

Developing Skills for Youthful Leaders

Module 6 Making a Decision

MAKING A DECISION

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TEACHING INSTRUCTIONS

PREPARING TO TEACH

1. Prepare for teaching this lesson by reading and familiarizing yourself with the objectives, materials, handouts and exercises.
2. Begin your preparation several days in advance so that you will be able to secure whatever additional resources you need to make the lesson a "local" learning experience.
3. Plan your learning environment with care so that the surroundings contribute to the achievement of the objectives.
4. Begin on time and end on time. Schedule a break at about midpoint of the lesson.
5. With all lessons after the first, ask participants what they did as a result of last week's lesson. Record these!
6. Introduce each lesson with an overview of how it fits with overall leadership development program for youth.
7. End each lesson with a summary and restatement of objectives. Tell what you expect participants to do with the lesson after they leave.
8. Heighten their anticipation for the next lesson without sharing too much.
9. Each lesson is designed for approximately two hours. Use your judgement on shortening or expanding various parts according to the needs of your participants.
10. The two hour lesson is divided into sections that are described in the "Teaching Guide." Each section starts with a title, description of the activity, purpose, time needed to complete it, materials needed, and directions for students or teacher. Use the notes portion of each section to record suggestions for the next time the lesson is used.

11. Each lesson contains a combination of brief lectures and student activities designed for the objectives of each lesson. The lectures are short and the student activities are designed for students to experience the point or topic of the lecture. Both the lectures and the student activities may be modified as appropriate for a specific student group or topic.
12. Student handouts are included for selected sections of each lesson. When these are included, duplications for each student should be prepared prior to the class. Masters for overhead transparencies or powerpoint are also included for selected sections.
13. After each lesson, students are asked to share the experiences they have had with their parents. A letter to the parents or a parent teen exercise is included with each lesson. Prepare the appropriate number of copies in advance and tell students this is part of the leadership experience. Solicit feedback from parents and record this in the notes for each lesson.
14. "Homework" as an after class assignment to enable students to use the topics in a situation outside the classroom is included in each lesson. Assign this at the end of the class and ask for reports, verbal or written, of the "homework" assignment prior to beginning a new lesson.
15. These materials, lectures, activities, and handouts come from many sources and care is taken to document the original source when it is known. If the original source or author is not known, a secondary source is given.

OBJECTIVES

1. To learn the importance of decision making in everyday life.
2. To learn a process for making decisions.
3. To use the decision making process.

LESSON OUTLINE

Section and Topic	Page	Time
1. Decision Making Lecture Objectives	8	10 mins.
2. When I Make Decisions Student Activity Discussion	9	10 mins.
3. Values and Decision Making Lecture	10	5 mins.
4. Priorities Student Activity Discussion	11	10 mins.
5. To Decide or Hang Loose Reading Student Activity Discussion	12	20 mins.
BREAK		5 mins.
6. Recognizing Decision Patterns Student Activity	14	10 mins.
7. The Decision Making Process Lecture Student Activities	15	45 mins.
8. Summary and Conclusion Homework Letter to Parents	16	5 mins.

TEACHING GUIDE

Section 2.

Title: When I make Decisions

Description: Student exercise

Purpose: To demonstrate to each student that they make decisions every day and they can learn how they make these daily decisions.

Time: about 15 minutes

Materials needed: One copy of Handout #1, "When I make Decisions"

Directions: Hand out questionnaire to each student. Ask each student to fill it out. Use the comments at the bottom of the questionnaire to guide a short class discussion.

Notes:

Section 5:

Title:	To Decide or Hang Loose
Description:	Student activity
Purpose:	To help recognize the need for decisions, and that some decisions are more important or critical than others.
Time:	About 20 minutes
Materials needed:	Handouts 3 and 4, Worksheet and Story for To Decide or Hang Loose

Directions: Hand out one copy of worksheet to each student. Read the story, To Decide or Hang Loose aloud or have different students read successive paragraphs.

Ask the group to listen to the story and mark all the decisions on the "Score card" with A if they think the decision would be made almost automatically without too much thought. Put C on the decisions that they felt were most critical. After the story, have them choose the five most critical decisions.

