



Key Scriptures: James 2:1-9; Romans 16:17-18; Matthew 7:1-5; John 4:7-10

### BIBLE BASIS FOR LEADERS

How do you deal with the weird people in your life? Do you go out of your way to ignore them? Or do you go out of your way to make friends with them? What did Jesus do when he encountered “weird” people? Use these Scriptures to help kids see that sometimes it’s easy to judge people before we get to know them. Remind kids that Jesus calls us not to judge others.

**James 2:1-9** says we can’t claim to have faith in Jesus if we’re favoring some people over other people—even if the other people seem odd to us. It’s a sin. Use this passage to help kids understand that God calls us to treat everyone with equal respect and attention.

In **Romans 16:17-18** we’re warned to watch out for people who cause divisions and upset people’s faith by teaching things that don’t line up with Jesus’ teachings. Use these verses to explain that it’s okay to avoid people who teach false things about Jesus so they don’t become deceived or confused.

**Matthew 7:1-5** tells us, “Do not judge others, and you will not be judged.” Sometimes we make assumptions about people before we even give them a chance. We might not even realize that other people think we’re strange! Remind kids that spending time getting to know someone just might lead to the discovery that you both have more in common than you imagined.

In **John 4:7-10** Jesus demonstrates how to treat people who society has judged. The Samaritan woman at the well was considered an outcast, not only because she was a Samaritan but also because of her promiscuity. To avoid awkward silences and accusing glances, she went to the well in the heat of midday, when no one else would be there. Imagine her surprise when Jesus talked openly with her and treated her with respect even though he knew who she was. Use this lesson to remind kids that Jesus hung out with all people. Jesus calls us to get to know people and not judge them.

### THE LESSON AT A GLANCE

Lesson Sequence		What Kids Will Do	Supplies
1	(5 minutes)	Build relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Christian music</li> <li>• music player</li> <li>• snacks</li> </ul>
2	(10-15 minutes)	Play a game.	
3	(10 minutes)	Try to decipher portions of images, and discuss judging people when they don’t know them well.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pencils</li> <li>• 1 copy per person of the “A Closer Look” handout (included with this download)</li> </ul>
4	(25 minutes)	Explore what the Bible says about favoritism, and see how Jesus treated people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bibles</li> <li>• pencils</li> <li>• scissors</li> <li>• prepared boxes of snacks</li> </ul>
5	(5 minutes)	Pray for someone they’ve judged on outward appearances.	

## OPENING

Ahead of time, purchase two different boxed snacks, such as snack cakes or crackers. Open the boxes and switch the contents, and then reseal the boxes. Purchase a box of a sweet treats and take the contents out, replacing them with a rotten or very ripe banana. Set the boxes aside until the Bible Study section of the lesson.

Play Christian music as kids enjoy snacks and friendship. Give kids this discussion starter as they eat. Say: **Find out who in our group has seen the weirdest animal (think octopus, platypus, angler fish).** Allow time, and then play the three-minute countdown included with your download to let kids know how much time is remaining. Gather kids together.

Say: **God sure made some funny-looking animals! Today we're exploring what happens when we judge people on outward appearances before we really get to know them. One creature I think is pretty crazy-looking is a spider. Let's play a game where you'll get to be gigantic spiders!**

Form teams of four. Have kids stand so their left shoulders touch. Using their left hands, kids will grab the left wrists of the people in front of them (forming a tight circle).

Kids should now be connected by their left hands while their right hands hang free. Explain that teams have become giant spiders. These creepy crawlers must perform the following tasks while remaining connected:

1. Sit on the floor. Count aloud to 10. Stand up.
2. Move to any wall in the room. One person is to touch the wall with his or her right hand. Repeat the task with the remaining three walls, with each one touched by a different teammate.
3. One person must remove his or her right shoe and scoot it on the floor to the person on the opposite side of the spider. Each person on the team should continue to pass the shoe around until it comes back to the owner.
4. All teammates should remove their right shoes and simultaneously scoot the shoes around the outside of the spider.
5. One person is to remove an object from his or her pocket. The object is to be passed to the right and on around the spider until it returns to its owner.

At no time should the parts of a spider become disconnected. If a spider becomes disconnected, it must perform some silly task chosen by other groups. (A sample task might be hopping on one foot while singing a funny song.)

Say: **Looks like you had to get used to moving around on eight legs. But real spiders do that all the time! They're actually amazing animals with skills and smarts we can only imagine. Sometimes we judge people by what we see on the outside, not realizing that they're amazing creations with skills and smarts. Let's try another activity to see what we can learn just by looking at the outside.**

## BIBLE STUDY INTRODUCTION

Give each person a pencil and a copy of the "A Closer Look" handout.

