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a resource in:
Sunday School

Biblical Decision Making Lessons
Middle School



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Biblical Decision Making

Lesson 1 - Making Decisions Aligned with God's Word

Recommended Age/Class: **Middle School** (6th-8th grade)

Lesson Objectives:

1. The student will understand that God can give us wisdom to make good decisions.
2. The student will understand that we can have faith that God will lead us to make good decisions.
3. The student will understand that the Bible gives all the guidance we need to find salvation and live a life that is pleasing to God.
4. The student will understand that reading the Bible allows us to learn God's ways and recognize good decisions from poor ones.

Scripture:

Proverbs 3:5-6, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

James, 1:5-6, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven by the wind and tossed."

2 Timothy 2:15, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

Psalms 119:105, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

John 14:15, "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

Content:

- All decisions or choices we make in life have consequences, whether small or eternal.
- The decisions we make that affect our soul have eternal consequences.
- Our decisions not only affect us, but can also affect other people.
- God wants us to ask Him for wisdom to make good decisions.
- Praying to God for wisdom in making decisions teaches us to listen to Him for help and guidance.
- God wants us to have faith that He will lead us, even when we do not know the future.
- God's Word gives all the guidance that is needed to find salvation and live a life pleasing to God.
- Daily reading the Bible helps us learn God's ways, so that when choices come before us, we can recognize what would be a wise choice from a foolish one.
- When reading the Bible, one should follow exactly what it says, rather than using it to prove a point or support a decision that does not align with God's commandments.
- When making a decision, one should ask if the choice will make them more like Christ and please God.

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Discussion Questions:

1. Do you ever go through a day and not think about some of the choices you made? Why might it be easy to do this?
2. Are all decisions easy to make? How do you feel when you have a hard time making a choice?
3. Why do we need to make good decisions? Who is affected by the decisions we make?
4. Why does God want us to have faith, rather than certain knowledge of the future?
5. What might be a time in which you need to ask God for wisdom to know how to make the right decision?
6. How can God's Word help us, even if it does not say exactly the answer we need to make a decision?
7. How would using the Bible like a "cookbook" or a "vending machine" be misapplying the Word of God to make decisions?
8. Why should we use the whole Bible when making decisions, rather than just one verse or part of a verse?
9. Why would it be important to read the Bible every day, rather than only when we need to make decisions?
10. When making a decision, what are some questions we could ask ourselves to make sure it is a godly decision?
11. What should we do if we are tempted to make a decision that would go against what God says in the Bible?

Activity:

1. Activity 1: Hand it to God

- a. Talk about how we can make some decisions now in our life of things we will always do (e.g. obeying our parents or commit to going to church) or things we will never do (e.g. drink alcohol or do drugs). These are decisions we know clearly from God's Word whether we should or should not do them.
- b. Read the Ten Commandments as examples of decisions God has already told us what we should or should not do.
- c. Have students make a list of things they will always do and a list of things they will never do based upon the Ten Commandments and other Scriptures they know from the Bible.
- d. Have students share some of the things they wrote on their list and have students add to their own lists as they listen to others.
- e. Tell students they can keep this list in a safe place to remind them of decisions they know they will always make that align with God's Word.

2. Activity 2: Wise Decision or Poor Decision? Game

(materials needed: two sets of the Choice Cards printed on card stock and cut apart; possible prizes)

- a. Shuffle each set of cards well.
- b. Divide the class into two groups. Have them work together to match the wise decision with the poor decision. The group who correctly matches all of the pairs first, wins the game.
- c. Discuss how for every decision, there is often a wise choice or a poor choice that can be made. Discuss possible consequences of the paired decisions on the game cards.

3. Object Lesson: The Right Tool for the Job

(materials needed: several nails, small board, hammer, toothbrush, screwdriver, spoon)

- a. Before class, put the nails in the board just enough that students can drive the nails into the board.
- b. Ask for 4 volunteers. Give each of the volunteers one of the tools and ask them to try driving in a nail in the board.
- c. Discuss how choosing the right tool for the job was necessary to complete it well. Compare this to life and how when we need to make a decision, we need to go the source of wisdom – God and His Word. Sometimes we may be tempted to ask our friends or rely upon our own desires. But, we must go to His Word to see what God's will is, in order to have the wisdom to make the right choices in our lives.

