



Bible Point ▶

God helps us make wise choices.

Bible Verse

“Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take” (Proverbs 3:6).

Growing Closer to Jesus

Children will

- discover that it’s best to make choices with God’s help,
- learn that they can rely on God, just as Gideon did,
- understand that God already knows the good choices to make, and
- learn to rely on God’s wisdom in making wise choices.

Teacher Enrichment

Bible Basis

■ Gideon chooses men for battle.

**Judges
7:1-8**



Today’s passage opens by referring to Gideon as Jeru-Baal (meaning “let Baal contend with him”). Gideon was given that name after he defied the Baal worship that had crept in among the Israelites. This episode identified Gideon as one willing to stand up against Israel’s enemies from without as well as willing to oppose the enemy within—idolatry.

The Lord, too, was concerned about rooting out pride. For this reason, he did not allow Gideon to march against Midian’s coalition with an army anywhere near full strength. The Lord did not want the Israelites mistaking the victory he would grant them that day as being the result of their own strength (7:2).

Although God’s weeding-out process might seem strange, it is easy to see the purpose for the water-drinking test. Those who drank water by putting their faces right down to the surface of the water lost the ability to watch for an attack. They became easy targets. Those who used their hands could keep watch as they refreshed themselves. God was going to use a stripped-down army in order to show his power to the Israelites, but the army that remained was to be the best of the crop.

Prayer

- Read Hebrews 11:32-34.
- What does Gideon’s story of faith teach you about trusting God for wise choices?
- Pray: God, I thank you that when I feel weak or outmatched by circumstances, I can trust you to help me and the students I teach make wise choices by...

Before the Lesson

- Collect items for the activities you plan to use, referring to the Classroom Supplies and Learning Lab Supplies listed in the chart.
- Make photocopies of the “Growing Together” handout (at the end of this lesson) to send home with your children.
- Pray for your students and for God’s direction in teaching the lesson.

This Lesson at a Glance

	What Children Will Do	Classroom Supplies	Learning Lab Supplies
Welcome	Welcome! —Receive a warm welcome from the teacher, and make name tags.	“God’s Servant Name Tags” (p. 126), scissors, markers or crayons, tape or safety pins	
Attention Grabber	Choose Clues —Make a decision with limited knowledge, and learn that they can rely on God because he knows everything.		
Bible Exploration & Application	Gideon’s Adventure —Learn from Judges 7:1-8 that God’s choices are always wise.	Bible	
	Wise Eyes —Listen to Colossians 1:9-10, and play a game about making wise choices.	Bible, “Wise Choices” handout (p. 149), scissors, basket	
	Hand It to God —Learn from James 1:5 and Proverbs 3:6 that they can go to God with everything, and make prayer hands that open up to God.	Bible, “Hand It to God” handouts (p. 150), safety scissors, glue, pencils, crayons	
Closing 	A Choice Song —March for joy, and shout thanks to God for helping them make good choices.	CD player	

Welcome

SUPPLIES: “God’s Servant Name Tags” (p. 126), scissors, markers or crayons, tape or safety pins

- Greet each child individually with an enthusiastic smile.
- Thank each child for coming to class today.
- As children arrive, ask them about last week’s “Growing Together” discussion. Use questions such as “How did your worry necklace remind you to ask God for help?” and “In what ways did God help you with a worry last week?”
- Say: **Today we’re going to learn that ► God helps us make wise choices.**
- Hand out the name tags children made during Lesson 10, and help kids attach the name tags to their clothing. If some of the name tags were damaged, or if children weren’t in class that week, have children make new name tags using the photocopiable handout.
- Tell the children that you’ll raise your hand to get their attention. They should respond by raising their hands and focusing their attention on you. Rehearse this signal, and encourage the children to respond quickly so you’ll have plenty of time for all the fun activities planned for this lesson.

BIBLE POINT



teacher tips

It’s important to say the Bible Point just as it’s written in each activity. Repeating the Bible Point over and over will help children remember it and apply it to their lives.

Attention Grabber

Choose Clues

SUPPLIES: none



Stand with the children in a large circle. Hold up the *surprise ball*, and ask:

- **Do you suppose this ball will bounce very high? Why or why not?** (No, because it’s a rock; maybe, if you throw it down hard, it’ll bounce a little.)

