

# Good Judgment

## Short Lessons

- Talk about good judgment in relationships. Do parents have to use good judgment with their children? Do couples and married people have to use good judgment in their relationships with each other? Do friends sometimes need to use good judgment?
  - Talk about great musicians and athletes. Can you think of a time when they used good judgment?
  - Brainstorm the different obstacles that can get in the way of education. What can we do about these obstacles? Help students realize that financial and tutoring assistance are available so that anyone who really wants to go to college can do so, but they may need to use good judgment.
  - Ask students to decide on one way they will use good judgment every day for one week. At the end of the week, see how many students kept that commitment.
  - Discuss the “American Work Ethic.” What does this term mean? Have they heard about it? What ways do adults use good judgment?
  - Talk about the ways in which students can use good judgment both at home and at school.
  - Develop a list of all the different words that could be used to describe someone who uses good judgment. (Teach students how to use a thesaurus to find synonyms.) Ask students to write a story about using good judgment.
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- Pay close attention to every situation today and write down all the times you see someone practicing good judgment. What are the consequences?
  - Write several paragraphs describing an incident in which you practiced good judgment, and the outcome of that incident. Be sure to use introductory sentences and supporting evidence in each paragraph.
  - Show students in various peer-pressure situations, such as saying ‘no’ to smoking, studying for a test when others are talking, and sitting quietly in an assembly, use the header, “What is popular is not always right, and what is right is not always popular.” Use good judgment.
  - **“Spotlight” or the Choice Game.**  
Begin by reading *Inside Me There’s a Storm a-Brewing*. The last few pages suggest, first with pictures and words, and then with just pictures, several scenarios that have to do with choosing how to act on strong feelings. Use the book to elicit

possible choices from students, and then help students develop their own scenarios of things that might cause strong feelings. In the “Stoplight” variation, follow these steps?

1. Draw a large stoplight on poster board. Write “Feel,” “Think,” and “Act” on the red, yellow and green circles, respectively. (See illustration on attached sheet.)
2. Have students come up with situations that might make them feel angry, greedy, lazy, or self-indulgent in other ways. You may need to give examples from the books, or offer your own suggestions to get things started.

3. As you identify each situation, cover the yellow and green lights to show “Feel.” Point out that when you have a strong, impulsive response to a situation, it’s wise to take a minute to think before acting.
4. Next cover red and green to show “Think.” Brainstorm as a class, or call on an individual student, to suggest ways you might react to the situation. Don’t judge reactions at this point, just get ideas out.
5. Finally, cover red and yellow to show “Act.” Let students choose the best response to the situation, and talk about probable consequences.

Use this game to reinforce the idea that we can’t always control the things that happen to us, but we can always choose how we will act in response. Taking time to think and use good judgment carefully can help keep others and us safe and out of trouble.

- **“Where Do You Stand?”**

This game also gives students a chance to move, while thinking about using good judgment. Start with four different-colored sheets of poster board, and mark one sheet “1”, the next “2,” then “3” and the last “4.” Line them up on the classroom floor. Then present a series of scenarios, with 4 possible responses. For example, you might say, “Jennifer wants a shirt she saw at the mall, but it cost more money than she has. Should she: (1) Take it when she thinks no one is looking? (2) Whine and beg her parents for it? (3) Wait a few more weeks until her allowance catches up and she has enough money to buy it? (4) Ask her parents for extra jobs to earn the money she needs?” As you read the choices, students line up behind the sheet related to the choice they like best. Students may change lines as you give more options. But at the end, they need to choose a line and be able to tell why they made that choice. There doesn’t always have to be a clear “right” and “wrong” choice. You might discuss which responses most children chose, and why.