

Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Have any selected video or music clips ready to show
- Encourage your group to listen to the podcast for this session (Share the link via email or social media)

Influencing and Being Influenced

Say something like: "We all know that TV commercials are designed to influence our purchasing decisions. Of course, you and I are impervious to such manipulations, right? Sometimes commercials are informative, while others try to be memorable using humor. I'd like to show you a collection of commercials that you'll probably remember."

Show the Commercials video (a collection of eTrade commercials featuring talking babies).

- Are these commercials effective? Why or why not?
- What do the makers of these commercials hope happens as you watch them? (What are they trying to convince you to do or think?)
- What commercials do you most remember as being particularly effective on you and why?
- In general, what does someone need to do or say to have the best chance of convincing you to make a particular choice in their favor?

Tempting Fruit

Read Genesis 3:1-21.

View the Bible Background Video.

- What aspects of the serpent's sales pitch in this narrative do you think were the most convincing and why?
- If you were in a position to entice someone to make a similar choice, what might you do or say to get what you want?
- To what degree do potential consequences affect our choices and how might that be overcome by the right "message?"
- What contemporary choices are we dealing with that are similarly difficult to the choices presented in this narrative?

Choosing Wisely

Lead a discussion using questions like these:

- What do you think of the choices offered by this story?
- To what degree do you believe people should be held accountable for the decisions that they make under duress, or in situations where they truly cannot discern the benefits of one decision versus another? Why?
- Given that not choosing is itself a choice, to what degree are we really exercising free will when we make choices?
- Why might it be better to have such freedom, as opposed to being happy and ignorant?
- Understanding the implications of the two “trees” in this passage, which would you choose and why?
- At its core, what do you think this passage reveals about the relationship between us and God?

Choosing God

Offer a closing prayer that asks God’s forgiveness for the times when we make poor choices, and God’s presence to help us grow in our ability to make faithful and healthy decisions.