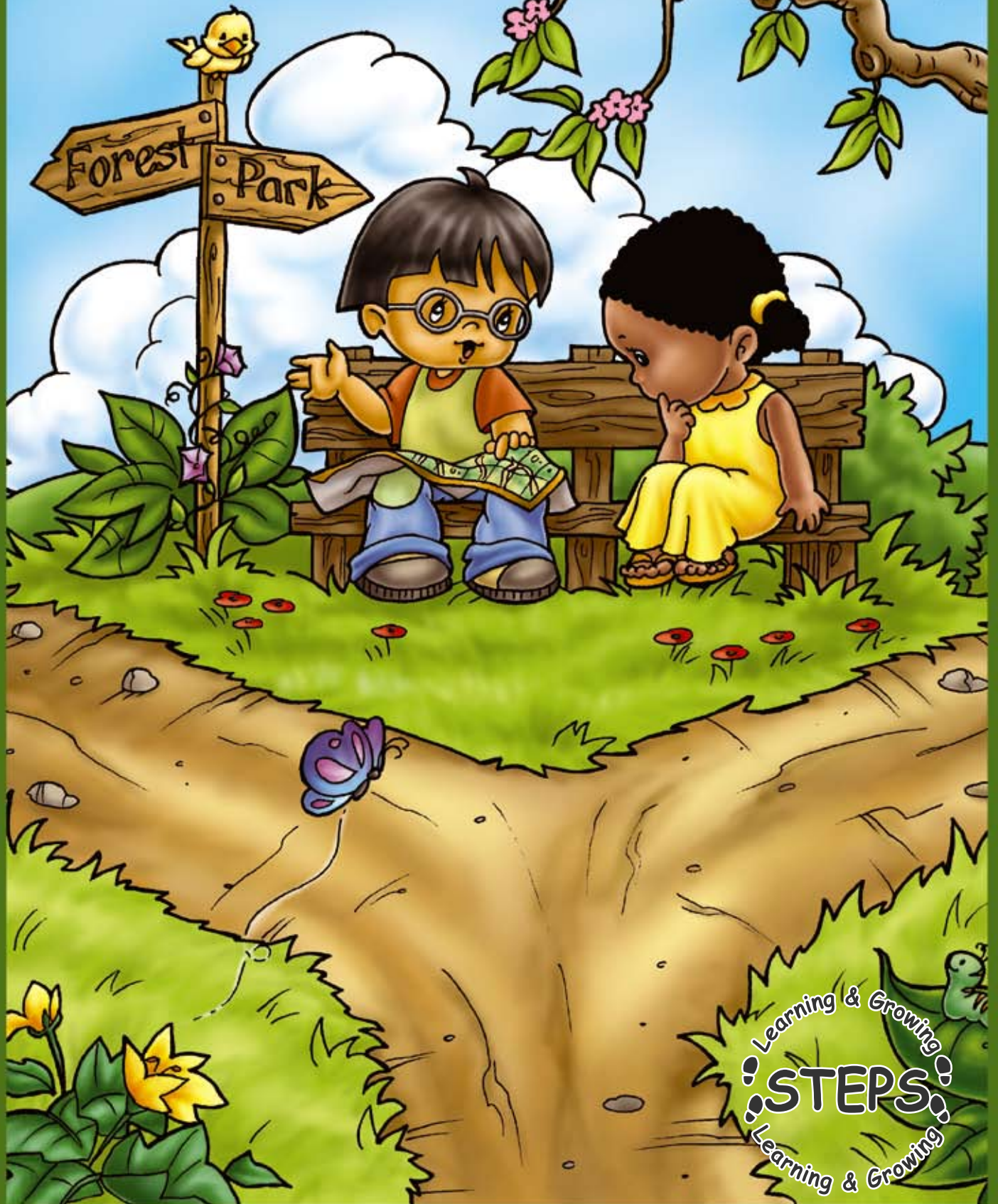


Making Decisions



Learning & Growing
STEPS
Learning & Growing



Contents:

The Seven Ways to Know God's Will . . .	4
Mr. Gladstone	6
The Cloudburst	9
Prayer and Memory Fun	13
Guiding Sam	14
The Best Choice	15
Super Scales	16
From Jesus—with Love	19



It's far better to let God choose
The way that we should take;
If only we bring our questions to Him,
He will guide without mistake.

By Amber Darley and Agnes Lemaire

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The Seven Ways to Know God's Will!

Number 1: By the Word of God!

The first place we look for the will of God is in the Word. Right in the Bible! This is it! This is the sure Word of God and it never fails.

