



Open Question:

Have you made a new friend recently? How did you become friends with them?

How to build up a new friendship? Two simple and obvious ways come to mind. First, use the person's name. Using someone's name identifies the person.

It shows them respect. Second, spend time with your new friend. Not only that, make them the focus of your time. Do activities that interest them. Enjoy your time with them. Have fun with them.

Use someone's name with respect. Spend time with them. We can use those two guides to foster a friendship with God. In fact, they are the Second and Third Commandments. Let's consider each in turn.

The Second Commandment

The Second Commandment is

You will not abuse the name of the Lord your God.

Exodus 20 :7a

Even before the time of Jesus, names represented the character and power of the person. When someone used them they invoked the presence of the person. When an official qualified an act with the phrase "In the name of the king," they claimed royal power in an act. Even today, ambassadors act in the name of the nation backed by its power and prestige.

So, how do we keep the Second Commandment? We honor the name of God. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states:

Respect for his name is an expression of the respect owed to the mystery of God himself and to the whole sacred reality it evokes.

Catechism of the Catholic Church 2144



We honor the name of God in prayer. For example, we begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, of the Holy Spirit.

We can honor the name of God in other ways. We can give our child a saint's name at their baptism to honor and emulate the saint. We also honor God when we respect others. After all, God calls them by name as his creatures and children.

We dishonor God's name when we swear, blaspheme, or make frivolous oaths. Most of the time, swearing is mindless. People swear for effect or to simply fill mental voids in their speech.

It shows undisciplined laziness. Blasphemy is far more serious. It is the deliberate use of God's name in a disrespectful manner. By its nature, it's rebellion against God. Finally, frivolous oaths are statements or promises that unnecessarily invoke God's name. How many times have you heard someone needlessly say "I swear to God" or "as God is my witness?" Jesus had something to say about frivolous oaths.

You heard our ancestors say, "Do not say 'I swear to God' and not mean it" and "Keep your promises to God." I tell you not to make any promises using God's name at all. Do not say "I swear by heaven" because heaven is God's

throne. Do not say, "I swear by the earth," because that's the place God rests his feet. Don't say "I swear by Jerusalem," because it's the city of great King David. Don't even say "I swear by my own head," because you don't have the power to turn a single hair on your head black or white. Instead, just say "Yes" if you mean it, and "No" if you don't. Adding anything to that is from the devil.

Mark 5:33-37

The Third Commandment

Let's turn to the Third Commandment.

Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy. You work on six days but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. You will not work on it: you, nor your children, nor your servants, nor your livestock, not even the stranger who is within your gates. For, in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath and made it holy.

Exodus 20:8-11

The Sabbath has two aspects. It is a day of worship and rest. It is a time to remember God's activity in the life of the people. So, people should take time with God, be in his presence, and present him with their needs.

But the Sabbath is also a holy time. The word "holy" means different, unique, one of a kind. In other words, this day should be different from the other days of the week. It is a time for rest. In this case, rest means recreation, fun, a chance to recharge one's personal batteries. Just as God rested, so must his creatures.

If the Sabbath is so important, why do we worship and relax on Sunday, the day after it? We celebrate on Sunday because it was the day of the week Jesus rose from the dead. It is the day we praise God for showing us that Jesus conquered death and gave us eternal life. For that reason, we call Sunday the Lord's Day. It is not the Sabbath but it fulfills the Sabbath obligation for Christians. The moral injunctions of worship and rest remain. Our

worship centers around Eucharist because it celebrates death and resurrection of Christ. And the Church is clearly present when the faithful gather together and receive Communion. So, Catholics are obligated to attend Mass on Sundays.

Excuses to miss Mass must be serious, like illness, care for family, necessary work or a real inability to attend. Catholics should also use Sunday as a time to focus on others, especially the ill and the poor. It is also an opportunity for family time.

The Second and Third Commandments remind us of ways to build a friendship. Call a person by name, spend time with them. In the same way, we should call upon God by name in prayer and with respect. We should also spend one special day a week in worship and rest focused on the good of others.

Closing Question:

How can you become better friends with God?

Reference to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, Paragraphs 2142-2195.

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