

Life of Christ

Don't Judge Others

Matthew 7:1-5

Younger Verse

Stop judging others.

Matthew 7:1 (NLT)

Older Verse

Stop judging others, and you will not be judged.

Matthew 7:1 (NLT)

Lesson Goals

Learn what it means to judge others and why it is wrong
Understand that only God is able to judge people's hearts
Recognize that we need God's help to change our attitudes

Welcome Time

There is an old saying that when you point a finger at someone else's wrongs, there are three fingers pointing back at you. **Ask: What do you think that means?** We will find out in today's lesson.

Bible Story

*Please note: This portion of the lesson is given to help in teaching the lesson. Please read through the story and read it in the Bible before teaching it. Do **NOT** read from this piece of paper. Instead, make a note sheet and place it next to the story in the Bible.*

Jesus has already told his disciples that they need to love their enemies and be kind to them. Now He tells them that they should not judge other people. **Ask: What does it mean to judge others?** When we judge another person, we think we are better than them. We point out the problems we see in the person.

Jesus reminds his disciples that they have problems of their own that they need to deal with first. He compares it to noticing a small speck in someone's eye when you have a log in your own eye! Jesus says that we should look at ourselves and *our* faults before we look at the faults of others.

Ask: Is it easier to see our own faults or those of someone else? Many times, we put other people down for things that we do, too! We do not see these things in ourselves, but we notice them in others. It is easier to put others down than to try to change ourselves.

But Jesus says that we should not be like this. He knows that we all have things in our life we need to work on. And we must focus on changing ourselves before we look at another person's weakness.

In John chapter 8, some religious men bring a woman to Jesus. She has been caught doing a bad thing, and the men want to kill her for it. They ask Jesus what He thinks about it. Jesus told them that if they had no sin in their own life, they could kill the woman. Of course, none of them were without sin! So they let the woman go.

Jesus knows we all have sin in our heart. We need to ask Him to forgive us and to help us live for Him. Then He can help us turn away from the bad things in our life. Instead of accusing others, we should pray for them and tell them Jesus loves them! **Only God can change a person's heart.** And we are not God, so we should not judge others.

Jesus has a word for people who judge others—**hypocrite**. A hypocrite is a person who says one thing but does another. If we say we love God and other people but then we put others down, we are being a hypocrite.

God knows what is in our heart. He knows the things that we need to change. He is waiting for us to ask Him to help. But if we only look at the wrongs of others, He cannot help us deal with our *own* sin!

Some people judged Jesus wrongly. They did not understand that He was really God's Son. They had a trial and brought in people who lied about Jesus. They judged Him guilty when He was innocent! They made a horrible mistake. They crucified Jesus on a cross. However, this is not the end! Jesus died, but He died for a special reason. He died to pay the price for all the wrongs WE have done. He traded places with us! Then, He came back to life 3 days later!

If we believe in Jesus and ask Him to come into our hearts, He will clean out all our sins and make us pure. We do not have to worry about all the wrongs we have done. He has forgiven them. He will stay with us and help us live for God and do things His way. Then, one day, He will take us to heaven. Would you like to know more? Talk to us about it.

Review Questions

1. What does it mean to judge someone? (Answer: to think we are better than them and point out their faults)
2. What did Jesus say to the religious men when they brought a sinful woman to Him? (Answer: You can kill her if you have no sin)
3. What is a hypocrite? (Answer: Someone who says one thing but does another)
4. What should we do before we judge someone else? (Answer: look at our own faults and ask for God's help)

Prayer Time

Ask God to help us not to judge others this week. It will really take some practice to show love and kindness instead of judgment. Ask for help from God.

Life Application

Think about your friends at school. What if they were all putting down someone in your class? They might say something like, "He's dumb," or "nobody likes her." Remembering what Jesus said about judging others, you could tell your friends that we all have things to work on. Maybe instead of judging, they could be nice to them and help them.

Jesus was known for "hanging out" with people that nobody else would be around. Think of examples (Zaccheus, the woman at the well, Mary Magdalene, etc.). Because Jesus showed them love instead of condemning them, they experienced God's forgiveness and their lives were changed! We can do the same.

Planning for Next Lesson
Wise and Foolish Builders
Matthew 7:24-27

**Preschool Lesson
For
Don't Judge Others**

Ask the kids to point their finger at someone. Now tell them to look and see how many of their fingers are pointing back at them (three).

In today's story, Jesus teaches that we should love other people. We should not point to their problems. He knows that we have problems, too.

Ask: Do you ever try to get your brother or sister in trouble? Sometimes we like to get others in trouble to make us feel better about ourselves. But Jesus says we should not want to get others in trouble or make them feel bad. Instead, we should look for good things in other people.

Jesus loves us and wants to help us get along with everyone. He doesn't want us to put other people down. We do this when we say something bad about them. He says we should look at the big stain on OUR shirt before we see the little-bitty spot on a friend's shirt!

Jesus says that we should **stop judging others**. (Hold up your hand like a stop sign.) When we feel like we want to say something bad about someone, we can cover our mouth, pray, and then say something nice about them instead. God will be happy when we do that!

Sing, "If You're Happy and You Know It," and remind students that it makes God happy when we are kind.

Let's ask God to help us be friends and help others.

Hands-on Activities For Don't Judge Others

Everyone has had a time when we have criticized others. One old Indian statement says that we should walk in their shoes before we criticize them. That means that we may not know what has been going on in their situation. We should look at that before we judge them. Bring all kinds of fun old shoes to class. Let the kids try to walk around in the shoes. Be sure to bring ladies high heels, little baby shoes, etc. Share how hard it is to walk in the shoes. Explain that we should not judge others because we do not know what has happened in their situation.

Try this as a great way to talk about judging others. Bring lots of snacks. As you pass out snacks, give some kids huge portions and others very small portions. Very quickly, the kids will say "that's not fair!" What a great teaching opportunity. Share how we should not judge others. Help them see that we should be glad for what we have and not look or criticize others. (It would probably be best to then add snacks to the very small portion people).

Bring tweezers and remind the kids that we should take the log of wood out of our eyes before we take the speck of dust out of someone else's eyes.

Bring cookies and break each one into two pieces. Give a broken cookie to each person. Each child must help another child mend their cookie with icing. Share how we must mend our harsh words and instead say kind words to others.

Illustrate what a hypocrite is by bringing a piece of good fruit and bad fruit (the bad fruit should look good on the outside but bad on the inside). Peel or cut the fruit so that the kids can see both. Share how a hypocrite looks good on the outside but is rotten on the inside. Share how God wants us to be good fruit.