Making Judgments

Materials Needed for Each Student

Should We Make Judgments on Other People? p. 2; *Civil, Moral and Spiritual Judgments* p. 3; pen or pencil

Prepare in Advance

Read through the quotations on *Should We Make Judgments on Other People?* on p. 2.

New Church Concept
How We See Others

Where kindness does not exist, selfishness is present and consequently we hate all who do not show us favor. As a result, we see nothing in our neighbor except their evil. Or if we do see anything good we either perceive it as nothing or else place a bad interpretation on it. But when we are in kindness, we hardly notice the evil in another person, but instead notice all their goodness and truth; and on the other's evils and falsities we place a good interpretation. See *Arcana Coelestia* 1079



In this activity students explore the idea that there are some judgments about others that we need to make, but only the Lord can know a person's spiritual state.

1. In the story of the Woman caught in adultery, the Lord sends away her accusers by reminding them that they too have faults. "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first" (John 8:7).
2. This event may remind us of one of the Lord's statements in the Sermon on the Mount, "Judge not, that you be not judged" (Matthew 7:1).
3. Do these teachings mean that we are never to judge the actions of other people? Are there some judgments we are allowed to make and others that are forbidden?
4. Distribute copies of *Should We Make Judgments on Other People?* (p. 71) and read the first quotation—from *Conjugial Love* 523—aloud. Read 1-2 of the other quotations together as time allows.
5. Give each student a copy of *Civil, Moral and Spiritual Judgments* (p. 72) and a pen or pencil. Read the top of the page aloud and then invite students to complete the table individually. Let students know that answers may vary depending on how people interpret the statements.
6. Divide the group into pairs and have students discuss answers with their partners. Remind students that the questions may be answered correctly in different ways.
7. Gather students to share their answers with the larger group.

New Church Concept : Mercy

The essence of mercy is love. Love itself is converted into mercy and becomes mercy when anyone in need of help is regarded with love or charity. Consequently mercy is the expression of love towards those who are needy. See *Arcana Coelestia* 3063

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Should We Make Judgments on Other People?

The Lord says, “Judge not, that you be not condemned.” (Matthew 7:1) This cannot in the least mean judging of someone’s moral and civil life in the world, but judging of someone’s spiritual and heavenly life. Who does not see that if people were not allowed to judge of the moral life of those dwelling with them in the world, society would collapse? But to judge what the inner mind or soul is like within, thus what a person’s spiritual state is and so his or her fate after death—of this one is not permitted to judge, because it is known to the Lord alone.

See *Conjugial Love* 523

The life of charity consists in thinking kindly of others and in wishing them well.

See *Arcana Coelestia* 2284

People with whom faith [that is, what they know] is separated from charity [that is, a desire to do good and useful things] see nothing else but errors and perversities in another person. But those who have faith that is guided by charity are different. They notice the good things, and if they do see evils and falsities they excuse them, and if they can, try to work with that person to correct them.

See *Arcana Coelestia* 1079.1

Loving the neighbor does not mean loving his person, but loving that in him by virtue of which he is a neighbor, consequently good and truth. They who love the person, and not that in a person from which he is a neighbor, love evil just as well as good. And they do good to the evil as well as to the good; when yet doing good to the evil is doing evil to the good, and this is not loving the neighbor. A judge who punishes the evil that they may be amended, and that the good may not be contaminated by them, loves the neighbor.

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Civil, Moral and Spiritual Judgments

One is never allowed to judge the nature of another person's spiritual life, for only the Lord knows this. But one is allowed to judge the nature of another person's civil and moral life. See *Conjugial Love* 523

- A civil judgment looks at whether or not a person obeys the laws of the country and local community.
- A moral judgment relates to whether or not a person does what is good and acts with charity toward the neighbor.
- A spiritual judgment is about a person's spiritual state and focuses on internal motivation, e.g. whether or not he or she will be saved, or his or her relationship with the Lord.

Decide whether each of the following statements reflects a civil, moral, or spiritual judgment. Check the box you think is correct.

	Judgment Calls	Civil	Moral	Spiritual
1	"He did that on purpose."			
2	"She is really acting like a brat!"			
3	"He got paid even though he hardly did any of the job he promised to do."			
4	"You let evil spirits talk you into doing what you did."			
5	"I think you're driving too fast."			
6	"You're a bad boy."			
7	"That was an unkind thing to say."			
8	"She is just thinking of herself and her own needs. She doesn't care about us at all."			
9	"You can't go around telling people that 'Joe's Ice Cream' sells food with maggots in it."			
10	"That sounded like a rude comment to me."			

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