 (NKJV)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think Moses included even the woodcutters and water carriers in the covenant?
2. What does Moses mean by “the secret things belong to the LORD”? Why is that comforting?
3. Deuteronomy 30:11–14 says God’s Word is near. What helps you feel that it is near or far?
4. What does “choose life” look like for a middle schooler?
5. How does God’s promise “I will not leave you nor forsake you” change how you face fear?

PERSONAL APPLICATION: THINK • FEEL • DO

THINK	What does it mean to “choose life,” and why does Moses say God’s Word is near to us?
FEEL	How do you feel when you think about God promising never to leave you or forsake you? Where do you need that most right now?
DO	What is one choice this week where you will deliberately “choose life” — and who can help hold you to it?

TEACHER BACKGROUND NOTES

History, Culture & Society — for you to know before you teach

The covenant in Moab

Chapter 29 begins, “These are the words of the covenant which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant which He made with them in Horeb” (29:1). It is a renewal for the new generation. Including the “woodcutters and water carriers” (29:11) foreshadows the Gibeonites, who later became woodcutters and water carriers for Israel’s altar (Joshua 9:21–27). The passage on the “root of bitterness” (29:18) is quoted in Hebrews 12:15.

Return and restoration

30:1–10 predicts exile and return, which came true in the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles and the return under Cyrus and Ezra, and was reaffirmed by the prophets. “Circumcise your heart” (30:6; see 10:16) anticipates Jeremiah 31:33 and Ezekiel 36:26–27, where God promises to write His law on hearts and give a new spirit — the New Covenant fulfilled in Christ.

Witnesses and the choice

In ancient treaties the parties called their gods to witness the oath. Since Israel had one God, Moses calls “heaven and earth” as witnesses (30:19; also 4:26, 31:28), creation itself. The language of two ways (“life and good, death and evil,” 30:15) is repeated in Psalm 1, Proverbs, and Jeremiah 21:8. The decision is not purely about being good, but about loving and clinging to the LORD (30:20).

Succession and the book of the law

Moses’ title in 31:2 “I can no longer go out and come in” is an idiom for leading. Joshua was first called Hoshea (Numbers 13:16); Moses renamed him Yehoshua, “The LORD saves.” Every seventh year at the Feast of Booths, the law was to be read in public (31:10–13); an example is Ezra reading in Nehemiah 8. The book of the law was placed “beside the ark” (31:26) as a witness. Verses 16–22 foretell rebellion, so Moses is told to write a song (Deuteronomy 32) so that it will “testify against them as a witness.”

Handout on the next page. Print one copy per student. A PowerPoint deck and the companion web app (with the Think • Feel • Do reflection) go with this session.

Choose Life

Deuteronomy 29–31

Name: _____

Date: _____

KEY VERSE

“I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days...”

— Deuteronomy 30:19–20 (NKJV)

THE BIG IDEA

God sets before us life and death, and urges us to choose life. His Word is near, His mercy is real, and He promises never to leave or forsake us.

FILL IN THE BLANK

1. “The _____ things belong to the LORD our God.”
2. God’s Word is not far off; it is very _____ you.
3. “I have set before you life and death... therefore _____ life.”
4. God promised Joshua, “He will not _____ you nor forsake you.”

THINK IT THROUGH

1. Describe a choice you face this week. Which option leads toward life?

2. Where do you most need courage right now? Write a prayer using Deuteronomy 31:6.

THIS WEEK’S CHALLENGE

Memorize Deuteronomy 31:6. Text or tell it to a friend who might be facing something scary.

MEMORY VERSE — DEUTERONOMY 30:19

“I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live.”

The Rock and the Road Home

Deuteronomy 32–34

Moses sings about the Rock, blesses the tribes, and climbs Mount Nebo to die — and Jesus, the greater Prophet, brings God's people home.

