

## 07. Why did God give Adam and Eve the choice to sin?



### BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

Psalm 139:1-4

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

1 Peter 1:19-20



### AIMS

To help the children reflect on why God gives people choice rather than forcing them to obey.

To help them understand that God knows in advance what we will do and he had already planned a solution to sin.

To allow them to reflect on their response to God.

**God gives us choice because he wants us to choose to love and follow him rather than forcing us to obey. He knew in advance that people would sin and he had already planned for a solution.**



### PREP FOR LEADERS

Read the Bible verses for today and reflect:

- How do you hold together the ideas that God knows in advance what we will do, but that he also gives us choices?
- What difference does it make to know that he planned Jesus' sacrifice before the creation of the world?

Take some time to pray for your group.



### GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Choose one or more of the following activities to introduce today's theme.

#### ▶ Robot Tig

*You will need: small spray bottle filled with water*

For this game, you will need a large space for the children to run about.

Choose one child to be the catcher and give the water spray (which represents an oil can) to a different child. Let all the children run about pretending to be robots while the catcher tries to tig them –

encourage them to do their best robot moves!

When a child is caught, they become a rusty robot and they have to freeze where they are. The child with the water spray (who cannot be caught) has to come and oil them by spraying at them a couple of times so they can move. The person who has just been unfrozen then takes over the water spray and it is their job to free the next person while the child who has just freed them continues as a normal participant in the game.

Continue playing like this. The catcher's aim is to freeze everyone except the child with the water spray, and everyone else's aim is to work together to prevent this.

*(continued overleaf)*

After a few minutes, you can allow everyone to be unfrozen and start the game again with a new catcher.

### ► Design a Robot

*You will need: felt pens, paper*

Divide the children into groups of three or four and give them a few minutes to design a robot. Get them to draw it on their piece of paper. Encourage them to give it a name and to think about what it will be able to do and the features it will have.

Once they have done this, let each group show their robot to the larger group. If you have time, each group could give a short explanation of their robot and what it can do, or if you are pushed for time, you could gather all the pictures together on a table or stick them up on the wall and give everyone a minute to look at them.

This activity could be done just for fun or a leader could choose a winning group.

### ► Friendship Game

*You will need: pens, paper*

Choose two volunteers who are good friends with each other. (You could choose two or three pairs to play at once.) Give each participant a pen and some paper. Tell them that you are going to read out a series of questions that involve making a choice.

Tell one of the pair that they have to write down what they would choose in that situation while the other member of the pair has to write down the answer they think their friend will give.

Here are some possible questions:

- Would you choose chocolate or crisps?
- What is your favourite colour?

- Would you rather go swimming or play football?
- If you found a £10 note lying in the playground, would you keep it or hand it in?
- Where in the world would you most like to visit?
- Do you prefer going shopping or going to the beach?
- Would you rather have a cat or a dog?
- If you saw someone dropping litter in the playground, would you tell them to pick it up, pick it up for them, or do nothing?

After each question, get the children to display their answers and give them a point for each question where their answers match within their pair. If you have more than one pair competing you can see which pair of friends know each other the best.

## ? INTRO TO QUESTION

**Last time we thought about why there are bad things in the world. God had made a world that was very good, but Adam and Eve sinned. They disobeyed God, and the knock-on effect was that their relationship with God and with one another was broken, and the world was broken. Now, instead of being very good, there are lots of things in the world that are very bad.**

**Today we're going to think about two big questions that follow on from what we talked about last week. Both of these questions come from children at an SU weekend away.**

- Did God know sin was going to happen?
- Why did God give us free choice?

**They are both brilliant questions, and they're quite complicated to think about, but we're going to do our best to find out what the Bible says!**



## EXPLORING THE BIBLE

### ► What does the Bible say?

*You will need: Bible or verses printed out (from additional document: Bible verses)*

**First of all, did God know sin was going to happen?**

**The short answer to that question is yes.**

Look up the Bible verses below, or show them to the children on the printouts:

*Lord, you have seen what is in my heart.  
You know all about me.*

*You know when I sit down and when I get up.  
You know what I'm thinking even though you are far away.*

*You know when I go out to work and when I come back home.  
You know exactly how I live.  
Lord, even before I speak a word, you know all about it.*

*(Psalm 139:1-4 NIRV)*

If you played the friendship game earlier, you could point out that when someone was making a choice, often their friend knew what they would choose because they knew them so well.

