

Agency Is the Gift to Choose for Ourselves

Song: “As a Child of God”

(page 28 in this outline)



Using scriptures: It is important for children to learn gospel truths from the scriptures. For some ideas of how to teach scripture stories to children, see TNGC, 59.

“Wherefore, men are free . . . to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men” (2 Nephi 2:27).

Supplement the ideas provided here with some of your own. Each week, plan ways to (1) identify the doctrine, (2) help the children understand it, and (3) help them apply it in their lives.

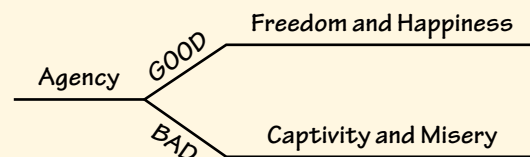
Ask yourself, “What will the children do to learn, and how can I help them feel the Spirit?”

Weeks 1 and 2: Agency is the gift to choose for ourselves.

Identify the doctrine (*playing a guessing game*): Tell the children that you are thinking of a word, and give them clues to help them guess the word. Ask them to raise their hands when they know the answer. Clues could include the following: We had this before we came to earth. It is a gift from our Heavenly Father. It is an important part of Heavenly Father’s plan for us. Satan wanted to take it from us. We use it when we make choices. It is a gift that lets us choose for ourselves. It starts with the letter A. After the children have guessed the answer, say together, “Agency is the gift to choose for ourselves.”

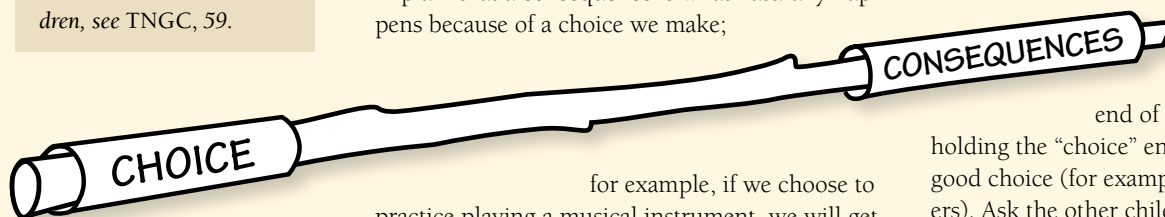
Encourage understanding (*seeing and discussing an object lesson*): Show the children a stick that has the word *choice* written on one end and the word *consequences* written on the other end. Explain that a consequence is what naturally happens because of a choice we make;

an older child to read 2 Nephi 2:27. Invite the other children to listen for what the consequences are for making the right choice (liberty and eternal life) and what the consequences are for making the wrong choice (captivity and misery). Draw a simple diagram on the board like the one shown here.



Help the children understand that when we make good choices, it leads to freedom and happiness, and when we make wrong choices, it leads to captivity and unhappiness.

Invite two children to come to the front of the room, and let each child hold one



for example, if we choose to practice playing a musical instrument, we will get better at it, and if we choose to touch fire, we will be burned. Pick up the stick and show the children that every time you pick up the stick, you get both the choice and the consequence of that choice. Ask

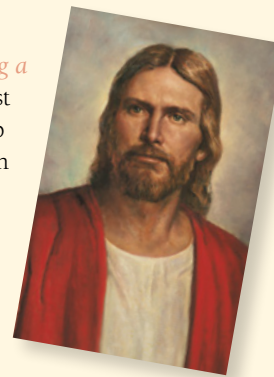
end of the stick. Ask the child holding the “choice” end to give an example of a good choice (for example, speaking kindly to others). Ask the other child to share possible consequences of that choice (for example, making lasting friendships). Repeat with several other children.

Reinforce the children’s learning through repetition. Keep the “choice and consequences” stick. There will be other opportunities to use it during sharing time throughout the year.



Encourage understanding (*learning scripture stories*): During the first two weeks of the month, teach some stories from the scriptures that show how making right choices leads to freedom and happiness and how making bad choices leads to captivity and misery. Scripture stories you could use include the Savior and Satan (see Moses 4:1–4); Nephi and Laman and Lemuel (see 1 Nephi 2–4, 7, 18); Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (see Daniel 3); or Alma and King Noah (see Mosiah 17–19). After teaching a story, invite two children to each hold one end of the “choice and consequences” stick. Ask one child to explain the choices made by those in the story and the other child to explain the consequences of those choices.

Encourage application (*hearing a story*): Place a picture of Jesus Christ on the board. Draw steps leading up to the picture. Draw a stick figure on a piece of paper, and place it at the bottom of the steps. Tell a short story about the choices a child might make during one day. For each choice, ask the children to show whether it is a good choice or a bad choice by standing up for a good choice and sitting down for a bad choice. For example: “Jane took a toy away from her baby brother, and he started crying. When Jane’s mother asked her why he was crying, Jane said she didn’t know.” For each good choice, move the stick figure up one step toward Jesus. Continue the story with other choices until the figure reaches the Savior. Discuss how good choices bring us happiness and help us move closer to the Lord.



Week 3: In the premortal life, I chose to follow God’s plan.

Encourage understanding (*singing songs*): Briefly discuss the following concepts, and then sing the corresponding songs with the children: Before I came to earth I lived in heaven (“I Lived in Heaven” [CS, 4]). I chose to come to earth and receive a body (“I Am a Child of God” [CS, 2–3]; “The Lord Gave Me a Temple” [CS, 153]). I will be baptized and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (“When I Am Baptized” [CS, 103]; “The Holy Ghost”

[CS, 105]). I can prepare to go to the temple (“I Love to See the Temple” [CS, 95]; “Families Can Be Together Forever” [CS, 188]). I will be resurrected (“He Sent His Son” [CS, 34–35]).



Week 4: Jesus Christ created the earth as a place where I can learn to choose the right.

Identify the doctrine (*seeing and discussing an object lesson*): Show the children a container of many different colors of crayons. Show them a second container with only one color. Ask the children: “If you were going to color a picture,

which of these containers of crayons would you want to use? Why?” Explain that having a variety of choices is a blessing. Testify that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ love us and They want us to make correct choices.

Object lessons “tie [an] invisible idea . . . to some tangible object the student already knows about and then build from that knowledge” (Boyd K. Packer, in TNGC, 163).



Encourage understanding (*coloring*): Let the children color a copy of the illustration on page 35 of the nursery manual, *Behold Your Little Ones*, or invite them to draw similar pictures with the same captions. Discuss who created the things in the illustration and why they were created. Teach the children that Heavenly Father expects us to take care of this world His Son created for us. Ask the children to share ways they can choose to take care of the earth and the creations that are on it. Invite the children to take their illustration home and have their parents make it into a book.

In this activity, you may choose to demonstrate the concept that choice is a blessing with crayons, colored pencils, a variety of fruits, or any other objects the children are familiar with.