Say: **Let’s see what happens when I bounce it.** Step into the center of the circle, and bounce the ball. Catch the ball, and ask:

- **Were you surprised that the ball bounced so high? Why?** (Yes, because it doesn’t look like a rubber ball; yes, because it looks hard.)
- **But I thought you were really sure the ball wouldn’t bounce high, so what happened?** (We were fooled; it didn’t look like it would bounce so high; we didn’t think you’d throw it so hard.)
- **Why do you think it’s impossible for us to know everything before it happens?** (Because we can’t see the future; because we’re not smart enough.)
- **In real life, have you ever been really sure about something but then found out that you were wrong? What happened?** (I had to choose again; I didn’t know as much as I thought; I felt silly.)

Say: **Let’s try to decide how something will turn out before it really happens. I’ll put my hands behind my back and hide the ball in one hand. Then I’ll call on someone to choose which hand he or she thinks the ball is hidden in.** If the child chooses the correct hand, it’s his or her turn to hide the ball and call on someone new to choose. If he or she is incorrect, select another person to make a choice. When everyone has been called on, ask:

• If you had someone who could see which hand the ball was in, would you have wanted help in deciding? Why or why not? (Yes, because then I'd know which hand to choose; no, because I thought I was right anyway.)

Say: **Every day we have important choices to make, such as whether or not to do our chores right away or who to spend our free time with. If we tried to choose all by ourselves, we'd probably make some good and some not-so-good decisions—just as you did in our game. God is so much wiser than we are. He knows every good decision because he knows what will happen. When we have hard choices to make, it's nice to know that God helps us make wise choices.**

Return the *surprise ball* to the Learning Lab.



Bible Insight

The Midianites were descendants of Midian, a son of Abraham and his second wife, Keturah. They were never considered part of the covenant people of God, and for the most part were hostile to Israel. The Midianites were nomads who tried to weaken the Israelites by stealing their crops.

Bible Exploration & Application

■ Gideon's Adventure

SUPPLIES: Bible

Hold up your Bible, and say: **The Bible story today is found in the book of Judges.** Turn to **Judges 7:1-8**, and say: **This story is about Gideon and some of the hard choices he had to make. Listen carefully so you can answer the questions I'll ask.**

Gideon gathered lots of soldiers to battle the Midianites. They were mean people who stole the crops that Gideon's people grew. There were many men in the Midianite army. God could've said, "Your army's strong enough to win—go ahead!" Or he could've said, "I think we need more soldiers to be sure we'll win." But God chose another way. He said, "Our army is too big, and we need fewer soldiers." Pause here, and ask:

• **Why do you think God chose to have fewer soldiers in his army?** (Maybe God's soldiers were stronger; maybe because God is so powerful.)

• **Do you think Gideon felt scared at this point?** (Maybe a little; no, because he knew God was going to help him.)

Say: **God is the most powerful one of all. When we rely on God, we don't need more soldiers or more strength or more power. We just need God. God wanted his people to win through his strength and not because their army was large.**

God told Gideon to tell the soldiers who didn't want to fight to go home. So 22,000 soldiers decided to go home.

Ask: • **How much is 22,000?** (A lot; more than I can count.)

• **What do you think Gideon chose to do then?** (He asked them to come back; he was afraid they'd lose, so he quit; he let them go and kept listening to God.)

Say: **Sometimes decisions are hard to make. Gideon's decision to let the soldiers go home was hard because a large army could surely win the war. But Gideon listened to God. Gideon was certain God knew what was wise, so Gideon obeyed God. Then God did an unusual thing. God saw that only 10,000 soldiers were left—half as many soldiers as had already gone home!—but still he chose to have fewer men fight. He told Gideon to watch the soldiers drink water. Those who knelt down to drink with their mouths wouldn't be**

allowed to fight, but the soldiers who lapped the water from their hands could go to battle. Gideon could've said, "This is crazy. I give up," or he could've kept all the soldiers and hoped God wouldn't notice. But Gideon chose to do exactly what God commanded.

Ask: • **Why do you think Gideon chose to obey God?** (Because he loved God; because he knew God was smart; because God's the boss.)

• **How do you suppose Gideon felt about his choice?** (Scared; good, because he was obeying God.)

Say: **Gideon watched his soldiers drink water. Then he chose the men who lapped the water from their cupped hands, just as God told him to do. Gideon had only 300 soldiers left in his army now. But because he'd made the right choices, God allowed Gideon and his 300 soldiers to win the battle.**

Ask: • **Why do you think Gideon and his 300 soldiers won?** (Because they obeyed God; because God knew what he was doing.)

