

THE ZONE

Week of January 29, 2012

We continue with our unit on wise decision making – and our prayer is that you (as parents or guardians) will see some positive changes in your children regarding their choice making process

This week's story illustrates the struggle between two different choices: Soccer and piano are two very different things that play an important part in a story about Katy, a girl about the age of some of you. Katy faced a very difficult decision. Many of her friends had signed up to play soccer. Katy liked to play soccer too, and she wanted to be with her friends, but she also liked to play the piano and had been taking piano lessons for a couple of years. Soccer practice was at the same time as her piano lesson and playing soccer would take away from the time she needed to practice the piano. There was no way she could do both.

Ask your children the following questions. Give them some time to really think about what they would do in that scenario: What should she do? Should she quit piano and play soccer with her friends, or should she finish what she had started and continue with her piano lessons?

Continue on with the story: Finally, Katy came up with an idea. She sat down with a sheet of paper and drew a line down the center of the page. At the top of the page on one side of the line she wrote, "Piano." On the other side of the line she wrote, "Soccer." Below the word soccer, she wrote all of the advantages of playing soccer with her friends. Below the word piano, she wrote all of the advantages of being able to play the piano. After she had considered all of the advantages and disadvantages of each choice, Katy made her decision. She decided to continue her piano lessons. After all, she could still see her friends at school, and playing the piano was something that she would enjoy for the rest of her life.

We all face important decisions in life. For your children, it may seem as though the struggle between piano and soccer is a HUGE one...but the

most important decision we face is whether we will follow Jesus or not . Perhaps you might say, "Oh, that is an easy decision. Of course I will follow Jesus," but Jesus warned that it isn't always easy to follow him. He said that we should sit down and count the cost. Will we choose to follow him if it means giving up friends who are making bad choices? Will we choose to follow him if it means moving to a far away place and leaving our family behind? Will we choose to follow him if it means we will never live in a big house or drive a fancy car?

Jesus said, "Anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple." Where did Jesus carry his cross? He carried it to Calvary. It was on that cross that Jesus gave his life so that you and I could have everlasting life. When we choose to carry our cross, it means that we are willing to give up everything to follow Jesus.

Dear Jesus, we thank you for being willing to carry your cross to Calvary. Help us to make the choice to take our cross and follow you. Amen.