

3

MAKING GOOD CHOICES

The Point

Disciples make choices that honor and obey Jesus.

What You'll Need

paper

2 Bibles

Quarter

Pen

clean paper coffee filter

used coffee filter with old grounds in it

The **BLUE** is YOU!

For you, parent:

Coke or pepsi? Plastic or paper? If only all choices were this easy!

Your child is just starting to make choices that can have life-changing consequences. Many of the choices facing younger kids are fairly black and white: obedience or disobedience, truth or dishonesty.

As kids become more independent, they deal with harder choices: which friends to hang out with, what shows, YouTube channels or movies to watch, what websites to visit, and what they'll wear. And sooner or later you won't be around to help your child make good, God-pleasing decisions.

That's why you're going to provide your child with a few easy, memorable filters that will equip him to make choices that honor God and deepen faith and trust in him. Kids who start using these tools now will develop the healthy habit of thinking through decisions they face today, tomorrow, and forever.

Heads or Tails

Before this activity, think of a place you and your child can easily walk to in about 10 minutes. It might be a local park, store, school or landmark.

Grab a quarter, and tell your child you're heading out for a walk. If the weather is bad, take your child for a drive instead, but follow the same guidelines. Stand in front of your house and hand your child the quarter.

SAY: We're going people to walk to _____, but we'll take a different route. Every time we come to a corner, flip the coin. If the coin turns up heads, we go right, tails, we go left. Ready? Flip the quarter and we'll begin.

Walk for about 10 minutes, following the directions "given" by the coin. You may not reach your intended destination – that's OK. Then turn around and walk back home.

As you walk home, discuss these questions:

- How did the coin affect our trip to _____?
- Was this a good way to make decisions? Why or why not?
- What are some choices that kids your age are making?

Because you're a disciple of Jesus, your decisions should honor and obey Jesus. Let's talk some more about how to make good choices.

Stop Sign

As you near your home, find a stop sign, and stand near it with your child.

When cars come to this sign, what are three things the driver might do?

Are those good things to do? Why or why not?

I'd be a bad driver if I stopped here, closed my eyes and then just kept going. Drivers need to look both ways to see if any traffic is coming. They need to be aware of what's going on around them. They need to see other people around them and decide what's best to do.

In life, we all need to stop sometimes to make good choices. As a follower of Jesus, our choices should honor and obey him. Let's head home and think some more about how to make good, God-pleasing decisions.

Go inside and sit down with your child. Gather a Bible, a sheet of paper, and a pen. With your child, brainstorm (and write down) three choices your child makes on a regular basis. For example, your child might write down “what TV shows to watch,” “which songs I’ll listen to,” and “how I treat kids at school.”

I’m going to give you a cool tool to use every time you need to make a choice like these. Remember the stop sign we saw? When it comes to making good choices, just STOP. S-T-O-P. Each letter reminds you of something to consider. Let’s start with S.

Ask yourself, **“If I do this, will I be safe?”**

Have your child look up and read aloud Psalm 139:13-14. Talk about how your child’s body was created by God and is a precious gift to care for and treasure.

The next letter is T. Ask yourself, **“If I do this, will I be truthful?”** Sometimes you’ll be tempted to make a choice that might lead you to lie, either now or in the future.

Help your child look up and read aloud Proverbs 12:22. Briefly discuss why lying is something God hates.

The next letter is O. Ask yourself, **“If I do this, will I be obedient to my parents?”**

Help your child look up and read aloud Colossians 3:20. Talk about how parents have more wisdom and experience in life than children and love their kids and want the best for them.

Finally, remember the letter P and ask yourself, **“If I do this, will it be pleasing to God?”**

Guide your child in looking up and reading Ephesians 5:1. Talk about what it means to be an imitator of God – doing things that God would like.

If you answer no to any of these questions, it’s probably a good idea to go in the other direction and make a better choice.

Quickly review what the letters remind us to do.

Remember, you’re giving your child a tool to use, not a test. Let your child use the examples he wrote down and practice using STOP as a decision- making guideline.

Choice Filter

Stopping to make good choices allows you to filter out some bad stuff. Take a look at what I mean.

Show your child the used coffee filter and coffee grounds.

How would you feel about seeing this sludgy stuff in your drink?

The filter strained out all the coffee grounds. When you stop to make good, God-pleasing choices, you stop some nasty consequences from coming into your life.

Bring out the clean, unused paper coffee filter.

Let's use this coffee filter as a reminder that disciples make choices that honor and obey Jesus.

Parent,

- How does your child see you relying on God in the face of big decisions?
- Have you humbly admitted to making a poor choice?
- How can God use one of your poor choices to bring about glory for his kingdom?
- Think about a poor choice your child has made recently. What prompted your child's misbehavior? How can knowing, loving, and following Jesus help your child make a better choice?

Choices, choices, choices

Objective: To consider how obeying Jesus filters out some nasty consequences from our lives.

Of the three below, *choose* the one that best suits your kids/family:

- 1.** Look up several verse with your child about wisdom, such as Proverbs 3:5. Let your child write a few verses on the coffee filter. Hang it somewhere in their room, use it as a bookmark, or put it on the fridge as a reminder.
- 2.** Gather leaves, grass, or pebbles and dro them into a glass of water. As you add items to the water, encourage your child to talk about some of the choices he or she might be facing in the coming week, month, or year. Hold the filter over an empty glass and let your child pour the dirty water over the coffee filter.
- 3.** Let your child drip dots of colored water onto the coffee filter. As the color spreads, blending with the other colors, talk about how our choices influence those around us. Discuss specific family members or friends who are affected by the decisions your child makes each day.