BIG IDEA	The LORD is our Rock — faithful when we fail. Moses finishes well by blessing God's people, and he points us to Jesus, the Prophet and Rock who brings us home.
KEY VERSE	"The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms..." — Deuteronomy 33:27
MEMORY VERSE	"The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." — Deuteronomy 33:27
KEY PEOPLE	Moses — Sings his last song, blesses the tribes, sees the land from Mount Nebo, and dies at 120. Joshua — "Full of the spirit of wisdom" (34:9). Takes up Moses' leadership. The twelve tribes — Each receives a blessing from Moses (chapter 33). The LORD, the Rock — "His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice" (32:4).
READ ALOUD	Deuteronomy 32:1–4; Deuteronomy 32:10–12; Deuteronomy 33:26–29; Deuteronomy 34:1–12

YOUR 45-MINUTE SESSION PLAN

0–5 min	Welcome & Opener Rock Solid (5 min). Bring a large, smooth rock. Pass it around and ask: "What does a rock make you think of?" (strong, steady, permanent). Say: "Today we hear a song that calls God our Rock, and we say goodbye to Moses."
5–8 min	Prayer & Memory Verse Open in prayer. Read the memory verse together (Deuteronomy 33:27), then say it again from memory. Briefly recall last week's memory verse.
8–28 min	Teaching (open Bibles) Read aloud: Deuteronomy 32:1–4; Deuteronomy 32:10–12; Deuteronomy 33:26–29; Deuteronomy 34:1–12. Teach three points, about six minutes each: (1) The Song of the Rock; (2) Moses' Last Blessing; (3) Finishing Well: The Death of Moses. Then show Jesus in the passage.
28–36 min	Activity Thirteen-Week Review (8 min). Place thirteen numbered cards on the wall, one for each session's title. Divide the class into teams. Each team draws a card and has 30 seconds to tell what they remember (key story, key verse, Jesus connection). Award points for each. End by naming together the three biggest lessons from Deuteronomy.
36–41 min	Discuss Choose two or three of the discussion questions below. Let students answer before you do.
41–44 min	Think • Feel • Do Students respond to the three personal-application questions (in the app or on paper).

**44–45
min**

Closing Prayer

Pray for the week. Dismiss with the memory verse.

THE TEACHING

Every great story needs an ending. Moses has led Israel for forty years. He has argued with Pharaoh, parted a sea, climbed a mountain, and put up with a lot of complaining. Now his last day has come. What does a person do on the last day of his life? Moses does three things: he sings, he blesses, and he climbs a mountain. In chapters 32–34, we see how to finish well.

1. The Song of the Rock

Deuteronomy 32

God told Moses to write a song that Israel would never forget, because songs stick in our heads long after sermons fade. The song opens with a call to heaven and earth to listen (32:1–3), and then declares, “He is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice, a God of truth and without injustice; righteous and upright is He” (32:4). Rock is the song’s favorite name for God: solid, safe, unchanging.

Then Moses tells the sad story. God found Israel in a desert land, “He kept him as the apple of His eye” (32:10). Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, hovers over its young, and carries them on its wings (32:11), God lifted His people. But Israel grew fat and comfortable and “forsook God who made him, and scornfully esteemed the Rock of his salvation” (32:15). They traded the Rock for fake gods. Yet the song ends with hope: God will have compassion, and the nations are invited to join in rejoicing (32:36, 43).

Moses ends by telling the people that these are not empty words: “It is not a futile thing for you, because it is your life” (32:47).

“He is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice, a God of truth and without injustice; righteous and upright is He.”

— Deuteronomy 32:4 (NKJV)

2. Moses’ Last Blessing

Deuteronomy 33

Before he died, Moses did something only a pastor’s heart could do: he blessed each tribe. Like Jacob had blessed his sons long before, Moses spoke a unique word over each tribe, praying that God would give them what they needed: strength for Judah, teaching for Levi, protection for Benjamin, rich land for Joseph, and joy for Zebulun and Issachar.

