

KIDS of INTEGRITY

Discernment



Meet some of the wisest people in the Bible, learn how your conscience is like a compass, and set up your own Garden of Eden with forbidden fruit!

Discover loads of fun ideas here to help kids:

- determine right from wrong
- make choices that please God
- resist peer pressure and temptation to disobey.

You'll also find this lesson helpful for addressing impulsive behaviour resulting in unwise choices.

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Scripture verses in this lesson are quoted from the English Standard Version.

Parents' prayer

Prepare for this lesson by talking to God about your own need to become wise in discerning right from wrong and making choices that please God.

If you prefer to personalize your prayer, read through the additional verses provided under "Scripture-guided prayer" for direction and inspiration.

Sample prayer

Wise Father, I will praise Your name forever and ever. Wisdom and power are Yours. You change times and seasons; You set up kings and depose them; You give wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning; You reveal deep and hidden things; You know what lies in darkness and light dwells with You (Daniel 2:20-22). In Your Word it says that You will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the intelligence of the intelligent You will frustrate. For Your "foolishness" is wiser than man's wisdom, and Your "weakness" is stronger than man's strength. I am amazed that You chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and the weak things of the world to shame the strong (1 Corinthians 1:19,25,27).

Thank You for Your promise that "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given to him" (James 1:5). Even though I know this, I still sometimes feel at a loss or inadequate in my parenting. Please forgive me for times that I have trusted in my own worldly understanding and made impulsive and poor choices as a parent. Today I praise You, for You are the all-knowing Father – a vast resource of wisdom. As Solomon asked, I pray that I would have the ability to distinguish right from wrong, so that I may "govern" our children in a godly way (1 Kings 3:7-9). Can You show me how to deal with daily problems and the larger life issues? My desire is to parent in partnership with You, being sensitive to Your guidance.

For my children, _____ and _____, I pray that they would have a life quest to "buy the truth" and to seek wisdom, discipline and understanding (Proverbs 23:23). We read in Your Word about Jesus, "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel

and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. And His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord” (Isaiah 11:2-3a). I ask that Your Spirit would rest on _____ and _____, and that the fear of the Lord would be the basis for their conduct and the decisions they make. As I send _____ and _____ to _____ (pre-school, school, child care), I ask that You would go with them. Please send Your Spirit to prompt them to choose good and not evil. May _____ and _____ “hate every false way” and choose to have You be the light for their path (Psalm 119:104-105). There will be times when _____ and _____ are tempted to sin instead of choosing to obey You. In these crucial situations, please give them the ability to recall Your Word and the spiritual maturity to rely on You as their source of power to resist the temptation so they can stay strong in You and in Your mighty power (Ephesians 6:10, Psalm 119:11).

Oh Lord, it is Your Spirit who gives us spiritual insight. I ask You, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, to give our family Your Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that we may know You better (Ephesians 1:17). Amen.

Scripture-guided prayer for parents

Read and pray through one or more of the selected Scriptures under each heading. Focus on listening to God and allowing His Spirit to direct you as you pray.

Character focus

Begin by thanking God for being a God of wisdom.
1 Kings 3:27-28, 4:29 | Job 12:12-13 | Proverbs 2:6 |
Proverbs 3:13-14 | Jeremiah 10:6-7, 11-12

Heart search

Acknowledge where you lack discernment.
1 Chronicles 21:1-8 | Proverbs 1:22 | Proverbs 12:15 |
Proverbs 13:20 | Ephesians 5:15-17

Gratitude

Thank God for ways you have seen evidence of discernment in your family.

Family requests

Ask God to help you and your children live wisely.
Psalm 90:12 | Psalm 119:33-35 | Proverbs 2:1-11 |
Philippians 2:1-4 | James 1:5, 3:13, 17

Kids talk with God

These sample prayers all begin with “Dear God,” but you may use any other names of God your children are comfortable with, (i.e. Father God, Lord Jesus, Heavenly Father, Abba Father, etc.)

If your children are ready to pray original prayers, you may wish to use the Bible verses provided under “Scripture-guided prayer for children.”

Sample prayers

Dear God, I’m one of your children. Please help me to understand the Bible (Psalm 119:125). Amen.

Dear God, please teach me so I know what’s right and what’s wrong. Amen.

Dear God, You are my power source when it comes to choosing to do the right thing. Help me to say no to sin and to choose righteousness instead. Amen.

Dear God, just as David prayed, I also pray, “Teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I believe in Your commandments” (Psalm 119:66). Amen.

Dear God, I want to be like Daniel, who set his heart to understand and humbled himself before You (Daniel 10:12). Amen.

Dear God, please help me to honour You in the choices I make, rather than just doing whatever I please. Amen.

Scripture-guided prayer for children

Read through one of the selected Scriptures under each heading and help your children pray based on the verse you read. Encourage them to listen to God and allow His Spirit to guide them as they pray.

Character focus

Begin by thanking God for being a God of wisdom.
Proverbs 2:6 | Daniel 2:20 | Romans 11:33

Heart search

Acknowledge times when you’re tempted to avoid doing what you’re asked to do.
Proverbs 1:7 | Proverbs 1:32 | Proverbs 10:8

Gratitude

Thank God for sharing His wisdom with us.

Family requests

Ask God to help you, your siblings and your parents to live wisely.

