God gives us choices.

Bible Verse
“But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15b).

Growing Closer to Jesus
Students will
- make choices and discover their consequences,
- learn that if they ask, God forgives them when they sin, and
- choose to grow closer to God.

Teacher Enrichment

Bible Basis
Adam and Eve give in to temptation.

Genesis 3:1-24
The serpent’s first question demonstrated his craftiness. He must have known what God had really commanded, but asking the question made Eve question God. The serpent proceeded to take his deception further, suggesting that God had lied to her and insinuating that God didn’t have Eve’s best interests in mind. It must have made sense to Eve, because she took the bait and ate the fruit.

As always, temptation promised more than the sin delivered. Adam and Eve didn’t “become like God” but instead were hit in the face with reality: They had disobeyed God. Suddenly their nakedness, which had been natural when all was good, seemed so wrong. And as usually happens with us, one sin led to another: They decided to hide from God.

God had every right to be angry. But God came looking for them, knowing well what had happened. Here God showed his character and established what would become a pattern: When people sin and turn against God, God seeks them out and draws them to himself. God loves his people—no matter what.

God’s constant love for us doesn’t mean we can avoid the consequences of sin. The rest of this passage relates the consequences of Adam and Eve’s sin, which from that point on fell upon all humanity. However, the banishing of Adam and Eve from the Garden (Genesis 3:22-24) was not so much for punishment as for their protection. Now that they had sinned, sin would be part of them as long as they lived. Should they eat of the tree of life in the Garden, they would live forever under the power of sin. Only physical death could save them from such a life of torture. And God had a plan to save them from spiritual death, a plan that likely is hinted at in Genesis 3:15: Jesus would come and experience death but defeat Satan forever!

Another Scripture used in this lesson is Psalm 103:8-13.

Prayer
- Read Hebrews 2:18.
- What is the greatest temptation in your life?
- How can knowing that Jesus was tempted but prevailed help you with your temptation?
- Pray: Lord, thank you for giving us Jesus as an example of how to resist temptation. Please help me be an example to the children I teach.
Lesson 2

Before the Lesson

- Collect the necessary items for the activities you plan to use, referring to the Classroom Supplies and Learning Lab Supplies listed on the chart.
- Make photocopies of the “Hands-On Fun at Home” handout (at the end of this lesson) to send home with your students.
- Pray for your students and for God’s direction as you teach the lesson.

This Lesson at a Glance

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Before the Lesson

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Welcome

As kids arrive, ask them how they put last week’s lesson into action. Ask questions such as, “How did you treat God’s other creations?” and “How did you practice growing in God’s qualities this week?” 

Remind kids that whenever you honk the Harpo horn twice, they are to respond by clapping twice and focusing on you. Explain that it’s important to respond to this signal quickly so the class can do as many fun activities as possible.

Attention Grabber

Which Way Do I Go?

SUPPLIES: snacks, newsprint

Do this activity in your classroom, in a large fellowship hall, or outside if the weather is nice and there is no wind. Use the multicolored confetti to make a trail from the classroom door around the room. Toward the end of the trail, make a fork in the road. The right side of the fork should lead to a bag or plate of snacks; the left side should lead to the Harpo horn. Cover the snacks and the Harpo horn with sheets of newsprint. You may want to tape the newsprint to the floor to keep early arrivers from peeking.

Welcome kids before they enter the classroom. Say: Follow the trail of multicolored confetti until you come to a fork in the road. Choose which fork you want to follow, and then sit down at the trail’s end.

Let kids follow the trail and choose which fork to follow. Award the snacks to kids who chose the right fork. Honk the Harpo horn at the kids who chose the left fork.

Ask: How is making the choice in this game like making choices in life? (Sometimes I don’t know the best choice to make; sometimes I make wrong choices and wish I could try again.)

Say: God gives us choices. Sometimes we have to guess which is the right choice to make. Today we’re going to talk about the choices we make every day and learn how God can help us make the right choices.

Give snacks to the kids who received a honk from the Harpo horn. After kids have finished their snacks, have them help you clean up. Save the multicolored confetti for use in later lessons. Throw away any used napkins or cups so they won’t be a distraction during the rest of the lesson.
**Bible Exploration & Application**

### Choices, Choices

**SUPPLIES:** Bibles, newsprint, markers, tape

Have kids form two groups. Give each group a sheet of newsprint and a marker. Give groups two minutes to brainstorm about 10 choices they might make every day at school, home, or church, such as what to eat for lunch, what to wear, or who to play with. Ask each group to choose an Encourager, Recorder, and Reporter. Explain to the kids that the Encourager will urge group members to think of ideas, the Recorder will write ideas on the newsprint, and the Reporter will share the group’s ideas with the class.

