Lesson Plan: “Who am I to Judge Another?”

Objectives:
- Talk about how only God makes final, righteous judgements.
- Emphasize how we can judge righteously by first focusing on our own heart and actions.

Each lesson contains 5 timed activities:

(Choose the activities that fit your family’s schedule. Additional resources are provided as extra time may be available.)

Reverence Time: Song, prayer, scripture and video clip
Lesson Time: Lesson summary and points to ponder
Story Time: Story
Activity Time: Object lesson or activity
Treat Time: Prayer, theme related recipe & music video

Choose only the activities that fit your family’s schedule
Approximate Time: 5 minutes

Sing Together:
Hymn #220 “Lord, I Would Follow Thee.”
If you wish to print sheet music or have an online music file to accompany you visit:
http://www.lds.org/churchmusic
(Note: Navigate to the Interactive Church Music Player where you can listen to and print Church hymns and children’s songs.)

Prayer:

Scripture Time:
John 7:24

24. Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

1 Samuel 16:7

7. But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.

Video Clip:
Watch chapter 4 from The Animated New Testament Complete Learning System, The Righteous Judge DVD. (Video clip is also provided for viewing online.)
Lesson
Summary:

Is it wrong to judge others? (Discuss ideas.)

“Some scriptures command us not to judge and others instruct us that we should judge and even tell us how to do it. But as I have studied these passages I have become convinced that these seemingly contradictory directions are consistent when we view them with the perspective of eternity. The key is to understand that there are two kinds of judging: final judgments, which we are forbidden to make, and intermediate judgments, which we are directed to make, but upon righteous principles.” Dallin H. Oaks, Ensign, Aug 1999 © Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved.

What guidance has the Lord given us in making judgments? (Read Matthew 7:2–5 and Discuss thoughts.)

“In this scripture passage the Lord teaches that a fault we see in another is often like a tiny speck [of sawdust] in that person’s eye, compared to our own faults, which are like an enormous [wooden log] beam in our own eye. Sometimes we focus on others’ faults when we should instead be working to improve ourselves.” True to the Faith © Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved.

What are some of the decisions we have to make in our lives that require us to make intermediate judgments?

“You need to make judgments of people in many of your important decisions, such as choosing friends, voting for government leaders, and choosing an eternal companion. Judgment is an important use of your agency and requires great care, especially when you make judgments about other people. All your judgments must be guided by righteous standards. Remember that only God, who knows each individual’s heart, can make final judgments of individuals (see Revelation 20:12)” True to the Faith © Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved.

Is it judging unrighteously to gossip and criticize others? (Discuss ideas.)

President Monson said, “Refrain from judging others. ... Gossip or criticism, are certainly akin to judgment.” Thomas S. Monson, Ensign, May 2009 © Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved.
Points to Ponder:

How can judging others unrighteously hurt us? (Discuss ideas.)

“Do we judge one another? Do we criticize each other for individual choices, thinking we know better, when in fact we rarely understand another’s unique circumstance or individual inspiration? ... Such judgments, and so many others like them, rob us of the good part, that pure love of Christ.” Bonnie D. Parkin, Ensign, Nov 2003 © Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved.

“The Spirit of the Lord cannot dwell where there is bickering, judging, contention, or any kind of bashing.” Marvin J. Ashton, Ensign, May 1992 © Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved.

How does judging others unrighteously hurt them? (Discuss ideas.)

“‘Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me.’ Right? Wrong! Words can ruin a reputation, alter a relationship, change the course of a life.” For Your Info, New Era, May 1992 © Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved.

What can we do to help us overcome judging others unrighteously? (Discuss ideas.)

“How focusing on how we could improve our behavior (first casting the beam out of our own eye), we, of course, would not be focusing on the faults and failings of another. And as we examine ourselves and persist in eliminating harmful impulses, we learn great patience and control. ... A vital element in our efforts is the companionship and influence of the Holy Ghost. ... Finally, if we think of the Savior’s responses to provoking situations, his compassion, his tenderness, his constant caring, making him the focus of our thoughts, we will eventually become as he is.” Burton C. Kelly, Ensign, Feb 1980 © Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved.

Quote:

“If Jesus were to stand by and be asked to judge those whom we accuse and should say to us, ‘He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her,’ and then should stoop and write in the sand, how many of us would feel to steal away ashamed, convicted in our own conscience? How sound is his counsel! If we could accept and practice the second great commandment, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself’ (Matt. 22:39), and really learn to love our neighbors, there would be no vicious gossip or bearing false witness.” N. Eldon Tanner, Ensign, Jul 1972 © Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved.
Cheryl placed her lunch tray on the table and slid onto the bench. “You’ll never guess what happened! I forgot my homework this morning. When I went to the office to call my mom, Randy was in Mrs. Martin’s office and he was crying. I bet he got caught cheating or something…”

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The bell rang, ending the lunch recess. Kathy opened the school door to go inside, just as Randy was leaving with a man she assumed was his dad. Kathy slipped into her chair. Leaning forward she whispered in Shauna’s ear, “Did you hear? Randy got suspended for cheating. I just saw him leaving with his dad. I think it was his dad anyway…”

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After school Shauna rushed to catch the school bus. Jeann waved at Shauna and slid over to make room for her friend. Shauna looked around to make sure no one was listening. “You’re never going to believe this. Randy got kicked out of school for cheating! Kathy saw a man leading him out of the school. She thought is was his dad, but it couldn’t have been. Randy’s dad is overseas. It was probably a policeman taking him to juvenile detention! I can’t believe he’d do this to his mom. Doesn’t she have enough to worry about right now…?”

