



Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Series: Signs on Believers Hwy  
Winter Year 4, Lesson 41

# Don't Judge Others—That's God's Job

**Primary Scripture:** Matthew 7:1-5; Galatians 6:1-5; John 3:17-18

**Key Verse:** Matthew 7:1-2a, “Stop judging so that you will not be judged. Otherwise, you will be judged by the same standard you use to judge others.”

## **How does this address a need in our kids' lives?**

Kids often find satisfaction in criticizing others. We as adults are no different. We assume a position above another person and judge their actions, attitudes or even appearance. This type of judgmental attitude is often a result of comparing ourselves with others. When we point out the faults of others, it helps us feel better about ourselves. Kids need to know that this is wrong. Instead of boosting their self-image by putting down others, they should help to encourage and support others. This is only possible in Christ. In Christ, we experience the judgment of our sin being lifted off us so that we, too, might refrain from judging others.

## **How does Jesus fill this need?**

**Jesus for us:** Jesus was sent to the world, not to condemn it but to save the world. He did this through his death and resurrection.

**Jesus in us:** As the Spirit of Christ lives in us, we are released from the spirit of condemnation.

**Jesus through us:** Through Christ we can judge the sin but still love and encourage the sinner.

## Stamp of Excellence:

*Remind the kids what excellent worship looks like. We are in God's presence to honor him. Put on your best manners. This might include wearing your name tag, participating eagerly at all times, listening when the leader is talking, raising your hand to speak, not distracting others, playing the learning game with cooperation, singing enthusiastically, and praying reverently. Offer rewards or positive reinforcement to those who worship with excellence.*



## Worship

### Invocation:

*Let kids bring forward the worship symbols, such as the cross, candles, Bible, and offering plate. Invite God's presence and call by name Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.*

### Attention Grabber:

*Capture the children's attention and help them focus on the worship theme for the day.*

*Supplies: tape rule, paper and pen to record measurements*

Ask for three volunteers to come up front for a measuring. Say:

**Let's see how you measure up.**

Measure the height of each student and announce the measurement.

**As I measured your heights, we could tell who is taller and who is shorter. But what would you say if I asked, "Who is smarter?"**

To the audience:

**Don't answer this question, just think about it: How would we measure these kids to find out who is smarter?**

**How could we find out, "Who is more Christ-like? Who best lives their Christian faith?" Once again, don't answer that question out loud.**

**Did you know that, as followers of Christ, we are not supposed to judge others to see how they measure up against ourselves?**

**God does not want us to compare ourselves to others because he knows that, before long, we would become critical of other people. We would judge them.**

**Instead of measuring these people and comparing them with each other, what would happen if we compared them to God? How tall are they?**

Say again the heights of each volunteer.

**How big is God? He is big enough to hold this whole world right in the palm of his hand. He can reach out and put his arms around billions and billions of stars. So, instead of comparing ourselves to others, and maybe even thinking we are better than them so we can judge them, let's compare ourselves to God. That makes us very, very small – and very, very humble.**

**We would have to say, “God you are mighty and big and wonderful. Who are we to think that we could possibly be compared to your greatness?” Let's have this attitude and tell God how wonderful he is with our praise and worship today.**

## **Songs of Worship:**

*Choose two or three songs. Briefly introduce songs so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God!*

Your choice of music.

## **The Power of the Cross:**

*Jesus has given his life for us that we might have forgiveness and power to live for him.*

**Sometimes Christians compare themselves with other Christians. They may say to themselves, “I live a better life than that Christian.”**

**God doesn't want us to do that. But he does ask us to compare our lives to his Son Jesus. But Jesus lived a perfect life. He showed perfect love at all times. He even loved us so much he went to the cross for our sin. If we compare ourselves to him, how far short do you think we would fall? It would be pretty far.**

**But Jesus says this: “If you trust me for forgiveness, I won't judge you or condemn you.” I will read from the Bible and I'd like you listen for the word “condemn.”**

When you condemn someone, you think they are wrong and will be punished. Listen for the word “condemn,” and when you hear it, take your fist and hit the palm of your hand like a judge’s gavel coming down.

