

Making Wise Choices



Lesson Overviews & Leader's Guide

*“Set your mind on things above, not on the things that are on the earth”
Colossians 3:2*

Summary

Have you ever faced a tough choice and didn't know what to do? In a culture that's constantly changing, how do you know what's right and what's wrong? In this series you'll discover the greatest choice of all and learn how to weigh decisions against the truth of God's Word.



Promo Statement

Join us this Sunday as we begin a new series on “Making Wise Choices” and discover how to follow Jesus when you face tough decisions and temptations knock on your door.

Note to Leaders

Even though this series is written for 5 sessions, it easily expands for more. The key is not trying to cover each part of each lesson but to focus on connecting the truths of each lesson with your students. Don't hurry. Take your time. Repeat activities, if you want to. Review what you've learned. Answer their questions. Talk about situations happening in their lives. If you don't finish a lesson one week, just review what you had covered and pick up where you left off the next week.

Making Wise Choices

Overview

Week 1 - The Greatest Choice of All

Key Verse: John 1:12

Scripture: Mark 10:17-27 & Luke 12:15-21

Week 2 - Our Foundation

Key Verse: 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Hebrews 4:12, Psalm 119:105, James 1:22

Scripture: Matthew 7:24-27

Week 3 - Putting on, Putting off

Key Verses: Galatians 6:7-8

Scripture: Colossians 3:1-17

Week 4 - The Love of the World

Key Verses – 1 John 2:15-17

Scripture – Genesis 3:1-24

Week 5 - Overcoming Temptation

Key Verse – Psalm 119:11

Scripture – Matthew 4:1-11

Making Wise Choices

Outline

Week 1 - The Greatest Choice of All

Opening Activity – “I Have”

Introduction – The Quiz

Key Verse – John 1:12

Icebreaker – The Dollar Drop

Scripture – Mark 10:17-27

Message:

- He was a good man.
- He was a rich man.
- He was a sad man.
- He had the right question.
- He had the wrong response.

Ending Scripture: Luke 12:15-21

Reflection Questions

Challenge students to read Matthew 7 before the next session.

Memory challenge: John 1:12

Making Wise Choices

Teaching Session

Week 1 - The Greatest Choice of All

Opening Activity – “I Have”

Set up chairs in a circle. Make sure that there is one less chair in the circle than people. The person who doesn't have a chair will stand in the middle of the circle and say something that they have done - i.e., “I have brushed my teeth.” “I have been to Texas.” “I have played basketball,” etc. (You might warn them not to say anything embarrassing.)

Tell your students, if they have done the same thing that the person in the middle has done, they have to leave their chair and find a new one in which to sit. They can go to any chair in the circle but they can't go to the chair on either side of them. The person without a chair each time becomes the new person in the middle who says something he has done. Be sure to warn your students to slow down before landing in a chair so they don't knock it over and to be careful not to run over anyone.

Spiritual Application - In the game, you were after a chair. In life, every one of you is chasing after something too. In the game, you were focused on getting that chair. What have you focused your life on? What are you after? As we begin today's lesson, I want you to keep this question in mind.

Introduction – The Quiz

Tell your students that you are going to ask them several questions and you want them to answer aloud “yes” or “no.”

Does God love good people? (*Yes*)

Does God love bad people? (*Yes*)

Does God love all people? (*Yes*)

Does God want everyone to go to Heaven? (*Yes*)

Is everybody going to Heaven? (*No*)

Is everybody a child of God? (*Most likely some will say “yes” and some will say “no.”*)

Ask them again...

SAY: Some of you said “yes” and some of you said “no” and some of you now just look confused.

ASK: So what should you do anytime you have a question and want to find the truth?
(Always begin with the truth of God's Word. What does the Bible say about this?)

Key Verse – John 1:12

Is everyone a child of God? The answer is NO.

Let's take a look at it... Turn in your Bibles to John 1:12.

Read and explain that everyone is a creation of God but only those who have "received" Jesus are the children of God. If a person has been saved, if they've given their lives to Jesus, then they have been adopted into God's family. If not, then even though God loves them and created them, this person is not a child of God until he trusts Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior

(This is also a good time for you to briefly share your salvation story or to have a student share their testimony of how and when they were saved.)

Icebreaker – The Dollar Drop

Call up a volunteer. Take a dollar bill and tell them that you are going to hold it at the top and that you want them to hold their fingers about an inch apart in the middle of the bill, right where the picture is. When you let go, you want them to catch it. They'll have to be fast. When they see your fingers open, they will quickly close their fingers. Simple as that.