Biblical Decision Making

Lesson 2 - Wise Counsel versus Peer Pressure

Recommended Age/Class: **Middle School** (6th-8th grade)

Lesson Objectives:

1. The student will understand that children should seek advice from their parents and other adults who are good influences to make wise decisions.
2. The student will understand that it is tempting to make decisions based on peer pressure.
3. The student will understand that peers may not always have the best advice for wise decision making.
4. The student will understand that giving into peer pressure may cause us to compromise and not become the person God created us to be.

Scripture:

Proverbs 1:5, "A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels."

Proverbs 12:15, "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise."

Proverbs 19:20-21, "Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end. There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand."

Content:

- The Bible tells children to seek advice from their parents and to obey their parents when making decisions.
- Children can also seek advice from other adults whom they trust and believe are experienced Christians.
- Getting advice from one's peers may not always be the best thing to do, as they may not see all sides of an issue or have enough experience to know what is the best choice.
- Making wise decisions in the face of peer pressure can be difficult.
- Pre-teens and teens struggle with not wanting to appear too different from their friends.
- Pre-teens and teens often struggle with fearing not being accepted by their friends if they do not do the things they are doing.
- When one feels pressured to do the wrong thing because others are doing it, it takes courage and praying for God's help to stand up for what is right.
- Sometimes walking away from a situation is the best option for avoiding peer pressure.

Discussion Questions:

1. Who should you turn to when seeking help in making decisions?
2. Why is it important to seek wise counsel?
3. Why are peers not often the best people to turn to for wise counsel?
4. Why can it be hard to make wise decisions when being with your peers?
5. Tell about a time when you felt pressured to do something wrong and you chose to do the right thing. What helped you to stand up for what was right?
6. What are things you can do when others are pressuring you to do what is wrong?

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Activity:

1. Activity 1: Typical Taunts

- a. Put some of the following typical taunts on cards and for each one discuss with students what they might really mean and how to respond to them. Discuss the correlating scripture verses as God's direction for these types of peer pressure taunts.
 - i. "You're such a baby!": This person might want to appear older than they really are or they want to make you do something. Responding to this taunt is unnecessary. You can just laugh and walk away. (*Proverbs 26:4*)
 - ii. "What are you afraid of?": This taunt might be because the person really does think you are afraid, whether you are or not. The person wants to make you do something by appealing to your pride. Just respond back, "I'm not afraid. I just don't want to." (*Isaiah 41:10*)
 - iii. "Why not? Nobody will tell on you!": Maybe this person doesn't want you to tell on them either! They think that doing it without anyone seeing makes it okay. This taunt ignores the fact that even if someone doesn't see, God always does! And sometimes God gives a parent or teacher the sense that something is wrong and they will notice. Respond by saying "That's not really the point. I just don't want to." (*Psalms 121:4*)
 - iv. "You're too weird!": This person is also just name-calling in order to make you do something. They know that it hurts to be called or thought of as different than others. This is probably not someone you want to continue to be with unless they change their behavior. Just give a brief response, such as "That sounds like sticks and stones" and walk away. (*Romans 12:2*)
 - v. "You're such a teacher's pet!": This person is not making good choices and wants to make your good choices look bad. They think that being cool means doing things that are wrong. Just respond by saying, "Oh, well" and shrug your shoulders. They often are not expecting this light-hearted response and will stop pressuring you. (*Titus 3:1*)
 - vi. "You're not fun anymore!": This person is giving a threat that they won't be your friend, unless you do what they say. This person might have been your friend for a long time and is now testing some limits as they grow older. They want you to go along with the risk, so they feel better about it themselves. It is time to probably tell this friend that their choices are not good ones, by saying something like, "You know I was thinking the same thing about you. I feel like you want to just prove something that might not be good." Maybe you can get your friend not to do it either. (*James 5:19-20*)
 - vii. "I'm not going to hang out with you anymore!" or "I'm not going to be your friend anymore!": This is a threat to make you do something. This person is actually not being a friend to you either by trying to get you to do something wrong. Don't respond back with a harsh word, instead say something like "That would make me sad. I hope you change your mind." Walk quickly away as this person will probably continue to pressure you since they are so angry. (*Romans 12:17* or *Proverbs 15:1*)
 - viii. "Nothing bad is going to happen.": This person thinks there will be no consequences, which is typical of teenagers to not believe the consequences will happen to them or to not understand the severity of the decision. This person is simply being immature. Respond simply by saying "I just don't believe that is true." (*Galatians 6:7-8*)
 - ix. "Everybody is doing it!": This is probably not true. This person has seen several people do it and has become blind to how many people are not doing it in order to justify their own actions. It will take bravery, but respond by saying something like, "Everyone but one" and walk away. (*Colossians 3:23* and *Psalms 27:3*)
 - x. "Did your Mom tell you that?": This person does not have respect for parents and believes you shouldn't either. This completely contradicts the Word of God and the commandment to obey one's parents. You can simply say "yes" and walk away. (*Exodus 20:12* and *2 Timothy 3:1*)

