



**Making Decisions (🌈 A Cognitive Health Story)
(5th Grade – 10-11 yrs.)
Video: The Wallet Test**



STORY CONNECTION – SLIDES 3 & 7 (Approx Time: 25-30 min)

Making good decisions can be a very hard thing to do. When you are faced with lots of options, which one do you choose? What are good decisions? Good decisions, or good choices, usually have something to do with helping either your body or your brain stay safe or helping someone else. There is a part of your brain, right in the front of your head, called the prefrontal cortex. This is a part of your brain that is important for helping you make decisions. The prefrontal cortex gets information from lots of other parts of your brain. It puts this information together and helps you to decide what to do. We know that the decision-making part of your brain is going to continue to grow until you are in your 20's or even your late 20's...that is somewhere between 22-29 years old (Remember, we all grow at different rates). That means your decision-making part of your brain is going to be growing for a long time. Until the decision-making part of your brain is finished growing, your brain might not always be able to make good decisions, so it is your job to help your brain make good decisions. You need to help your brain make good decisions because this is a time when your brain may want you to engage in risky behaviors.

Materials needed:

- Small group discussion questions (included below)
- Chart paper or whiteboard
- Markers
- Tape
- Would you pass the Wallet Test? Video Link:
 - <https://thekidshouldseethis.com/post/wallet-test-ethics-video> (5:34)
- Equipment to show an online video

Preparation needed:

- Preview the video prior to the activity.
- Read the information on the website for a better understanding of the video and the experiment.
- Print out and copy small group discussion questions or copy on chart paper or the whiteboard
- Determine student grouping. (Facilitators working with an individual student will “partner” with the student.)

Instructions:

1. In this activity, student(s) will watch and discuss a video about a study that looked at what decision people made when they found a wallet. This video also touches on honesty, which so often plays a role in good decision making, especially at this age.

Part I: Small Group Discussion

2. Explain to student(s) they will be placed in a small group to discuss a set of questions. Each group will need a designated reader, recorder and a reporter. They will have an allotted amount of time to discuss and be prepared to share out.
3. Ask student(s) if they have any questions or need any clarification. Clear up any misunderstandings.
4. Place student(s) in their group.
5. Have student(s) determine their roles.
6. Pass out/display the discussion questions.
7. Give the groups 10-15 minutes to talk about their answers to the questions.
8. When time is over or all groups have finished discussing, bring the group back together.
9. Ask the reporter in each group to share the responses. Discuss any interesting points that arise.

Part II: Video Experiment

10. Tell the student(s) they will now watch a video.
11. Play the video Would You Pass the Wallet Test?
12. When the video is over, use some or all the following questions to discuss:
 - What impacted whether the person tried to return the wallet? Amount of money in it.
 - Where were the “lost wallets” found? Public places like hotel lobbies, banks, offices
 - What did researchers expect to happen? Wallets containing no amount of money would be reported.
 - What happened in the experiment? Wallets containing money were reported more often.
 - Why did so many people decide to report the missing wallets with more money? Taking a larger sum of money felt more like stealing, the wallet’s owner would be more hurt by the loss of more money, the wallets were found in professional settings, etc.
 - Do you agree that seeing yourself as an honest person can make you an honest person?
 - Does this make society better? Why?
 - What decision would you have made if you found the empty wallet? The wallet with \$13? The wallet with \$100?
13. Lastly, talk a bit about honesty. Discuss with the student(s) some of the following points:
 - Does honesty play into good decision making?
 - Do they use honesty as a compass to guide their decision-making skills?
 - Knowing that the decision-making part of the brain is still developing, do they think honesty is important to keep in the forefront when making decisions? Why or why not?
14. In closing, review that making good decisions can be an extremely challenging thing to do especially when their prefrontal cortex is still growing and developing and will be for many years to come. Remind them that by being honest, they are going to make better decisions and choices, and this will keep their brain happy, healthy, and SPECTacular!

Discussion Questions Credit: <https://ed.ted.com/lessons/would-you-pass-the-wallet-test#watch>

Small Group Discussion Questions

Group Members:

Give an example of a time you found something of importance that did not belong to you, and you had to decide what to do about it. This could be at school, on the street, at a store, etc.

What did you do when you found this item?

Why did you decide to do what you did when you found this item?

Was it difficult to make this decision? Why or why not?

Would you make the same decision again? Why or why not?

Have you ever lost something and had it returned? Tell about this experience.

Do you think the person returning your item made the right decision? Why or why not?