"When I let go, I want you to catch the dollar. Now it doesn't count if you catch it around your knees or once it gets past your hand - You've got to catch it right here when I let go. So keep your eyes on my finger and as soon as I open my finger, you close yours."

Call up two volunteers. Go back and forth giving each a couple of tries.

(Secret: Physically it is impossible to catch the dollar because it falls faster than your eyes can see the fingers open and tell your brain to close your fingers. There are only two ways to consistently catch the dollar. (1) Watch the person to anticipate when it is going to fall (2) Have a finger gently touching the dollar. It's best for it not to be one of the catching fingers but a lower finger that is bent. Then, don't close your fingers based on what you see but on what you feel.)

Explain that the world is going to offer a lot of things to distract them or pull them away from following Jesus. There are a lot of choices but, just like the dollar, if they go after any of these choices, they're going to be left empty-handed because what they are looking for is not found in the world, but only in Jesus Christ.

Scripture – Mark 10:17-27

Read and explain Mark 10:17-27 with your students. Below is a sample outline of major points.

Message:

- **He was a good man.** - When Jesus lists six of the Ten Commandments (the six having to do with how we treat each other, leaving out the four that deal with us and God), He is NOT saying that good people get to go to Heaven. He is appealing specifically to this man's problem. He is a good man but that's not enough...
- **He was a rich man.** - When tell him to sell everything he has, again, Jesus is NOT saying that you must give all your possessions away to be saved. He is dealing specifically with this man's problem. He was rich and his wealth was more important to him than anything else. Jesus knew that for him to truly surrender, he would have to be willing to let go of his "stuff."
- **He went away a sad man.** - He left sad because he wasn't willing to let go of what was holding him back from coming and following Jesus? Is there anything in your life that's holding you back from coming to Jesus? Is there anything holding you back from fully following Jesus?
- **He had the right question.** - Have you asked this question: Are you saved? Do you have eternal life?
- **He had the wrong response.** - This good, rich man had the wrong response. Will you?

Story: A young lady named Amanda attended a youth rally at a church in her town. They played games, ate pizza and then an evangelist talked about how Jesus died and rose again to save us from our sins. God moved in Amanda's heart. At the end of the service, the evangelist gave an opportunity for anyone willing to know more about being saved to talk with someone. Amanda watched as several students moved to talk with the leaders but she stayed in her seat. After the service, Amanda was waiting for her ride at the entrance to the church. She was crying because she knew she wasn't saved. Then the evangelist, who had spoken that evening, came around the corner. He asked her what was wrong.

"I'm not going to Heaven," she said with tears running down her cheeks.

"Well, Amanda, that's why Jesus came. He can save you and before you walk out those doors," he said, pointing to the glass doors leading outside, "you can know for sure that you're going to Heaven if you're willing to give your life to Jesus."

"You don't understand," she whispered. "I can't give my life to Jesus. If I give my life to Jesus, my boyfriend will break up with me and there are things that I'm doing that I know are wrong and I'm not willing to let go of them."

They spoke for a few more minutes and then Amanda's ride arrived. She said goodbye and the evangelist watched as she left, with tears running down her face. She believed the truth but wasn't willing to receive it. Just like the rich, young ruler, she went away sad and grieved because there were things in her life that she wasn't willing to let go of.

Ending Scripture: Luke 12:15-21

Read Luke 12:15-21. Then have your students bow their heads and close their eyes as you ask the following reflection questions.

Reflection Questions

- Do you know for sure that you're going to Heaven?
- How do you know?
- Has there ever been a time in your life when you received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?
- Wealth held the rich man back from follow Christ, sin held Amanda back. Is there anything in your life that is holding you back from fully surrendering your life to Christ and following Him every day in every way?

Tell your students what to do or with whom they can talk if they have questions about salvation or anything you talked about in today's lesson.

Ending

- Challenge your students to read Matthew 7 before the next session.
- Challenge your students to memorize John 1:12.
- Tell your students that in two weeks you are going to teach them the secret to dropping and catching the dollar bill.

Making Wise Choices

Outline

Week 2 - Our Foundation

Opening Activity

Activity – Samurai, part 1

Illustration - Gravity

Key Verse - Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Activity – Samurai, part 2

Key Verse - Read Hebrews 4:12

Activity – Samurai, part 3

Key Verse - Read Psalm 119:105

Activity – Samurai, part 4

Making Wise Choice Question Cards - Student Activity

Scripture – Read Matthew 7:24-27

Message:

- The Wise Man
- The Foolish Man
- The Right Foundation
- The Wrong Foundation

Ending Scripture: Read James 1:22

Reflection Questions

Give out the Making Wise Choice cards

Challenge students to read Colossians 3 before the next session.