After two minutes, honk the *Harpo horn* twice and wait for kids to respond. Determine which group named the most choices in the given time, and ask everyone to gather around the quick-thinking group and give them high fives. If both groups thought of 10 choices, have them take turns giving each other back rubs or high fives.

Have Reporters present their groups’ choices to the class and then tape the lists on a wall.

Ask:
- **What choices do we make at school?** (Who to play with during recess; whether or not to do our work.)
- **What choices do we make at home?** (Whether to watch television or read a book; whether or not to obey our parents.)
- **What happens if we make a wrong choice?** (We hurt ourselves or the people we love; sometimes we can try again.)

Say: *When we make a wrong choice, we have to accept the consequences of that choice. If you choose not to do your math homework, you might not get a passing grade in math. Often our wrong choices lead to sin. But no matter how often we sin, we can ask God to forgive us. Let’s look at a Bible passage that tells how God reacts when we sin.*

Distribute Bibles. Have kids find partners from the other group and then read Psalm 103:8-13 together. Partners should take turns reading the verses aloud. Then have kids discuss the following questions with their partners.

- **What do these verses tell us about God?** (God doesn’t stay mad; God loves us a lot; God will forgive us.)
- **Does this mean God wants us to sin?** Explain. (No, but he still loves us when we do; God wants us to do the right thing, but he’ll still forgive us if we mess up.)
- **How far is it from the ground to the sky?** (A hundred feet; a mile; as far as I can see.)
- **How is the distance from the ground to the sky like God’s forgiveness?** (It seems to go on forever; God’s love is really big.)

Honk the *Harpo horn* twice to bring everyone together. Wait for kids to respond, and then invite them to share the insights they discovered in their discussions.

After kids have shared what they learned from their partners, say: *God gives us choices. Even though our wrong choices make him sad, God is always willing to forgive us when we ask him. Many people in the Bible sinned, but God forgave them when they told God they were sorry. Let’s find out about some of those people now.*
**Adam and Eve**

**SUPPLIES:** Bible

Open your Bible to Genesis 3:1-24, and show kids the passage.

Say: Our Bible story today comes from Genesis, the first book of the Bible. I’m going to need your help to tell a story about Adam and Eve.

Practice the following cues and responses with the kids before telling the story.

- **Boys,** whenever I say “snake,” make a “hissing” sound.
- **Girls,** whenever I say “tree,” you should “sprout.” Demonstrate “sprouting” by spreading your arms over your head like branches.
- **Everyone,** whenever I say “fruit,” say “yum-yum!”
- And whenever I say “God,” flex your muscles and say, “Strong and powerful!”

Read aloud the following story of Adam and Eve. Pause after each cue word to let kids do their actions.

One day the snake said to the woman, “Did God really say that you can’t eat fruit from any tree in the garden?”

The woman answered the snake, “We can eat fruit from the trees in the garden. But God said not to eat fruit from the tree that’s in the middle of the garden. We can’t even touch it, or we’ll die!”

But the snake said to the woman, “You won’t die. God knows that if you eat the fruit from that tree, you’ll learn about good and evil and you’ll be like God!”

So the woman took some of the fruit and ate it. And she gave some of the fruit to her husband, and he ate it.

Then they heard God walking in the garden in the cool part of the day, and the man and his wife hid from God among the trees in the garden. But God called to the man and said, “Where are you?”

The man answered, “I heard you walking in the garden, and I was afraid, so I hid.”

Then God asked, “Did you eat fruit from that tree, even though I told you not to?”

The man said, “You gave me this woman, and she gave me fruit from the tree, so I ate it.”

Then God said to the woman, “How could you do such a thing?”

She answered, “The snake tricked me, so I ate the fruit.”

So God forced the man and woman out of the garden and placed angels around it to guard its borders so that people could not get to the tree of life.

Have kids give themselves a round of applause for their enthusiastic participation in the story. Then have them stand up.

Say: Raise your hands when you think of an answer to each of the questions I’m about to ask you. I’d like to hear lots of different, interesting answers. When someone gives an answer you thought of and you don’t have anything more to add, you may sit down. When everyone is seated, I’ll ask you to stand again for the next question.

Ask: Why did God give Adam and Eve choices? (God wanted them to choose to obey him; God wanted to see what choice they’d make.)