John 3:16-18 says,

*“God loved the world this way: He gave his only Son so that everyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life. God sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but to save the world. Those who believe in him won’t be condemned. But those who don’t believe are already condemned because they don’t believe in God’s only Son.”*

After hearing this Bible reading, open your fist and raise your hand if you believe in Jesus as your Savior. Pause. If you raised your hand, God says that you won’t be condemned. Maybe instead of using our fists, we should all put our palms together and clap for that right now.

Clap.

If you don’t yet trust Jesus as your Savior, we invite you to do that. Place your trust in him as you pray this prayer with everyone. Pray it in your heart.

Dear God, thank you for sending Jesus. I need your forgiveness because I have sinned. Each one of us has fallen short when compared to your standard and your holiness. But I ask for forgiveness through Jesus. I believe that when he gave his life for me on the cross and rose again, he took away my sin so that I will not be condemned. Instead, I will be able to live with you now and forever. Thank you for taking my punishment on yourself. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

## **Song of Response:**

*Choose a song to help the children turn to Jesus. Or, you may want to help them celebrate what God has done by singing a song of praise.*

## Offering:

*Teach the importance of giving and talk about the mission activities they are supporting.*

Briefly tell the story of the widow's mite as kids bring the offering forward (Luke 21:1-4). Point out that in Jesus' day, many people put money in the offering plate just to get others to notice them. Jesus pointed out that a widow who put in a very small amount of money had given a bigger gift because it was all she had. It showed her love and dedication for the Lord,

**So, God looks at our hearts when we give our offerings. Even if the offering is small, it really matters because God looks at the heart and doesn't judge the outward appearance.**



## The Word

## Learning Game:

*Some churches dismiss children from the adult service at this time to join Kids Church. The learning game provides a fun kinesthetic activity to help kids connect with each other. The learning point will help reinforce the theme of the day.*

### Chicken Judging

*Supplies: three-inch stack of newspaper for every group of six children; masking tape for each group; plastic trash bags; awards for the funniest chicken, the most authentic chicken, the mummy chicken, the best chicken imitation*



Divide the kids into groups of six. Then say:

**Today we will make and judge chickens. We want you to make a chicken model by taping newspaper to one person in your group and making a chicken costume. You will need to make a beak and some feathers for the top of the head. You might have some feathers on the feet... I wonder how you might make chicken feet or chicken tails? Anyway, that is for you to figure out. Your whole group can work**

**together by tearing paper, rolling it, and taping it until you have something that looks a bit like a chicken. After that, we will have a chicken judging contest.**

Allow seven minutes for the completion of the chickens. If kids need more or less time, make adjustments. Line up the chickens in front of the audience. Then say:

**Here are the rules for judging. Everyone judges by clapping, but you can't clap for your group's chicken. You can clap as much as you want and as loudly as you want for every other groups' chickens—just not your own. We have several categories to award today. We will give an award for: the funniest chicken, the most authentic chicken, the mummy chicken which will be the one that is most covered, and finally, the best chicken imitation—meaning the one who acts most like a chicken.**

Take a vote for each chicken in each category, announcing the category and walking behind the chickens, holding your hand over each chicken to mark which one kids should vote on and clap for. Decide who gets the loudest handclap in each category and give awards. Then make the following observation.

**Did you notice how each chicken was different? Each had something special to be appreciated.**

**Do you know that if we judged by only looking for things that were wrong, we would probably miss all these other wonderful things that are unique and good about these chickens?**

Have two volunteers from each group come up and remove the chicken costumes and put them in the plastic trash bags. Have the contestants remain on stage.



**Contestants, how would you like us to judge you, not as chickens but as people? Would you like that very much? Most people wouldn't. How would you like it, if you stood up here and we judged you for all the things that we could find wrong about you? That would be terrible, wouldn't it? That would be terrible for you, and terrible for us because we would miss all the good things there are about you. Listen to what God says in his word.**

***"...when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves to themselves, they show how foolish they are... Instead, we will only brag about what God has give us to do..." (2 Corinthians 10:12b-13a.)***

**Are we to think of ourselves as so important that we are better than others? Of course not. Should we compare ourselves to others? Of**

course not. Instead, we should look at what we do and make sure we are doing what God wants as much as possible.