Memory challenge: James 1:22

NOTE: Last week you did the Dollar Drop illustration. This is a great way to engage students at they arrive and are hanging out. Next week you'll teach them the secret.

Making Wise Choices

Teaching Session

Week 2 - Our Foundation

(NOTE: This session could be easily expanded to two sessions. As you prepare, be mindful of how many students will be attending and how much time you have. Also, always be careful not to spend so much time on the games and activities that you don't make a strong point with them.)

Activity – Samurai, part 1

YOU WILL NEED: Two pool noodles.

You will play this game several times throughout the session. Depending on your time, you might want to only play one version at the beginning and introduce the other version later in the session. Try to give every student who wants to participate an opportunity to play at some point during this lesson.

Version #1 - Tournament-Style Samurai

Have the students sit in a large circle and then choose two volunteers to go to the middle of the circle. Give each a pool noodle. When you say “Go” the first one to touch the other person with their samurai (pool noodle) wins. The winner remains in the circle to face the next challenger. The overall winner is the person who won the most matches.

Also, be careful not to spend so much time on the game that you don't make your point with it.

Discussion

SAY: Just a little touch wins the game. You didn't have to hit hard or swing hard. It didn't have to be anything big. And just a little can make a big difference in life too. A lot of people think that they'll be okay as long as they don't do anything really big that's wrong, but even what someone might consider to be the “smallest” sin, will always have a huge impact. Sin will always separate you from God. Even as a Christian, if you allow sin, however small, a place in your life, you will have a broken relationship with God. As a Christian, you will still have a relationship, but it won't be a right one.

ASK—What do you have to do to have a right relationship with God? (Get rid of all sin.)

ASK—How does a person get rid of their sin? (They confess it to God, turn from it, and ask for His forgiveness.)

ASK—Is there any sin in your life from which you haven't turned away or confessed to God?

ASK—What is stopping you from getting rid of it today? How do you think this sin will affect your life if you don't turn away from it. (Sin will always lead to more sin. Sin will always hurt the person doing it and usually those around them too.)

Version #2 - Free-Style Samurai

Have the students make a large circle and then choose two volunteers. Give each a pool noodle. When you say "Go" give them 20 seconds to "beat the living daylights" out of the other person. This is an "extreme" game and although it may sound and look like hits with a pool noodle might hurt, the impact is usually minimal.

Read these Rules to the Students: Head shots are illegal. Be careful not to get so close to each other that you actually hit your opponent with your hand. Take off glasses, large earrings and anything else that might get caught in or damaged by a pool noodle. You don't have to participate if you don't want to. Stop when I say stop.

Have a couple of rounds and then the discussion below...

Discussion

SAY: There will be times in your life when you struggle against sin. There might be something that you know is wrong, but you want to do it. Just like the game, where you used the Samurai (pool noodle) to defend yourself, you need to be ready to have God's Word defend you.

ASK—What if you had never picked up the Samurai? Could it have defended you? (No.)

SAY: In the same way, if you haven't hidden God's Word in your heart, you won't be fully ready to fight against sin. You won't be ready to defend yourself and it'll be easy for the world to pull you into one of its lies.

Lies such as:

“It's not that bad.”

“Just once won't hurt.”

“Times have changed.”

“Right and wrong depend on your perspective.”

Illustration - Gravity

- If I throw (an object such as car keys, etc.) in the air, what happens to it? It comes back down.

- A thousand years ago, if someone threw something in the air, (throw the object up again) what happened to it?
- A thousand years from now, if someone throws something up, (throw the object up again) what will happen to it?

What goes up comes down. It's called the law of gravity. It was true a thousand years ago and it will be true a thousand years from now. In a similar way God has other laws that govern life as well. These truths don't change. Times may change but the truth never will. What was wrong long ago is still wrong today and will always be wrong. What is right was right at the beginning of time and will still be right at the end of time. Truth doesn't change and God's Word is the truth that we build our lives on.

NOTE: The following uses several key verses. You can read these to your students or have different students look up and read different ones. However, never put a student "on the spot" to read. Many students are not comfortable reading aloud and making fun of how they read or forcing them to read when they don't want to is neither healthy nor beneficial.

Key Verse - Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Explain that the Bible is God's truth and that it is God-breathed. It's a living Word that guides and instructs those who follow Christ.

[If you have time...Samurai, part 2]

Choose more volunteers and play the game some more...

Key Verse - Read Hebrews 4:12

Explain that God's Word, the Bible, is like a sword. The sword is the only weapon in history that is both offensive and defensive. In other words, you can attack with it but it can also be a shield to defend you.

[If you have time...Samurai, part 3]

Play the game again.