Psalm 119:33 | Ephesians 6:10 | James 1:5

Speak a blessing

Encourage your children throughout your lesson by being quick to commend them whenever you notice them making a wise choice. Simple statements like these mean a lot to a child.

- You are a discerning boy/girl _____.
- You are a wise boy/girl _____.
- I'm proud of you _____. You know the difference between right and wrong and choose to do right.
- Great choice _____!
- You have chosen wisely _____!
- Wisdom is a quality I admire so much. Thank you for choosing to do right.
- You made a wise choice, just like _____
(name a wise Bible character you have read about, such as Daniel).

Memory verses

Memorizing Scripture with your children helps God's Spirit bring about lasting change. Choose a verse that your children can learn over the course of your lesson and aim to review the verse at least once every day.

Psalm 119:1-3 "Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord! Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, who seek Him with their whole heart, who also do no wrong, but walk in His ways!"

Psalm 119:9 "How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to Your word."

Psalm 119:66 "Teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I believe in Your commandments."

Psalm 119:73 "Your hands have made and fashioned me; give me understanding that I may learn Your commandments."

Psalm 119:125 "I am Your servant; give me understanding, that I may know Your testimonies!"

Psalm 119:133 "Keep steady my steps according to Your promise, and let no iniquity get dominion over me."

Proverbs 1:7 "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction."

Proverbs 2:6 "For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding . . ."

Proverbs 3:13-14 "Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding, for the gain from her is better than gain from silver and her profit better than gold."

Proverbs 3:35 "The wise will inherit honor, but fools get disgrace."

Proverbs 4:7 "The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom, and whatever you get, get insight."

Proverbs 9:9 "Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning."

Proverbs 10:8 "The wise of heart will receive commandments, but a babbling fool will come to ruin."

Proverbs 10:13 "On the lips of him who has understanding, wisdom is found, but a rod is for the back of him who lacks sense."

Proverbs 14:6 "A scoffer seeks wisdom in vain, but knowledge is easy for a man of understanding."

Proverbs 15:14 “The heart of him who has understanding seeks knowledge, but the mouths of fools feed on folly.”

Daniel 12:3 “And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.”

James 1:5 “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.”

James 3:13 “Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom.”

James 3:17 “But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.”

Kick-off craft

Plan to do this kick-off craft early in your lesson on discernment. You will work together to make a poster showing wise food choices.

Wise food choices poster

Directions

You will need the following supplies:

- poster paper
- felt-tip markers
- glue
- pictures from magazines or flyers.

Here's how to make your poster:

1 Begin by helping your children cut out pictures of food. Also have them cut out pictures of non-edibles that could be poisonous, like detergent, bleach or glue. (Another option for this activity is to contrast healthy food with junk food.)

2 Mark a line down the middle of your poster. At the top of the left column draw a poison symbol

(a skull and crossbones) or another suitable symbol to indicate items that are not good to eat. At the top of the right column, draw a checkmark indicating food that is good to eat.

3 Next, have your children practice being discerning: let them paste each of their pictures in the appropriate column on the poster.

4 Write the memory verse you have selected in the column with the “good food” pictures and tell your children that you are writing the verse on the “wise choice” side of the poster as a reminder that we get wise when we read God's Word.

5 While you complete your poster, use the discussion questions below to help explain to your children that we eat food to keep our bodies healthy and that we shouldn't ever eat anything that might harm our bodies.

6 Close by praying with your children, asking God to give them wisdom so they can tell the difference between right and wrong. When “poisonous” (sinful) attitudes and actions show up during your study on discernment, refer to the poster and ask the child involved what side of the poster their choice belongs on.

Questions for discussion

1. Why do we eat food?
2. Why shouldn't we eat _____? (Name something that's not food.)
3. How do you know what's good to eat, and what's not good to eat?
4. Deciding what to eat is just one of many choices we make each day. What other kinds of choices do you often have to make?
5. Can you think of some times when you've had to decide between doing something good, or doing something harmful?

Key concepts

Food gives us energy to play and work. Food also

provides nutrients that keep our bodies operating properly. We wouldn't ever want to harm our bodies by eating anything that isn't good for our bodies. Just as parents teach children what is safe to eat and what is unsafe to eat, God teaches us how to tell the difference between right and wrong. God calls this "wisdom" or "discernment." In James 1:5 God says He wants to give us wisdom. We gain wisdom from God by reading the Bible and learning how God wants us to behave.

Relevant Scripture

James 1:5 "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him."

Bible stories

Choose one or more Bible stories that are appropriate for your children. If the Bible passage is too complex for your children, paraphrase the story yourself or use the summary provided under "key concepts."

Wisest of the wise guys

Read 1 Kings 3:5-15 or 2 Chronicles 1:7-12.

Questions for discussion

1. If you were granted one wish and could ask for anything in the world, what would you wish for?
2. What did Solomon ask God for?
3. Did this please God?
4. What did God do for Solomon?
5. Is there anything you want to ask God for today?

Key concepts

God appeared to Solomon in a dream and asked Solomon what he would like God to give him. Solomon told God that he needed wisdom to govern God's people, the people of Israel. God was very pleased with Solomon's request and told him that because he had asked for wisdom and not riches or honour, that He would give him a wise and discerning heart, as well as other blessings. God said that He

would give Solomon so much wisdom, wealth and honour that Solomon would be greater than any king who had lived before him.

The Bible says in James 1:5 "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him." If we ask for wisdom, God will give it to us too! God is pleased when we ask for wisdom, just as He was pleased with Solomon.