Number 2: The Voice of His Word!

This is God speaking to you through His Word. All of a sudden a verse seems just for you, and it's as if God whispered it in your ear.—The Voice of His Word!

Number 3: Direct Revelation!

Sometimes God uses a dream or a vision, a voice or a prophecy to show you what to do. You know it is from God if it agrees with His Word.

Number 4: Godly Counselors!

A Godly counselor can help you in finding the will of God too. This is someone who really believes the Bible and does what it says—somebody who's a good example and who's doing a good job for the Lord.

Number 5: "Open and Closed Doors!"

If something is God's will, He may show you by clearly making it possible through "opening the door."

Number 6: Burdens!

Some people call this the "witness of the Spirit." You have faith and you feel strongly in your heart that it's the will of God and that that's what you are supposed to do or not do.

Number 7: A Fleece!

In the Bible Gideon laid a fleece (sheepskin) on the ground one night and said, "Now Lord, if the fleece is wet and the ground is dry in the morning, then I'll know it's You talking to me!" And that's exactly what happened. But then he wanted to make doubly sure, so he said, "Now Lord, if the fleece is dry and the ground wet, I'll believe it!" And that's just what the Lord did. That's one way to find the will of God: ask for a sign of some kind, a fleece. (See Judges 6:36-40.)

"He knows, He loves, He cares, nothing His truth can dim. He gives His very best to those who leave the choice with Him." The first thing you must do to find God's will is to have no will of your own. You must give your body, your mind, and your will to Jesus



Mr. Gladstone

William Gladstone was England's Prime Minister* three times and was one of the most famous British political leaders of the 1800's. He was also famous for being a Christian. Every day as he went up the steps of the parliament building he witnessed to the little newsboy there about Jesus' love.

"How are you today, Johnny?" Gladstone said to the newsboy as he took his usual paper.

"Fine, thank you sir. I read the gospel tract that you gave me yesterday and I wanted to ask you a question about it."

"I would be glad to talk to you about Jesus. How about at 5 p.m. after work?"

"Thanks, sir. That's so kind of you. I want you to know how much I appreciate your taking time for me—you being such an important man and all."

"Well Johnny, you can never be too busy for one of God's children."

Mr. Gladstone looked for the boy at 5 p.m. as they had arranged, but the newsboy was nowhere to be found.

The next day as he and his secretary were going up the steps to Parliament* on their way to a very important meeting, another little newsboy stopped them, saying, "Mr. Gladstone, you know the newsboy who usually sells you papers here?"

"Yes, I do."

"Well, yesterday he was run over by a carriage and he's badly injured. He's going to die, and he wants you to come get him in."

Mr. Gladstone said, "What do you mean, 'get him in'?"

"You know, get him in to Heaven!"

His secretary, however, protested, "No, no, no, you don't have time to go see a little dying newsboy! You know how important your speech today is. It could change the course of English history!"

Gladstone thought a moment, then said, "One immortal soul is worth more than my speech in Parliament!"

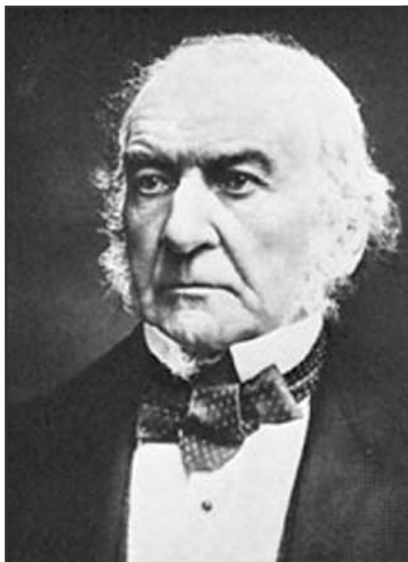
So he went to the little attic room where the newsboy lay crushed and dying on a little mat in the corner. Gladstone prayed with him to receive Jesus. He "got him in!"—And then the little newsboy died peacefully.



An hour or two later Gladstone made it back to Parliament where a heated discussion was raging. He was late and had almost missed his turn to speak, but when he did, he won the debate*!

Afterwards his secretary said, "Sir, how could you have gone off and bothered with that little dying newsboy and almost miss making such an important speech?"

Gladstone replied, "This speech today was a very important and good thing, but getting that boy saved and into Heaven was a better, more important thing."



William Ewart Gladstone

1809-1898

British political leader who served as prime minister four times (1868-1874, 1880-1885, 1886, and 1892-1894). He enacted (make into law) educational and parliamentary reforms.

