

upper elementary



Lesson 2 / June 14, 2026

Rules or Relationship

By RLD Editorial Team

for use as
STEP 1 

Lesson 2

Focus:

God gives us a special day to enjoy Him!

Lesson 2

Bible Basis:

Exodus 20:8–11;
Matthew 12:1–15

Lesson 2

Memory Verse:

“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.”
—Exodus 20:8

Students will distinguish between following rules on the Sabbath and enjoying a relationship that desires a Sabbath time with God.

Materials:

- Internet access

After your students have arrived, read the following list of actual laws from this website to your students and invite them to guess which state has this law:

<https://thelawdictionary.org/article/weird-laws-by-state/>

1. It's illegal to feed garbage to pigs without a special permit. (Arizona)
2. It's illegal to manufacture artificial snow for ski slopes without a permit. (Colorado)
3. It's illegal to sell domestic dog or cat fur. (Delaware)
4. It's illegal to own more than \$600 worth of salamanders. (Illinois)
5. It's illegal to park in front of Dunkin Donuts locations because those spots are reserved for police officers (Maine).

➤ **So what are your thoughts on these laws? Can you think of any good reasons that these rules became laws that people should live by?** (Encourage your students to discuss why the laws seem good or bad, whether they serve any value, and why they might have been important at one time.)

Then read crazy law #6:

6. It's illegal to play dominoes on a Sunday. (Alabama—but Sunday-specific laws exist in several states)

Explain that the law about not playing dominoes on Sunday is a type of Blue Law. **“Blue Laws” were moral laws that used to be honored in our country. According to the History Channel website, “Blue laws are statutes that, throughout American history, have restricted certain activities—most famously shopping, work and alcohol sales—on Sundays and other designated days of observance or rest. For generations, they shaped the rhythms of American life, dictating when businesses could open, what goods could be sold and how communities spent their leisure time.”**

Under these laws, people didn't work on Sundays, and stores didn't open on Sundays. Sundays were set aside for rest and religious activities.

➤ **The Blue Laws have been around for decades. Why do some consider these laws to be old fashioned?** (Answers will vary.)

➤ **What do you think about keeping the Blue Laws in places where they are still present?** (Encourage your students to discuss pros and cons of keeping/doing away with these laws.)

➤ **Do you think Blue Laws make people concentrate more on God on Sundays or more on the rules? Explain your answer.**

Blue Laws in America were put in place to set aside Sundays for religious activities. Certain activities were allowed, and certain activities were forbidden. Today we are going to learn about the true meaning of God's command to keep the Sabbath, a day that isn't necessarily about rules.

Source:

<https://www.history.com/articles/blue-laws-sunday>

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your teacher's guide; your Step 4 appears below.)

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Rules or Relationship

for use as
STEP 4 

Lesson 2**Focus:**

God gives us a special day to enjoy Him!

Lesson 2**Bible Basis:**

Exodus 20:8–11;
Matthew 12:1–15

Lesson 2**Memory Verse:**

“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.”
—Exodus 20:8

Materials:

- Internet access
- Index cards
- Paperclip or rubber band
- Pens/pencils
- Whiteboard and marker (or screenshared document)

If your class is meeting online, invite students to bring supplies with them.

As we learned today, setting aside time for God is about our relationship with God, not about rules we have to follow. We don’t need Blue Laws in order to keep Sunday—or any day—special for God. We need a heart that wants to obey God’s command. We need a desire to be in a relationship with the God who wants to be in a relationship with us.

Let’s prepare to set aside a special Sabbath time this week. Plan to make time when you won’t have to rush to be somewhere else and when you have finished anything your parents may have asked you to do. This time should be all about your relationship with God.

Distribute supplies (or invite students to have them ready at home). As you ask the following questions, ask your students to write down their favorite ideas on the index cards (they can write one idea or multiple ideas on the front and back of the cards, but they should leave room for notes and comments to be added later). Once they have finished, instruct them to keep the index cards together with the paperclip or rubber band.

➤ **What kind of things might we do in a Sabbath time?** (As your students give answers, write them on the whiteboard (or screenshared document). Encourage them to think outside the box. In addition to prayer, reading God’s Word, praise, worship, etc., ask them to consider stargazing to reflect on how big and creative God is, taking a nature walk with Jesus, writing Him a poem, playing a Bible game with other family members, and so forth.)

When it’s time for your Sabbath with God, shuffle your cards and pick one. When you’ve completed that activity with God, mark down the date and any special thoughts or comments you have about that time together. Return the card to the rest of the deck; you may want to repeat that same relationship-building activity with Him again—soon!

Challenge your students to be prepared to share how they spent their Sabbath time with God when you meet again.

Close in prayer, asking God to help you and your students keep your personal Sabbaths with Him, learning to enjoy Him in new ways that build your relationship with Him.

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