Another really wise guy

Read Daniel 2:1-46.

Questions for discussion

1. Can you tell me what I dreamt last night?
2. Who does know what I dreamt last night?
3. When you're having a hard time knowing right from wrong, who should you go to for help?
4. Why did Daniel praise God?
5. Who does Daniel give credit for giving him insight about the king's dream?

Key concepts

King Nebuchadnezzar had a strange dream that worried him greatly and he wanted to know what it meant. He needed to be sure the wise men of Babylon were telling the truth about what his dream meant and not just making something up. So to make sure the wise men really did have remarkable insight, King Nebuchadnezzar would not tell them what his dream was about. He expected them to know what it was without being told.

But as it turned out, none of the wise men could tell the king what his dream was about, so they could not tell the king what it meant either. On hearing this, King Nebuchadnezzar was not at all happy with the wise men, and he issued a decree that all the wise men be killed, including Daniel and his friends.

When Daniel heard about this and learned that he and his friends would be killed too, Daniel asked King Nebuchadnezzar if he could have some time to find

out what the king's dream was and what it meant. Daniel then went to his friends and asked them to pray with him, asking that God would show Daniel what the king's dream was and its meaning.

During the night God did show Daniel what the dream was and what it meant. When Daniel went to the king to tell him the dream and the interpretation, Daniel made it very clear that God had revealed the mystery to him. The king was amazed and said to Daniel, **“Truly your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery”** (Daniel 2:47).

Daniel's story helps show how wise and powerful God is. It's encouraging to know we can go to an all-powerful and all-knowing God for help and advice, instead of depending on our own wisdom.

Not-so-wise gals

Read **Matthew 25:1-13**.

Questions for discussion

1. How do we prepare our house if a special guest is coming?
2. How can we be ready for Jesus' return?
3. How would we feel if Jesus came back and walked in when we were fighting or doing something wrong?

Key concepts

Jesus told a story about a wedding banquet. He told how five young women came to the wedding well prepared by bringing lamps, plus extra oil for their lamps.

Five other young women also came to the wedding and they brought lamps full of oil too, but they didn't bring extra oil for refilling their lamps.

The bridegroom took a long time to come and while they were waiting, the lamps burned out of oil. The young women who had brought extra oil were able to refill their lamps, but those who had not brought extra had to go and buy some more.

When the bridegroom came, only the five who came prepared were able to go in to the wedding feast. The women who had not brought extra oil missed going in, because they had gone away to buy oil.

Jesus told the story of the wedding banquet to remind people to be ready for His return at any time.

For us, living here and now, we could think of the story in this way: When we go to a special show or parade we will often go early to get good seats, then spend time waiting for the show to begin. No one goes away or falls asleep, because they are eagerly awaiting the performance. When Jesus returns to earth everyone will see Him come. It will be the most exciting show ever (Matthew 24:30-31), and Jesus wants us to be ready for it.

The story about the maidens and their lamps is a good reminder that each day we need to live as though Jesus were with us every moment of the day – because He is – and He wants us to always be doing our best for Him.

Older isn't always wiser

Note: Before you begin, share this background to Job's story:

Job was a very godly man. He lived righteously and God blessed him with a family and with many servants to help him take care of all of his animals and property. When bad things started to happen to Job and his family, his friends began to list reasons why they thought the bad things were happening to Job. The Bible records the advice given to Job by Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar. When these older men had finished speaking, Elihu asked if he could speak too (Job 32:4).

(See Job 32-37 for Elihu's complete discourse.)

Read **Job 32:4-12**, **Proverbs 20:11** and **1 Timothy 4:12**.

Questions for discussion

1. When did Elihu speak?
2. Why did he wait until the others had finished talking?
3. Who did Elihu say gives men understanding?

4. Has a child older than you ever been unkind to you?
5. Just because a child is older, does that mean they know more than you do about right and wrong?

Key concepts

In Job 42 we read about Elihu, who waited for the older men to finish speaking before he spoke. This shows that Elihu respected the older men, but he was not afraid to say why he did not agree with what they said. Elihu acknowledged that it is God who gives men understanding (Job 42:8). At the end of the book of Job, God says the three older men had not spoken what was right, but God was not displeased with what Elihu said (Job 42:7-9). This story is an example of how younger people can be wise.

It's easy for young children to think that "older means wiser." We do learn more as we grow older, but just because a person has accumulated more knowledge doesn't mean they always make wise choices. There are foolish adults and wise adults, just as there are foolish children and wise children. Children should not be pressured into doing something they think is wrong just because the person pressuring them is older or bigger.

The Bible says that young people should not let anyone look down on them because they are young. Rather, young people are to be an example to others in showing love, and in how they speak and behave (1 Timothy 4:12). Children can set good examples by being kind and loving, and by showing good manners – for example, by saying please and thank you.

Relevant Scripture

1 Timothy 4:12 "Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity."

Proverbs 20:11 "Even a child makes himself known by his acts, by whether his conduct is pure and upright."

Listen to the quiet voice

Read all or part of 1 Samuel 3.

Questions for discussion

1. Have Mom or Dad ever woken you up by calling your name?
2. What did you say when they called you?
3. Did you know that sometimes God speaks right out loud?
4. When you are about to do something wrong, do you sometimes feel guilty even before you do it?