• **What do you think might've happened if Gideon had chosen to disobey God's decisions?** (Gideon would've been in trouble; they might've lost the battle; God might've been angry with Gideon; things wouldn't have turned out the same way.)

Say: **Gideon learned a very important lesson. He learned that God helps us make wise choices. Gideon relied on God's help when he had hard choices to make. And we can rely on God's help, too. Let's practice making wise choices.**



◀ **BIBLE POINT**

■ Wise Eyes

SUPPLIES: Bible, "Wise Choices" handout (p. 149), scissors, basket



Before class, photocopy one "Wise Choices" handout. Cut the cards apart, and put them in a basket.

Have the children sit with you in a circle.



Ask: • **Look around our classroom. What do you see?** (Bible; a chalkboard; chairs; kids; bulletin boards.)

Hold up two *wiggle eyes*, and say: **Our eyes are able to see only what's in front of them. We're not able to see things that are in another room or things that haven't happened yet. But God's eyes see everything. And God is so wise. He can see what will happen even before it happens! God already sees which choices are wise. Let's read what Colossians 1:4-10 says about wisdom.** Read the verses aloud to the children from an easy-to-understand translation of the Bible such as the *Hands-On Bible*. Then ask:

• **How do we become wise?** (Ask God for wisdom; pray for wisdom and understanding.)

• **Why does being wise bring God honor?** (It shows we want to learn more about God; when we're wise, we know how God wants us to act.)

Say: **We need wisdom to make good choices. We're going to play a game that will give us a chance to make wise decisions. But first, let's learn a rhyme to help us play the game. Here's how it goes: "God has big, all-seeing eyes, and God helps people choose what's wise."** Have children repeat this rhyme with you a few times. When they're comfortable with the words, say: **We're going to pass these eyes around the circle while we say the rhyme. The person who's holding the eyes when we get to the last word will draw a**



Gideon, who thoroughly depended on God to help him make wise choices, is one of the heroes of the faith listed in Hebrews 11 (verse 32)—all men and women who sought God's will in order to honor and please the Lord.

“Wise Choices” card from the basket. I’ll read the two choices on the card to that person, who will decide which is the wise choice. Then the whole class will shout, “Yea, [child’s name], you made a wise choice!”

Begin reciting the rhyme and passing the *wiggle eyes*. When everyone’s had a turn to draw a card, set aside the eyes and basket.

Ask: • **Were your choices easy to make? Explain.** (Yes, because only one choice seemed smart; yes, because some of the choices were unkind.)

• **How do you feel when you have a hard choice to make?** (Frustrated; angry; mixed up; I don’t want to choose.)



Say: **Gideon must have felt unsure about many of the hard choices he had to make. Gideon needed God’s help in making those decisions.**

Ask: • **When have you asked someone for help in making a decision?** (Once I asked my dad to help me decide what to do when my friend wanted me to do something wrong; I asked my sister if she thought Mom would get mad if I went to my friend’s house to play.)

• **Think of an important decision you made in the past couple of weeks. How did you decide what to do?** (I asked my parents for help; I prayed.)

Say: **Everyone has to make important decisions at times. Sometimes choices are hard, and we need someone wiser to help us decide what to do. ► God helps us make wise choices. Also, we can follow our friend Jesus’ example. Jesus had tough decisions to make when he lived on earth, and he always prayed to God to help him make wise choices. When we have tough decisions to make, we can do what Jesus did, and that’s ask God for help. God will never let us down.**



■ Hand It to God

SUPPLIES: Bible, “Hand It to God” handouts (p. 150), safety scissors, glue, pencils, crayons

Before class, photocopy the “Hand It to God” handout for each child. Have children sit at tables. Say: **I have a rhyme for you. It’ll show us a good way to make wise choices. Follow along with the actions.**

First I take my left hand (*hold left hand out in front, palm facing right*)
And put it with my right. (*Right palm resting against left—prayer hands.*)
Then I talk to God above (*look upward*)
Morning, noon, and night.

Hold up your Bible, and say: **The Bible says praying is a good way to help us make wise choices. Let’s read what the Bible says about being wise and praying.** Open your Bible, and read aloud **James 1:5**. Then ask:

• **How can praying help you make wise choices?** (Because God is wise; because God will help us; praying helps us listen to God.)