The chapter closes with an unforgettable picture: “There is no one like the God of Jeshurun, who rides the heavens to help you... The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms” (33:26–27). Imagine falling and finding that underneath you there are arms, and they never wear out. Then comes the final cheer: “Happy are you, O Israel! Who is like you, a people saved by the LORD, the shield of your help” (33:29).

“The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.”

— Deuteronomy 33:27 (NKJV)

3. Finishing Well: The Death of Moses

Deuteronomy 34

God told Moses to climb Mount Nebo to the top of Pisgah. From there, God showed him all the land: Gilead, the hills of Judah, the plains of Jericho. “This is the land of which I swore to give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” (34:4). Moses saw it, but he did not enter. Then, at 120, “his eyes were not dim nor his natural vigor diminished” (34:7), Moses died there “according to the word of the LORD.” God Himself buried him, and “no one knows his grave to this day” (34:6).

Israel mourned for thirty days. Joshua, “full of the spirit of wisdom,” took over (34:9). And Deuteronomy closes with a tribute: “There has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face” (34:10). Moses didn’t get to enter the land. But what a life! He finished faithfully, and God Himself honored him. The best leaders prepare others to go farther than they did.

“But since then there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face...”

— Deuteronomy 34:10 (NKJV)

Moses sang, blessed, and finished well. He pointed away from himself to the Rock and to the Prophet who was coming. Where will your life point?

JESUS IN THIS PASSAGE

Jesus: The Rock, the Greater Prophet, and the One Who Brings Us Home

Paul says something stunning in 1 Corinthians 10:4: Israel “drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.” The Rock of Moses’ song is Jesus. When storms come, His words are the solid rock beneath our feet (Matthew 7:24–25).

Deuteronomy ends by saying no prophet arose like Moses. But Hebrews 3:5–6 says, “Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant... but Christ as a Son over His own house.” Jesus is the Prophet Moses promised. And in a beautiful twist, Moses didn’t get to enter the Promised Land in his lifetime, but centuries later he stood in the land beside Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:3). Luke 9:31 says they spoke about Jesus’ coming death in Jerusalem. John 1:17 sums up the whole story: “For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” Jesus is the new and greater Joshua, who leads His people into everlasting rest.

“For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”

— John 1:17 (NKJV)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think God used a song instead of just a sermon at the end of Moses' life?
2. What does it mean to you that God is your Rock and that His everlasting arms are underneath you?
3. Why did Moses bless the tribes instead of scolding them?
4. What can we learn from how Moses finished his life?
5. Looking back on all 13 sessions, what is the most important thing you learned about God and about loving others?

PERSONAL APPLICATION: THINK • FEEL • DO

THINK	What was the most important thing you learned from Deuteronomy about God and about loving others as Jesus taught?
FEEL	How do you feel about God being your Rock with everlasting arms underneath you? What do you want to say to Him?
DO	What is one thing from this study that you will keep doing for the next month, and who will you invite to do it with you?

TEACHER BACKGROUND NOTES

History, Culture & Society — for you to know before you teach

The Song of Moses

Deuteronomy 32 is a poem written in Hebrew parallelism and structured like a covenant lawsuit (Hebrew *rib*): witnesses are called (32:1), the LORD’s faithfulness is declared (32:3–4), the people’s unfaithfulness is accused (32:5–6, 15–18), judgment is announced (32:19–27), and mercy is promised (32:36–43). “Rock” (*tsur*) is repeated as a title for God. Jeshurun (32:15; 33:5, 26) means “upright one,” an affectionate name for Israel. Paul uses verses of the song in Romans 10:19 (32:21) and Romans 12:19 (32:35), and Romans 15:10 quotes 32:43, “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people.”

