



# The Greatest Commandment (The Shema)

## Handout

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**Session Theme:** Prayer

**Activity:** Shema Craft

**Scripture Story:** *Matthew 22:34-40; Deuteronomy 6:1-9*

**Video Clip:** Proof

**Matthew 22:** 34 When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, 35 and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. 36 "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" 37 He said to him, " "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 This is the greatest and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

**Deuteronomy 6:** 1 Now this is the commandment—the statutes and the ordinances—that the Lord your God charged me (Moses) to teach you to observe in the land that you are about to cross into and occupy, 2 so that you and your children and your children's children may fear/respect/honor/surrender/serve the Lord your God all the days of your life, and keep all his decrees and his commandments that I am commanding you, so that your days may be long. 3 Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe them diligently, so that it may go well with you, and so that you may multiply greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, as the Lord, the God of your ancestors, has promised you.

*4 Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. 5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.*

6 Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. 7 Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. 8 Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, 9 and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

### NOTES:

- The Deuteronomy scripture is often referred to as "The Shema."
- *Shema* is a Hebrew word that means "To listen carefully and then do."
- The Hebrew word for "soul" is *nephesh* which means "throat" or "channel." So for the Hebrews, they understood the word "soul" to be the entry point (or channel) that allowed God into us.
- Jesus says the Shema is the greatest commandment.
- How well do you think we are doing at living out the greatest commandment?
- What do you think living the Shema more fully would look like (be literal!)?