Key concepts

Samuel was a boy who had a very special job. He was a helper for the priest who worked in the temple serving God. The priest who was training Samuel was named Eli.

One night while they were sleeping, Samuel kept hearing a voice calling his name. Each time Samuel went to Eli and asked if he had called. Finally Eli realized it must be God talking to Samuel, so Eli told Samuel to answer, "Speak, Lord, for your servant hears." Samuel obeyed, and God spoke to him in a voice that Samuel could hear and understand. As Samuel continued to grow up, he was careful to keep listening to God and God continued to speak to him.

God still speaks to people today. Sometimes He speaks out loud, sometimes He speaks through the Bible, sometimes He speaks through other people, and sometimes He speaks through our thoughts. We need to practice listening to God's voice, especially when we need wisdom. Another way to practice listening to God's voice is to read a verse from the Bible and then be quiet and wait to see if God gives you an idea to pray about related to the Bible verse you read.

The path to freedom

Read Matthew 7:13-14.

Questions for discussion

1. Have you ever been on a walk where you came to a fork in the path and had to choose which way to go?
2. How did you decide which path to take?

3. What do you think the Bible means when it talks about the “narrow path”?

Read **Psalm 119:104** and **Proverbs 8:13**.

4. What does God’s Word say we should hate?

Read **Psalm 119:9-11,30,32**.

5. Can you think of a time when you had to choose between doing right or wrong?
6. What do you think the Bible means when it says we should set our hearts on God’s laws?
7. Why should we follow God’s commands?

Key concepts

David wrote in Psalm 119:9-11 that young people can learn to do what is right by reading and memorizing God’s Word. In life there are two paths, and every person chooses to walk on one or the other. One path leads to life (a life lived the way God wants us to live, also known as “God’s way”) and the other path leads to destruction (a life lived to please ourselves instead of God, also known as “my way”).

God makes it very clear that He hates evil. The more we understand about following and obeying God, the more we begin to hate sin too. The result of choosing to follow God’s way is freedom – being free from the control of our sinful nature.

Relevant Scripture

Psalm 119:9-11 “How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to Your word. With my whole heart I seek You; let me not wander from Your commandments! I have stored up Your word in my heart, that I might not sin against You.”

Creative discipline

Here’s an idea to help you encourage discernment in your child.

Biblical basis

Proverbs 29:15 “The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.”

Proverbs 13:24 “Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him.”

Suggested disciplinary action

Explain to your child that you love him or her and want the best for them in the future; this means that you must guide them by disciplining them when they make unwise choices.

The choice of discipline is up to you, but as you implement it, assure your child that they are being disciplined because you believe that *not* disciplining them will set them up for disappointment later in life.

Explain “disappointment” with a simple example such as, “If you don’t learn to be kind to others, then it will be hard for you to make friends in the future.”

Affirmation

Remind your child that because they made an unwise choice, you were required to discipline them. Then affirm your child by incorporating one of the verses below into a prayer asking God to put His Spirit of wisdom, knowledge and understanding on your child so that they can be wise in the choices they make.

Relevant Scripture

Isaiah 11:2 “And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.”

Colossians 1:9 “And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding . . .”

Hands-on options

These fun ideas require very little preparation, making it easy for you to share some simple but memorable lessons with your kids. Choose just one or two ideas that will appeal to your children.

Discerning noses and taste buds

fun with food

Have fun conducting some blind smell or taste tests with your children. You will need strips of cloth to use as blindfolds and various food items to sample.

- 1 Begin by explaining to your kids that when they identify foods based on their smell or taste it is called “discerning.” Tell them that some smells and tastes are easier to discern than others are.
- 2 Next, have your children put on blindfolds and present them with different foods to taste and identify. Start with some easy to identify tastes such as peanut butter, chocolate, banana, root beer, apple or orange juice. Then you can progress to more challenging taste tests such as 7 Up pop versus Sprite, corn syrup versus Aunt Jemima syrup, and dried cranberries versus raisins.
- 3 For smell testing, begin with easy to discern smells like vanilla, bread, banana or a cooked hotdog. Your harder to identify items could be a sliced orange, sandwich meat or cheese.
- 4 After your identification game, use the discussion questions to talk about how discernment is important in life.
- 5 Close in prayer, asking for God’s help in discerning right from wrong.

Questions for discussion

- When do you need discernment?.
- Who teaches kids the difference between right and wrong?
- How do parents decide on family rules of right and wrong?
- Which two smells or tastes did you have a hard time identifying?
- Besides asking your parents, how can you decide what is right or wrong?

Key concepts

Every day people need to decide between what’s right and what’s wrong. Sometimes telling between right and wrong is very obvious. Other times it’s more difficult to discern what’s right and what’s wrong.

When children are young, parents teach their kids what actions are right and what actions are wrong, and typically parents expect their children to follow a set of family rules. Ideally these rules are based on what God says in the Bible.

If their parents are around, kids can depend on their parents to help them decide between what’s right and what’s wrong, and what’s good or evil. God has also given us the Bible to help us understand the difference between righteousness and sin. In addition to the Bible, God gives us His Holy Spirit to serve as our counsellor or guide to help us to become discerning and wise.

Relevant Scripture

Job 34:2-4 “Hear my words, you wise men, and give ear to me, you who know; for the ear tests words as the palate tastes food. Let us choose what is right; let us know among ourselves what is good.”