(Typical Taunts activity adapted from: <https://www.christianitycove.com/sunday-school-lesson-peer-pressure-1/3860/>)

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2. Object Lesson 1: Wise Counsel

(materials needed: 2 small candy bars of 3 different types [total 4-6 candy bars], 2 paper plates)

- a. Have one student choose a candy bar they would like to eat.
- b. Have this student choose someone in the room they believe will give them wise counsel. Have them agree that they will do whatever their “counselor” tells them to do.
- c. Have the student who chose the candy bar step out of the room.
- d. Unwrap the two candy bars of the type the student chose.
- e. Put each candy bar on one of the paper plates.
- f. Tell the “counselor” to watch carefully so they can give the student good counsel.
- g. Lick one of the candy bars and set it back on the paper plate.
- h. Have the student come back in the room. Tell them to ask their counselor which candy bar would be good to eat.
- i. The “counselor” should tell them to eat the candy bar that was not licked, but not tell them why. The student should eat the candy bar.
- j. Afterwards, have the “counselor” tell the student why they chose that candy bar for him/her to eat.
- k. Discuss how the “counselor” had to be mindful of all aspects of the situation to give good advice. The student who ate the candy bar had to trust the “counselor” was giving advice they could rely upon. This shows the importance of choosing counselors carefully.

3. Object Lesson 2: Dropping Like Dominoes

(materials needed: Dominoes)

- a. Have a volunteer arrange the dominoes in a line.
- b. Have someone else push on a domino and see what happens.
- c. Talk about how peer pressure is like the push on the domino. It can be easy to fall to this pressure and when others see us fall to it, they fall as well.

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Choice Cards: Wise Decisions:

Study before a test.	Be kind to someone who was mean to you.	Ask a friend if you can borrow their new game.
Be a friend to a new student at school.	Ask your mom or dad for the money to go mini-golfing.	Be respectful to your teacher even though you were called out for talking.
Complete your homework before going out with friends.	Take out the garbage the first time you are asked.	Volunteer to help with raking leaves for the elderly.
Pray with a friend who is sad.	Give some of the money you earned to a collection.	Invite a friend to church so they can learn more about God.

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Choice Cards: Poor Decisions:

<p>Cheat on a test.</p>	<p>Get revenge on someone who was mean to you.</p>	<p>Take your friend's game and return it later without them knowing.</p>
<p>Gossip about the new student at school, because you don't want them to take your best friend away from you.</p>	<p>Take money from your mom or dad's wallet without asking.</p>	<p>Say a sarcastic comment to your teacher when he/she called you out for talking.</p>
<p>Go out with friends and leave your homework incomplete.</p>	<p>Wait to clean your room until your mom or dad threatens to ground you for not listening.</p>	<p>Choose to do something fun instead of raking leaves for the elderly.</p>
<p>Ignore your friend when they are sad because you don't want to hear their problems.</p>	<p>Keep all your money to yourself.</p>	<p>Don't tell your friends you go to church because you're not sure they will think you are cool if you do.</p>