23. Good Choice! Bad Choice!

The Course

Key Verse: 1 Samuel 12:24 – How should I serve the Lord?
1 Samuel 12:24; Judges 2, 3:7, 8:34, 17:6; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; James 1:22; 1 John 1:9

The Goals

As a result of this lesson the children will:
  1. Know what kind of choices the children of Israel made.
  2. Feel sorry for the bad choices and grateful for the good choices they have made.
  3. That they will make wise choices in their lives.

The Equipment Room

For the following lesson you will need:
  Visuals #1-7 [As PowerPoint]

The Warm-up

Game: Good Choice/Bad Choice – Have children play this version of Red Light/Green Light to have them begin thinking about the different choices they make. Have children line up against a wall. Stand no more than fifty feet away from the children. Tell the children this game is like Red Light/Green Light, only you will be saying “good choice” for green light and “bad choice” for red light. Tell them when you say, “Good choice,” they should quickly walk towards you. When you say, “Bad choice,” they should stop moving and freeze. Remind them if you say, “Bad choice,” and they don’t stop, they must go back and start over. Turn around with your back to the children and shout “good choice.” Children will walk towards you. After a few seconds, shout “bad choice” and turn around quickly. Send anyone who didn’t stop completely back to the beginning, then play again. The game is over when the first child reaches you. Each day we have choices to make. Sometimes we choose to make bad choices. Explain to children that bad choices are like red lights. We need to stop making bad choices. On the other hand, the good choices we make are like green lights. We need to keep on going with making good choices. Our Bible lesson today is about a group of people who had choices to make, just like we do.

Scripture Memory Review Game: For this game you will need 3x5 cards with one word from the verse written on each card. [Make several sets to be played in groups of four or five children.] Place the cards in random order face down. Children may flip over one card at a time. When they see the next word in order of the verse, they may put it in order. If it is not the correct word, it must be flipped back over face down.

Opening Ceremonies

Songs: Run the Race; Make Me [See Olympian CD Tracks 1 and 4.]; O-B-E-D-I-E-N-C-E; I Love Thee, Lord Jesus With All My Heart
Bible Lesson Review: Make 20 3x5 cards with this information on them: 6 – 50 points cards; 5 – 100 points cards; 3 – 200 points cards; 1 – 300 points card; 2 – Bankruptcy cards; 2 – Lose 50 points cards; 1 – Lose 100 points card.

Shuffle the cards and lay them face down on a chair or stool in the front of the room. Divide the group into two teams. Each team must choose one player to face a player from the other team. When you ask the question, whoever raises their hand first may answer. If they don't know the answer, the question will go to their team to answer. If no one on the team knows the answer, it goes to the other team. Once the correct answer is given, that team may choose to keep 20 points for answering correctly, or pick a card for the possibility of more points. If they choose to pick a card, they forfeit the sure 20 points for whatever is on the card. The team with the most points wins.

The Coach's Corner

Let's begin our journey into the Book of Judges. Let's read Judges 2:7. During the time Joshua lived, the people had served the Lord! But trouble is ahead. Let's look at Judges 2:10-11. [Read Judges 2:10-11.] Wow, things changed. Instead of serving the Lord, the people are serving false gods. Because of their sin, God would send other nations to take them captive. After a while, the people would cry out to God for help. Then God would send a judge to help them. The people would start to obey God, but when that judge died, they would go back to their old ways. [Judges 2:18-19]

The children of Israel had a choice to make. They could choose whether or not to listen to God's Word. [Read Judges 2:20.] The Bible tells us the people did not want to hear what God had to say to them. When they stopped going to worship God, they found it easier to skip listening to God's Word through their spiritual leaders, the judges. They didn't want to hear God’s judgment against their actions. They liked it better when they could do whatever they wanted to do. God’s opinion didn’t matter to them anymore. They just wanted to do whatever they wanted to do.

[Display Visual #1 and read it aloud.] Okay, was this a good choice or a bad choice? [Allow children to respond.] You may say, “I would never make a choice like that.” But do you ever throw a temper tantrum or slam a door when you don’t get your way? Is that a good choice or a bad choice? Do you sometimes forget God by not having your quiet time each day? What kind of choices are you making?