• **What are we to pray for?** (We should pray for wisdom; we can pray to understand things better.)

Say: **When we pray and ask God for wisdom, we make better decisions. Let's say our rhyme once more to help us remember that prayer is a way ►God helps us make wise choices.** Repeat the rhyme one more time. Then say: **Gideon put his decisions in God's hands, and so can we. When we pray and ask God for wisdom, we know God will help. Let's make a craft that'll give you a helping hand in remembering to pray for wisdom.**

Pass a "Hand It to God" handout to each child. Have children carefully cut out the two hands and the rectangle shape. Show the children how to fold on the dotted lines to make a pop-up card. Now have children glue the hands on each side of the closed pop-up card—left hand to the left side of the closed card and right hand to the right side of the closed card. Open the pop-up card, and ask children to draw a picture of a choice they could leave in God's hands. Have them draw their pictures on the inside of the cards.

When everyone has drawn a picture, ask:

• **Who'd like to tell about the pictures they drew?** Allow time for children to share.

Then say: **Whenever we have hard choices to make, we can pray and ask God to help. Our Bible verse for today comes from Proverbs 3:6, and this is what it says about asking God for help: ►"Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take."**

Let's fold our hands and say a prayer right now to ask for God's help with our choices. Pray: **Dear God, we thank you for your wisdom. You always know the choices that are good. You will show us what to do. Please help us make wise choices and listen to you. In Jesus' name, amen.**



HANDS-ON BIBLE

You'll need colored self-adhesive paper, scissors, and markers for this activity.

Direct students to the "Just Ask!" activity near **James 2** in the *Hands-On Bible*. Ask a volunteer to read aloud **James 1:5**. Read the box about making decisions aloud to the class, and discuss their reactions to those ideas. As students discuss, distribute colored self-adhesive paper, scissors, and markers. Then have students follow steps 1 through 3 to make stickers that remind them to ask for God's help when they have to choose between pleasing people and pleasing God. When students have finished making their stickers, ask:



• **Why is it always the best choice to ask God about which choices to make?** (Because God knows everything; because God says he will help.)

• **How does God help us make wise choices?** (By giving us ideas; by giving us peace on the inside when we've decided something.)

Encourage children to seek God this week about decisions they need to make.

Closing

■ A Choice Song

SUPPLIES: CD player



Ask: • **What did you learn today?** (God helps us make wise choices; God is smart; I can pray for help.)

Say: **God wants his people to be wise and learn from his Word. God knows that making wise choices can be a real battle, but everything is possible when God is on our side.**

With God's help, we'll march like winners! Let's practice with a song we learned before called "Everything Is Possible With God" (Mark 10:27).

Have children form a line, and say: **We'll march around the room, and you can pretend to play your favorite musical instrument. I'll be the leader of the band to start with, and you follow the way I march. If I tap you on the shoulder, we'll change places, and you can be the leader of the band. Then the rest of us will copy how you choose to march.**

You'll find the song on track 9 of the CD; song lyrics are located at the back of this teacher guide. Begin the CD, and march around the room. Use a variety of marching steps such as high stepping, backward marching, and skipping. You may need to replay the song so that each child has a turn being the leader.

After each child has been the leader, ask:

• **What could we say to God to thank him for helping us make wise choices?** (Thank you for being so wise; thanks for listening to our prayers; thank you for loving us.)

Say: **Let's march around the room once more. When I tap your shoulder this time, shout a word of thanks to ► God for helping us make wise choices.**

Collect name tags for next week's use.



BIBLE POINT ►



Growing closer to Jesus extends beyond the classroom.

Photocopy the "Growing Together" handout (at the end of this lesson) for this week, and send it home with your children. Encourage children and parents to use the handout to plan meaningful activities on this week's topic. Follow up the "Growing Together" activities next week by asking children what their families did together.

Wise Choices

Photocopy this page, and cut apart the cards. You'll need one card for each child in your class.

CARD 1

It's Sunday morning. You can go to Sunday school or stay in bed. Which is a wise choice?

CARD 2

You come home after school with lots of homework to do. Do you run outside to play, or do you finish your homework to be sure it gets done?

CARD 3

Dad wants you to do the dishes tonight. Do you complain or wash the dishes?