Key Verse - Read Psalm 119:105

Explain that God's Word is our guide. Imagine walking in the dark. Without a light you would not know where to go. The Bible is a light that shows you the path for following God.

[If you have time...Samurai, part 4]

Play a few more rounds of the game. You might even have a championship round of the previous winners.

Pass out the “Making Wise Choice” question cards.

Divide your group into 10 groups. Give each group one of the questions. Ask them to look up the Scripture verses and to creatively prepare a way to teach that card to the rest of the group. They can explain it, read the verse, give an illustration, give a true-life story, act it out, etc. (If you have a small group, you might assign two cards to each group or only distribute five cards this week and the other five at another time during this series.)

Scripture – Read Matthew 7:24-27

Message:

(Since today is full of a lot of activities, the “message” time will be shorter. Most of today’s message is being taught above by the students as they illustration the truth behind the ten “Making Wise Choice” questions.)

Read and explain Matthew 7:24-27.

- **The Wise Man** - Ask your students to identify what made him wise.
- **The Foolish Man** - Ask your students to identify what made him foolish.
- **The Right Foundation** - Ask your students to explain the right foundation.
- **The Wrong Foundation** - Ask your students to explain the wrong foundation.

Ending Scripture: Read James 1:22

Explain that God doesn’t want us to listen to the truth but to live it.

Reflection Questions

- How important is it to you that you know God’s Word?
- Do you have a habit of spending time with God?
- How well do you feel like you know the Bible?
- Have you been a wise person or a foolish person?
- Which of the 10 questions do you feel will help you the most in the future?

Ending

- Challenge your students to memorize James 1:22.
- Challenge your students to read Colossians 3 before the next session.
- Give out the “Making Wise Choice” cards. Explain that these 10 questions will help them to determine what to do when they face temptation or choices when they don’t what to do. Review the questions with them and challenge them to put the card in a place where they will see it often.
- Tell your students that next week you are going to teach them the secret to dropping and catching the dollar bill.

Making Wise Choices

Outline

Week 3 - Putting on, Putting off

Opening Activity – I Have / Shuffle

Introduction – The Quiz Re-Capped

Review

Key Verses – Galatians 6:7-8

- Tug-of-War Illustration
- Two Dog Illustration

Icebreaker – What’s Tugging (Tug-of-War)

Scripture – Colossians 3:1-11

Message:

- Colossians 3:1-6
 - What to seek...
 - What is dead...
- Colossians 3:7-11
 - What to put off...
- Colossians 3:12-17
 - What to put on...
 - Romans 13:14 - Clothed in Christ
 - 1 John 1:9 - Repent

Reflection Questions

Ending Scripture: Psalm 119:11

Give out the “Making Wise Choice” cards

Challenge students to read Genesis 3 before the next session.

Memory challenge: Galatians 6:7-8

Making Wise Choices

Teaching Session

Week 3 - Putting on, Putting off

Opening Activity – I Have / Shuffle

Play “I Have” from Week 1 again and then lead directly into the “Shuffle” game. The chairs will already be in a circle but you’ll need to add one more, to make sure that there are the same number of chairs as people. Then have everyone move the circle inward until the chairs are touching, right next to each other. Choose one person to be in the middle.

Explain that there is a chair for every person, including the person in the middle but he has to get into it. When you say “go”, everyone will begin “shuffling” by moving one chair at a time to their right. (All of this is done as they sit - This isn’t a game where they ever move across the circle.) This will make it seem that the empty chair is moving. The person in the middle will try to sit in the empty chair while no one is in it and if he succeeds, the person who should have moved into the chair will take his place in the middle.

As your students get better at the game, you can make it more difficult. Every time you say “Reverse,” the direction they are moving changes. For example, if they are moving one chair at a time to the right, everyone would immediately need to start moving to the left.

Introduction – The Quiz Re-Capped

Two weeks ago I asked you some questions and I want to see if you remember what we talked about. Tell them you want them to answer aloud “yes” or “no.”

Does God love good people? (*Yes*)

Does God love bad people? (*Yes*)

Does God love all people? (*Yes*)

Does God want everyone to go to Heaven? (*Yes*)

Is everybody going to Heaven? (*No*)

Is everybody a child of God? (*No. Everybody is a creation of God but only those who have received Jesus are the children of God.*)

Earlier in this series we learned that John 1:12 says that only those who have received Christ are the children of God and that giving your life to Christ is the best choice a person can ever make.

Review

Briefly review the previous lessons and re-cap the Dollar Drop. Use a few volunteers to illustrate it, like you did in Week 1.

Re-explain that the world is going to offer a lot of things to distract them or pull them away from following Jesus. There are a lot of choices but, just like the dollar, if they go after any of these choices, they're going to be left empty-handed because what they are looking for is not found in the world, but only in Jesus Christ.