The second choice the children of Israel had to make was to obey or disobey God. (➤1) God told them not to make agreements with the people in the land and to tear down their altars. [Read Judges 2:1-2.] Did they obey what God told them to do? They weren't disobeying God in the “big stuff,” just making small choices to disobey God. [Display Visual #2 and read it aloud.] Do you think this is a good choice or a bad choice? [. Encourage children to answer as a group.] Have you ever told a small lie? Or just partially obeyed your parents? Small choices matter to God.

[Read Judges 3:7. Display and read Visual #3.] The Israelites knew God wanted them to worship Him. They knew He wanted them to worship Him with all of their attention. But they did not always worship Him or take Him seriously. Even though they knew better, the Israelites worshiped the gods of wood, gold, and stone. Because they stopped listening to God, it was easy to put false gods above the true God. So, the Israelites had chosen to stop listening to God's Word, disobeyed God, and were worshiping other gods. Do you say that you don't have time to have your quiet time or read your Bible? Maybe you decide to play baseball and because of that you don’t have time for God. Or maybe you would rather spend time playing video games, playing with friends, or other activities instead of spending time with God.

Finally, the people forgot about God and what He wanted them to do. Each time the Israelites sinned, it led to more sin, until they did not live for God at all. [Read Judges 8:34] Did you hear that? They actually forgot God! [Display Visual # 4 and read Judges 17:6.] Everyone did what they thought was right. God saw what they were doing and called their behavior evil. (➤9b) Do we obey God’s Word and follow it? Or do we
sometimes forget about God, when we leave Olympians or church and act like we don’t even know the Lord?

It’s sad to think about all the bad choices the children of Israel made. It’s also important to remember this was a sad time for the children of Israel. There are lots of other times where the Bible tells us they made many wise choices and obeyed God, but God wants us to learn from their mistakes. God wants us to make **good and wise choices**. Let’s find out how we can do that.

[Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17. Display Visual #5.] **The Bible, God’s Word, helps us to know what is wrong and what is right.** The Bible tells us how to make wise choices. Where are some places you can study and hear God’s Word? [Allow time for children to answer.] What kind of choice is it “to study God’s Word”? (►4)

[Read James 1:22. Display Visual #6.] James 1:22 tells us that just hearing or reading God’s Word is not enough; **we must do what it tells us to do.** **Having a daily quiet time, memorizing God’s Word, and attending church** are all ways we can obey God. Is obeying God a good or a bad choice?

[Read 1 Samuel 12:24, display Visual #7 and let children respond to questions.] Why should we serve the Lord? What are some ways you can serve the Lord? What are some things that God has done for you? Let’s make a list of them. Is serving the Lord a good or bad choice?

### Running the Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mostly Unchurched Children</th>
<th>Mostly Churched Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Think about some choices you made today. [<em>Pause for children to think.</em>] <strong>What kind of choices were they?</strong> Were they choices that pleased God or were they choices that were pleasing you? Sometimes we make wrong choices because we want to please others or ourselves instead of pleasing God. (►5)</td>
<td>Think about some choices you made today. [<em>Pause for children to think.</em>] <strong>What kind of choices were they?</strong> Were they choices that pleased God or were they choices that were pleasing you? Has church become boring for you? Have you stopped having your quiet time or only do it when your mom or dad tells you to? Maybe, right now, you need to look at your life and see where you are allowing disobedience to come into your life.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I want you to think about the choices you are making. Do they please God? If not, you need to ask God to forgive you. God tells us how to do this in 1 John 1:9. [*Read 1 John 1:9.*] This means to **admit to God that our actions and attitudes are sinful and ask God’s forgiveness for that sin.** God has promised to forgive us if we have accepted Him as our Savior. If you have never accepted Jesus as your Savior, then that is the first good choice that you need to make. If you would like to know more about accepting Jesus into your life at the end of the lesson, come and talk to me, and I will show how you can have eternal life with Jesus.

What can you do about it? You need to confess your sin, get rid of it, and follow God’s instructions for your life. God tells us how to do this in 1 John 1:9. [*Read 1 John 1:9.*] This means to **admit to God that our actions and attitudes are sinful and ask God’s forgiveness for that sin.** God has promised to forgive us if we have accepted Him as our Savior.

Maybe you are having trouble pleasing God in a certain area. Then you can start making right choices by memorizing Bible verses that help you in that area so that when you are tempted to do wrong, you can say the Bible verse to help you make a good choice. If you need help finding a good verse to memorize, be sure to talk to one of the coaches; they will love to help you.

