



## THE SABBATH CIRCLES HOME SUNDAY SCHOOL CURRICULUM

*Unit Theme: Illumination of mind and heart*

*Lesson connected to Sunday, February 99, 2020*

*Today's Scripture: Matthew 7:1-5*

*Key Verse: "Do not judge, so that you may not be judged." Matthew 7:1*

*Contexts of the Scripture:*

- Matthew was written down sometime in the late first century, probably around 80 CE. Thus, it is not as old as Mark's Gospel and, in fact, it is likely that Matthew's author had access to Mark's Gospel.
- Matthew is the first book of the New Testament, or Christian Scriptures, for several reasons. First, it quotes a lot from the Hebrew Scriptures making it a natural bridge between the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. It was also the Gospel most frequently used by the ancient church as the source of information on Jesus and his teachings.

*Questions to go deeper:*

- Once again, this week's text is part of a larger "discourse" or sermon by Jesus Matthew uses to explain the teachings of Jesus. This particular discourse is called "the Sermon on the Mount." In today's text, Jesus is telling people they should not be so quick to judge other people. He gives a reason why this is a bad thing to do. Can you find that reason in the text? What exactly does Jesus say?
- As Jesus always does in his teaching and preaching, he uses a concrete example from every day life to illustrate his point. What is that example for this lesson?
- What does Jesus say is the first step to moving away from our quickness to judge others? How practical is this advice, do you think?

*Activity possibilities:*

- **Family activities:**
  - Where would this fall on the bible timeline? Hint: Check out the context info above!
  - This past week, our news was dominated by the very public and controversial judgment of a key leader. The decision itself became an incendiary moment in our national discourse. Setting aside partisan politics in favor of Christian perspective – no easy feat these days – what were the "logs" in the eyes of people on both sides of this debate? How might the situation have played out differently if both sides had been able to "own" their own logs first?
  - How does your family deal with situations where there is genuine disagreement on what to do in a given situation? For example, if you decide to do a family activity together but you cannot agree on what that

family activity should be, how do you solve the impasse? What are some creative solutions?

- Create a family “logs and specs” collage where each person can “own” their own logs by sketching them in the context of the family. Give each family member a piece of white paper divided into four quadrants. In the first quadrant each person draws a self-portrait or stick figure of themselves. In the second quadrant, each person should sketch a “log” in the shape of what it represents. For example, someone might say their hatred of broccoli is a log when it comes to mealtime so they would sketch a broccoli spear. In the third quadrant, sketch a family moment when the log has gotten in the way. For example, a fight over broccoli ruined the entire dinner experience for everyone so the sketch could be stick figures for each family member around a table with sad faces. In the fourth column, imagine how you might turn your log into specks. This one will take some family brainstorming!

- **Younger children activities:**

- Take the children on a brief nature walk to locate a stick about 6” in length and then a small twig. Bring both back home and set aside. Then, make a mask for the child out of a paper plate and let them decorate it. Punch holes on both sides and thread with twine or ribbon so the mask can be tied on. Cut out the eye holes and help the child put the mask on. Then hold up the stick very close to one eye hole and ask the child to describe what they can see. Do the same with the twig. Then ask them which was the best way to see what was around them – looking around the stick or the twig or with nothing blocking their vision. Then remind them that when we get angry Jesus wants us to look for the big sticks keeping us from seeing everything before we act on our anger. Act out specific scenarios of what these anger situations might be.

- **Older children and youth activities:**

- Invest time with your parents and/or younger siblings completing both of the activities just described above.
- Check out this Youtube.com video for a great re-telling of this story of Jesus: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3VmlkG8O6ag>

Remember, Rev. Ruth is always happy to answer your questions and help you find more information on anything in the Bible that interests you! Catch up with her through the church or come to the Savoy Bookstore and Café any Thursday afternoon between 2-4pm.