Here is a famous quote from William Gladstone:

"All that I think, all that I hope, all that I write, all that I live for, is based upon the divinity of Jesus Christ, the central joy of my poor wayward (imperfect) life. I have known 95 of the world's greatest men in my time, and 87 were followers of the Bible."



- Do you think Mr. Gladstone made the right choice?
- When deciding what to do, was Mr. Gladstone only thinking of himself?
- Talk about what might have been going through Gladstone's mind at that moment on the steps to Parliament, where he was to give an important speech, but also heard about the dying newsboy.
- What would you have done if you were Mr. Gladstone or on your way somewhere important and were faced with that decision?
- What is the first thing we should do when we're faced with a choice?
- List on a sheet of paper your priorities in life. What is the most important thing in your life? What is your major goal?

***Prime Minister:** a chief minister appointed by a ruler; also often the chief officer in parliament

supreme legislative (to create or pass laws) powers within the state

***Parliament:** a national representative group of people having

***debate:** discuss

The Cloudburst

This is the story of a miraculous escape that happened to William Harquist, a missionary to China. It was during the dangerous days of the Chinese Boxer rebellion* in the year 1900. A group of Chinese Christians and the missionary were fleeing from the enemy.

"There's an inn!" William pointed to the welcome sight.

"Maybe we can stop and rest there!" Chan, their guide, said.

At the inn they had time to study the maps to try to get an escape route planned. Several members of the group of Christians made suggestions.

"Pastor, in two more days we should reach the safety of the British fort in Peking, God willing!" Lu, one of the missionaries, said confidently.

"With Christians and foreigners being killed everywhere, it's a miracle that He has kept us safe on our journey so far!" one of their Chinese leaders named Jiang said.

"Amen, praise the Lord!" William added as he motioned to all of his group to gather together. He spoke to them, "Well, brethren, we have come to the point where we have to make a choice. Do we continue our journey over those high mountains or go by boat down the Han River?"

"But there's no water in the Han River! It's dried up because of the drought," Jiang said with a note of alarm in his voice.

"I'll ask our guides if we can walk down the river!"

The guide was less than encouraging.

"Walk? It would take weeks to walk on that very rugged riverbed. We refuse!" Chan stated vehemently*.

William came back and told the other missionaries what they said.

"Well, that settles it then. We have no choice but to go over the hills!" Lu said.

"But wait, brethren! Let's not make any decision in a hurry without first asking the Lord."

"You're right, pastor William. We'll hold a prayer meeting in this inn," Jiang said.

They prayed, "Lord Jesus, You promised that if we acknowledge You, then You will direct our paths. The river route certainly looks like a closed door, Lord. So if it's Your will for us to travel over the hills, please confirm it to us. We're looking to Thee for Thy guidance."

After several minutes Yan-yan, who was one of the Chinese Christians in the group, said, "This may sound crazy, but I feel strongly that we should not go over the hills!"

"I think you may be right, Yan-yan! I got the verse Proverbs 16:25: 'There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.' I think we should go by river," Jiang said.

One of the group did not agree, "But this is insane! There's no water in the Han River! It's a closed door."

"Yes, but when finding the will of God, conditions and open and shut doors are not always the final answer."

Mrs. Ling, who was the oldest Chinese lady in the group said, "Yes! Remember Moses at the Red Sea? That seemed like a closed door too."

"God is able to open doors of His will at the last minute that you didn't expect to be opened." William reminded everyone.

"God is able to change the conditions to perform His will!—Right, Pastor?" Jiang asked hopefully.

"Amen," William replied simply.

Several other members of the group agreed with the plan to go down the river, despite how impossible it seemed. And so, completely and totally by faith, the Christians bought two large flat-bottomed boats.

"Yes, these will do nicely," the pastor said.

"Let's drag the boats to the middle of the riverbed!" Jiang suggested.

"Good! Then we'll place the food and baggage on board," another of the Christians said.

"We'll buy some food for our river journey," Mrs. Ling suggested. Everyone was busy preparing for the trip.

"Good, we're all set to go!" William said as he inspected the boats.

"Except for the river," the doubter of the group complained.

"The only thing we can do now is to pray and wait. We've done everything we can do. So now it's time for God to do the rest, that we can't do," William explained as the sun beat down on them.

And so there they sat in the middle of a dry riverbed. Long hours passed, but nothing happened.

The villagers on the shore laughed and mocked them.

"What are they saying?" William asked.

"That we're all crazy," Yan-yan explained.

"Now I know how Noah must have felt," William said sadly.

But suddenly, "Hey, everyone, look what's coming over the top of those hills!" Yan-yan said, pointing upwards.