2 Timothy 3:16-17 “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.”

John 14:26 “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”

Temptation alley

drive time / any time

Play this game to give your children the chance to practice discernment in everyday situations.

To introduce the game, explain that making discerning choices in life is not always easy. Sometimes what’s right and wrong is obvious, but other times it’s not so clear.

As you share each scenario with your kids, let them decide which answer is the right course of action.

Continue with the game as you wish, making up your own scenarios. Take time to discuss your children’s answers.

When you've finished playing the game, use the discussion questions to guide you into a conversation about peer pressure.

Scenario 1: Imagine we are walking in an alley and a family we know from church approaches us and asks us to help them rob a bank. They offer to split the money saying, "You won't even be stealing. All you have to do is delay the police when they arrive by telling them your child has gone missing."

What should we do?

- a) Agree to help because we could use the extra money to take a great family holiday.
- b) Say no and remind the other family that the Bible tells us that we are not to steal or lie.
- c) Tell them we are already rich and suggest they ask a different family.
- d) Rob the bank and give your family's half of the money to the church so God can use it.

Scenario 2: You are playing at the park with one of your friends. You see another kid you know approaching, and your friend whispers, "Don't let them play with us."

What do you do?

- a) Ignore the kid and pretend you didn't hear their request to join in.
- b) Go home.
- c) Tell your friend it would be nice to include the other child.
- d) Tell the kid who wants to play that you are very sick and they wouldn't want to catch your germs.

Scenario 3: You are at a friend's house and your moms are chatting in the next room. You and your friend are in the kitchen and he (or she) suggests that you take some gummy worms from the treat drawer.

What do you do?

- a) Go along with your friend's idea because you love candy.
- b) Go and ask your mom if it would be okay to have a treat.
- c) Tell your friend that you only eat the worms if they are covered in dirt.
- d) Tell your friend you have a stomach ache and can't eat one.

Scenario 4: You and your brother / sister / friend are playing together in the playroom. While you are playing make believe, your brother / sister / friend begins to make the toys use language that you know is not allowed in your home (e.g. stupid, shut up, ugly, fatty).

What do you do?

- a) Play along because it's really the toys that are using the bad words, not you.
- b) Ask them to quit using words that your parents do not allow you to say in real life.
- c) Suggest that you all quit playing and go have a snack instead.
- d) Yell and tell your mom or dad what's happening.

Scenario 5: One of your brothers /sisters / friends is angry and pouting. Your other sibling / friend whispers to you that the pouter looks like the cartoon monkey you saw earlier in the day.

What do you do?

- a) Laugh quietly about it.
- b) Tell the one pouting to go look in the mirror.
- c) Imitate the "monkey lips" and make monkey noises.
- d) Pray and ask God to give you self-control.

Questions for discussion

- Why do you think kids do wrong, even when they know it's wrong?
- Would you rather be known for doing right or doing wrong?
- Is it easier for kids to talk each other into doing wrong, or doing right?
- How can you help another kid do what's right?
- If you are unsure if something is right or wrong, what should you do?
- What qualities do you think you should look for in a friend?

Key concepts

Life can be like walking through an alley where other people are offering us tempting opportunities to sin. If a kid chooses to hang out with kids who are constantly encouraging them to do wrong, they will eventually get into trouble.

On the other hand, choosing wise friends helps us stay out of trouble. The Bible warns us about this too. In Proverbs, God says we become like the people we are friends with (Proverbs 13:20). Given that fact, it makes sense to choose friends who will encourage us to do what's right.

The best way to tell the difference between right and wrong is to ask God. Parents can also help kids make wise choices, but an even better idea is to walk so close to God that you get to know His voice well enough to avoid temptation and harm. If you are in a situation where you don't know what to do, you should pray and check with your parents.

Relevant Scripture

Psalm 119:133 “Keep steady my steps according to Your promise, and let no iniquity get dominion over me.”

Proverbs 13:20 “Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.”

Proverbs 16:29 “A man of violence entices his neighbor and leads him in a way that is not good.”

Tempting tales

drive time / any time

Tell your children a story about a time when you resisted peer pressure as a kid, and why you're glad you did. If you don't have a story of your own, here's one from Laurel Kirchner, author of the *Kids of Integrity* lessons, from her own teen years:

When I was in grade eight, there was extreme peer pressure to smoke cigarettes. Every lunch hour my friends and I would walk uptown and stop in at the bakery. As we walked, my friends would smoke and invite me to join them. Every day they pressured me to have a cigarette with them and every day I'd say, “No thanks.” In our group of five friends, I was the only one who didn't smoke. I took it as a challenge to do the opposite of what the crowd wanted me to do.

My parents had told me that smoking would harm my body and that I shouldn't do it. In obeying my parents, I was trusting that what they had taught me was right, even though all my friends were choosing to do the opposite.

Today I have a healthy, strong body and I don't have a costly and harmful habit. Many people who started smoking when they were younger will tell you they regret the day they smoked their first cigarette. Am I ever glad I didn't!

Relevant Scripture

Proverbs 3:5 “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.”

Psalm 119:9-11 “How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to Your word. With my whole heart I seek You; let me not wander from Your commandments! I have stored up Your word in my heart, that I might not sin against You.”

Our conscience is our compass

science with a twist

For this activity, you will need a compass and a map. The goal is to discuss how a person's conscience can work like a compass when the person chooses to listen to God's directions.