Teach the Secret: Tell them that it is physically it is impossible to catch the dollar because it falls faster than your eyes can see the fingers open and tell your brain to close your fingers. There are only two ways to consistently catch the dollar. (1) Watch the person to anticipate when it is going to fall (2) Have a finger gently touching the dollar. It's best for it not to be one of the catching finger but a lower finger that is bent. Then, don't close your fingers based on what you see but what you feel.

Transition phrase: In the same way that I just showed you the secret to catching the dollar, now I'm going to show you the key to living for Jesus.

Key Verses

- **Tug-of-War Illustration**
 - Activity: There are several ways you can illustrate this: (1) Have a long rope. You can buy a Tug-of-War rope from a sports distributor but it is usually cheaper to get rope from a hardware store such a Lowe's or Home Depot. Use a number of students to illustrate Tug-of-War. (2) Use a short rope where two to three people can be on each side. (3) Don't use a rope at all. Call up two volunteers and have them join hands (usually placing the hand on each other's arm). You can even use the biggest guy and the smallest girl in the room. Say, "On the count of three we're going to have a Tug-of-War match. Ready, 1... 2...just kidding because if we did this the [girl's name] would toss you off the stage!"
 - Point: Which side wins in Tug-of-War? The side that's stronger. In life you're going to be tugged and pulled by temptation and desires. Do this, do that. Go this way, go that way. You're going to be pulled by the things of this world to walk away from Christ. And you're going to be pulled by the things of God to live and stand for Christ. What's going to win in your life? Which ever one is stronger.
- **Two Dog Illustration** - Let's say I have two dogs and every time these dogs get together, they fight. So I have to keep them separate. But then one day I leave town for a week and I ask my neighbor to feed my dogs but when he comes over, he only see one of them and so for a week he only feeds one of them. At the end of the week I come home and let's say those dogs get into the backyard and start fighting. Which one is going to win? The one that is stronger. The one that was

fed. In the same way, if you feed that things of the world into your life, that is what will be stronger. But if you feed the things of God into your life, when you are tempted, the things of God will be stronger. What you feed in determines what will grow.

- **Read and briefly explain Galatians 6:7-8**

Icebreaker – What’s Tugging (Tug-of-War)

If you would like an ice breaker at this point before getting into your message, have several more Tug-of-War or similar “the strongest-side wins” competitions.

Scripture – Colossians 3:1-11

Message:

Colossians 3:1-6

- **What are we supposed to seek?** - The things above.
- **What is dead?** - You are dead. When you gave your life to Christ, you died and God raised you to a new life. Your life now belongs to Him.
- **What is your life now?** - Your life now *is* Christ - not just an effort to be like him but He Himself is your life because you have been “hidden” with Christ in God. Sin now has no place in you because sin has no place in Him.
- **What should you put to death?** - Every part of you that doesn’t line up with the holiness and perfection of Christ.

Colossians 3:7-11

- **What should you put off?**
Ask your students to list sins. You can use the ones listed in Colossians 3 as well as others. Write each on a very large, plain T-shirt. Then choose a student to put the shirt on over their clothes. Have the volunteer stay on stage while you move on to the next part.

Colossians 3:12-17

- **What should you put on?**
Ask your students to list things that should characterize our lives, using the list in Colossians 3. Write each on a second, very large, plain T-shirt. Explain that God doesn’t want us to simply cover over our sins or just to tuck them away and keep them hidden. Gods wants us to remove the bad and replace it with His kind of character. Have your volunteer remove (put off) the shirt with the “bad” list and put on the shirt with the good list.

- **Read Romans 13:14** - Emphasize the idea that God hasn't called your students to simply clean-up their lives or to try their best. God has called them to "put on Christ" and to give no place to satisfy evil desires of the flesh.
- **Repent** - Explain or use a volunteer to show that if a person is going the wrong way, that he can "repent," turn from the wrong things he's been doing and change directions. The Bible says in **1 John 1:9** that if we confess our sins that God is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Reflection Questions

- Are you doing things that you know are wrong?
- Have you set your mind on things above or are you focused on things on the earth?
- Are there actions and attitudes that you need to "put off"?
- Are there actions and attitudes that you need to "put on"?
- If you are "clothed with Christ," when people look at you, what will they see? (*Christ.*) When people look at you right now, what do you they see?

Tell your students what to do or with whom they can talk if they have questions about today's lesson.

