

7th Grade New Testament (Gospels)**Lesson Plan:** Judging Others (Matthew 7:1-6, 12-23)**Learning Goals:** Students will distinguish between being judgmental and observing the fruit of other people's lives. They will be able to defend the call to discernment without falling into the trap of judgmentalism.**Opening Question:** What does it mean to be judgmental? Is this a good or a bad thing? Why?

Prayer

Discuss Question on board.

Read Matthew 7:1-6; 12-23**We are not called to be Judges**

- When we judge (condemn) others, we are taking on the role of God, not the role of humans. (God alone is the judge.)
- We must learn to distinguish moral discernment from personal condemnation.
 - It is one thing to be judgmental (to look down on someone from a level of superiority); it is entirely different to say that sin is wrong. (To ignore sin or turn a blind eye to sin saying, "who am I to judge?" is to miss the point of Jesus' words.)
- Illustration: every time you point a finger at someone else, you are pointing three back at yourself (see "flow chart" on the next page). We must begin with a realistic understanding and evaluation of who we are and the depth of our own sin and failing. This will lead to a humility in dealing with others and keep us from the seat of judgement.

We are called to be Fruit Inspectors

- Jesus' method of detecting "false prophets": inspect their fruit.
- Grapes don't grow on thorn bushes and figs don't emerge from thistles. Fruit reveals the nature of the tree.
- Good trees produce good fruit; bad trees produce bad fruit; good trees do not produce bad fruit; bad trees do not produce good fruit. The character of the fruit reveals the character of the tree.

Entering the Kingdom

- Jesus compares two ways: the narrow gate (difficult) and the wide gate (easy).
- Why is the gate "narrow?" It is demanding discipleship. It requires a person to turn from sin and follow Jesus, to do the will of God taught by Jesus. It requires them to actually live out and follow the Sermon Jesus has been preaching.
- We have two choices: following Jesus or not following him.
- To enter the narrow gate is to enter into a relationship with the Jesus who really is the king and Lord and saves and rules, and the relationship to Jesus entails following him.
- Jesus warns that false prophets will not enter the kingdom. Even though they used charismatic gifts (cast out demons, healed, or prophesied) and appeared to be followers (they did it in Jesus' name), their lives do not demonstrate a life of discipleship. The false prophet is the gifted leader who does not do the will of God in the ordinary elements of life.
- We are saved by faith, but we are judged by works.

Lesson Summary /Review:

Students should review and highlight the following vocabulary terms and concepts from this lesson in their notes:

- What does it mean to be a “fruit inspector” according to the sermon on the mount?
- What is the difference between the wide gate and the narrow gate?

