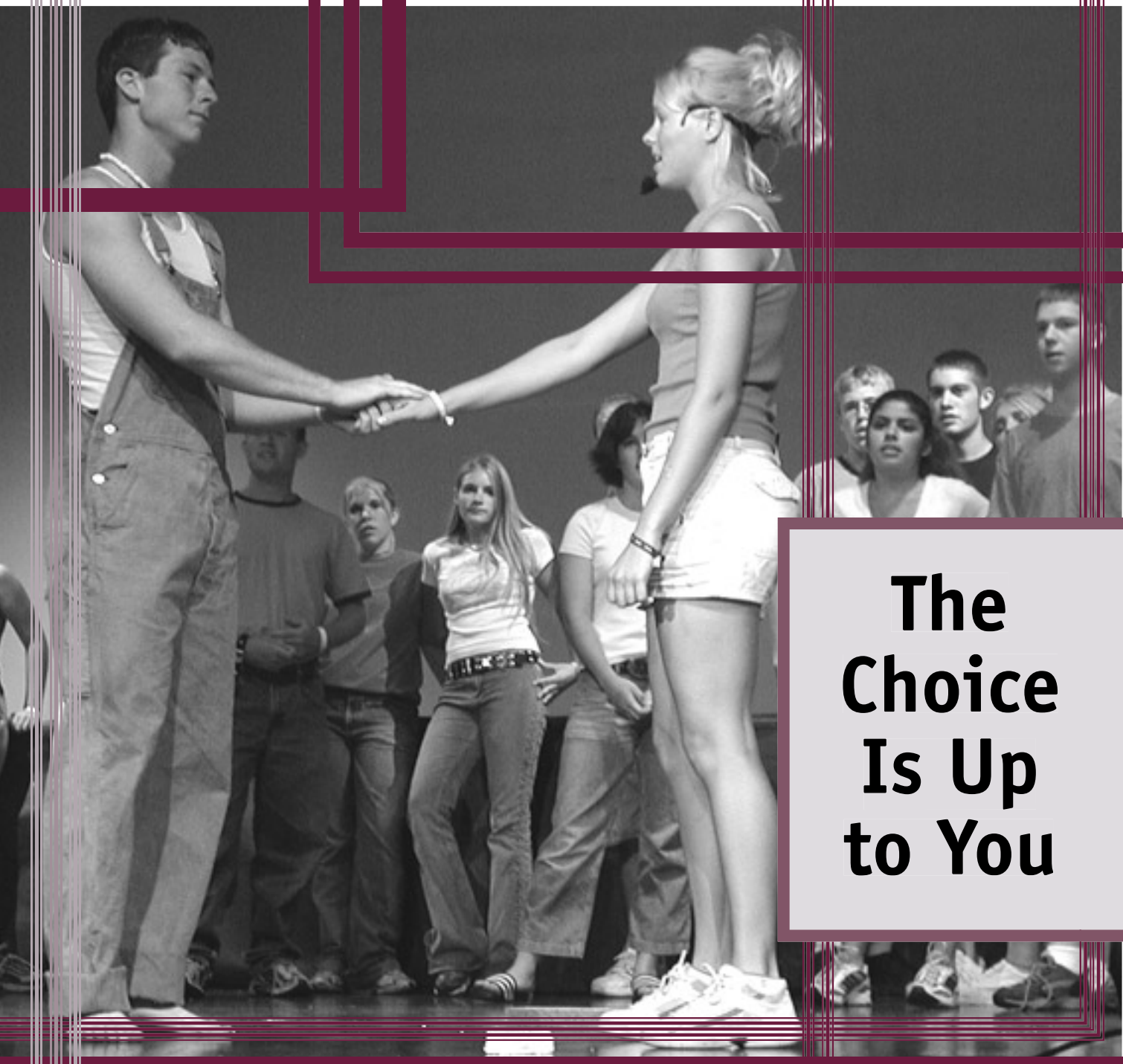


PEACE

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Empowering Youth to Be Ministers of Peace and Justice



**The
Choice
Is Up
to You**

Become Aware

Jacob starts each day with a reluctant climb out of bed, a wake-up shower, and then a quick breakfast before he heads off to school. His day will look much like any other. He will have a test in three of his classes, eat lunch with his girlfriend, and make plans with his friends for the weekend. After school he will go to play practice, work a few hours at the local cinema, and then head home for a

late night of homework. Nothing unusual, but choices abound—even a few that might be monumental for his future.

- What will he wear?
- What will he eat?
- Did he study for his tests?
- Is he prepared for play practice?
- Will he be on time for work?
- How will he react when he gets pushed around in the hallway at school and then again at the cinema by the same group of guys?

Intertwined in the essence of who we are as human beings is the desire and ability to make choices for ourselves. Even a two year old wants to choose the clothes

she wears, the food she eats, and when she sleeps. By the teen years, making choices for yourself is part of the evolution into adulthood.

The ability and freedom to make these choices is a gift from God. It is also a responsibility. To make the “right” choice is seldom a simple task, because life is *never* simple.