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Jeannie dropped her backpack on the kitchen table. “Mom, I’m home!” Jeannie called, but there was no answer. “Mom, where are you?” she called, but there was still no answer. Jeannie searched the house, but Mother was not there.

That’s strange, Jeannie thought, pouring herself a glass of chocolate milk. Mom always tells me if she’s not going to be here when I get home.

Just then a car pulled into the driveway. Jeannie looked out the window to see who it was and was happy to see Mother getting out of Sister Owen’s car.

“Thanks for the ride, Marilyn and for going with me,” Mother told the driver of the car. “I am so grateful that I have such wonderful counselors. Your support means so much to me.”

Jeannie met Mother at the door. “Hi, Mom! Guess what happened today!” Jeannie continued without giving Mother a chance to answer, “Randy got suspended from school for cheating! A policeman even came to the school and took him to juvenile detention.”

Mother looked at Jeannie with a shocked expression. “Jeannie, why would you say such a thing?”
“’Cause that’s what all my friends at school said,” Jeannie answered with a puzzled expression. “Cheryl saw him crying in the Principles office. Then Kathy saw him leaving with a man she thought was his dad. But Shauna said it was a police officer, because Randy’s dad is overseas. I guess we’re not positive he was cheating, but he must have been caught doing something pretty bad.”

“Well, you are all wrong. It simply is not true!” Mother said solemnly shaking her head.

“How do you know?” Jeannie asked.

“I just came from the Thompson’s house,” Mother explained, with a trembling voice. “That’s why I wasn’t here when you got home.”

Jeannie looked at her mother with concern. “What’s wrong, Mom,” she asked.

“Randy’s uncle took him out of school early today, because Brother Harris passed away.”

“Randy’s grandpa? The one that’s been living with them?”

“Yes,” Mother replied. “Oh, dear! Look what time it is. I told the Thompsons I’d bring them dinner tonight.” Mother gave Jeannie a hug. “We’ll talk some more about this later. Okay?”

Jeannie laid on her bed. Opening her scriptures to the page she had left off at the night before, she began to read. When she was about half way down the page a passage hit her like a ton of bricks, “Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.”

“That’s what I’ve done,” Jeannie whispered. “I’ve judged Randy unrighteously.” Without even finishing the page, she knelt next to her bed and prayed, “Father, I was wrong to judge Randy. Please help me know what can I do to fix it...”

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Father notice the soft beam of light coming from under Jeannie’s door. “Jeannie it’s after midnight. You should be asleep.” But, Jeannie didn’t hear him. She had fallen asleep kneeling at her bed, waiting for an answer. Father gently lifted his little girl in his arms and tucked her into bed.

“Daddy,” Jeannie said with a sleepy voice, “‘Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me’ is wrong. My words hurt Randy! Plus, they can spread like wild fire. Do you think I’ll be able to put out this fire?”

“If you do the best you can, Princess, I promise you the Lord will do the rest.”

by Margie Nauta Lee
What you need: A copy of the “The Mote and the Beam” activity (artwork included with this lesson,) scissors and tape. Optional: Self-adhesive laminating sheets.

2. Place the paper “mote” in the boy’s eye with a small piece of rolled tape.
3. Follow directions to put beam together.

Activity: (Younger children will need help from an older sibling or parent.)

1. **Read:** Matt. 7:3-5. “And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye.”

2. **Ask:** What is a mote? (Mote: a tiny piece of a substance : the tiniest mote of sawdust. A mote in someone’s eye is a fault in that person that is less serious than the fault in someone else who is judging them unrighteously.)

3. **Ask:** What is a beam? (Beam, a long, sturdy piece of squared timber. A beam in one’s eye is a fault that is greater in oneself than in the person one is finding fault with.)

4. **Ask:** Have you ever gotten a small piece of dust or something in your eye? Did it need to be removed?

5. **Explain:** Jesus knew that we sometimes need help and sometimes we need to help others overcome faults, just like the dust needed to be removed from our eye. (Remove the paper “mote” from the boy’s eye.)

6. **Ask:** But if we have a beam in our eye (hold the paper “beam” up to your eye) can we remove the mote? (Tape the face on the wall. Put the paper “mote” back in his eye. Without standing sideways have each family member try to pull the paper “mote” out of the eye while holding the paper “beam” up to their eye.)

7. **Ask:** Did we look foolish trying to take the mote out of the boy’s eye while having the beam in our own eye?

8. **Explain:** It is just as foolish to judge other’s faults unrighteously while attempting to cover up or hide our own faults. Let us not look foolish! Instead be humble and recognize and work on overcoming our faults. Then, with love and compassion, we can help others.
Prep Time: 5 minutes  
Cooking Time: Approximately 3-4 minutes  
Cooling Time: Approximately 30 minutes

Chocolate “Gavel & Sound Block”

1 Hostess Ho Hos® per person  
1 Hostess Ding Dong® per person (optional)  
1 Pretzel rod per person  
1 c. semi-sweet chocolate chips

Place chocolate in a microwave dish. Cook at 50% power for 3–4 minutes. Stir until smooth. Dip pretzel rods in chocolate to cover. Place 1 inch apart on waxed paper. Cool until chocolate hardens (about 30 minutes).

Treat Time: Give each family member (1) Ho Hos®, (1) Ding Dong® and (1) chocolate covered pretzel rod. Gently push pretzel rods into center of Ho Hos® to create gavels. Use the Ding Dongs® as sound blocks.

The striking of a gavel by a judge can bring order to the court room and also signify the end of an issue. When we are faced with the temptation to judge others unrighteously we can think about the judge’s gavel—putting our thoughts in order and putting an end to the issue.

Closing Prayer and blessing on the food.