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**Bible Insight**

Eve is actually the third name given to the first woman. Genesis 1:26-28 explains that God first called all human beings adam. Adam himself provides the second name, woman, to reflect the origin of woman from man (Genesis 2:23). Adam doesn’t give the third name until after the Fall, when he calls woman Eve, the Hebrew word for “live,” to denote her motherhood of all living (Genesis 3:20).
Lesson 2

- **Why did Adam and Eve make the choice they did?** (They were tempted; they wondered what the fruit would be like.)
- **How do you think Adam and Eve felt after they knew they’d made a wrong choice and sinned?** (Sad; scared.)
- **How do you feel when you’ve sinned?** (Sad; bad; I wish I could try again; sorry.)
- **What’s the best thing to do when you’ve done something wrong?** (Ask God to forgive me; learn from it so I don’t make the same mistake again.)

Say: *When we make a wrong choice, it’s good to think about why we made the choice we did. By learning from our sins, we can avoid sinning the next time. God gives us choices, and we can ask God to help us choose wisely in the future.*

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**BIBLE POINT**

*But sometimes we choose to disobey, to deliberately hurt others or do something we’ve been told not to. In other words, we choose to sin. Those choices make God sad, but he will still forgive us if we confess our sins. That’s why God sent Jesus to earth!*  

*When Jesus died on the cross, he took the punishment for our sins. When he came back to life, he defeated death and sin forever! Because of Jesus, we can have forgiveness from all our sins. That’s a huge reason to thank and praise God!*  

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**HANDS-ON BIBLE**

Give each person a washable marker and a piece of paper. Make sure kids have their Hands-On Bibles.

Have kids turn to Genesis 3 in their Hands-On Bibles and complete the “‘Thumb-thing’ to Think About” activity. When kids have finished, ask:

- **What’s always the best choice we can make after we make a bad choice?** (We should tell God what we did; we should ask God to forgive us.)
- **What do you need to ask God’s forgiveness for right now?** (For lying; for fighting; being mean.)

Say: *Let’s take a moment right now to ask God to forgive us for our sins.* Give kids a few moments to pray silently for forgiveness.
Pulling Strings

SUPPLIES: masking tape

Say: How many of you remember the made-up story of Pinocchio? That’s not a story from the Bible, obviously, but it makes a great point about choices. You’ll remember that Pinocchio was a marionette—a puppet that’s controlled by pulling strings attached to its feet, hands, and other points on its body.

Let’s pretend to be marionettes. Everyone stand and respond as I read you some instructions. Ready?

It’s time to say hello, you puppets! Wave your right hand. Now raise your left foot. Hop up and down three times on your right foot. Smile big, too—and remember puppets have to do as they’re told!

Now pretend that your strings are loose—slump over on the floor. That’s right—you can’t move until someone picks up your strings and lifts them.

Wait! The puppeteer is raising your strings so you’re standing tall on tiptoes. Raise your right hand...now raise your left hand...now raise your right foot...now raise your left foot and hang in the air!

Everyone, go ahead and sit down. You’re no longer puppets.

Ask: • How did it feel to be a puppet? What did you like about it? What didn’t you like? (I didn’t have to make decisions; I couldn’t do everything that I was asked to do.)

• Would you rather be a puppeteer than a puppet? Why or why not? (Yes, I’d rather tell people what to do than have everyone tell me what to do; no, I don’t want to be in charge of other people.)

• Puppets don’t get to make choices. What do you like most about being able to make choices? (I get to do what I want; I don’t have to do things that might hurt me.)

Say: Our friend Pinocchio wanted to become a real boy instead of a puppet so he could make choices. The problem was that Pinocchio sometimes didn’t make good choices, and a large part of his story is about all the trouble Pinocchio caused for himself and others with his bad choices.

We like to make choices, but we don’t always have all the information we need to make the best choices. Let’s see how that feels.

Have children form pairs, and give each pair one streamer from the Learning Lab and either a heart or a star from the linking hearts and stars. Also give each pair three 6-inch lengths of masking tape. One member of the pair can hang on to the tape by lightly affixing it to his or her shirt. Ask pairs to spread out and position themselves around the outside of the room.

Ask the person in each pair who’s wearing the most blue to play the part of the Link Hunter. The other person will be the Lifeline. Roles will be later be reversed so each person can play each role.

Instruct the Lifeline to use a piece of masking tape to affix one end of the streamer to the back of the Link Hunter. The Lifeline will hold the other end of the streamer. The Link Hunter will then wrap another piece of tape around his or her thumb, sticky side out. The Link Hunter will use the tape to pick up a linking heart or star.
Ask the Link Hunters to close their eyes. Let each Lifeline toss the pair’s linking heart or star onto the floor on the far side of the room.

Say: All you Link Hunters, listen up. You have two jobs. The first is to keep your eyes closed. The second is to reach out your thumb that’s covered with sticky tape and put it right on top of your linking heart or star. That’s how you’ll pick up the heart or star.