CARD 4

Your friend asks you to watch a movie on television that you know you're not supposed to see. Do you watch the movie or tell your friend you can't watch it and choose another show?

CARD 5

It's bedtime, and Mom reminds you to brush your teeth. Do you brush your teeth or sneak to bed without cleaning them?

CARD 6

Your neighbor accidentally breaks your new pencil. Will you forgive your friend or get even by breaking his pencil?

CARD 7

Mom tells you it's time to come inside from playing. Will you stay outside an extra 10 minutes or come inside right away?

CARD 8

You accidentally broke your grandma's new flower vase. Do you tell her you're sorry for breaking it, or do you hide the broken pieces and say nothing?

CARD 9

You have a bad cold. Mom said not to go outside, but your best friend asks you to go sledding. Will you grab your sled and go or explain to your friend that you have to stay inside?

CARD 10

You have a math test tomorrow in school. Do you play baseball until bedtime or study for the math test?

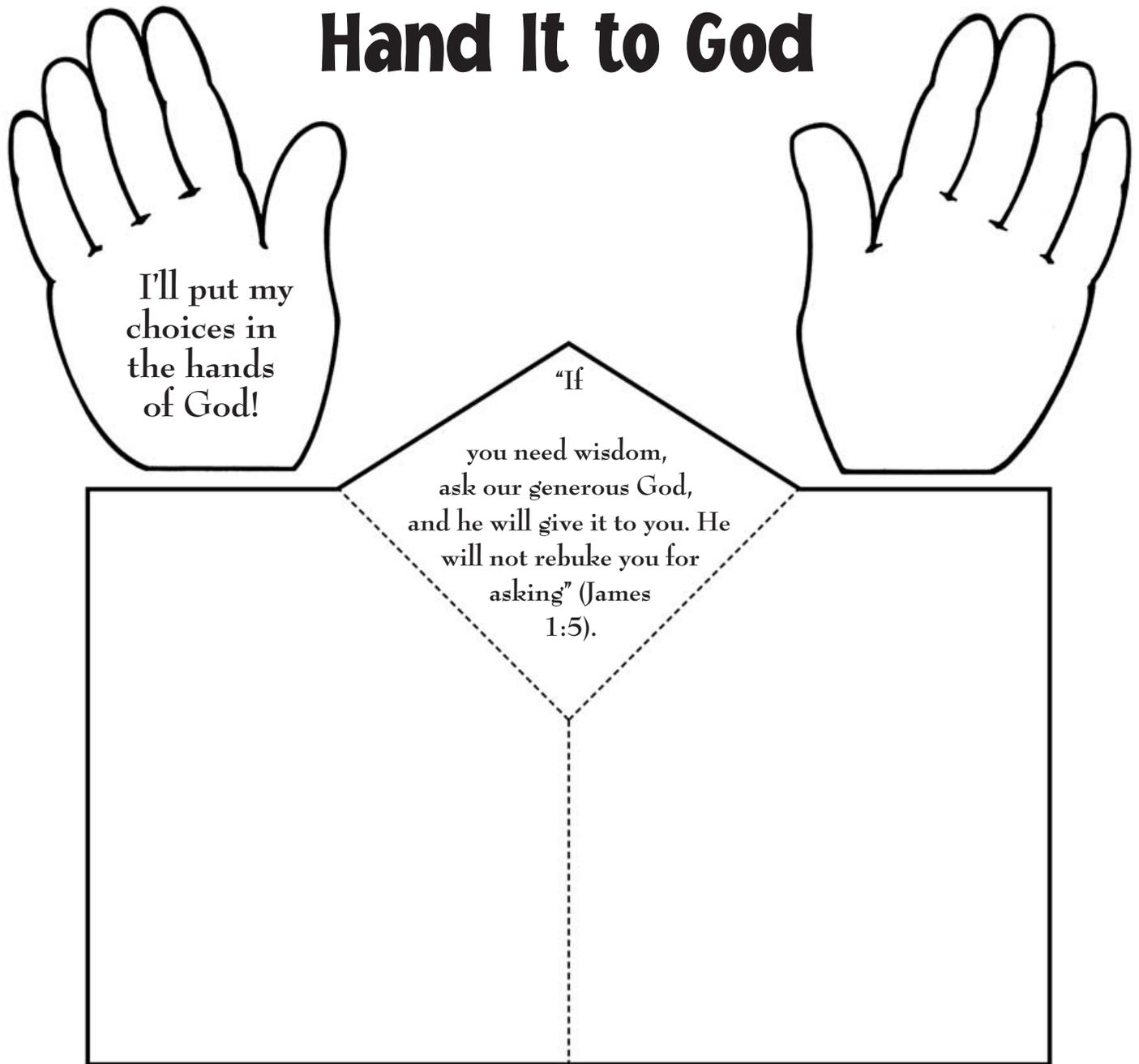
CARD 11

Your teacher asks you to stop running in the halls. Will you argue with her or slow down?