"The enemy soldiers have come to attack us!" the doubter fretted.

"No, heavy dark clouds!" William answered, "Thank You Jesus! It's going to rain."

Soon everyone was singing and praising the Lord as they danced, "It's going to rain! It's going to rain!"



And then the rain began!

"It's a cloudburst! It must be the biggest one that ever hit this area."

"In all my life I've never seen such heavy rain," Mrs. Ling said in amazement.

"What a wonderful miracle! And it's the first rain in months," their guide, Chan, said in surprise.

The rainwater soon began to pour down from the surrounding high hills and fill up the dry riverbed.

"Hold tight, everyone!" William called to the other boat.

"We're moving! Praise God!" everyone yelled for joy!

"Good-bye everybody, we're off!" Yan-yan said happily.

As they floated down the swirling river they sang an appropriate hymn, "Got any rivers you think are uncrossable? Got any mountains you can't tunnel through? God specializes in things thought impossible. And He can do what no other one can do."

After several adventurous days on the raging river they arrived safely at the British fort. There they learned why the Lord had not wanted them to travel by land.

"It's jolly good luck that you didn't travel over those hills, Sir," the captain said.

"Well, it wasn't luck, it was the Lord who told us not to," William answered.

"Then you can thank the Lord that He saved you. We've just received reports that there were 200 enemy Boxers hiding up in those hills waiting in a mountain pass to kill all of you."

"Praise God! He sent us the safe way! We were kept by the power of God," William said with joy as he raised his hands in praise.



- What would have happened if they had made their decision by what seemed right to them instead of praying and seeking God about it?
- Have you ever made a decision that seemed right to you, but it turned out to be the wrong one? Tell us about it.
- Next time you don't know what choice to make, what will you do? Of course we usually make decisions using our common sense, but do you think it was a good idea for them to pray and make this decision that seemed to be the opposite from the information they had heard? Can you think of any examples in the Bible where God's people did things that were considered crazy by most

people? (Noah and the Ark, Jesus being born in a stable, etc.)

***Boxer Rebellion:** members of a secret society in China that unsuccessfully attempted in 1900 to drive foreigners from the

country by violence and force Chinese Christians to deny their faith in God.

***vehemently:** with conviction; expressed with, or showing

Prayer and Praise

Dear Jesus, there are so many big and little choices that I have to make, and it's sometimes hard to know what to do. Decisions are really important and I want to be sure to make the right ones. So please help me to remember to ask You when I don't know what to do. Thank You for helping me, Jesus!

