

Romans 13:1-10

Good Citizens

Scripture: Romans 13:1-10

Memory Verse: Romans 13:10 *“Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.”*

Lesson Focus: While the Christian’s ultimate citizenship is in heaven, this chapter of Romans has a lot to say about what kind of citizens God wants Christians to be on earth. Both submission to authority and love for others are two essential character traits that we will challenge the kids to pursue with God’s help.

Activities and Crafts: Pray for Leaders Coloring Picture, Word Search of different terms from lesson, Bring it Home Sheet for 3rd – 5th.
Craft for 1st & 2nd: Patriotic Craft

Starter Activity: National Holiday Quiz

The kids should be familiar with many of our national holidays and consider quizzing them to see how many of them they know. Since the kids just celebrated 4th of July, start off by having some discussion about it and what the kids did to celebrate! *

Q: What holiday did we all just celebrate this week? A: 4th of July!

Q: What do we remember on this day? A: Our nation’s independence from British rule which was formally recognized in the “*Declaration of Independence*”. *

This is our nation’s most well-known holiday, but there are some other one’s that I’d like to see if you are familiar with. **Teachers:** Consider briefly describing each holiday below first and then ask them if they can guess it. If they don’t get it, then share the month that it is in as another hint:

- 1) Memorial Day (May)
 - Honors our nation’s soldiers who died defending our nation
- 2) Veteran’s Day (November)
 - Honors our nation’s retired military servicemen
- 3) Martin Luther King Jr. Day (January)
 - Honors a man who fought for justice and equal rights for minorities
- 4) President’s Day (February)
 - Honors George Washington and Abraham Lincoln
- 5) Labor Day (September)
 - Honors the contributions that industry and hard work have made to our nation

Believe it or not, the Bible teaches us quite a lot about living as Christians in our nation. As we continue through the book of Romans, we will see that God wants us to be good citizens. * Let’s take a look!

Bible Study:

Romans 13:1a: The Bible says that every one of us is to be subject to the governing authorities. That means our basic reflex is to submit and obey! *

Q: Who are some of the governing authorities in our city, state, and nation?

A: Mayor, police, governor, senators, president, etc. **Teachers:** Consider asking the kids if they know the names of some of these public officials. See the last few pages of our lesson with pictures and names of them. We will supply your classroom with these. *

Now the older you get, the more you will begin to have opinions about these public officials. You may even strongly dislike them and disagree with them.

Q: But did the Bible say we should be subject ONLY to the governing authorities we like? A: NO! God wants Christians to honor all of our governing authorities.

Romans 13:1b: Why? Because God put them there! In our nation, we have the privilege of voting for many of our leaders. But God is still the one in control! *

Romans 13:2: Since God appointed our governing authorities, when we disobey or “resist” them, we are disobeying or “resisting” God! *

Boys and Girls: Submission to authority is a crucial behavior for the Christian. * We see all throughout the Bible that God’s people are to be a humble people who are willing and ready to submit to the authorities that He has instituted. * Kids are to submit to parents, your parents are to submit to their bosses at work, even Jesus submitted to the Father!

Romans 13:3: If we are disobeying, we will feel afraid and anxious inside because we know we are guilty! **Teachers:** Consider sharing a personal story (appropriate for kids of course) where you were foolishly disobeying authority and how you felt “afraid” because you knew you might get caught! *

It really is simple: If you don’t wanna be afraid of authorities, then don’t mess with them!

Romans 13:4: There are consequences for disobeying your authorities!

Q: What typically happens to people who break the law? A: Fines, losing privileges, * jail, or even death! The worse the crime, the greater the consequences. This is justice and it is good! We live in a broken and fallen world where people sin and hurt each other. God put governing authorities in place to protect people! Imagine if there were no consequences for stealing, murdering, lying, etc.

Q: Do you think that would be a better world to live in? A: NO WAY!