You know the piece you need to get is in this room. You know you have the tape ready to pick it up. But you’re missing some information, right? The good news is that you’ve got a Lifeline who will help you make wise choices! You can ask the person who’s connected to you for guidance when it’s time to decide which way to move and when it’s time to stop so you don’t run into someone. Rely on your Lifeline! Now, go!

After children have played this round, reverse partners. The second partner will use the extra piece of tape on his or her thumb.

After the activity, ask pairs to sit down and discuss the following questions.

• What sort of information did you receive that was helpful? (Which way to turn; when to put my thumb on the piece to pick it up.)

• How was this like relying on God for help when we’re making choices? (God helps me make choices; God tells me what’s right and wrong; the Bible is full of good advice.)

Say: God gives us choices every day. It’s great that God also gives us a lifeline so that we can make wise choices! We can go to God in prayer about our choices.

Let’s go to God in prayer right now to thank him for always being our lifeline when we’re making choices!

Have kids in each pair face each other, and ask each person to hold either the streamer or one of the linking hearts and stars.

Say: I hope you’ll be willing to pray out loud, but you don’t have to. But do please pray, though. I’m going to start, and I’ll ask first for the person in your pair who’s holding the heart or star to pray, and then the person with the streamer.

Join me in prayer.

Pray:

Dear God, sometimes our lives feel hard and cold. It seems like any choice we make will be wrong, and it seems like we just can’t make a good decision.

Thank you for loving us whether we make good decisions or poor ones. Thank you for loving us with a love that never stops. The stars some people are holding remind us that you created everything, including us, and the hearts remind us that you created us in love.

People holding hearts or stars, praise God for his wonderful love.

After about 20 seconds, continue praying.

Dear God, sometimes we feel like we’re all tied up. We’d like to make a choice that lets us follow you, but we’re scared about what our friends would think. We’re tied up by what we fear and by people’s opinions and by busy days. Please help us break free of those things that tie us up so we can be free in you and make decisions that honor and praise you.

People holding streamers, praise God for setting us as free as we want to be in him.
After 20 seconds, continue praying.

Dear God, thank you for your mighty love. We want to choose to love you back. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Collect the streamers and the linking hearts and stars for use in later lessons.

Closing

Choosing God

SUPPLIES: Bibles, index cards, pencils

Distribute Bibles, and help kids look up Joshua 24:15. Ask a volunteer to read the last sentence of the verse aloud while everyone else follows along in his or her own Bible.

Say: God gives us choices. God wants us to love and follow him because we want to, not because he makes us. Choosing to follow God is the most important choice we can make. When we choose to follow God, we try to make all our other choices please him, too.

Ask: What are some ways that we can grow closer to God and choose to love him? (Pray; read the Bible; go to church and Sunday school.)

Say: Our Bible verse for today comes from Joshua 24:15b. Here’s what it says: “But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord.” Have kids repeat the verse with you several times.

Give everyone an index card and a pencil. Say: On your index card, write one way that you can help your family serve God this week. Think about what you will do and when and where you’ll do it. For example, you might read your Bible to your sister every night before going to bed, or you might pray for your mom and dad during the day. Be specific.

After a minute or two, gather the class in a circle. Pass the Harpo horn around the circle so that kids can honk it before sharing the plans they’ve written.

Ask kids to keep their cards to remind them of the good choices they’re going to make to serve the Lord.

Close by praying: God, thanks for each person here. Thanks for giving us choices and for helping us choose wisely and serve you. Forgive us when we make wrong choices and sin. Help us follow you every day of our lives. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Growing closer to Jesus extends beyond the classroom.

Photocopy the “Hands-On Fun at Home” handout (at the end of this lesson) for this week, and send it home with your kids. Encourage kids and parents to use the handout to spark meaningful discussion on this week’s topic.
Lesson 2

God gives us choices.

Bible Verse: “But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15b).

Notables

Cut out these coupons, and give them to your mom or dad. Ask your mom or dad to fill out a coupon and give it to you when you make a good choice.

Date ___________ Today I saw you make a good choice when _____________________________.

I’m proud of you for making that choice!

♥♥♥♥♥♥♥ Love, ______________________

Date ___________ Today I saw you make a good choice when _____________________________.

I’m proud of you for making that choice!

♥♥♥♥♥♥♥ Love, ______________________

Check It Out

• Read John 15:16.
  Why are you glad God chose you to be his friend?

• Read Deuteronomy 30:19.
  What choices are fun to make? What choices are hard to make?

• Read Proverbs 16:16.
  Tell about one bad choice you made. What did you learn from it?

Way to Pray

After dinner one evening, ask your parents to discuss choices your family needs to make, such as where to go on vacation, when to get a new car, or what kind of pet to have. Write the choices on slips of paper and drop them into a bowl. Take turns pulling a slip out of the bowl and praying about that choice.