Discussion: On a chalkboard or flipchart, rank each decision according to the number of members that marked it critical. Then ask: Why is one decision more important than another? In the most critical cases, why was a decision important? What would have happened if no decision were made? (Did a decision need to be made?) Why are some decisions automatic? What are the real dilemmas (or problems) in the critical decisions? Are they the first things that came to mind? What is/could be/should be happening?

Some sample questions and possible answers.

Were any of these decisions more important than others?

Whether to study or not; whether to eat my lunch.

Why were these two more important than the others?

Because if I don't study I won't get a good grade. That will affect my getting into college. It might also hurt my parents who want me to do well in school.

Section 6.

Title:	Recognizing Decision Patterns You Have Recently Used
Description:	Student Activity
Purpose:	To gain self understanding about how one makes a decision.
Time:	About 10 minutes
Materials needed:	pencils and paper

Directions: Tell students that this will be an activity to help them tune into at least one personal decision making technique they have used in the past.

Have students think of an important decision they have made recently. Use these questions to help them remember the process they used.

1. What event triggered the moment when you made your decision?
2. What are some things you thought about before making your decision?
3. Was your decision based more on logic or on feelings and intuition?

Point out that everyone has a personal decision making process. Some are logical and some are reactionary. The best decision making incorporates both logical data and feelings. Use overhead B to show the process.

Notes:

Section 7.

Title:	The Decision Making Process
Description:	Lecture and student activity
Purpose:	To identify the actual steps in a decision making process and the importance of each step.
Time:	About 45 minutes
Materials needed:	Overhead C, Handouts 5,6,7 and Lecture "The Decision Making Process"

Directions: Tell students that after identifying some of our personal values and priorities and the importance of making decisions it is now time to take an in-depth look at the steps involved in the actual process.

Pass out handout 5. Review each step using the lecture as a guide and example. Handout 6 and 7 as noted in the lecture.

Notes:

Section 8.

Title: Summary and conclusion of the lesson

Description: Homework, letter to parents, handouts for reading

Purpose: To end lesson

Time: About 5 minutes

Materials: Overhead D and one copy of each of the 4 activities in the home- work section for each student; Handout #8.

Directions: Review steps on overhead D; Give homework assignment of 3 of the 4 activities; letter to parents and student handout #8 for reading.

Notes: _____

LECTURE MATERIALS

DECISION MAKING

Every day you make decision, some little ones and a few big ones. A lot of these decisions are made without much thought. For example, when you want a sandwich, you have to decide if it will be jelly, peanut butter, ham, or whatever. The choice you make probably won't make much difference in your life or to anyone else.

Sometimes you make much more important decisions. You may decide to save to buy a bike. Then you look at the different kinds of bikes to see which one you like and are willing to save for. These decisions require much more thought. You look at a situation, decide things you might do, then decide what you will do.

DECISION MAKING AND VALUES

Any discussion of decision making must first be prefaced with an awareness of one's values and priorities. Decision making is based on values, goals, needs and priorities.

All of us are influenced daily by our values. We are aware of some values, but others have been learned at such an early age that we do not recognize we are behaving in accord with them. In working with others, it is important to be aware of their values and our own. It is the first step toward making a decision that will reflect well on ourselves and also be right for the other person.

Values are abstract concepts of worth or what we think is good. They guide the way we act and feel about certain things, situations, and people. Tolerance for the value systems of others is an important attitude in human relationships. It increases understanding and makes working relationships easier.

A value is not in itself either good or bad. Values can and do change. This is easy to see when we consider how the standards for male and female behavior have changed over time. When we travel to other areas, we can see that other people look at the world differently, interpret what they see in other ways, and have feelings about situations that are different from ours.

DECISION MAKING PROCESS

STEP #1 IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM

This first step is important to critically analyze the real issue at hand. Many times decisions become confusing because we neglect to complete this first important step -- what is the real issue or concern? For example, let's use Handout 5.

At this point, discuss Handout 5.

DISCUSSION Discuss this situation with the group participants. Have participants identify the problem.

SITUATION Sue has been trying to make a decision about her post-high school education. She has been accepted in the engineering program at Johnson College, a school six hours from her home. Sue has never been away from home. She has visited Johnson and is impressed with the program. She has not confirmed her acceptance into the program. Sue is concerned that the school is six hours away.