Choices that reflect personal values, belief systems, and goals will reward you with a sense of inner peace. Likewise, those choices that go against the life you desire to lead as a disciple of Christ, will usually result in a lack of peace for yourself and others.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

Acknowledge Responsibility

The Bible is filled with stories that illustrate the impact one choice can have on many people. Look up the following stories. Read ahead. What major choices were made, and how did those choices impact others?

Genesis 3
Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden

Genesis 37:12–36
Joseph and his brothers

Exodus 2:1–10
mother of Moses

Mark 14:43–50
Judas’s betrayal of Jesus

Acts 9:1–19
the conversion of Saul (Paul)

Joshua 24:15 NRSV

Now if you are unwilling to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.

Acquire More Understanding

Every Day, Every Way

Starting with the choice to get out of bed in the morning, create a list of simple choices you make every day.

Joe Somebody

Watch the movie *JOE SOMEBODY* with Tim Allen. Discuss the choices made throughout the movie, how they impact the life of Joe, as well as the lives of his family, friends, and strangers. If different choices had been made, what might the outcome of the movie have been?

KEEP IT LEGAL

Make sure you are licensed to show movies in public settings.

MPLC

Motion Picture Licensing
www.mplc.com

CVLI

Christian Video Licensing
www.mplc.com/index2

Major Choices

Make a list of major choices teens are faced with at this stage of life.

Feeling creative?
Act it out!

Choice and Consequences

Discuss the following situations. What are the choices available? What might be the immediate result of each choice on yourself and others? What long-term consequences could result from each choice? Only a few of the possible scenarios that face teens have been provided. Create your own situations, and share them with others. Discuss the consequences.

- You are invited to a party where alcohol will be served to minors. What are your choices? What are the possible consequences of those choices?
- There is a great stretch of road just outside of town that kids talk about all the time. Driven at a high enough speed a car will hit the hills and lift off the road, allowing the passengers to feel the sensation of weightlessness. You are the driver and your friends are begging you to “be cool” and try it. What are your choices? What are the possible consequences of those choices?
- Your parents have always made you wear a seatbelt when riding in a car with them. Now you are the driver and your friends are the passengers. What are your choices? What are the possible consequences of those choices?
- You like the way you look in a certain outfit, but you know that the jeans are not within the school dress code. What are your choices? What are the possible consequences of those choices?
- You have a very important test tomorrow, but the girl you have been wanting to date has asked you to go with her to tonight’s basketball game and out for pizza afterward. What are your choices? What are the possible consequences of those choices?
- Even though your parents say differently, you believe that you are old enough to date, choose whom you date, and make decisions about your dating life (*where to go, when to come home, whether or not to have sex*). What are your choices? What are the possible consequences of those choices?

A: age limits

B: biological makeup

C: class instructors

D:

E: From A–Z, Not My Choice!

F: There are many situations in life that greatly affect you but are not a result of any choice you have personally made.

G: Sometimes this is a result of other people’s choices and

H: sometimes it just is. Use the alphabet from A–Z to come up

I: with just such situations in which teens might find themselves.

K: Discuss the types of things that appear on your list. How

L: might one choose to live within each given situation?

Take Action

• Listed below are just a few of the thousands of choices teens are faced with on a daily basis. The consequences of these choices have the potential to change lives. When faced with important choices, it is best to have thought through them before you experience an emotional situation in which your response could be critical. Now's your chance. Think through the possible choices these topics represent. Write down your thoughts, discuss them with your parents and other adults you respect. Think about the possible consequences of each choice. How do the various choices reflect your values. What effect might they have on your future and the future of others? What would your choice be today?

school: attendance, dropout, study, college, behavior
dating/friendships: who, what you do, where you go, sex,
drugs, alcohol, smoking
breaking the law: shoplifting, speeding, seatbelts, stealing

- Invite adults from the congregation and/or community to speak to your youth group about some of the most important choices they have made in their life. How did these choices make a difference? Would they do anything different, if they were making those choices today?
- Who or what has the greatest impact on the choices you make? Are you satisfied with this fact or do you need to evaluate and make some changes? How much do current trends, media, and social status play into the choices you make?

Become an Advocate

Create a maze that people in the community can come and experience. A maze contains turns that take you to dead ends requiring the participant to turn around and make another choice.

Activity Options

MAKE A MAZE

grass & a lawn mower
paint & lawn
masking tape on floor
string & sticks
hay bales on open space
fabric or plastic hung from ceiling
rocks
pieces of wood

• Handout flyers inviting people to experience the maze.

• Encourage parents to walk through the maze with younger children. If they cannot, make sure they have another adult or teen escort so the experience remains positive.

• Set up signposts along the way. Every time there is a choice in the road, write a life choice on a signpost with possible "choices" pointing each direction.

- Go through the maze as partners. One partner is blindfolded, and the other guides. At the end, reverse who wears the blindfold, and walk the path again. Discuss the influence of guidance on the choices we make.
- Create a handout on making wise choices to be discussed by families at home.
- Provide a discussion circle at the end of the maze.