Why Moses couldn’t enter

In 32:48–52, God repeats that Moses and Aaron broke faith at the waters of Meribah (Numbers 20:1–13): Moses struck the rock instead of speaking to it and did not honor God as holy before the people. It was a hard consequence for a man who served so faithfully. Nonetheless, God let Moses see the land from Mount Nebo (in the Abarim range, about 2,700 feet high, in modern Jordan), a view that on a clear day reaches over the Jordan valley, Jericho, and the hills of Judea.

The blessing of the tribes

Chapter 33 resembles Jacob’s blessing of his sons (Genesis 49) but is gentler and focuses on God’s presence. It starts by recalling God coming from Sinai (33:2). Simeon is not mentioned. Levi is blessed for teaching God’s law and serving at the altar (33:8–11). Judah is asked for help (33:7). Joseph gets abundant blessing (33:13–17). Benjamin dwells between God’s shoulders in safety (33:12). Not every blessing needs to be covered; choose a couple your students will remember.

The death of Moses and the ending

Moses is called “the man of God” (33:1) and “the servant of the LORD” (34:5). Moses was 120, healthy and strong (34:7). The LORD buried him in a valley in Moab, and no one knows where (34:6). Jewish and Christian tradition holds that Moses wrote the Pentateuch; the closing verses about his death were likely added by Joshua or a later inspired writer under God’s guidance. The statement “since then there has not arisen a prophet like Moses” (34:10) looks forward to the Prophet of 18:15, fulfilled in Jesus. For the closing session: take time to review the 13 weeks, give students a sense of the whole book, and invite them to commit to following Jesus.

Handout on the next page. Print one copy per student. A PowerPoint deck and the companion web app (with the Think • Feel • Do reflection) go with this session.

The Rock and the Road Home

Deuteronomy 32–34

Name: _____

Date: _____

KEY VERSE

“The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms...”

— Deuteronomy 33:27 (NKJV)

THE BIG IDEA

The LORD is our Rock — faithful when we fail. Moses finishes well by blessing God’s people, and he points us to Jesus, the Prophet and Rock who brings us home.

FILL IN THE BLANK

1. God is called the _____ in Moses’ song.
2. “Underneath are the everlasting _____.”
3. Moses saw the Promised Land from Mount _____.
4. The law was given through Moses, but grace and _____ came through Jesus Christ.

THINK IT THROUGH

1. What is your favorite lesson from all 13 weeks? Why?

2. Write a short blessing for a friend or family member, like Moses did for the tribes.

THIS WEEK’S CHALLENGE

Write a blessing for three people in your life and give it to them. Keep reading Deuteronomy or start the gospel of John.

MEMORY VERSE — DEUTERONOMY 33:27

“The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.”

Memory Verses at a Glance

Use this page to track the thirteen memory verses. Review one from a previous week every class.

1	“The LORD your God carried you, as a man carries his son, in all the way that you went until you came to this place.” — Deuteronomy 1:31
2	“You will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.” — Deuteronomy 4:29
3	“You shall have no other gods before Me.” — Deuteronomy 5:7
4	“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.” — Deuteronomy 6:5
5	“Man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.” — Deuteronomy 8:3
6	“What does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul...” — Deuteronomy 10:12
7	“You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice, you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him.” — Deuteronomy 13:4
8	“You shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor and your needy, in your land.” — Deuteronomy 15:11
9	“The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear.” — Deuteronomy 18:15
10	“You shall not see your brother’s donkey or his ox fall down along the road, and hide yourself from them; you shall surely help him lift them up again.” — Deuteronomy 22:4
11	“So you shall rejoice in every good thing which the LORD your God has given to you and your house.” — Deuteronomy 26:11
12	“I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live.” — Deuteronomy 30:19
13	“The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.” — Deuteronomy 33:27

About

Deuteronomy — Middle School Bible Study

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Company: Quantum Reality Programming LLC

Developer: Ron Whittam

Website: qrprogramming.com

Contact: QuantumRealityprogrammingLLC@Gmail.com

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