ANSWER What should Sue do about enrolling in the engineering program at Johnson College next fall?

STEP #2 BRAINSTORM FOR POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

This step in the decision making processing allows for all possible alternatives to be considered. Even though some options may seem foolish, they may generate workable ideas. Remember in brainstorming there are no right and wrong answers.

ACTIVITY Brainstorm solutions to Sue's problem. Put all solutions on chalkboard or flipchart. Remember in brainstorming there are no right and wrong answers.

TIME 10 minutes

INTRODUCTION Tell participants: Let's now move to an activity for a moment.

LESSON One of the most important skills in decision making is the ability to think of many ways to solve a problem. The more possibilities a person can find, the better the chance of a good decision. It is very rare that the first solution a person thinks of is the best solution.

The mind has a tendency to put up artificial barriers or limits which can which it difficult to see new possibilities. A fun example of this is RENEWING YOUR VIEWING.

Put up the nine dots from RENEWING YOUR VIEWING. Tell the participants to draw 4 straight lines without lifting their pencil from the paper. The lines must pass through each dot once. Allow them a few minutes. Show the solution and discuss how the solution went "outside" the artificial barrier the mind put up (the edge of the row of dots as a limit).

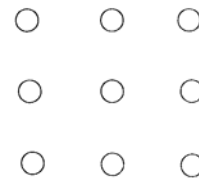
There are several good ways to open the limits our minds set. One is to brainstorm for possible solutions, thinking of all kinds of solutions. Even crazy "far-out" ideas can trigger a new possibility.

SOLUTION

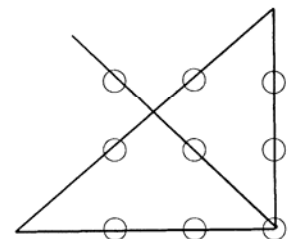
DISCUSSION

- Where do you get your preconceived ideas?
- What barriers stopped you from seeing the problem?
- How do they get in the way of solving problems?
- What is a good way around this?

DOT PUZZLE



SOLUTION



SUMMARY

Ask participants: What did you learn from this activity?

Emphasize that even some far-out ideas can lead to good solutions, so keep an open mind.

The Decision Making Process in Use!

STEP #3 EVALUATE THE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF EACH SOLUTION

ACTIVITY The following exercise will help participants identify when an alternative is acceptable or unacceptable.

TIME 15 minutes

INTRODUCTION Tell participants: In this step serious consideration must be given to each identified solution. The consequences for the decision maker, other persons and society as a whole must be considered.

Evaluating the consequences of each solution aids in the next step of selecting the solution.

LESSON Pass out worksheet Acceptable or Unacceptable. Have participants work in small groups to complete this exercise.

Work through the situations and ask discussion questions. Ask: What makes an alternative unacceptable to you? Do all your friends feel the same way? Why would an alternative be unacceptable to one person and acceptable to another?

STEP #4 SELECT THE SOLUTION

ACTIVITY This step involves actually making the decision and making a plan of action. You have identified the problem, sought solutions and studied each solution. Now is the time you must decide which plan of action to follow. At this point, it is often times important to justify your decision with adequate and reliable reasons from Step 3.

STEP #5

TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE DECISION

ACTIVITY

This step allows the opportunity to evaluate the decision and use these findings in making future decisions.

In reflecting and evaluating your decision, some questions you may want to ask yourself are listed in Handout 7.

Pass out Taking Responsibility for Your Actions

OVERHEAD TRANSPARENCY MASTERS

OBJECTIVES

- To learn the importance of decision making in everyday life.**
- To learn a process for making decisions.**
- To use the decision making process.**

THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS

- 1. Recognize a decision needs to be made**
- 2. Gather information**
- 3. Identify alternatives**
- 4. Examine potential alternative**
- 5. Consider personal values and goals**
- 6. Make the decision**
- 7. Evaluate the outcome**

Steps in the Decision Making Process

STEP #1	Identify the program
STEP #2	Brainstorm for all possible solutions
STEP #3	Evaluate the positive and negative consequences of each solution
STEP #4	Select the solution
STEP #5	Take the responsibility for the decision-evaluate

Overhead C

SUMMARY

Review the important points of each lesson.

