

SABBATH SCHOOL

Preteen Sabbath Instruction Program — Teacher's Outline

Level 3 • Unit 10 • Week 3

RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT

OBJECTIVE:

The story of the woman caught in sin (John 8:1-11) teaches us that God judges rightly and is merciful. We also should be able to determine whether an action is right or wrong. While God wants us to hate sin, we should love the person and not condemn them.

ATTENTION GETTER:

Supplies: A bag of cookies

Say: I brought this bag of cookies with me to class for us to share as a snack. You know, sharing cookies with you makes me think of a poem I read recently. It's called "The Cookie Thief" and it was written by Valerie Cox (from *A 3rd Serving of Chicken Soup for the Soul*). Let me read it to you, I think you'll enjoy it.

*A woman was waiting at an airport one night,
With several long hours before her flight.
She hunted for a book in the airport shop,
Bought a bag of cookies and found a place to drop.*

*She was engrossed in her book, but happened to see,
That the man beside her, as bold as could be,
Grabbed a cookie or two from the bag between,
Which she tried to ignore, to avoid a scene.*

*She read, munched cookies, and watched the clock,
As the gutsy "cookie thief" diminished her stock.
She was getting more irritated as the minutes ticked by,
Thinking, "If I wasn't so nice, I'd blacken his eye!"*

*With each cookie she took, he took one too.
When only one was left, she wondered what he'd do.
With a smile on his face and a nervous laugh,
He took the last cookie and broke it in half.*

*He offered her half, as he ate the other.
She snatched it from him and thought, "O brother,
This guy has some nerve, and he's also rude,
Why, he didn't even show any gratitude!"*

*She had never known when she had been so galled,
And sighed with relief when her flight was called.
She gathered her belongings and headed for the gate,
Refusing to look back at the "thieving ingrate." [someone who's not grateful]*

*She boarded the plane and sank in her seat,
then sought her book, which was almost complete.
As she reached in her baggage, she gasped with surprise.
There was her bag of cookies in front of her eyes!*

*"If mine are here," she moaned with despair,
"Then the others were his and he tried to share!"
Too late to apologize, she realized with grief,
That she was the rude one, the ingrate, the thief!*

Ask: Were you as surprised as I was?

Say: It's kind of funny, kind of sad. What we thought and what was really the case were completely different! The lady in the poem, without realizing it, was helping herself to someone else's cookies. The man she judged to be rude was actually polite and kind, overlooking her rudeness. Sometimes that's the way judgments can be. Sometimes we don't have the whole picture.

BIBLE LESSON:

Say: God always has the complete picture. He is a righteous Judge. And God wants us to learn righteous judgment as well. I'd like to tell you a story today that teaches us about righteous judgment and God's mercy.

Long ago when Jesus walked on this earth He went into the temple. People came to Him and He sat down and taught them.

But then some other people—scribes and Pharisees, people thought to be very righteous—interrupted Jesus. They pushed a woman who was crying into the middle of the crowd.

“Teacher,” they said, “this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act!”

Adultery is not being faithful to your husband or wife. This was a very serious sin. God designed marriage and the family, and He intended that the love that a husband and wife give each other should not be given to someone else.

The scribes and Pharisees said, “Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that a person who commits adultery should be stoned to death. But what do you say?”

It was true that the punishment given for adultery was stoning. But what these men were really concerned about was trying to trip Jesus up. They were testing Him, hoping they could have something to accuse Him of.

But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger.

When they continued asking Him, Jesus stood up and said to them, “He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.”

And then He stooped down again and wrote on the ground. The Bible doesn’t tell us what He wrote, but it had a powerful effect on these men. The Bible tells us that they were convicted by their conscience and went out one by one, leaving the woman and Jesus.

When Jesus stood up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, “Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?”

She said, “No one, Lord.”

And Jesus said to her, “Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.”

This was an example of righteous judgment and God’s mercy. Without a doubt, this woman was guilty of adultery—she had been caught in the act! But Jesus knew what was in her heart. He knew she was truly sorry—truly repentant. He also knew what was in the hearts of the men who accused her. It seems very possible that Jesus might have been writing on the ground their own sins!

When judging others, we need to be careful that we’re not guilty of the same sin ourselves! We should examine ourselves and make sure that we’re not hypocrites.

Ask: Does anyone know what a hypocrite is? [Let students respond.]

Say: A hypocrite is someone who pretends to be what he isn’t.

Turn with me to Matthew 7:1-5: “Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment

you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."

Ask: Does this make you think about "The Cookie Thief"? Who was really the cookie thief? [Let students answer.]

Say: That's right! The lady—the one who was judging the man who was actually sharing his cookies!

God wants us to learn to judge actions correctly. We need to make sure we have the facts. And then we should learn to judge whether something is right or wrong. Let's turn to 1 John 3:4 to learn how we decide what is sin. In the King James Version it reads "Whosoever commits sin transgresses also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." Sin is disobeying God's law. God wants us to study the Bible and learn what sin is.

Jesus knew what was right and wrong. He didn't tell the woman caught in adultery that what she had done was OK. In fact, He told her not to do this again!

God wants us to hate sin. But He doesn't want us to hate the sinner—the person who did the wrong. It is a very difficult thing, and something we can only do with God's help, but God wants us to love the person even while we hate the wrong thing that he or she did. God wants us to become like Him. Let's read about what Jesus taught in Matthew 5:43-45: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust."

LESSON APPLICATION:

Do the accompanying word search.

MUSIC:

Sing "Righteous Judge" from the United Church of God hymnal, page 56.

MEMORY VERSE:

John 7:24: "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

family activity

THE POINT:

God wants us to learn righteous judgment. The story of the woman caught in sin (John 8:1-11) teaches us that God judges rightly and is merciful. We also should be able to determine whether an action is right or wrong. While God wants us to hate sin, we should love the person and not condemn.

FAMILY TOGETHER TIME:

Discuss the importance of choosing friends carefully. Why is this kind of "judging" good and necessary?

Talk about hypocrisy. What does it mean? Can people who have made mistakes teach others to avoid those mistakes?

MEMORY VERSE:

John 7:24 "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

RIGHTEOUS JUDGE WORD SEARCH

L P L T H G I R E D P R O V X
R U D F R E L T A N L B W E N
E N S T O J U D G E C A D F I
H I G P D R H L I B X P W O S
J S L O V E G R Z G L P H H I
S H K A H U K I O M R E Y E T
K M Y S N L W G V X E A P A X
I E C T W C G H A E F R O R K
Z N R E P E N T A N T A C T Q
A T P D I S C E R N F N R Y F
D Q W L E W R O N G S C I F S
U J D N Y G V U E R P E S U M
T V C T H J U S T I C E Y R Z

Search forward, downward, diagonally and backward to find the following words:

right
law
forgive
love

judge
sin
wrong
mercy

hypocrisy
punishment
appearance
repentant

righteous
justice
discern
heart