Romans 13:5: This important verse helps us better understand why. So far, it seems like we just submit so we can avoid punishment. And that might be true for a lot of people. But Christians have a higher calling. Christians obey the law and submit to these authorities because it is the RIGHT THING TO DO! *

Now some of you may be wondering about very evil governing authorities and if we are to just submit to them too (i.e. Hitler). * The Bible does give Christians the freedom to disobey the governing authorities when they require Christians to sin (because then they would be disobeying God!). This takes wisdom * though so let's test this a little bit:

- 1) If the government says it is illegal to read your Bible, will you obey? NO!
- 2) If the government says it is illegal to pray, will you obey? NO! *
- 3) If the government says it is illegal to play video games, will you obey? YOU SHOULD! (This is where you might work to change government!)

Romans 13:6-7: In summary, we are to honor our government officials whether we like them or not. This is often hard and we need God's help to do this. One way that you can honor them is by praying for them. **Read 1 Timothy 2:1-2. Teachers:** After the lesson, consider leading the kids in prayer for each public official that we have pictures of in your class. Pray that they would be saved. Pray that they would govern righteously. Pray that they would know the Lord God who has appointed them to their office!

So God wants us to be law-abiding citizens who esteem their public officials. This is good for us, good for our society, and is pleasing to God. But there is something even more important that God wants:

Romans 13:8: That we LOVE others! This is the direct commandment of God to Christians and it trumps all others.

Romans 13:9: This echoes the words of Jesus when He simplified all of the commandments down to just two: Love God and love others. (**Matthew 22:37-40**)

If you are loving your neighbor, will you steal from them? NO!
If you are loving your neighbor, will you lie to them? NO!
Etc., Etc.

Romans 13:10: This is why love fulfills the law. If you are loving God and loving others, you will always be doing what is good and right and need not fear breaking the law! *

Key Point: So instead of worrying about obeying the law more, instead ask God to help you love more! For when we are actively loving others, not only do we and the people around us flourish, but we bring glory to God!

Jesus said that when Christians are faithful to be the one's in our nation that love others, that care for others, that share with others, people will take notice and come to Him. (**John 13:34-35**) We make disciples by telling people the gospel and also by showing people the gospel with our love!

Go and be a good citizen this week! Love your neighbor, obey those authorities God has put over you, and show others the gospel!

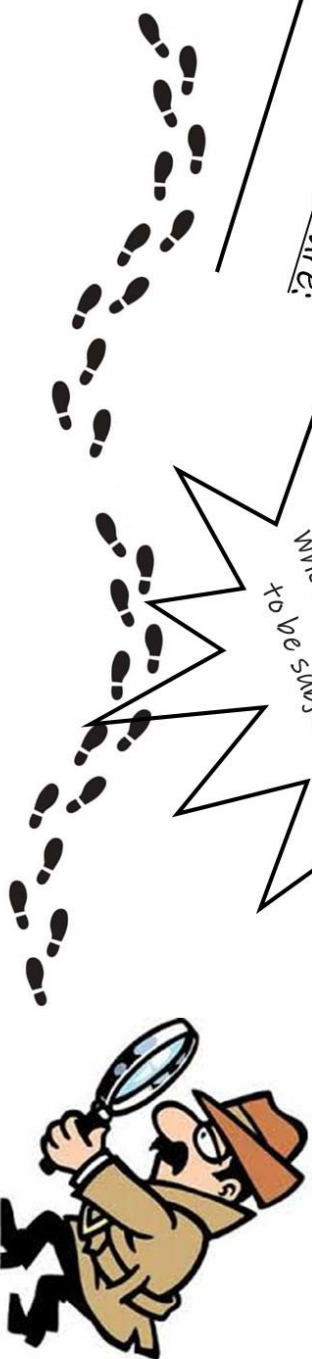
BRING IT HOME

Read Romans 13:2
What authorities
might you be resisting?

Parent Signature:

Parent Challenge:
Who does God want us
to be subject to?

Read Romans 13:10
How does loving our
neighbor fulfill the law?



Vice President: Kamala Harris



Colorado Springs Mayor: John Suthers



President: Joe Biden