Lesson #1	Values and priorities are individually different but uniformly important to recognize.
Lesson #2	Decisions are made cautiously by us all, therefore, the information is important to all.
Lesson #3	We need to recognize past patterns to help us seek change and improvement in decision making skills.
Lesson #4	The decision making process is flexible, each of the five steps is very essential.
Lesson #5	Practice using the process to understand it better.

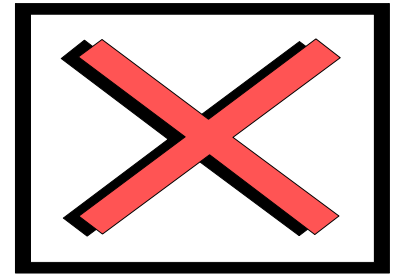
Overhead D

STUDENT HANDOUTS

HANDOUT #1

Activity: **When I Make Decisions**
Leadership skill: Making Decisions
What to do: Fill out this form.

Place an "X" in the space that shows the way you make decisions.



	I think it through carefully	I give it some thought.	I don't stop to think.
1. Spending money on a bike	_____	_____	_____
2. Making friends	_____	_____	_____
3. Choosing hobbies	_____	_____	_____
4. Buying clothes	_____	_____	_____
5. Getting along with my family	_____	_____	_____
6. Joining clubs, teams, or activities	_____	_____	_____
7. What to eat for lunch	_____	_____	_____

Looking back:

Think about your answers. How do you make decisions? Discuss your answers with your Friend. Most of the time are you a thoughtful decision maker? What other decisions do you make each day? Which are important to your Friend? Unimportant? Which decisions are important to you? Unimportant to you?

HANDOUT #2

PRIORITIES

Purpose

Working individually, rank a set of needs. By comparing your existing priorities with your ideal, you can become more aware and may want to use your time more in accord with your true needs.

Steps

1. Think about the 10 needs below and how important they are to people.
2. Rank them (1 to 10) in the order of importance.

_____	Family	_____	Recreation
_____	Friends	_____	Alone time
_____	Exercise	_____	Time for what I love to do
_____	Nutrition	_____	Variety of activities
_____	Sleep	_____	Brave question, brave answers

DISCUSSION:

Share with the group how you ranked your needs in the two lists and explore how you can accomplish your ideal.

Reference:

Adapted from S. Simon, L. Howe, H. Kirschenbaum, Values Clarification, Hart Publishing Co., Inc., New York, 1972.

HANDOUT #3

THE STORY: TO DECIDE OR HANG LOOSE



The alarm goes off, bringing Mike out of dreams to the reality of another school day in eighth grade. Ugh--the day of the math test, course registration day, and his speech in English class. "If I didn't brush my teeth or wash my face, I would have two more minutes in bed," Mike thought. But then he changed his mind, thinking about what he would be doing that day. "This one won't make it with the kids in my class; this one won't please my English teacher who is judging my speech; this one won't pass my mother in the kitchen; but then this one might please them all." So it went, as he brushed his hair on the way to the kitchen.

If he didn't take time to eat anything, he would have some extra time to look over his math before his test. But he knew he never thought very well when his stomach was growling, so he grabbed some toast and orange juice before leaving for school.

First period he had his math test. This test would make the difference between a C or a B for this quarter, but he hadn't thought

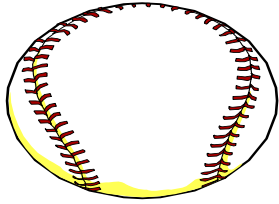


about that too much when he had time to study. Some of the questions were fairly easy. Some, he found, were tricky. Pete, the "brain" of the class, was sitting across the aisle from him and his paper was exposed. Mike could see Pete's answer to that fourth problem, but looked away and continued working on it himself. Oh well...he'll get the grade he deserved.

During his free period he decided to go to the counselor, instead of meeting with his friends. He had to make up his mind whether he would take shop next year or French. He had to decide by fifth period when he would be handing in his course registration sheet. The shop he wanted wouldn't be offered in high school, but French I would be harder if he waited to take it in the tenth grade. The counselor told him that the decision was up to him. Ya, gee... always up to me! He already had a heavy academic load for next year, so he thought he would take the shop course.