Ending Scripture: Read Psalm 119:11

Ending

- Challenge your students to read Genesis 3 before the next session.
- Challenge your students to memorize Psalm 119:11. Ask if any memorized John 1:12
- Give out the "Making Wise Choice" cards. Explain that these 10 questions will help them to determine what to do when they face temptation or choices when they don't what to do. Read the questions with them and challenge them to put the card in a place where they will see it often.

Making Wise Choices

Outline

Week 4 - The Love of the World

Icebreaker – Act-It-Out Skit: “Granny’s House”

Introduction – Review the Cards

Key Verses – 1 John 2:15-17

Icebreaker – No Tear Paper

Scripture – Genesis 3:1-24

Message:

- The Beginning of Sin - Genesis 3:1-6
 - The pride of life - “You shall be like God...” (Genesis 3:4-5).
 - The lust of the flesh - “...the tree was good for food” (Genesis 3:5).
 - The lust of the eyes - “...it was a delight to the eyes” (Genesis 3:5).
- The Shame of Sin - Genesis 3:7-8
- The Confession of Sin - Genesis 3:9-11
- The Excuses for Sin - Genesis 3:12-15
- The Results of Sin - Genesis 3:16-24
- The Covering for Sin -Genesis 3:20-24

Reflection Questions

Ending Scripture: 2 Timothy 4:10

Give out the “Making Wise Choice” cards

Challenge students to read Matthew 4 before the next session.

Memory challenge: 1 John 2:15-17

Making Wise Choices

Teaching Session

Week 4 - The Love of the World

Icebreaker – Act-It-Out Skit: “Granny’s House”

Granny’s House is a funny Act-it-Out drama that uses six volunteers. See the script at the end of this lesson.

Introduction – Review the Card

Show your students the “Making Wise Choices” card that you passed out last week and read through the questions with them. Explain that the reason you want them to have this card is because you want them to always be ready to make good choices and to overcome temptation.

Key Verses – Read 1 John 2:15-17

Have your students repeat after you.

The things that are in the world: / The lust of the eyes / The lust of the flesh / The pride of life.

These are not from God but are of the world. Through the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life, temptation comes your way. Today I want to help you understand temptation better so you can always make wise choices.

Icebreaker – No Tear Paper

This is a great icebreaker and can be ordered and watch on video at www.330resources.org/no-tear-paper.

Call up two volunteers. Give one a piece of paper with the word “World” on it. (This paper can be torn.) Give the other a piece of paper with the word “God” on it. (This is the “No Tear” paper.) *(The paper actually comes blank to allow for multiple uses.)*

When you say go, have a competition to see who can tear their paper into the most small pieces. At the end, everyone will see that the things of the world don’t last but the things of God last forever.

Scripture – Read Genesis 3:1-24

Message:

- **The Beginning of Sin** - Genesis 3:1-6
 - This is how sin first came in. When God created Adam & Eve, he gave them dominion over the earth. When they sinned, they surrendered that dominion over to the devil, which is the reason the Bible calls him the prince and ruler of the this world. But watch how they were tempted.
 - The pride of life - “You shall be like God...” (Genesis 3:4-5).
 - The lust of the flesh - “...the tree was good for food” (Genesis 3:5).
 - The lust of the eyes - “...it was a delight to the eyes” (Genesis 3:5).
- **The Shame of Sin** - Genesis 3:7-8
 - Because of the shame of their sin, Adam & Eve hid themselves from God.
- **The Confession of Sin** - Genesis 3:9-11
 - God knew where they were and what they had done but he asked, “Where are you,” because He wanted them to confess their sins in the same way that He wants us to confess our wrongdoings as well.
- **The Excuses for Sin** - Genesis 3:12-15
 - Who did Adam blame? (Eve, but also God... “the woman you gave to me with me...”)
 - Who did Eve blame? (The serpent)
- **The Results for Sin** - Genesis 3:16-24
 - What was Adam’s punishment? (That the earth would no longer naturally produce but that he would have to work by the sweat of his brow.)
 - What was Eve’s punishment? (Pain in childbirth)
 - What was the serpent’s punishment? (He was cursed)
 - What was the other punishment? (They were banished from the Garden of Eden and the Tree of Life. In other words, they could no longer walk with God. They were separated from Him and they would eventually experience a physical death.)
- **The Covering for Sin** - Genesis 3:21
 - Before sending Adam and Eve out of the Garden, God killed an animal. It was the first time that anything had ever died. This was the first time that they had seen the result of their sin - death. And God made for them a covering to remove the shame of their nakedness. In a similar way, Jesus died on the cross and He shed his blood to made a covering for our sins.