Memory Fun

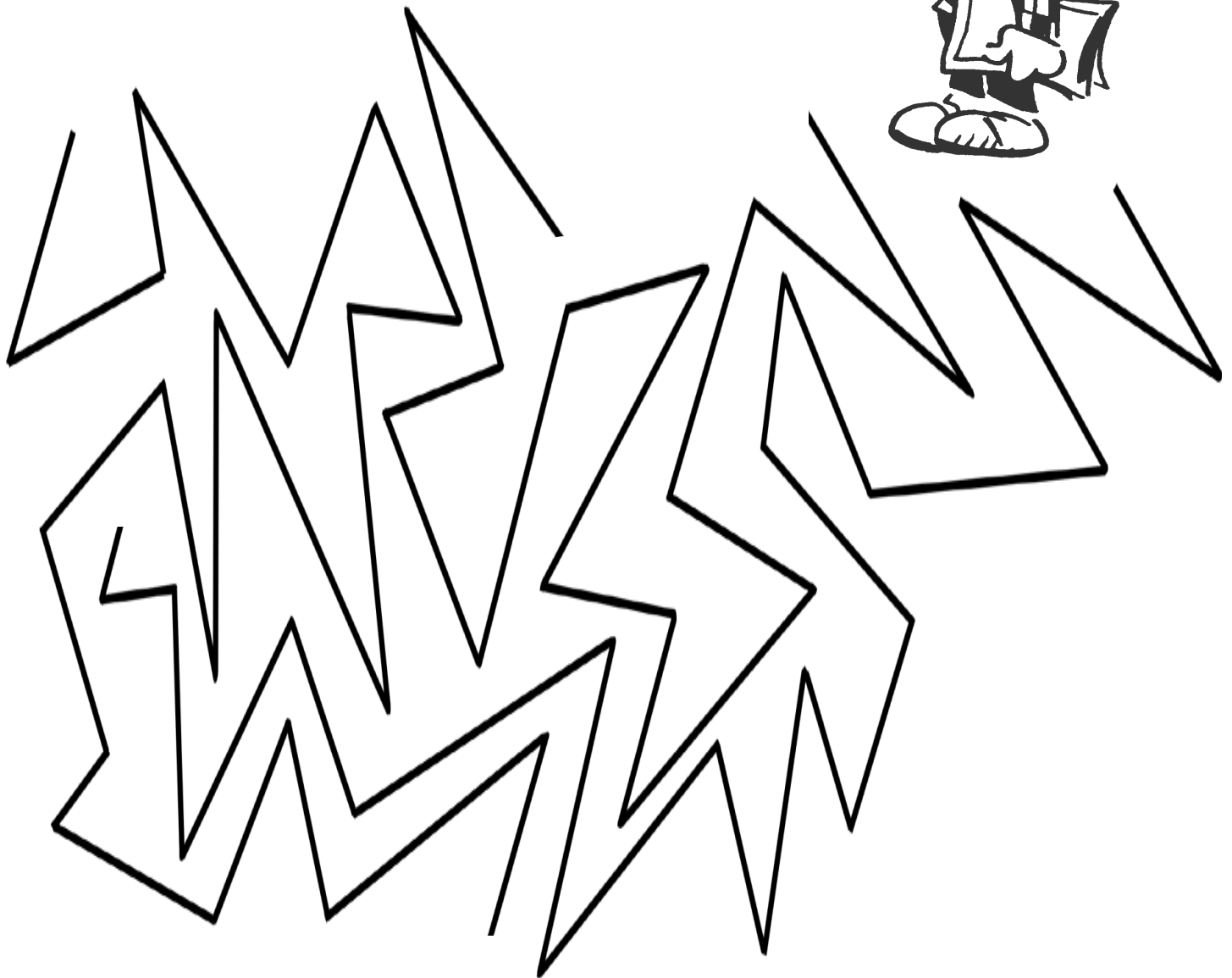


and let Him choose.

In all your ways
acknowledge
Him, and He
shall direct your
paths.

Guiding Sam

Lead Sam through the maze to God's Word, where he'll find answers to his questions. Fill in the missing words in the sentence below.



God's Word

The answer for everything is in _____.

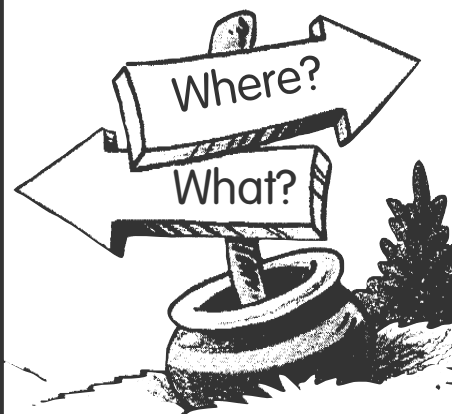


The Best Choice

Look in the Word Search to find the words in the sentence below. (Words can be horizontal, vertical or diagonal.)

God gives the very best to those who leave the choices up to Him!

U	B	E	S	T	A	Y	L	S	T
N	F	G	O	H	R	K	M	N	K
F	G	I	V	E	S	N	D	H	J
P	T	O	V	P	B	C	H	I	I
W	H	O	D	Q	U	P	I	J	E
U	O	R	S	T	O	D	M	E	F
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L	E	A	V	E	B	C	D	G	H

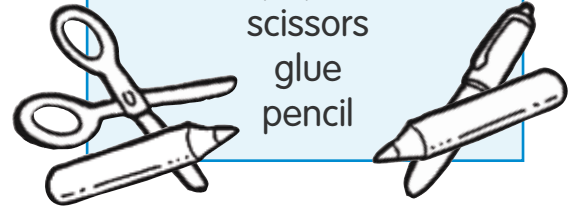


Make and Do

Super Scales

You will need:

cardstock
paper
scissors
glue
pencil



How to:

- Make a paper scale using the patterns on the next page.
- Cut out all shapes on the black lines.
- Glue all dotted line sections and put together with matching letters.
- Use the choice questions below as ideas, or make your own! Place these on one side of the scale. On the other side of the scale, write up your answers as to how you made the choices that you did. You can follow the 7 Ways to Know God's Will ideas from page 11.
- Pin the top of the scale to a piece of cardstock.

You cannot find your missing sock. What can you do about it?