Thinking that most of his decisions for the day were over, he went to English class, getting into the mood for his speech on drugs and teenagers. He had worked hard on it and had practiced on every member of his family. Then Miss Carroll announced that there was only time for three of the four speeches. She asked who would rather wait until tomorrow. If Mike did, he would have still more time to practice, but if he didn't he would worry about it that night. He told Miss Carroll he would

did, he would have still more time to practice, but if he didn't he would worry about it that night. He told Miss Carroll he would like to give it that day.



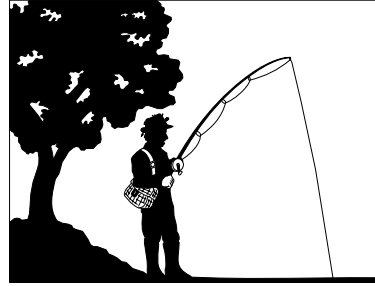
At noon, some of his buddies wanted him to go to the park with them during lunch. Some others

want him to play on the softball team. He wanted to do both, but wanted to play ball more. He hoped he hadn't made his other friends mad.

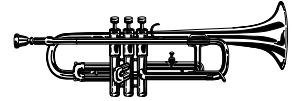
When school was out he knew he had a science quiz the next day, a social studies report due in two days, and an invitation to play tennis with Bob--a great player--after school. He had promised his mother he would clean the garage and practice his trumpet today. So what was he going to do? Which was more important?



After dinner, he had a phone call from his friend, Frank, asking him to go to the baseball game Saturday. He had already told his Dad he would go fishing at the cabin. His Dad didn't have many weekend's free, but he



wasn't always asked to the baseball game either. He told Frank he'd let him know.



Two hours left before bed. His favorite TV program was on, and he had that quiz tomorrow. Could he get by in science without studying for the quiz? What would that do to his grade?



At 11 p.m. he fell into bed exhausted from all the things he had to decide during the day. He thought of those waiting for him tomorrow. Life was just one decision after another.

HANDOUT #4

TO DECIDE OR HANG LOOSE

1 To get out of bed	2 To brush his teeth and wash his face	3 What shirt to wear	4 Whether to eat anything for breakfast	5 To go to class, or school, that day
6 To cheat on his math test	7 How to spend his free period	8 To take shop or French next year	9 To back out of giving his speech in English	10 To go to the park or play ball during lunch
11 To play tennis after school, or clean the garage and practice the trumpet	12 To go to the baseball game with Frank or fishing with his father	13 To watch the TV program or study for his science test	14 To watch the TV program and stay up longer studying	15 To go to bed

1. Mark the decisions that are almost automatic "A."
2. Mark the 5 most important (critical) decisions "C."

Were there any decisions made in the story that aren't on the score card?
 What are they? _____

What are the 5 most important decisions?

Decision	Reason

Rank the decision with your friends and come up with a definition of why a decision is important to a person.

Taken from "Dare To Be You," see reference page.

HANDOUT #5

THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS

STEP #1 IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM

Notes:

STEP #2 BRAINSTORM FOR ALL POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Notes:

STEP #3 EVALUATE THE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF EACH SOLUTION

Notes:

STEP #4 SELECT THE SOLUTION

Notes:

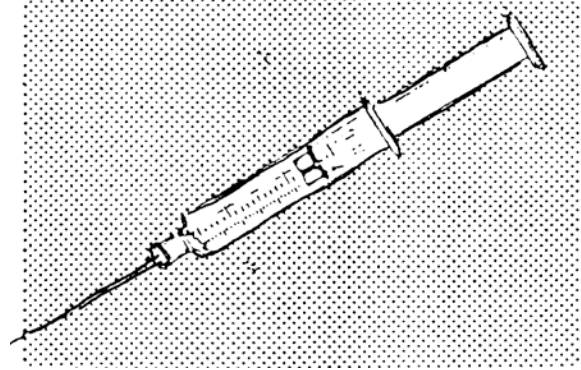
STEP #5 TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE DECISION-EVALUATE

Notes:

HANDOUT #6

ACCEPTABLE OR UNACCEPTABLE

When is an alternative unacceptable? What is acceptable or unacceptable to a person is usually determined by personal values. In the situation below, see if you can identify acceptable alternatives. Why are they either acceptable or unacceptable? (Some examples of alternatives are given. Can you think of others?)