Reflection Questions

- Are you being tempted through the lust of the flesh - things you want and desire that you know are wrong?
- Are you being tempted through the lust of the eyes - things you see or look at and know displeases God?
- Are you being tempted by the pride of life - wanting to look good and living with yourself as the focus instead of God?
- Is there sin in your life?
- When and how did this sin begin?
- Are you experiencing the shame of sin yet? Do you see how it has broken your relationship with God?
- What are the results of the sin you've let into your life?
- What's holding you back from coming to Jesus and getting right with God?

Ending Scripture: Read 2 Timothy 4:10. Explain that Demus travelled with Paul and had shared the Gospel but he fell away because he cared too much for the things of this world.

Ending

- Challenge your students to read Matthew 4 before the next session.
- Challenge your students to memorize 1 John 2:15-17. Ask if any memorized John 1:12 or Psalm 119:11.
- Give out the "Making Wise Choice" cards to anyone who missed last week. Explain that these 10 questions will help them to determine what to do when they face temptation or choices when they don't what's right. Challenge them to put the card in a place where they will see it often.

Granny's House - An Act-it-Out Drama

Choose six volunteers who trust you explicitly but who have no idea what you're about to do.

Characters:

Granny (Girl), Purse (Light weight person, usually a girl), Dog (usually a guy), Rocking Chair, Cat, Table (Older student - not someone small)

As the narrator tells the story, the characters act it out. Pause between each sentence to make give the characters time to perform their task.

Narrator:

Welcome to Granny's House. As you look around you see a table located in the middle of the room. *(The table get on his hands and knees.)* A rocking chair sits next to it. *(Rocking chair sits down with his knees up.)* A cat lies next to the rocking chair. The cat is quietly snoring.

Granny enters the room carrying her purse. She puts the purse on the table and sits in the rocking chair. *(She doesn't have to sit on him but can sit on or at his feet.)* She begins rocking in it. She rocks larger and larger and squishes the cat's tail. The cat screams and runs under the table and to the door.

A dog outside sees the cat and barks. The cat runs and jumps on the table, knocking the purse off. The dog follows and sits on the table. The cat jumps off and runs behind the rocking chair. The dog follows while Granny stands and screams, "EEEEK!"

The cat jumps in the chair and onto the purse. The dog jumps in the chair and Granny sits on him. The dog bites Granny. She stands and screams, "EEEEK!" while the cat hides under the table.

The dog runs under the table. Granny tries to swat the dog, but misses and hits the table. The cat runs and lies next to the rocking chair while the table falls on the dog! The dog screams, "Yelp!"

The dog jumps on the cat. Granny hits the dog. The dogs runs out the door. Granny sits in the rocking chair and they live happily ever after!

Spiritual Application:

The volunteers did what the leader told them to do. If a person is going to call Jesus their Lord, they too, should do what He tells them to do. Anyone can come to church and say all the right words, but how a person lives at home and at school, the choices they make, shows to what extent Jesus really has full control of their lives.

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Making Wise Choices

Outline

Week 5 - Overcoming Temptation

Opening Activity – What’s Knocking

Review

Key Verse – Psalm 119:11

Icebreaker – “Welcome to a New Land” - How much do you know?

Scripture – Matthew 4:1-11

Message:

- The Lust of the Flesh - Matthew 4:3-4
- The Pride of Life - Matthew 4:5-7
- The Lust of the Eyes - Matthew 4:8-10
- What Jesus Did - Matthew 4:4, 7, 10
- What the Devil Did - Matthew 4:11

Ending Scripture: James 4:7

Reflection Questions

Give out the Making Wise Choice cards

Memory challenge: James 4:7

Making Wise Choices

Teaching Session

Week 5 - Overcoming Temptation

Opening Activity – What’s Knocking

Introduce today’s lesson with a number of Knock, Knock Jokes. Some of these can be found on the last page of this lesson.

SAY: Today I want you to know what to do when sin knocks on your door.

Review

Last week our key verse was about three ways that temptations comes to you and we saw how these three are found in the story where Adam and Eve were tempted. I’m going to say part of each one and I want you to finish the phrase:

- The Lust of the _____ (Flesh)
- The Lust of the _____ (Eyes)
- The Pride of _____ (Life)

ASK: This past week did you notice temptations coming to you in any of these ways? Would anyone like to share one way they were tempted and what they did?

ASK: Did you overcome the temptation and if so, how?

Key Verse – Read Psalm 119:11

Re-read the verse and as you read have your students repeat the following words: *word, heart, sin*. Briefly explain the importance of hiding God’s Word in your heart.

Icebreaker – “Welcome to a New Land”

For the next few minutes you are no longer in America. You’re in a foreign land. (You can make up a funny name for it, if you want, by putting “land” at the end of your name.) In this land you aren’t allowed to have a Bible. (Collect everyone’s Bibles in a large box or have them bring them to the front of the stage. You might even collect them as students enter the room at the beginning of the session.)