- 1 Begin by showing your child a map of your city or town. Point out how the map is marked with the directions north, south, east and west. Show your child some neighbourhood landmarks and ask them to determine whether those landmarks are north, south, east or west of your house.
- 2 Next, show your child how to use the compass by lining up the floating arrow on the compass with the “N” for north. Based on the reading from the compass, have your child tell you which direction is which, from inside your home. Help your child identify the direction of the back yard, the front street and your neighbours’ houses.
- 3 When your child has had sufficient opportunity to explore using the compass, use the questions for discussion to relate their compass experience to discerning right from wrong and finding direction from God.
- 4 Pray with your children and ask God to put on them the same Spirit that rested on Jesus so they have wisdom and understanding.

Note: If your children are older and love outdoor activities, you may want to expand this activity by going geocaching or orienteering.

Questions for discussion

- What is a compass used for?
- How is a conscience like a compass?
- When is a compass useless?
- When is a conscience no longer useful?
- How can we deaden our consciences?
- How can we decide what is right and what is wrong?

Key concepts

A compass points in the direction of north and helps hikers find their way to their destination. But a broken compass is of no use to a hiker and can even send them off course. God gives us an inner voice called a conscience. It’s the quiet prompting we hear inside of us that God uses to encourage us to

do what is right. A conscience is like a compass that gives us direction in the choices we make, showing which choice is the right way to go.

A person who believes that God’s commands in the Bible show how we should live and act has an inner compass that is functioning correctly. A person who has a “faulty” conscience is someone who makes decisions based on what *they* think is right, rather than using God’s Word to decide right from wrong.

If we listen to our conscience, our conscience stays sensitive to leading from God’s Spirit. However, if we constantly ignore the prompting of God’s Spirit through our conscience, it becomes “deadened” and we begin to find it easier and easier to ignore God’s guidance.

As you get older, you will have to make more and more choices on your own about what is right and wrong. It’s important that you start practicing now, building a habit of “running things by God” and asking His Spirit to show you what is a good choice, and what is not.

Relevant Scripture

Isaiah 11:1-2 “There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from His roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.”

James 1:5 “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.”

James 3:13 “Who is wise and understanding among you? By his conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom.”

Forbidden fruit

fun with food

Create a “temptation in the garden of Eden” experience for your children, either indoors or outdoors. You will need small bowls and a variety of sliced fruit, with each type of fruit presented in a different bowl.

Call your children together for snack time. Give them each a small plastic bowl and invite them to select fruit for a snack. Let them know, however, that one bowl of fruit is “forbidden” and they cannot choose from that bowl. (The forbidden fruit may be a favourite, or an unfamiliar fruit.)

As your children go off to fill their bowls, this is your cue to leave. Let your children know that you are leaving for a few minutes to start a load of laundry, use the washroom etc., but will return shortly to pray and eat with them. Give them a minute or two to collect their snack.

Watch your children from a distance, unseen. On your return, invite your children to enjoy their snacks as you talk through the discussion questions:

Questions for discussion

- Did you think it was strange that I asked you not to eat any of the _____? (*Name the fruit that was off limits.*)
- Were you tempted to sneak a taste of the forbidden fruit?
- Would it have been harder to obey if I had put out your favourite cookies and asked you not to eat them?
- Imagine that a friendly furry creature suddenly appeared and told you to eat the forbidden fruit because it would give you “mommy power” or “daddy power” – the power to decide when to go to bed, how much TV to watch, when to do chores, and what to eat for dessert and snacks. Would you still have resisted temptation?
- What Bible story does this remind you of? (*Briefly review the story in Genesis 3.*)
- Does God want you to obey your parents at all times, or only when the request seems reasonable?
- In the Bible story of Adam and Eve, it was a snake

who talked them into disobeying God. Who in your life might tempt you to disobey God, or your parents?

- What should Eve have told the snake?
- Who can help you when you are tempted?
- What can you say to friends who try to convince you to do wrong?

Key concepts

In life, sometimes it will be easy to say no to temptation and at other times it will be much harder. Temptation can be even more difficult to resist when another person is trying to convince you that the sin isn’t really wrong. This is what happened to Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. A snake tempted Eve, but you may have friends who try to get you to go along with them in doing something wrong.

It’s good to have a plan in place ahead of time so you know what to say and how to avoid giving in to peer pressure. The first thing you should do is ask God to give you strength and wisdom so you can make the right choice. The prayer doesn’t need to be long. It can be as simple as *God, please help me make a righteous choice.* You can also practice what to say to your friends. Here are some ideas.

- *You can go ahead and do what you want, but I’m going to make my own choice.*
- *You may be comfortable doing that, but I’m not.*
- *This is my body and I’ll do what I believe is right for me.*
- *You make your choice and I’ll make mine.*
- *Sorry, I just can’t go along with that. Let’s _____ instead (suggest an alternative activity).*
- *I’m not sure if I am allowed to do that. I’ll have to check with my parents first.*
- *God is watching and that’s not something I want Him to see me doing.*

Relevant Scripture

Genesis 3:1 “Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, ‘Did God actually say, “You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?”’ ”

I Corinthians 10:13 “No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation He will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.”

Wisdom boot camp

physical activity

When you're on a walk, running around at the park or out bike riding, talk about the concept of physical training for fitness and how we also need to “train” or exercise for spiritual growth.

You may also wish to create a learning opportunity by conducting a mini boot camp for your kids. For even more of a challenge, try doing the spiritual growth “exercise” of saying your memory verse while you are exercising physically.