Situation: You have a good friend who confesses to you that he is hooked on drugs.

Your values: Loyalty. (Add your own values.)

Objective: You want to help him get "unhooked" and you know that he has not felt free to talk to anyone else.

Unacceptable alternatives

1. Turn friend in to police.
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Why are these unacceptable?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Acceptable alternatives

1. Get advice from drug counselor on how to help your friend.
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Why are these different from the acceptable?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

HANDOUT #7

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE DECISION

YES

NO

1. Is this solution a good one?

2. Do I have facts to support my decision?

3. Are my sources of information reliable? Think why.

4. Do I have enough relevant information to justify my decision?

5. Will the consequences of my solution or action be for the well-being of myself and others?

a. What if everyone acted this way?

b. If I were the people around me, how would I feel about this solution?

c. Would I do this same thing in a new or another situation? Why or why not?

HANDOUT #8

DECISION MAKING PROCESS

STEP #1 IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM

This first step is important to critically analyze the real issue at hand. Many times decisions become confusing because we neglect to complete this first important issue - What is the real issue or concern? For example, let's use Handout 3.

STEP #2 BRAINSTORM FOR POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

This step in the decision making processing allows for all possible alternative to be considered. Even though some options may seem foolish, they may generate workable ideas. Remember in brainstorming there are no right and wrong answers.

One of the most important skills in decision making is the ability to think of many ways to solve a problem. The more possibilities a person can find, the better the chance of a good decision. If an ideal solution were easily apparent, there would be no difficulty making the decision. It is very rare that the first solution a person thinks of is the best solution.

STEP #3 EVALUATE THE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF EACH SOLUTION

In this step serious consideration must be given to each identified solution. The consequences for the decision maker, other persons and society as a whole must be considered.

Evaluating the consequences of each solution aids in the next step of selecting the solution.

Handout #8 (continued)

STEP #4 SELECT THE SOLUTION

This step involves actually making the decision and making a plan of action. You have identified the problem, sought solutions and studied each solution. Now is the time you must decide which plan of action to follow. At this point, it is often times important to justify your decision with adequate and reliable reasons from Step 3.

STEP #5 TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE DECISION

This step allows the opportunity to evaluate the decision and use these findings in making future decisions.

In reflecting and evaluating your decision, some questions you may want to ask yourself are listed in Handout 7, Taking Responsibility for the Decision.

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS

HOMEWORK

1. Complete the "Think Ahead Exercise" and "Careers" exercise. Use the decision making process you learned in this lesson.
2. Use "Student-Parent Activity" with your parents. Fill it out and bring it to class.
3. Use the list of situations in "Decisions, Decisions" and the steps in the decision making process to come to a decision.

Activity 1

THINK AHEAD

Read the requests listed below. Think about how the things you do today can help you in the future.

1. Write the name of the job you think you might like to do someday.

2. List some interests you would need to do the job. _____

3. Will this job be necessary to society 5 years from now? _____
4. List the school subjects that will help you to be successful in the job you selected. _____

5. List the special training or special education that will be required in the job you have selected. _____

6. List five jobs that are related to the job you selected, jobs that are in the same field of interest. _____

7. Use this space to rank order the jobs you listed in statement number 6. Rank them according to your own interests. Number 1 would be the most interesting and number 5 the least interesting.

1. _____	4. _____
2. _____	5. _____
3. _____	

Activity 2

IMPORTANT CAREERS...INTERESTING CAREERS...MONEY MAKING CAREERS

Read the list of jobs below. Think about the jobs in terms of your own interests, your own feelings; about importance of money. Then rank order the jobs according to the instructions below.

JOBS: Teacher, Plumber, Doctor, Firefighter, Police Officer, Mechanic, Salesperson, Pharmacist, Pilot, Cook, Artist, Entertainer

A. Write the list of jobs in order of **IMPORTANTANCE** to you. Consider number 1 as very important and number 12 as least important.

1. _____	5. _____	9. _____
2. _____	6. _____	10. _____
3. _____	7. _____	11. _____
4. _____	8. _____	12. _____

B. Write the list of jobs in order of **INTEREST** to you. Make the most interesting number 1 and the least interesting number 12.

