CHARIS YOUTH

Series: Living By Faith

Lesson 2: Faith Begins with a Choice

About This Lesson

Some young people are in situations where they don't have many choices to make because parents are making choices for them and aren't receiving guidance in how to make godly choices. This lesson gives the young people an opportunity to see how their personal decisions should be made in light of their relationship with Jesus and the teachings found in God's Word. At some point in this lesson, give them an opportunity to make the most important choice in their lives—to choose Jesus as their Savior.

Key Takeaway: Your faith journey consists of daily choices to live by faith. The most important choice is salvation.

Key Verse: Romans 10:9–10 *That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

Teaching Outline:

I. FAITH ALWAYS BEGINS WITH A CHOICE

A. Salvation is the first choice to make on your faith journey.

B. Choose to follow God and His Word—everything else will work out!
Deuteronomy 30:19-20 *I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; 20 that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.*

C. You have to choose to live for Jesus!

D. You must choose to believe the Bible and follow its teachings. Once you do that, God will help you with all the other decisions you have to make in life!
   1. He will help you as you make various plans, whether school, career, or relationships—as long as He is number one, everything else will work out! Proverbs 16:9 *A man's heart plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps.*

   2. Give a personal example of when God led you to make a decision.

II. GOD LIKES TO TAKE WHAT'S ORDINARY AND ADD HIS "EXTRA"

A. God often uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things!
   1 Corinthians 1:26–31 *For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. [27] But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; [28] and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, [29] that no flesh should glory in His presence. [30] But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption— [31] that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the LORD."*
   1. God has a special plan and calling for your life. It takes faith to fulfill it.

B. Don't despise what other people often overlook!
   Acts 10:15 *And a voice spoke to him again the second time, "What God has cleansed you must not call common."*

C. Naaman's faith journey began in an unusual way (2 Kings 5:1–19).
   1. Naaman, the commander of the Syrian army, had leprosy. An Israelite maid encouraged him to visit the man of God named Elisha. He went to the door of Elisha's house, and Elisha sent a messenger with the message to go and wash in the Jordan River seven times, and his flesh would be restored and made clean. Naaman was furious because he was an important man, and Elisha sent a servant to him. He was also upset because the Jordan was a dirty river. But, when he finally did what the prophet said, he was healed!

2. His faith journey began when he heard the testimony of a servant. Even though he was in a powerful position, he had to make the choice to listen to someone from a lowly position.

3. You can influence people to make right choices, and even faith choices.

D. Pride is a huge detour for people on the faith journey that God has in store for them.

II. FAITH IN CHRIST FOR SALVATION

Romans 10:9–10 *That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.* [10] *For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

A. Salvation is a choice that begins with a decision to confess and believe. When you receive the free gift of salvation through Jesus' death on a cross and resurrection, you begin a new life of faith in Christ.
   1. Give the young people an opportunity to choose to place their faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior. Lead the group in a prayer for salvation.

Bottom Line:
When you choose salvation, you choose to live a life of faith in Christ and allow God to add His "extra" to your "ordinary" life to live the "extraordinary" life He called you to live.

Small Group Time:

1. Faith is a choice that you make every day. Once you have received salvation, your faith journey continues until you reach heaven.
   - What prompted you to make the choice to receive salvation?
   - What are some faith choices that you made this past week? (believe God is working things for good even though things are rough right now; go to church instead of a party)

2. First Corinthians 1:26 talks about your calling, "For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called." God has given you a calling, a purpose and meaning in life. He gives gifts or talents to accomplish the calling He gives. We are not to neglect the gifts God has given us.

- Natural giftings examples: artistic abilities (painting, music, dance), athletic abilities, academic abilities where certain subjects come very easy, etc. What natural giftings do you think God has given you?
- Spiritual giftings examples: enjoys helping others, loves to volunteer in a particular area of the church, is very compassionate, finds it easy to understand important concepts in the Bible, loves to pray for others, etc. What spiritual giftings do you think God has given you?

3. God delights in doing unexpected things with people whom others might not expect God to use. Scripture says that He often chooses the foolish before the wise, the weak before the strong, those who are low on the totem pole, people who were outcasts and not really given much of a chance (1 Corinthians 1:26–31).

- Are there any examples that you can think of in the Bible of people God used who were like this? (David was a shepherd boy; fishermen and a tax collector became disciples)
- What do you think God might use you to do, even though you might not think you are qualified?

Declaration:

"I choose to live by faith in God."

Youth Weekly Journal:

Handout, Email, or Download

- **Question:** What is a hindrance today for you to make a faith choice, whether salvation or to live by faith?
- **Pray:** Ask the Holy Spirit to highlight choices to make that help you fulfill God's calling on your life.
- **Read:** 2 Kings 5:1–19 and count the number of choices made by Naaman, the Israelite servant, and Elisha. Consider what choices you would have made if you were Naaman.
- **Live It:** Each faith choice is a step in your faith journey. View each choice today as either "I believe God's promises," or "I doubt and choose to live in

unbelief." Live your faith by choosing to believe God's Word and following the Holy Spirit's leading.

- **Create:** Make a song, poem, meme, artwork, dance, rap, or video challenging young people to make the most important faith choice—salvation. Share your creation with the youth group and on social media.

EXTENDING THE LESSON

Icebreaker Question: If you had a dream car, what would it be, and why?

Opening Activity Suggestion: Create your own question dealing with the topic of important choices to make in life or daily choices made by students to set the tone for the lesson. Ask a sampling of students ahead of time to create answers with typical percentages of young people who might give that answer.

Opening Affirmation: "The Word of God is my guidebook to live my life by faith. I will walk by faith as I choose to follow God's plan for my life and watch God use me!"

Giving Time: Isaiah 54:13 *All your children shall be taught by the LORD, And great shall be the peace of your children.*

God's Word is the best teacher. Use faith to follow God's principles about money:

1. Save and steward what you have.
2. Be a giver.
3. Work to earn.
4. Believe God to take care of you.

BEYOND – ADDITIONAL APPLICATION FOR CHURCH OR HOME

Challenge: Write down as many miracles in the Bible as you can. Then, think about each miracle and write down what faith choice had to be made before the miracle could happen. For example, Peter had to make the faith choice to believe that Jesus was the Son of God and was worth getting out of the boat and walking to Him on the

water. Think about miracles in your life or someone you know. What faith choice was made before the miracle happened? Look this week to make faith choices, and next week tell the group about what happened.

Biblical Worldview: The choices made by young people are often made quickly, based on emotions or hormones, made for the short term and not planning for the long term, and influenced by peers. When young people use the Word of God as their lens to view the world and make their decisions, they are choosing to partner with God's plan for their lives and will experience success in each area that they choose to follow God. Encourage the youth to take seriously their choice to live by faith and fulfill God's calling on their lives.

Outreach/Missions: Plan a fun youth night where the young people can invite their unsaved friends. Games, food, music, and giveaways are ways to encourage people, who are not interested in church or God, that Christians can have fun and church is not a scary place. As leaders interact with visitors, ask about any needs they have and pray for those needs. Encourage the regular attenders to welcome visitors and have conversations to build their confidence to do outreach.