Here are some suggested conditioning exercises for your boot camp. Search online for specific instructions for each exercise and plan to alternate strengthening exercises with cardiovascular challenges:

- crunches or mini sit-ups
- running laps or stairs
- push-ups
- tuck jumps
- triceps dips
- star jumps
- wall sits
- side-to-side jumps over a line
- plank exercises
- front-to-back jumps over a line
- side bridge exercises
- jumping jacks
- lunges
- burpees.

In the days to come, when you notice unpleasant behaviour in one of your children, remind your

child that it's time to do some “spiritual training” by praying and/or reviewing your memory verse.

Questions for discussion

- What do we need to grow physically?
- According to the Bible, in what ways did Jesus grow? (See Luke 2:52.)
- How do we grow in wisdom?
- What do you think it means to grow “in favour with God and man”?
- How can you grow in favour with God and man?
- Do you think God is more concerned about our spiritual growth or our physical growth?

Key concepts

The Bible compares the value of physical training with the importance of spiritual training. It says physical training is of some value, but godliness has value now and forever. The Bible says that Jesus grew in physical stature and in wisdom, and in favour with God and man. This means that God was pleased with Him and that other people also appreciated the way Jesus acted.

We can grow in wisdom too by spending time with wise people, by reading the Bible and by listening to God. God is happy when we show our love for Him by obeying His Word. Others feel respected and loved when we treat them as we would like to be treated ourselves.

Relevant Scripture

Luke 2:52 “And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.”

John 14:23 “Jesus answered him, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.’ ”

1 Timothy 4:8 “. . . for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.”

King for a day

drama / role play

Read aloud the story of King Solomon's demonstration of great wisdom in 1 Kings 3:16-28, and have your children dress up and act out the story as you read. Let them take turns playing the part of Solomon and the two women who were fighting over the baby. To add drama, make a crown and a sword and use a doll to represent the baby.

Each time you act out the story, emphasize the final verse, "And all Israel heard of the judgement that the king had rendered, and they stood in awe of the king, because they perceived that the wisdom of God was in him to do justice."

Invite your children to come up with scenarios from daily life where we need God's wisdom. Close your playtime by thanking God for being a God of wisdom, righteousness and justice. Ask Him to share His wisdom with each of your family members as well.

Relevant Scripture

1 Kings 10:9 "Blessed be the Lord your God, who has delighted in you and set you on the throne of Israel! Because the Lord loved Israel forever, He has made you king, that you may execute justice and righteousness."

Psalms 33:5 "He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the steadfast love of the Lord."

James 1:5 "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him."

Cartoon critics

drive time / any time

If your children have the maturity to evaluate television programs, have them practice discerning with you which cartoons and other shows are okay to watch and which ones are not acceptable. Use your discussion to establish some family standards in terms of media consumption.

Here are some ideas for standards you might want to adopt:

- We will not view shows with characters who speak disrespectfully to each other.
- We will not view shows with characters who are deceitful or lie.
- We will not view shows featuring children who do not honour their parents.
- We will not view shows featuring characters who do not respect authority.
- We will not view shows showing violence or cruelty to people or animals.
- We will not view shows that dishonour God or take His name in vain.
- We will remember that shows and advertisements can contain subtle messages that do not agree with what is taught in the Bible.
- We will remember that the advertisements on TV can tempt us to be discontent or greedy, or to desire unhealthy foods.

You may also decide to routinely pray as a family before watching TV or DVDs, asking God to provide wisdom, insight, discernment and understanding.

Relevant Scripture

Psalms 19:14 "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer."

Proverbs 3:31-32 "Do not envy a man of violence and do not choose any of his ways, for the devious person is an abomination to the Lord, but the upright are in His confidence."

Proverbs 6:16-19 "There are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to Him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers."

Playdough pressure

creative crafts

Show your kids first-hand how they can be influenced by peer pressure! You will need a toy stuffed rabbit (or another stuffed toy) and some playdough. Here are the steps to follow:

- 1 Join your kids while they are playing with playdough and make yourself a snowman with a long, carrot-like nose.
- 2 Next, play the part of a talking stuffed rabbit. Have the rabbit come and talk to your children, admiring their work and making a few suggestions for small changes or additions.
- 3 Then have the rabbit inspect your snowman for a moment. Make the rabbit tell the snowman that he (the snowman) should have long ears, a puffy tail and a short, twitchy nose with whiskers. Continue to have the rabbit give instructions about how the snowman should look, and re-mould your snowman until he looks exactly like a rabbit instead of a snowman. Say phrases like, “A little more pressure here” and “A little more pressure there,” while you are shaping the dough.
- 4 After your children have had fun seeing the snowman transformed into a rabbit, explain that peer pressure is like that: friends can pressure each other to change. Explain that this is fine if it’s positive peer pressure where friends encourage each other to do what is right, but it’s not good when friends pressure each other to do wrong or to sin.
- 5 Talk together about ways friends can pressure each other in good ways and in bad ways.
- 6 Now give your children a chance to experience peer pressure from the rabbit. Have each child make a snowman, then have the rabbit come along and encourage them to make their snowman look like a rabbit instead. Let your children practice telling the rabbit that they like their snowman and that they prefer to leave him the way he is.