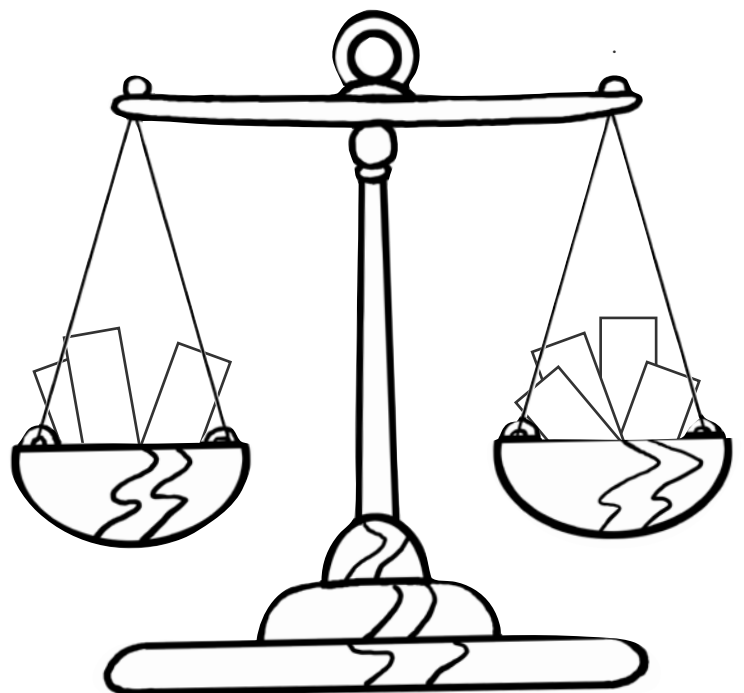
You have homework to do, but you prefer to do something else instead. What do you feel you should do?

Your friend is sick and he is alone. You had planned on going to play ball with your other friends. What will you do now?

You hear about some fun outing your friends will go on. You really want to go, but you don't know if your parents will let you. They are not home so you cannot ask them right now. What should you do?