1. _____	5. _____	9. _____
2. _____	6. _____	10. _____
3. _____	7. _____	11. _____
4. _____	8. _____	12. _____

C. Write the same list of jobs in terms of **MAKING MONEY**. Number 1 would make the most money in your opinion, and number 12 would make the least money.

1. _____	5. _____	9. _____
2. _____	6. _____	10. _____
3. _____	7. _____	11. _____
4. _____	8. _____	12. _____

Activity 2 (Continued)

Answer these questions:

1. Are the jobs you like also the ones you think are important?

2. Are the jobs you think are important also jobs that have higher salaries?

3. Are there jobs that are equally important, interesting, and high paying?

Activity 3

STUDENT-PARENT ACTIVITY FOR DECISION-MAKING AND PROBLEM-SOLVING

Purpose: To practice the process of decision-making and problem-solving.

Use the chart below to work through together a family decision that needs action within the next week.

STATE THE DECISION TO BE MADE

ALTERNATIVE	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES	PROBABLE OUTCOMES
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

Reference:

Bingham, M., Edmondson, J., and Stryker, S. Choices: A Teen Woman's Journal for Self-Awareness and Personal Planning. Santa Barbara: Advocacy Press, 1984.

Activity 4

DECISIONS, DECISIONS

1. Jane's parents want her to go to summer school to improve her algebra grade. Jane's boss at the store wants her to work there this summer.
2. You are going with a boy or girl that your parents can't stand. They will not like it if you keep him or her as a friend.
3. Your friends are urging you to join them in smoking pot. They kid you constantly. You don't really want to join them, but you do want their friendship.
4. You have agreed to spend the night with a classmate on Friday. Thursday night another classmate invites you to spend the weekend at his farm. You really want to go to the farm, but you don't want to hurt your other friend's feelings either.
5. You know that your best friend is "cheating" on his/her project for the Science fair. You feel this is unfair, but you don't want to lose his/her friendship.
6. Friday night is the big game with your school's rival. It is also your cousin's wedding. You want to go to both.
7. You and your boy/girlfriend have been dating for about six months. He/she is pushing for a more serious relationship. As a matter of fact, you would like to date other people. The opportunity arises when someone else invites you to a Christmas party in another town.



LETTER TO PARENTS

MAKING A DECISION

Dear Parent,

Some of the most critical life skills are related to effective decision-making and problem-solving. Many individuals reach adulthood and find themselves in difficulty when important decisions must be made. The lesson on decision-making helps your child become aware of the importance of decision-making in his/her life.

Research indicates that understanding one's values and goals is a critical first step. A value involves a harmonious and consistent relationship between a person's thoughts, feelings and actions on a particular belief or issue. Values help the individual decide what is important to them, where they stand on an issue and what they should do. A person's goals are determined by their values. A goal is a dream upon which an individual acts. Goals may be short term or long range. Short term goals, linked together one by one over a period of time, result in the accomplishment of a long range goal.

The decision-making, problem-solving process becomes logical when values and goals are clearly in focus. Logically speaking, there are four steps that are helpful in making decisions that help individuals reach their goals and/or manage their problems. The first step is to state the decision to be made or the problem to be solved. Step two involves finding and listing possible alternatives or choices. The next step is to gather information that can be helpful in evaluating the consequences of each alternative or choice. The last step involves considering the odd or probably outcomes and choosing the action which seems most appropriate/acceptable.

While this process does not guarantee success, it does produce the desired results more frequently than just "guessing" or letting someone else make the decisions. Making decisions starts in infancy and continues throughout life. Parents and other significant adults help youth develop the skills for effective decision-making and problem-solving.

Sincerely,

University of Florida Extension County Faculty

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Developing Skills for Youthful Leaders

Developing Skills for Youthful Leaders is a six part curriculum designed for volunteers who work with young people. It is designed to enable teachers to apply a systematic approach to training youth for leadership roles in schools and neighborhoods. Each module includes training materials and activities that can be used for leadership education for students and youth groups. Partial funding for the development of these modules was provided by The Junior Woman's Club of Milton, Florida.

Modules:

Module I - You Can Be A Leader

Module II - Knowing and Accepting Yourself

Module III - Being Your Best

Module IV - Communicating With Others

Module V - Listening Skills to Improve Communication

Module VI - Making a Decision

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