

Choose Wisely

By RLD Editorial Team

for use as
STEP 1

**Lesson 8****Focus:**

Our choices always have consequences.

Lesson 8**Bible Basis:**

Joshua 7:1-5,
10-12, 19-21, 25,
8:1-4, 7

Lesson 8**Memory Verse:**

Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.
—Psalm 51:1

Students will do a movie-related activity and explore how changing one choice can have a huge impact on consequences.

Materials:

- Whiteboard and marker (or screenshared document)
- Optional: Breakout room feature of video chat software (if meeting online)

Greet your students as they enter. Discuss favorite childhood movies while everyone is getting settled. Write down as many as you can on the whiteboard or screenshared document.

Let's play a little game called Change That Movie. You'll be divided into groups. You'll have a few minutes to look over the list of movies we made, pick one, and change ONE decision a character made. Your change should affect the outcome of the whole movie.

For example, if you choose the movie *Moana*, you wouldn't choose to change her animal companion to something other than the chicken, Hei Hei. This wouldn't change much about the story. However, you might choose to make Moana's parents have an open conversation with her about why they don't leave the island. Then, Moana's family and village could work together to return the heart to Te Fiti. This kind of change would make the story's outcome significantly different. Once you've decided how to change the plot, figure out a way to act out the new movie for the rest of the class in a short skit.

Divide the class into groups of 2–5 depending on your class size. (If your class is meeting online, you can use the breakout room feature of your video chat software.) Give them 5–10 minutes to change their movie. If they need help with ideas, you could ask questions like “What gets the action going in this movie? Could you change that?” or “Where does the problem really begin?” Bring the class back together and have each group perform their changed movie skit.

Just like the characters in these movies, our choices have consequences. Sometimes the consequences are good, sometimes they're bad. Sometimes they're major, sometimes they're minor, but there are always consequences for our choices. Today we're going to look at someone who had to face the consequences of a choice he made in defiance of God. Spoiler alert: They were major consequences.

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your teacher's guide; your Step 4 appears below.)

Choose Wisely

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STEP 4 

Lesson 8**Focus:**

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Materials:

- “Choices Graffiti” poster from Step 3 (if completed)
- Whiteboard and marker (or screenshared document)
- Optional: Breakout room feature of video chat software (if meeting online)

Begin by having the class read through the choices that were written on the Choices Graffiti poster completed in Step 3 and then adding any more choices they can think of to the whiteboard. If your class did not make a Choices Graffiti poster, ask them to call out choices that middle schoolers face regularly. Record their responses on the whiteboard (or screenshared document) as they call them out.

Let’s focus in on our relational choices. The truth is, your generation has more choices to make in this department than any other generation has had to deal with. Why? Social media. If you aren’t part of social media yet, you probably will be soon. You don’t just see your friends at school and have to make choices about how to treat them there, you have to make digital choices once you are home: who will you communicate with, how much will you say, and what will you tell them?

If your students are further removed from social media—either by choice, their parents won’t let them, or for another reason—remind them that these principles hold true in person just as much as online.

Our online and in-person choices have big consequences. I’m sure you’ve all heard news stories of cyberbullying leading to a student’s decline in mental health or even suicide.

➤ **How do you think God wants us to choose to act in our relationships?** (God would want us to treat others kindly, etc.)

Divide the class into pairs and ask them to come up with one specific choice they can make this week in their relationships that would be pleasing to God. (If your class is meeting online, you can use the breakout room feature of your video chat software or have a discussion as an entire class.) Some examples might be: “I choose to text one friend every day this week and offer them a compliment.” Or “I choose to sit with the new kid at lunch, even if my friends think I’m

weird.” Or “I choose to only comment positive things online this week.” Ask the partners to hold each other accountable to their choice for the week; they should exchange contact information so they can stay in touch. Bring the group back together and ask for volunteers to share what they’ve chosen to do.

Ask a volunteer to read the memory verse one more time. Remind the students that God offers us forgiveness and a fresh start every time we mess up and make a poor choice.

End in prayer, asking God to help us make choices that are pleasing to Him.

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