



# Fourth Grade

We learn to make good choices, deciding not to allow our feelings to direct us.

Lesson 4



## Each student will–

- Become familiar with a healthy decision-making process
- Realize his need to make decisions that aren't directed by emotions
- Work through a decision-making case study with the class



## Outline

1. Introduction to making decisions
2. The problem that feelings sometimes create
3. The decision-making process



## Realized Impact

An emerging independence and ability to make thoughtful choices make fourth grade an ideal time to teach students to deliberately subject their decision-making to a more reasoned process. Hormone-driven emotions are starting to play a big part in their behavior. In any given situation, it will be important for students to think through their choices and not allow emotions to determine the best course of action. Students may have accurate information and God-centered values, but they need to learn how to use that information in the decision-making process.

So in the curriculum for fourth through sixth grades, students will practice making decisions; it is key to making good choices. And good choices will lead to a life of freedom to fully participate in God's adventures to come.



## Materials

Notebooks or journals (with lined pages) for each student  
Pencils



## Making an Entrance

Start by asking students to share about the notecards they delivered after the last lesson. What kinds of responses did they receive? Ask a few students to share with the class.

Now hand out blank, lined notebooks or journals to the class and say—**Today we are going to create a decision-making journal that we will use throughout the year. Write your name on the inside cover.** Give them time to do this. **On the outside of the cover, write the words “Decision-Making.”** Write these words on the board so the students can copy them down. **Now, on the first page write “Life’s Decisions.”** Again, write these words on the board. **Take some time and make a list of all of the decisions you think you’ll have to make throughout your lifetime.**

Discuss the students’ ideas. If students come up with additional ideas after the class discussion, give them time to add those to their own lists.

Say—**Now, on the second page of your journals, write “Fourth Grade Decisions” at the top of the page. Let’s make a list of the decisions you might have to make while you’re in fourth grade.** Discuss the students’ ideas.

Then say—**God created each one of us. He knows us better than we know ourselves. Because He knows us so well, He also knows the best decisions or paths for our lives. We can trust Him to tell us the best way to go. We can trust Him to direct us in ways that will give us the best possible life.**

**The writer of the Psalms talks about God’s direction for his life. Listen as I read two verses to you and be prepared to tell me how the author describes the benefit of making choices according to God’s direction. “Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light for my path” (Psalm 119:105, NLT).** Ask the students for their ideas. Then read the next verse and ask them to respond to the description. **“I run in the path of your commands, for you have set my heart free” (Psalm 119:32, NIV).**



## Informing

Say—**Let’s talk about how we can make good decisions. Here’s an example: Susan has to decide if she’ll play softball this year. This would involve three two-hour practices and a game each week. But it would**

**conflict with her church activities. Susan really loves playing softball and would be so disappointed if she couldn't play.**

**Now turn to the next page in your journals and write at the top of the page: "Option 1–Susan Plays Softball." What are the pros and cons? Make two columns and label them "Pros" and "Cons." Write an example on the board for the class to copy. Let's list the pros. What are some good things that might happen if Susan decided to play softball? Take ideas from the class and write them on the board as they write them in their journals. Once you've exhausted all the pros, move on to the second column. Let's list the cons next. What are some bad things that might happen if Susan decided to play softball?**

**On the next page write: "Option 2–Susan Doesn't Play Softball." Again, make two columns for the pros and cons. List the pros–What are some good things that might happen if Susan decided NOT to play softball? List the cons–What are some bad things that might happen if Susan decided NOT to play softball?**

**The next questions to consider are: What might God say about this decision? What might God say to you through the scripture, your parents or pastor?**

**Let's look back at our lists of pros and cons. Is there anything there that God would have an opinion about? After all, He is wiser than we are and gives us directions about the best way to do life. Give the class a chance to discuss this question.**

**After a few moments, move on by saying–Title the next page "Choice" and write down the choice you would make if you were Susan, basing your decision on all that we've talked about today. Include the reason why you think this would be a good choice to make. Ask a few students to share their choices–and reasons for making those choices–with the class.**

### Valuing

**Now say–This would be a hard choice for Susan to make because she really loves softball. Her *feelings* tell her she should play softball. Can you think of an example of a time when you might not feel like making a good choice? Why would you make a good choice even when you don't feel like it? What could help you to make a good choice when you don't feel like it?**



## Changing

Say—Keep your journal in your desk. The next time we'll talk about decisions again, but this time I'll ask you to write in your journal about a decision *you* need to make. Throughout the coming weeks, we'll allow time for you to journal through your own decision-making process, just like we did with Susan's.

Teachers, it would be great if you could set aside some time every day this week for students to journal about personal decision-making processes. Review or write the decision-making process step-by-step on the board and then ask the students to write about a decision they're making.



### **Builds into:**

Social Justice, Purity