

Making Decisions

Summary

Students practice decision making by using the We STOP'D model.

Time Frame

1 class periods of 30 minutes each

Group Size

Large Groups

Materials

Copies

- [Worksheet: "Who Makes the Decision?"](#)

Materials

75 round toothpicks and 100 miniature marshmallows for each group

Timepiece (watch, wall-clock, stopwatch) with second hand

- ["Tell What Happens If..." worksheet](#)

Music

"I've Decided" from the CD *Something Good*

"The Right Choice" from the CD *Something Good*

Vocabulary

decision-making
evaluate
incorporate
contemplate
responsibility

Background for Teachers

Lesson at a Glance

Introduction

1. Who Makes the Decision?

Strategy

2. Marshmallow Tower
3. The "We STOP'D" model

Conclusion

4. "What Happens If..."

Instructional Procedures

1. Who Makes the Decision?

When do we make decisions during the day?

Who is involved in making decisions that affect us?

Myself or "I", people together or "we", others or "they"

What does the word "responsibility" mean?

Answerable for an act, able to respond, accountable, able to be trusted

How does being responsible affect the types of decisions a person can make?

How can one student be responsible?

How can two students together be responsible?

How can a group of students be responsible?

When does one student make "I" decisions?

"I" decisions should be ones appropriate for students in the second grade.

When does a small group of students make "We" decisions?

"We" decisions are ones that students make with others, sharing the responsibility with other students or other adults as appropriate.

When do other people make decisions for us?

"They" decisions are ones that parents, teachers, and other adults make for students because of health, safety, and welfare considerations (e.g., school fire-drill procedure, home safety rules, etc.).

Ask the questions below and have the students respond by:

(1) Snapping fingers for "I."

(2) clapping hands for "We."

(3) patting legs/lap for "They."

Help students identify three groups of people who make decisions: I, We, and They.

What time do you go to bed at night?

What clothes should you wear to school today?

With whom will you sit at school today?

What game will you play at recess today?

With whom will you eat lunch today?

What time will you eat lunch at school?

Where will you go after school today?

When will you do your homework tonight?

What movies can you see?

With whom will you play on the weekends?

For extra practice, distribute the "Who Makes the Decision" worksheet.

2. "Marshmallow Tower"

Jackson, Tom. *Activities That Teach*: Red Rock Pub., 2003. (Used with permission)

Marshmallow Tower Activity: (20 minutes plus discussion time)

Concept: Sometimes the decisions we make are not ours alone to make. There might need to be a group of people involved. You need to know how decisions are made in a group, and the dynamics that take place. Our ability to influence a group decision will play a major role in our staying out of trouble, since many of our troubles occur when we are in groups and not by ourselves.

Divide the class into groups of six. Give each group a handful of toothpicks and a pile of miniature marshmallows. Groups may get more marshmallows and toothpicks from the teacher if they run out. Explain that the object of the activity is to have each small group build the tallest freestanding tower. Groups will have ten minutes to complete their tower. The tower must stand by itself for fifteen seconds.

Judge the towers that stood for fifteen seconds to see which one is the tallest.

How did the group decide what the tower was going to look like?

How did the group decide on the plan for building?

How successful was the plan?

How did the plan change as the group worked?

How was the group process comfortable?

Who was the leader? How was the leader selected?

What would you change next time?

What can this activity tell us about making decisions?

What was your role with the group in the tower building?

What did your teammates do?

Who was left out of the process?

3. The We STOP'D Model

Process the "Marshmallow Tower" activity using the six-step We STOP'D model learned in lesson 5: We STOP'D.

The "We" means that we are a group. We have the power to make decisions that affect our group. What kinds of decisions can we make when we build a marshmallow tower?

The "S" stands for "stop" or chill. Sometimes, the group must stop what it is doing and make a new choice. When did you decide that you needed to build the tower in a different way?

The "T" stands for "think" about what to do. We can all express our ideas and listen to the ideas of others. How well did your group listen to others?

When we stop, chill and think, we are taking the time to express ourselves using "nice" statements instead of "ice" statements.

The "O" stands for "Options." Options are all the things we can think of that we could choose to do. When we think of these options, it is called "brainstorming." Listening to other people's ideas might give us new, more effective ways of solving the problem. What are some of the options your group discussed?

The "P" stands for "Pick a plan." As a group, we can choose the best course of action to follow. How did your group decide what plan to use to build your tower?

The "D" stands for "Decide and Do it!" The group must act together to get the job done. How well did your plan work?

Did you have to stop and think of other options?

4. What Happens If...

Use the "What Happens If..." page to conduct a class discussion about consequences.

Bibliography

This lesson is part of the Utah State Board of Education [Prevention Dimensions program](#).

Authors

[Utah LessonPlans](#)