[Close in prayer.]

### Personal Training Time
1. What are some bad choices children your age might make?
2. What is one good choice you want to start making?
3. What is one thing you can do this week to help you make wise choices?

The Big O’vent

**Dodge It Relay** [See Big O’vent Mega CD, page 142.] When we play by the rules we can have fun! When we didn't follow the rules, the decision cost us to sit out of the game. The bad or wrong choices we make in life will also have consequences.

Closing Ceremonies

The choices you make will impact your life now and could impact it in the future. Make sure that you are making godly choices. In the next lesson in Judges we will see the consequences for the choices that Israel made.

Lesson Adaptation Explanations

1. Extra Action: Puppet Skit

   **Coach:** We are having a problem with this right here in our Olympians.

   **[Beeper and Pipsqueak come up]**

   **Beeper:** Pipsqueak, do you know who is having the problem disobeying the coach?

   **Pipsqueak:** Well, I have a pretty good idea!

   **Beeper:** You do, what did they do?

   **Pipsqueak:** Well, remember last week when coach told us to let the girls go first to the Big O’vent?

   **Beeper:** Yeah, I sneaked down the back stairs and beat them to the gym. That was great.

   **Pipsqueak:** Then Game Coach made us count off by two's, and you got put on the blue team.

   **Beeper:** I just traded places with Joey, so he could be he could be on the blue team with the rest of the slow kids. We creamed them ten to zero in kickball. That was great!

   **Pipsqueak:** By the way, Beeper, did I see you texting during the lesson time?

   **Beeper:** Yeah, that was fun! I had a great conversation. By the way, Pipsqueak, we kind of got off track. You told me that you have a pretty good idea who was disobeying coach

   **Pipsqueak:** Haven't you figured it out yet Beeper?

   **Beeper:** Was it Joey?
Pipsqueak: No.

Beeper: Was it you, Pipsqueak?

Pipsqueak: No, it wasn't me, but it is one of my very close friends.

Beeper: Was it John?

Pipsqueak: No, it's not John. Let me give you a hint. It is my friend who went down the back stairs at gym time, traded places at game time, was texting during the lesson, and is green.

Beeper: Why that sounds like me, Pipsqueak. I was just having fun. It really wasn't that bad.

Pipsqueak: But you didn't obey all that Coach said to do, Beeper. That is why I think the coach was talking about you. We better go and let Coach finish the rest of the lesson. We need to learn the rest of the story. Say Goodbye, Beeper.

Beeper: Goodbye, Beeper.

Pipsqueak: Goodbye.

[Puppets exit and Coach continues lesson]

➢2 Small Group: Provide each child with their own red light and green light. When you come to the place where they are to make a choice between a bad or good choice, have the children hold up the appropriate "light" as they respond to the questions. [Equipment Required: one red and one green construction paper circle taped on to an unsharpened pencil or craft stick.]

➢4 Mostly Churched Children: Discuss the value of having a large portion of your friends be believers who want to grow with you. Talk with these children about the importance of accountability and helping each other from Galatians 6:1.

➢5 Mostly Unchurched Children: Some of you don't have parents that show love to you but as long as they are not asking you to sin [such as steal, lie, or hurt others], you still need to obey them. By obeying and living for God, you can be a testimony to your parents to receive Christ. When we disobey our parents, we not only disobey God, but we display a bad testimony to our parents.

➢8 Champions Only: Allow Champions to brainstorm ideas of what is sin. Write them down on a whiteboard or overhead transparency. You may want to discuss what happens when everyone does what they think is right or when our culture says sin is okay.

➢9a Challengers Only: Provide each child with their own red light and green light. When you come to the place where they are to make a choice between a bad or good choice, have the children hold up the appropriate "light" as they respond to the questions. [Equipment Required: one red and one green construction paper circle taped on to an unsharpened pencil or craft stick.]

➢9b Challengers Only: Have children make a simple traffic light signal to take home. Have them cut out a red, yellow, and green circle from construction paper. Glue the circle on to black rectangular piece of construction paper. Tell the children to place the signal somewhere at home to remind them to make good and wise choices. [Equipment Required: red, green, and yellow construction paper circles, black rectangular piece of black construction paper, scissors, and glue]
Stop Listening To God's Word
Think It's Okay to Disobey
Worship Other gods
Forget God
Study God's Word
Obey God Always
Serve the Lord