- 7 Finally, have the rabbit suggest to your kids that they make fun of each other’s snowmen or rabbits. A little later, have the rabbit urge the children to disobey some of your family rules, perhaps by suggesting they throw playdough in the house, or demand junk food for lunch.
- 8 Give your children a chance to respond to the rabbit on their own and observe their responses. After a little while, have everyone join in in response to the rabbit by saying in unison this slightly modified version of Psalm 119:115: Away from us, you evil rabbit, that we may keep the commandments of our God!
- 9 Pray to end your time together, asking God to give you discernment and the strength to exert positive peer pressure instead of allowing yourselves to be shaped by negative peer pressure.

Relevant Scripture

Psalm 119:115 “Depart from me, you evildoers, that I may keep the commandments of my God.”

Plugged in to God’s power

fun with food

Secretly unplug the microwave, toaster or toaster oven. Then offer your children a snack or meal that will need to be prepared using the unplugged appliance. Invite your children to help figure out what the problem is, and don’t intervene until they’ve had a chance to investigate and make some suggestions.

Explain that the appliance is not working because it’s not connected to its power source.

Now read Ephesians 6:10 and work through the discussion questions to help your children understand that our power source is God! If we “plug in” to Him by praying and asking for help, God can help us make wise choices.

Close by praying this prayer from Ephesians for your children:

Dear God, I ask that You, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, will give _____ and _____ your Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that they may know You better. I pray also that the eyes of their hearts would be opened to understand the incomparably great power You make available to us (Ephesians 1:17-19). Amen.

Questions for discussion

- Why didn't the appliance work when we wanted to use it?
- What powers the appliance?
- Where is our power source when we want to discern right from wrong?
- How do we access God's power?

Relevant Scripture

Ephesians 1:16-19 "I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which He has called you, what are the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His great might . . ."

Seeking wisdom treasure hunt

physical activity

Create a treasure hunt by printing out the Scripture verses included here and hiding them around your home as clues.

You'll also need a "treasure" for your kids to discover at the end of the hunt that suggests the tremendous value of God's Word. Gold-covered chocolate coins make good treasure. Dried fruit, granola bites or mini cookie packets are good alternatives. If you prefer not to use food, real money can be the treasure, or use a children's book containing Biblical wisdom.

Here are the Scripture "clues" to print out and hide:

- Keep this clue to read at the beginning of the hunt: **Proverbs 3:21-22**
- Hide this clue on a necklace: **Proverbs 8:18-19**
- Hide this clue in a bowl of fruit: **Proverbs 8:20-21**
- Hide this clue on a path or walkway leading to your house: **Proverbs 8:10-11**
- Hide this clue in your wallet or purse: **Proverbs 8:33-34**
- Hide this clue in a doorway: **Psalms 119:103**
- Hide this clue under a honey pot or bowl of sugar: **Psalms 19:9-11** and **Psalms 119:127-128**
- Also hide your choice of treasure, for the final reward, with your Bible.

To begin your treasure hunt, explain to your children that you'll be reading out verses from the Bible that talk about wisdom. Their job is to listen for the words in the Bible verses that describe wisdom; these words will be hints to help them find where the next clue is hidden.

Use this parent's clue guide so you know when and how to provide assistance:

Parent's guide

To start the hunt, read aloud Proverbs 3:21-22 "My son, do not lose sight of these – keep sound wisdom and discretion, and they will be life for your soul and adornment for your neck." (Give additional hints if your children need help recognizing the connection to a necklace.)

Read clue 2 (found on the necklace): Proverbs 8:18-19 "Riches and honor are with me, enduring wealth and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, even fine gold, and my yield than choice silver." (The key word is "fruit.")

Read clue 3 (found in the fruit bowl): Proverbs 8:20-21 "I walk in the way of righteousness, in the paths of

justice, granting an inheritance to those who love me, and filling their treasuries.” (The key word is “paths.”)

Read clue 4 (found on the path): Proverbs 8:10-11 “Take my instruction instead of silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold, for wisdom is better than jewels, and all that you may desire cannot compare with her. (The key words are silver and gold. Give hints to help your children discover that you keep your “silver and gold” coins in your purse or wallet.)

Read clue 5 (found in your purse or wallet): Proverbs 8:33-34 “Hear instruction and be wise, and do not neglect it. Blessed is the one who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting beside my doors.” (The key word is “doors.”)

Read clue 6 (found in the doorway): Psalm 119:103 “How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” (The key words are “honey” and “sweet.”)

Read clue 7 (found under a honey container or sugar bowl): Psalm 19:9-11 “. . . the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.” And also Psalm 119:127-128 “Therefore I love Your commandments above gold, above fine gold. Therefore I consider all Your precepts to be right; I hate every false way.” (If they need help, encourage your children to look for your Bible.)

At the conclusion of your treasure hunt, if you used a children’s book as a reward, read the book and talk about how valuable it is to gain wisdom from the Bible. Alternatively, read a story from the Bible stories section of this lesson. Finish by praying, asking God to help you love Him more than anything else.

Questions for discussion

- How much does God want us to love wisdom?
- Where can we find wisdom?

- Why do you think I hid the treasure with the Bible?

Key concepts

God wants us to love and value His Word, and to eagerly desire to learn more about Him. He wants us to seek out His wisdom every day, and to want this even more than we desire sweet treats or money.

Recommended resources

For a list of children’s stories that reinforce the theme of this lesson, consult the home page for the **discernment** lesson at Kidsofintegrity.com.