Say: **Try to guess what these strange pictures are. Below each square, write what you think the picture shows. To make things a little more difficult, you have only 30 seconds to guess all of them. Go!**

Allow time.

Ask: **What were some of your guesses for each picture?**

Tell kids what the pictures actually are. (1. bark from a tree; 2. knuckle on a human hand; 3. keyboard keys; 4. cotton fibers of a shirt; 5. a bug's wing; 6. a dollar bill)

Ask: **Why was it so difficult to know what the picture was?**

Say: **These pictures don't look anything like what they actually are! Because we can see only a small part of the image, it's really hard to tell what the whole picture is. Have you ever found that a person was nothing like you thought at first? Maybe you thought certain people were really weird because you saw only part of them, but then when you got to know more about them, you realized they were really pretty cool.**

Ask: **Tell about a time you thought you knew someone based on knowing only a little about that person.**

- **How did your opinion change after you got to know the person better?**

Share an example from your own life, and then let kids share.

Say: **Sometimes it's easy to judge people before we get to know them. Sometimes we think people are weird before we even give them a chance. But what does God say about people we think are weird? Let's dive into that.**

### **BIBLE STUDY**

Set the snack boxes with switched contents in different corners of the room. Keep the one containing the rotten banana.

Say: **I brought some snacks today and figured we could get into groups based on which snack you like best. Move to the corner that holds your favorite snack, but don't open the box yet.** Allow time for kids to move. If everyone moves to one corner, you'll need to form two groups later.

Ask: **In your group, tell why you didn't choose the other snack option.**

Allow a minute for discussion, and then take responses. Have kids open the boxes and enjoy their snacks.

Ask: **What surprised you when you opened the box?**

- **How is that a little like judging people before you know them?**

Say: **The Bible has a lot to tell us about judging others.** Assign one group James 2:1-9, and assign the other group Matthew 7:1-5. **Before you read this passage, think of a person in your life who you've judged but that you honestly don't really know. Maybe it's someone who you think is stuck up, bossy, or just strange.** Share an example from your own life. **As you read this passage, keep that person in mind.** Have kids read aloud the assigned passage with their groups.

Ask: **What do these verses tell you about making a quick judgment about people before you know them?**

- **What does it really hurt to judge people before you know them?**

Say: **In a minute you'll read the passage that the other group just read.** Have groups switch passages and read them within their groups. Then have kids talk in their groups about the following question.

Ask: **What challenges you most in the passage you just read? Why?**

Take a few responses from each group, and then gather everyone together. Bring out the box containing the rotten banana. Ask kids what they like about the snack pictured on the box you're holding. Then open the box and bring out the banana. Talk about how you'd feel if you opened a box of food but found that what was inside had spoiled or was rotten.

Say: **Sometimes what's inside isn't so great. That happens with people, too—no matter what they look like on the outside.**

Help kids look up and read aloud Romans 16:17-18.

Ask: **When, if ever, might it be okay to avoid or not spend time with people?**

- **Do you think you can make those judgments about people before you get to know them? Why or why not?**

Say: **Jesus hung out with a lot of people when he was on earth. He spent time with people that no one else liked or wanted to be around. Let's look at what happened when Jesus sat down and talked to a Samaritan woman. Samaritans and Jews did not get along. They believed different things about God. They worshipped God differently. And in that time, men and women didn't always talk or spend time together. Let's see how Jesus treated someone who others had judged as not worthy.** Help kids look up and read aloud John 4:7-10.

Ask: **What can you learn about treating others from what Jesus did?**

- **Why might that be hard to do?**

Say: **Jesus set the example for being kind and open with everyone. He spent time with people and got to know them. That can be hard for us—it's easier just to put people in a box and assume we know what they're like. Let's use these boxes to make reminders that God sees what's on the inside and that he loves all people.**

Have kids open the boxes and cut squares off of them. Kids can write out Matthew 7:1-5 or "God loves you" on the blank side of the box squares.

## **CLOSING**

Say: **Hold your little square and think of someone you may have judged without getting to know him or her. Silently pray and ask God to help you love that person the way God loves you.** Pause while kids pray silently, and then end the prayer time.

Say: **Jesus hung out with all people. In fact, he was always getting in trouble with the Pharisees because they thought he needed to stop hanging out with ordinary people and start hanging out with *them*. I challenge you to be more like Jesus this week. I challenge you to hang out with different people—get to know them and don't judge by what you see from a distance. I challenge you to try it out: Sit down next to that person you think is a little strange and start a conversation. You may be surprised by what you find out!**

Find the Parent Page for this lesson included with this download. Print copies for kids to give to their parents, or send the file to parents via email.