## **Bible Presentation:**

*Help children pay attention by giving them a word or concept to listen for as you read. Consider letting a child read who could do so with excellence.*

### **OPTION ONE**

#### **Blinded by Sawdust** Dramatic Sketch

*Supplies: two sawhorses or a table upon which a 2" x 4" board can be cut, one six-foot 2" x 4" board, one four-foot 2" x 4" board, tape rule, hammer, two nails, saw, two towels (one with a teaspoon of flour on it)*

*This sketch requires two adults to ad-lib their roles, making up their conversation as they go. If two adults are not available, one adult can take the part of character number one and, with a little coaching beforehand, a child may participate as character number two.*

Character One—Bobby or Betty Builder: *This person is a perfectionist and is reluctant to trust any of the building crafts to his/her partner.*

Character Two—Handy Helper: *Assists character one.*

Say to the kids:

**Every time you hear the word “judge” or the word “judging,” take your fist and hit it into your other hand like you are bringing down a judge’s gavel. So, whenever I say the word “judge,” you make a smack sound with one fist hitting against your other palm.**

**Let’s practice. “Stop judging.”**

Smack fist into palm.

**Did you listen for the word “judge?”**

Smack fist into palm.

**Okay, I think you are ready.**

Read the following Bible passage and be sure to pause after each time you read the word “judge” or “judging” to allow time for the kids to smack their fists into their palms.

Matthew 7:1-5:

***“Stop judging so that you will not be judged. Otherwise, you will be judged by the same standard you use to judge others. The standards you use for others will be applied to you. So why do you see the piece of sawdust in another believer’s eye and not notice the wooden beam in your own eye? How can you say to another believer, ‘Let me take the piece of sawdust out of your eye,’ when you have a beam in your own eye? You hypocrite! First remove the beam from your own eye. Then you will see clearly to remove the piece of sawdust from another believer’s eye.”***

### Introduction

**Hello, I am Bobby (Betty) Builder and this is my handy helper, Handy Helper. We are in the business of building the church and, as you can tell, we have made pretty good progress. Today though, we are building one of the most important parts—the top of our building and that is a cross. Is there anything you would like to say, Handy Helper?**

Let him/her begin to talk, then interrupt him quickly, explaining to the audience that he is not very good at speaking in public, so on with the task.

### Measuring the board

**This six-foot long 2” x 4” needs to be measured at exactly four feet and marked. Mr. Handy Helper, can you do that?**

As Handy Helper begins to do this, criticize how he is holding the tape, how he is marking it, his lack of precision, etc. and conclude with:

**You must have not been very good in math. Maybe you should go back to the third grade. Here, you hold the end of the tape and I’ll mark the measure.**

### Cutting the board

**Handy Helper, why don’t I hold the board while you cut it with the saw?**

Again, find a few things wrong with how he is sawing. Then relieve him of the task and have him hold the board while you saw the wood. Point out how Handy Helper doesn’t hold the board just the right way, either.



## Making the Cross

Bobby Builder starts to nail the two-foot piece onto the four-foot piece creating a cross. He offers to let Handy Helper hold the nails. But then he takes them back immediately, remarking that Handy Helper sure isn't very handy. Continue to criticize during the nailing process. The cross piece might even be purposely nailed on crooked and, of course, this is to be blamed on Handy Helper.

## Sawdust in the eyes

**Now it is time to clean up. Handy Helper, would you take this towel and clean up some of the sawdust?**

Bobby Builder holds the cross while Handy Helper cleans the sawdust off of the table. Handy Helper secretly picks up a towel with flour on it, holds it between his face and Bobby Builder's face to show him he got it all. Bobby Builder sneezes the sawdust (*flour*) into the eyes of Handy Helper. Handy Helper staggers and claims he can't see. So, Bobby Builder, not letting go of the cross, tries to help Handy Helper. But, the cross is pressed against his face and eyes so he can't see what he's doing. He then tries to assist in getting the speck of sawdust out of Handy Helper's eyes. This becomes a frustrating experience until he asks Handy Helper what he should do. Handy Helper says that he should take the plank away from his own eye so that he can be helpful to others.

Ask the audience for volunteers to come onstage and be interviewed.