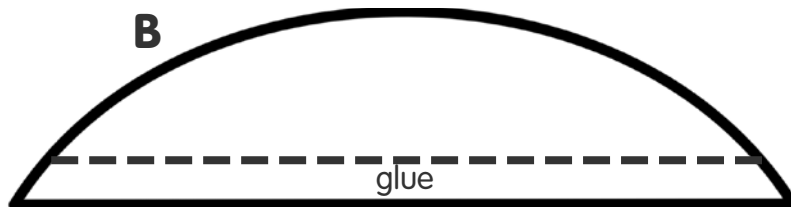
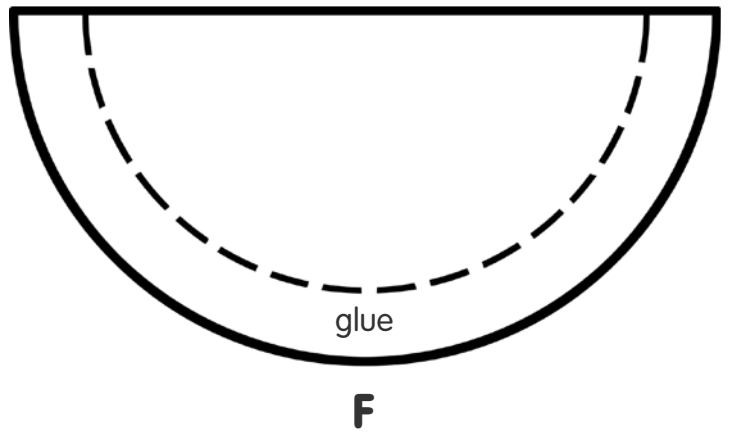
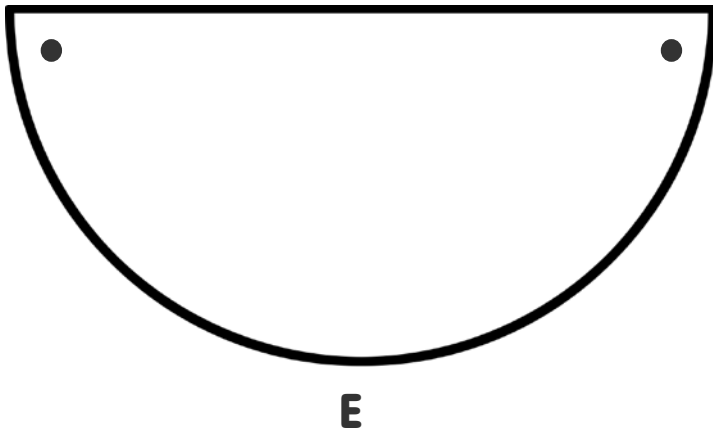
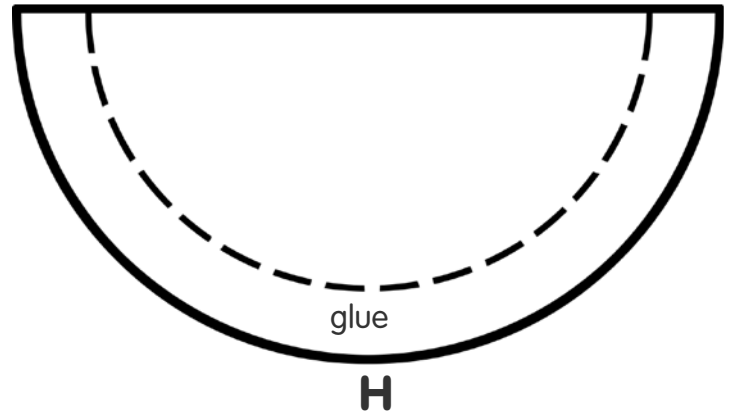
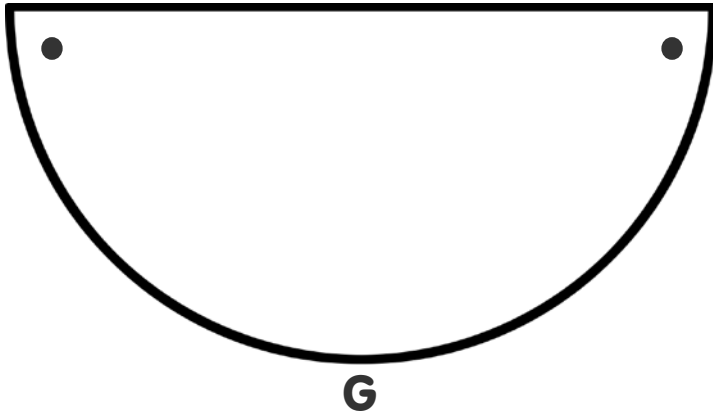
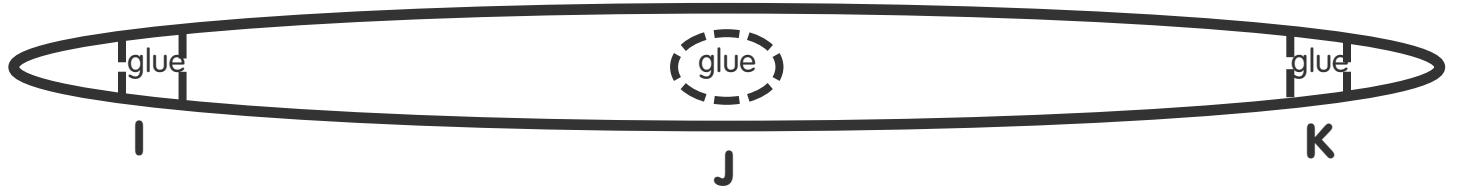
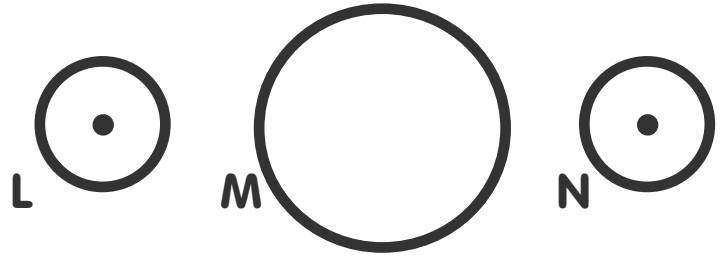
Your sister lost your favorite book and you find it too difficult to forgive her for it. What does the Word say to do?

Choice Questions



Super Scales

Cut out the pieces below and copying the scale on page 15, glue B over top of A, C over top of B, J over top of D, E over F, G over H, L over I, N over K, M over middle of J. After you have done this, string I and K with corner dots of E and G as shown on picture of scale on page 15.



