

THAT'S NOT WHAT IT SAYS

SERIES FINALE · A DEVOTION FOR KIDS & FAMILIES

Neither Do I Condemn You

the myths we use to avoid grace

MATTHEW 7:1–5 · JOHN 8:1–11

A pool noodle, a tiny speck, and a handful of stones. This week's story is about noticing our own stuff before we point out everyone else's — use it together as a family, or hand pieces to different ages around the table.

First Christian Church · Highland, Indiana · [DATE]

The Big Idea

Have you ever heard someone say "don't judge" and think it means you should never notice when something's wrong? Or heard "hate the sin, love the sinner" and wonder why loving someone should come with conditions? Neither phrase tells the whole story.

Jesus told a funny little story about a person who tries to pick a tiny speck out of a friend's eye while they've got an entire log sticking out of their own. And in real life, some people once dragged a woman in front of Jesus, ready to punish her, stones already in their hands. Jesus knelt down, was quiet for a moment, and then said something surprising: check your own heart first. One by one, everyone put their stones down and walked away.

That's this week's big idea: it's easy to notice what's wrong with someone else and hard to notice what's wrong with us. Jesus wants us to flip that around — be honest with ourselves first, and be gentle with everyone else.

TOGETHER: THE STONE IN YOUR POCKET

Find one smooth stone for each person in your family. Carry it in a pocket for a few days. Every time you notice it's there, let it remind you to check for your own "log" before pointing out someone else's "speck." At the end of the week, talk together about what you noticed — and try setting the stones down somewhere together, on purpose, as a sign of letting go of a judgment you were carrying.

TALK IT OVER

Questions By Age

Pick the questions that fit your family, or work down through all of them together.

AGES 4–6

- *Have you ever tried to help someone with a tiny problem while you had a much bigger one yourself?*
- *What do you think it means to be gentle with someone who made a mistake?*
- *Can you think of a time someone was kind to you even when you did something wrong?*

AGES 7–11

- *Why do you think Jesus told a story about a huge log instead of just saying "don't judge people"?*
- *In the story, the people with stones walked away one by one instead of all at once. Why do you think that happened slowly?*
- *What's the difference between noticing someone did something wrong and deciding to be mean about it?*

TEENS

- *"Hate the sin, love the sinner" isn't actually in the Bible. Why do you think it caught on anyway?*
- *Jesus said "neither do I condemn you" before he said anything about changing. Why might that order matter?*
- *Where do you see people online or at school being quick to judge and slow to look at themselves?*

WHOLE FAMILY

- *Is there a "stone" our family has been holding onto — a judgment about someone we could set down?*
- *What would it look like for us to be as gentle with each other's mistakes as Jesus was with the woman in this story?*

BEFORE YOU GO

A Family Prayer

Dear God, thank you for being gentle with us even when we mess up. Help us notice our own stuff before we point out other people's, and help our family be as kind to others as you are to us. Amen.

ONE MORE THING TO TRY

Each night this week, ask one person at the table: "Did you notice your own 'log' before someone else's 'speck' today?" It's okay if the answer is no — that's the whole point of practicing. Let it be your family's small, ongoing way of choosing gentleness over judgment.