You are the last Christians left and you have come together to write down everything you know about the Bible—every verse that you have memorized. (You might need to exclude your adult leaders or sponsors.) Who wants to start?

Let your students quote as many Bible verses as they can. Write down the reference for each and if someone knows a verse but not the reference, see if anyone can help them. Most youth groups can't list more than 20-30 verses. If anyone knows a large amount and keeps saying verses, after the 5th verse, congratulate him on saying so many but tell him that, unfortunately, he was taken into custody because the authorities discovered his Bible knowledge and put him in prison. He is no longer available to help the group.

- Ask if they are surprised by the number of verses they know as a group.
- Ask if they are surprised by the number of verses that they personally know.

If putting God's Word in our hearts is how we overcome sin, do you think we've done a good job? Think about it while we look at Jesus' example.

Scripture – Read Matthew 4:1-11

ASK - Is it wrong to be tempted? (No.)

Jesus is perfect but He was tempted. Temptation doesn't mean you did anything wrong. It simply means that you had the desire or the opportunity to do something wrong.

Message:

- **The Lust of the Flesh - Matthew 4:3-4**
 - Jesus was tempted to turn stones into bread. But what's wrong with that? Didn't he also multiply the bread to feed the 5,000? Yes, but in this, He is being tempted to use his power and authority for self gain. What did He do to overcome the temptation? He quoted Scripture.
- **The Pride of Life - Matthew 4:5-7**
 - The devil tempted Jesus to jump off the highest point of the temple and the devil even quoted Scripture although he twisted its meaning. What did Jesus do to overcome the temptation? He quoted Scripture.
- **The Lust of the Eyes - Matthew 4:8-10**
 - Jesus came to be the Savior of the world and in the temptation the devil is offering Him what He came for - the world. He showed him all the kingdoms and offered them to Him if He would only bow down and worship him. But what did Jesus do to overcome the temptation? Again, he quoted Scripture.
- **What Jesus Did - Matthew 4:4, 7, 10**
 - Jesus knew God's Word. He didn't go and look it up or do a web search for it. He already knew it. He was prepared. Are you?
- **What the Devil Did - Matthew 4:11**
 - After tempting Jesus and being overcome, the Bible says that the devil left Him alone. This same story is told in the Gospel of Luke but Luke adds another little detail. In Luke 4:13 he writes that after tempting Him, the devil left him

“for a season.” In other words, it’s not over...it’s just over for now. So don’t let down your guard. Be alert because the temptations will come back.

Ending Scripture: Read James 4:7

Many people quote this verse but they leave off the first part. You’ll hear people say, “Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” But you can’t leave off the first part. You must first “Submit to God.”

What does it mean to submit to God? (It means your whole life is surrendered to Him.)

Reflection Questions

- Are you submitted to God? Does your whole life belong to Him?
- How are you resisting the devil and the ways of the world?
- Are you happy with the amount of Scripture that you know?
- Do you feel like you would be stronger in your faith if you read your Bible more? Memorized more Scripture?
- How ready are you to face temptation?
- What else do you think God might be calling you to do to know Him and follow Him?

Ending

- Challenge your students to memorize James 4:7.
- Challenge them again to memorize John 1:12, Psalm 119:11 and 1 John 2:15-17 as well as the verse references on each of the ten “Making Wise Choice” question cards
- Give out the “Making Wise Choice” cards to anyone who missed last week. Explain that these ten questions will help them to determine what to do when they face temptation or choices when they don’t what’s right. Challenge them to put the card in a place where they will see it often.

Opening Activity – What’s Knocking KNOCK, KNOCK JOKES

Tell some “Knock, Knock” jokes. Here are some examples:

Knock, Knock / Who’s There?

Ima / Ima Who? / Ima really hungry. Can we order a pizza?

Shirley / Shirley Who? / Surely you can get up and open the door!

Dishes / Dishes Who? / Dishes the police! Open up!

Handome / Handsome Who? / Handsome of the pizza to me!

House / House Who? / House it going?

Watson / Watson Who? / Watson TV?

Colleen / Colleen Who? / Colleen up your room, please.

Gorilla / Gorilla Who? / Gorilla me a cheese sandwich, please.

Huge / Huge Who? / Huge you expect.

Yaw / Yaw Who? / Just me. Why are you so excited?

Leena / Leena Who? / Leena little closer and I’ll tell you.

General Lee / General Lee Who? / General Lee I ring the doorbell!

Boo / Boo Who? / Quit crying and I’ll tell you.

Tom Sawyer / Tom Sawyer Who? / Tom Sawyer underwear!