**Which character in our drama judged the other? (*Bobby Builder.*)**

**How do you think Handy Helper felt?**

**What did Bobby Builder have to do before he could help get the sawdust out of Handy Helper's eyes? (*Take the big board away from his eyes.*)**

**What does that have to do with judging others? (*When we judge or criticize others, oftentimes we have an even bigger thing wrong. All we do is notice small wrongs about another person.*)**

**Who is the only person qualified to judge because he has never done anything wrong? (*Jesus.*)**

## Conclusion

**Does Jesus judge? Yes. He will come back as judge on the last day and judge all the people who rejected him. But anyone who has received Jesus into his/her life won't be judged and, instead, will have life with him forever.**

## OPTION TWO

### **Climb the Ant Hill** Audience Interactive Drama

*Props: chair on top of a strong table or stepladder, a stool, some funny props that remind us of ants like antennae (made out of wire or from the novelty store).*

*This story will illustrate how we sometimes compare ourselves to others. When these comparisons cause us to judge someone, it is destructive. We push others down to make ourselves feel better. A problem occurs when everyone pushes others down to make their own way to the top. If this happens, no one can ever be happy because eventually someone else will push down the one on top when they make judgments, too. One person will read the following story while a second adult helps kids onstage to act out their part.*

Invite three kids from the audience to come forward.

**There once was a busy anthill. There were hundreds of ants working busily to dig their tunnels in the ground. Here are three of those ants—Twiggy, Twaddle, and Twiddle. These names might sound unusual to you, but to ants they are not.**

**These ants are in charge of taking dirt from the tunnels and stacking them outside. Watch them do that now.**

Coax the volunteers to push imaginary dirt into a mound around the stepladder.

#### Twiggy—fast

**As they were building their mound, Twiggy looked at the others and thought to himself, “Those ants are slow. I’m much faster. There is nothing worse than slow ants.**

**Look at how fast Twiggy can move!**

Have the Twiggy volunteer pretend to work quickly.

#### Twiddle—smart

**Twiddle looked at the other two ants and thought to himself, “Wow, are those ants dumb. They don’t even know where to put the mud to build the highest mound possible! I’ve been reading about mud mound towers all my life and not goofing around like those lazy, dumb other ants. Here, let me do my math right now to figure out how tall we are going to build this mud mound tower.”**

**Look there, he (she) is doing the math.**

Have the Twiddle volunteer pretend to do the math action.

### Twaddle—strong

**Twaddle looked at the other ants and thought to himself, “Boy, are those ants weaklings. They can lift only three times their own weight! No wonder they won’t let them work underground! They wouldn’t be strong enough to get any dirt out of the holes. Let me show you how much dirt I can lift at one time!”**

Have Twaddle pretend to lift a lot of heavy dirt.

### Twiggy moves up the chair

**Perhaps you can see the anthill growing. Who will be the first one up? Twiggy, of course.**

Set twiggy on the chair.

**And from this position, Twiggy felt much better about himself. But notice how Twiggy has his foot on the shoulder of Twiddle.**

Make sure that the children stay balanced as you hold and help them place a foot lightly on the shoulder of the other actor.

**You see the way Twiggy climbed to the top was to push others down and go right over Twiddle and Twaddle. After all, he was fast. Twiddle and Twaddle were slow.**

### Twiddle—smart way up the hill

**When Twiddle saw that Twiggy had climbed right over him to the top of the anthill, he had an idea. “I’ll go around to the backside of the anthill,” he thought to himself. “I’ll climb to the top from the backside. From there, I will be able to make sure I’m higher than everyone else. That should be easy since these other ants are not so smart.**

Move Twiddle around to the back of the ladder and have him climb the stepladder or stool and gently place his foot on top of Twiggy’s.

**So Twiddle climbed to the top of the anthill and felt good that he could push down on the others. “Sometimes,” he thought to himself, “to get to the top, you have to step on other people below you.”**

### Twaddle pulls them both down

**Twaddle, on the other hand, saw the two weakling ants were up the mountain in front of him. He thought to himself, “That’s because I have been doing all the work lifting dirt. But I know how to take care of them!”**

**So Twaddle started up the mountain and grabbed Twiggy’s foot and pulled him down.**

Gently help kids act this out.