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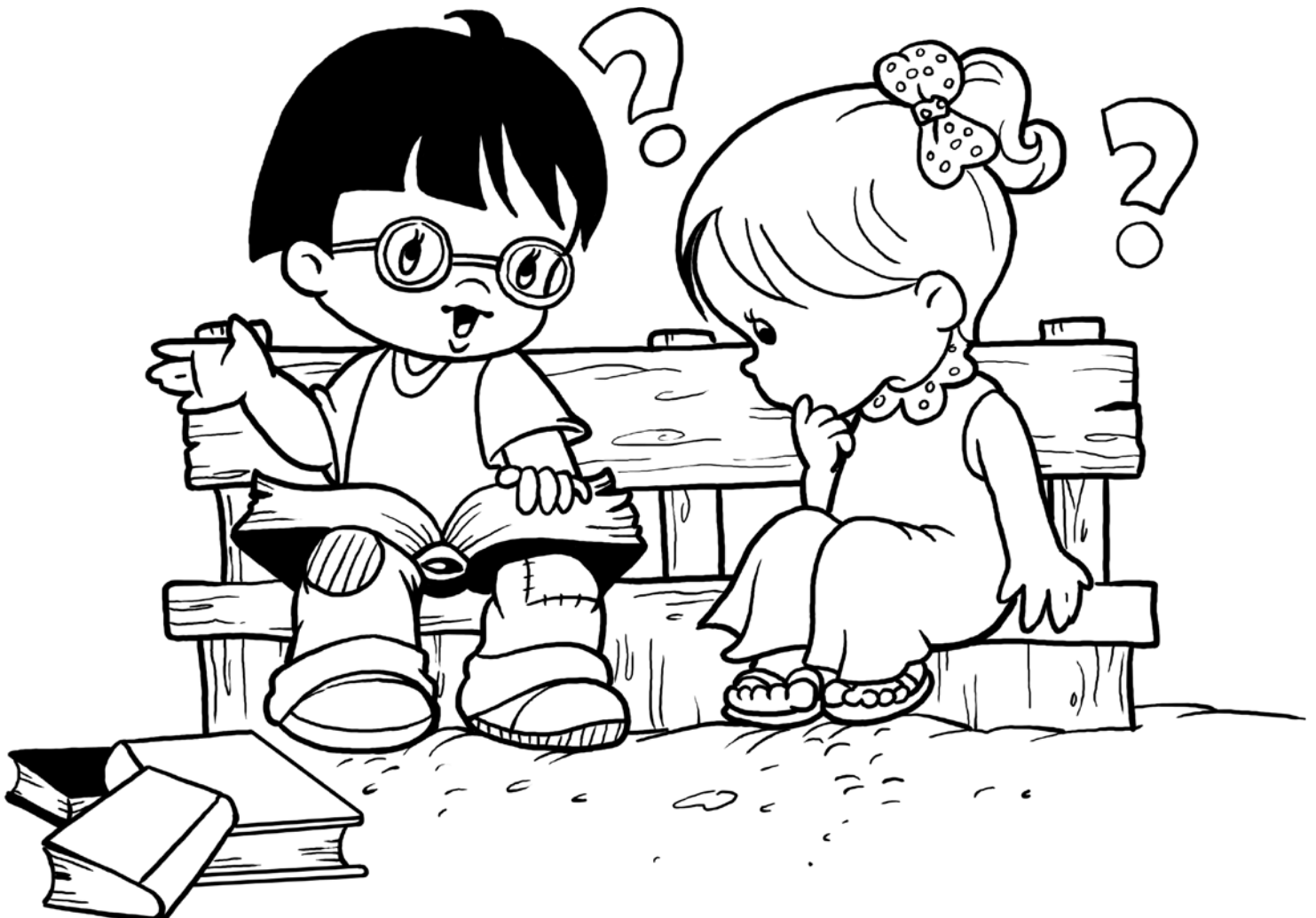
From Jesus—with Love



Have you ever been faced with a decision and you just didn't know where to turn? It can be pretty frustrating, whether it's a little decision or a big decision. Maybe your friend, Tommy, asked you to go over to his house and play with him, but at the same time Alice was baking a cake and asked you to help her, or Benjamin was working in the garden and asked you to help him. What would you do?

Well, the best thing to do when you don't know what to do is to stop and ask Me to show you what would be the best. Maybe I'll show you that Alice or Benjamin really need the help so you should stay and help them, or maybe I'll show you that Tommy is really lonely and would be sad if you didn't come over to play with him. But what if you ran off and did the first thing that popped into your head? Well, maybe it wouldn't end up being as much fun as if you did the right thing.

So, when you're faced with a decision, what should you do? That's right! Ask Me, your Best Friend, about it. I see everything and I always know what's best.



THE STEPS PROGRAM

Character Building Series

Help your children build character and sound values through the 20 *Character Building* lessons in this course.

The **STEPS** Character Building series is a unique life-skills learning program intended for use at home, camp, or classroom, by parents, counselors, caregivers, and teachers alike. Each booklet in this series focuses on developing a personal or interpersonal skill, social value, or quality of character necessary for positive self-esteem and to live a happy, rewarding, fulfilling life, in peace and harmony with others.



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