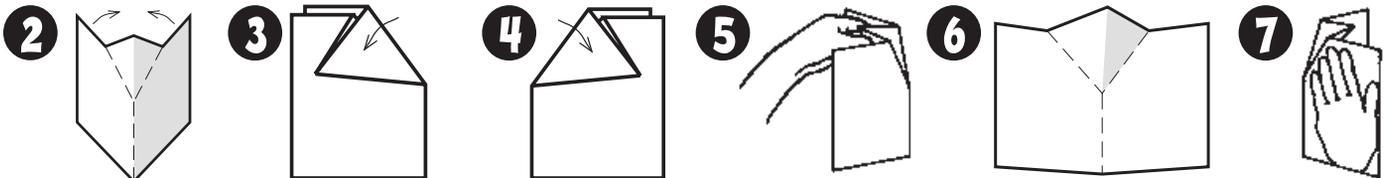
CARD 12

Your cousin was mad and said some mean things to you. Now your cousin is sorry. Will you be forgiving or say mean things to your cousin?

Hand It to God



1. Cut out the two hand shapes and the pointed rectangle shape.
2. Fold the rectangle backward down the center. Crease the fold well.
3. Fold the point to the left side and crease well.
4. Return the point to the upright position. Flip card over and fold the point to the right side. Crease the fold well.
5. Open up the card. Pinch the point together and fold the outside edges of the card inward. The point should be hidden inside the rectangle. Crease this fold well.
6. Open your card. The Scripture verse on the point should now “pop up” from the center of the card.
7. Now close the card and glue the left-hand shape to the left side of the card. Glue the right-hand shape to the right side of the card. When the card is closed, it will look like praying hands.



Growing Together

Bible Story

Gideon chooses men for battle (Judges 7:1-8).

Gideon 12:
God helps us make wise choices.

Bible Verse

“Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take”
(Proverbs 3:6).

In Touch

Today your child learned how God can help us make wise choices. The children learned that God already knows the right choices to make and he'll help us make good decisions. Use these activities this week to encourage your child to ask for God's help in decision making.

Hot Potato

For dinner, have a hot-potato bar. Let kids help in the preparation by scrubbing raw potatoes and grating different cheeses. While the potatoes are baking, set out a variety of toppings, including cheese, sour cream, bacon bits, and onions. Then set out a few unusual toppings such as brown sugar, peanut butter, cinnamon, and candy sprinkles. Let family members top their own potatoes with the ingredients of their choice. Discuss how some of the choices were obviously “off the wall,” while others were good. Remind your child that when there are lots of choices, God can help us choose wisely.

Take a Hike

Go for a family hike in a local park or wooded recreational area. As you walk along, offer each other choices such as “Do you want to turn left or right?” and “Shall we jog or skip?” Allow each family member to make at least one choice during your outing. When you're on your way home, talk about your choices. Point out that poor choices can cause us to go down the wrong path in life, but good choices keep us on the road to God.

“Chews” for Me

Gather magazines, scissors, glue, and two paper plates. Then settle in a cozy corner with your child, and have fun creating a meal for the other person. Cut food pictures from magazines, and glue them on the plates. Don't ask the other person what to choose—make those choices for him or her! (It's especially fun if you try to keep your plates a secret.) When you've finished “cooking,” swap plates. Then talk about the choices. Ask: “Were these foods you'd have chosen? Why is it hard to choose for someone else? Who knows best which choices are right for us?”

Family Poster

Make it a joyous family choice to follow God. Using a sheet of poster board and markers, create a family poster with Joshua 24:15 written in the center: “Choose today whom you will serve...As for me and my family, we will serve the Lord.” Have the entire family join in decorating the poster. Use sequins, markers, glitter, buttons, ribbons, and other decorations. Then have each family member sign his or her name on the poster.