**Then Twaddle pulled down Twiddle, and down came Twiddle.**

Help Twiddle down.

**Twaddle began to climb the hill that was now vacant. He felt the other two hanging onto his feet. Soon they were all sprawled out on the ground.**

Have other two gently pull down Twaddle.

### Argument

**Soon each one of them began yelling at each other explaining how good they were. Twiggy yelled about how fast he is, Twiddle about how smart he is, and Twaddle how strong he is.**

Have kids scream and yell at each other for a few seconds to fake an argument.

### The King arrives

Put on a funny ant antennae and approach the setting.

**Just then the King arrived. “What is going on here?” the King asked. “It looks like the work has stopped.”**

**Twiggy, Twiddle and Twaddle began at the same time, talking and blaming one another. But the King ant said, “As you know, I am the fastest, strongest, and smartest ant in the kingdom and I have an idea about getting to the top of the anthill and here it is.”**

**Then the King picked up each of the ants in turn, and helped them up the hill.**

Place one ant on at the top of the stepladder, one at the top of the stool, and one at the top of another convenient place.

**You see, the secret to getting to the top is not trying to push down others so you feel better about yourself. The secret is building up others and helping them get to the top and then serving them, just as I have served you.**

### Teaching point

Galatians 6:1-4:

***“Brothers and sisters, if a person gets trapped by wrongdoing, those of you who are spiritual should help that person turn away from doing wrong. Do it in a gentle way.”***

**In other words, if someone from church does something wrong, they need help turning away from that wrong. They don't need to be judged and told they are no good.**

***“At the same time, watch yourself so that you also are not tempted. Help carry each other's burdens. In this way, you will follow Christ's teachings.”***

**Our job then, is to watch ourselves so that we don't do the same wrong thing. Instead, we should help the other person. This is what Jesus did. He helped sinners. He didn't judge and condemn them. Instead, he invited them to follow him.**

***“So if any one of you thinks you're important when you're really not, you're only fooling yourself. Each of you must examine your own actions. Then you can be proud of your own accomplishments without comparing yourself to others.”***



### **Witness and Tell:**

*Give children opportunities to share how God is working in their lives. It is best to use a microphone to ask children interview questions around the theme for the day.*

Have kids or adults share ways they catch themselves in a comparison with others and how it affects their behavior toward others. Also, some might share a time when someone seemingly crawled over them to make their way to the top and how it made them feel.

## Prayer:

*Let the kids pray out loud. If you are using a microphone, invite children to form a prayer line and speak their thanksgivings or requests. If you have portable microphones, you can roam the audience. Kids can also go to prayer stations set up for specific types of prayer.*

## Options: (select one from the options below)

\_\_\_\_\_ **Prayer Line Option:** Kids line up and take turns stepping in front of the microphone to speak their prayers briefly.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Prayer Chair:** Adults or children with special prayer needs are invited to sit in the chairs. Kids gather around them, lay hands on their shoulders or knees and take turns praying.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Popcorn Prayer:** The leader moves through the crowd with a microphone and turns it toward kids who are raising their hands to pray. The kids speak their prayers into the microphone.

**Lord's Prayer:** Lead the children through the Lord's Prayer, phrase by phrase, or let them pray the entire prayer along with you.

## Blessing:

*Speak a blessing prayer over the children. Personalize this to your setting. Use a special scripture verse or blessing around the theme of the day.*

## Song of Sending:

*Choose one song. Briefly introduce song so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God.*

# Supplies:

## *Attention Grabber:*

- tape rule
- paper and pen

## *Offering:*

- plate or basket

## *Learning Game:*

- a three-inch stack of newspaper for every group of six children
- masking tape for each group
- plastic trash bags
- awards for: the funniest chicken, the most authentic chicken, the mummy chicken, the best chicken imitation

## *Bible Presentation:*

### *Option One: Blinded by Sawdust*

- two sawhorses or a table upon which a 2" x 4" board can be cut
- one, six-foot 2" x 4" board
- tape rule
- hammer
- two nails
- saw
- two towels (one with a teaspoon of flour on it)

### *Option Two: Climb the Ant Hill*

- chair on top of a strong table or stepladder
- stool
- some funny props that remind us of ants (*like antennae*)

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