Why learn how to make good decisions?

Individuals and families are happier if they are happy with the decisions they make. People are happier with the decisions they make if they understand and approve of the decision-making process being used.

What do we need?

paper and pencils (if you decide to write the steps of the decision-making process on paper instead of just discussing them)

How long will it take?

20 to 30 minutes

What do we do?

• Here are some good steps to follow when a family member is trying to make a decision. Read and discuss them. Then apply them to the following sample problems.
  – Define the problem or decision to be made.
  – Decide how you would determine if a particular decision was good (the criteria or standards for a good decision).
  – Gather information.
  – List alternative ways you might solve the problem.
  – Brainstorm choices.
  – Compare the alternatives against the standards you have set. Determine the consequences of each alternative.
  – Make a decision.

Sample problem. You want to do something special for a friend on her birthday. You are trying to decide between sending a special card or buying her a favorite sundae.

Sample problem. Your family has decided to buy a small computer for home use. How will you help your family decide on size, cost, brand, extras, and software?
Sample problem. You want to pick a fun 4-H project that will help you learn to cook. Look at two project manuals to help you choose.

Sample problem. You have been offered a babysitting job that would help you make money for something you really want to buy; or you could go to a game and be with your friends.

Sample problem. You could go to the library to prepare for a paper that is due, or you could help your neighbors (who are in poor health) with some chores.

Sample problem. You are in the drug store with a group of friends, and they're pressuring you to shoplift a small item that you don't have the money to buy.

Option. Discuss the following questions:
- How did you make these decisions?
- How important was past experience in making these decisions?
- How do you decide if a decision is an important one?


What happened?

▼ How did you feel about using the steps for decision making when you were trying to solve the sample problems?

What did you learn?

▼ What did you learn about making decisions?
▼ What was difficult about setting standards for the decisions?
▼ What standards did you come up with?
▼ How did each person's past experience affect how he viewed the problem?

Why was this activity important?

▼ Why is it important to know how to make a good decision?
▼ Why is it important to have standards to measure your decisions against?

What's next?

▼ How would this decision-making process work in other areas of your life (school, church, work, or clubs)?
▼ Name some other problems you will attempt to solve using this technique.