**The Bible tells us that God knows us even better than our best friend because he made us. He knows what we are going to do or say, even before it happens.**

You could refer back to Session 5 – it talked about how we are limited by time and space but God is not, so his view of things is different from ours.

That leads on to the second question (and possibly several other questions!) If God knew that Adam and Eve were going to disobey him, why did he give them the choice? Wouldn't it have been easier if he had made them choose not to eat the fruit? And why does God let people choose to do things that hurt others today?

See what ideas the children come up with in answer to these questions. If they are struggling to think, you could ask them to imagine what it would be like if people didn't have a choice about how they behaved.

**If God had made people so that we couldn't choose to do things that are wrong, then we wouldn't be able to choose to do right either. We wouldn't be able to choose to do anything. We'd just be like robots, doing what we were programmed to do.**

**That might mean there was no evil, but things like love and friendship wouldn't exist either, because they are things that have to be chosen. They can't be forced.**

If you used the Design a Robot intro activity you can get the children to think about what it would be like if they actually made the robot. It might be able to do things for them, but could it really be their friend?

**The Bible teaches that God created people for friendship with him, and that he wants us to choose to love him and obey him, but it's not something he forces us to do, because then it wouldn't really be love.**

**All through the Bible, he gives people a choice.**

**A couple of weeks ago (in Session 5) we heard about Moses. God's people, the Israelites, were slaves in Egypt, and God decided to**

**rescue them and called Moses to lead them to freedom. The story of how God rescued his people is amazing! He saved them even though Pharaoh, the King of Egypt, was determined to keep them as his slaves. He opened up the sea and made a path through the middle for them to escape. He provided all the food and water they needed on the long journey to the land he had promised them, and he led them all the way there. They were free!**

**But part of that freedom meant making a choice.**

**When the people were at the edge of the land and about to go in, Moses spoke to them and told them about the choice they had.**

Read Deuteronomy 30:15-20:

*'Today I'm giving you a choice. You can have life and success. Or you can have death and harm. I'm commanding you today to love the Lord your God. I'm commanding you to live exactly as he wants you to live. You must obey his commands, rules and laws. Then you will live. There will be many of you. The Lord your God will bless you in the land you are entering to take as your own.'*

*Don't let your hearts turn away from the Lord. Instead, obey him. Don't let yourselves be drawn away to other gods. And don't bow down to them and worship them. If you do, I announce to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. You are about to go across the Jordan River and take over the land. But you won't live there very long.*

*I'm calling for the heavens and the earth to be witnesses against you this very day. I'm offering you the choice of life or death. You can choose either blessings or curses. But I want you to choose life. Then you and*

*your children will live. And you will love the Lord your God. You will obey him. You will remain true to him. The Lord is your very life. He will give you many years in the land. He promised to give that land to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."* (NIRV)

**What was the choice the people had?**

**What were the consequences of their choice?**

**They had to choose whether they were going to love God and obey his commands or whether they were going to do their own thing.**

If they followed God, that would lead to a good life in the land, but if they didn't, it would lead to trouble. He wanted them to choose to follow him, but they had the choice and, unfortunately, as we follow the story of the Israelites we see them make lots of bad choices and we see that it led to trouble.



## REFLECT & RESPOND

### ▶ Reflection and Prayer

*You will need: paper and pen or pencil for each child*

Give each child a sheet of paper and a pen or pencil. Get them to divide their paper into quarters. Lead them through the reflection below and get them to write or draw something in response to each of the four questions. Let them know that nobody will be asking for their responses, this is something for them to think about by themselves.

**Take a moment to think about the choices you make.**

**What is one choice you have made today? (It could be a very simple choice like what to have for a snack or it could be a**

**bigger choice.) Draw or write something on your paper.**

**When have you been pleased about a choice you've made? It could be choosing a particular person to be your friend, it could be taking on a challenge or trying something new, it could be choosing to do something to help someone else.**

**When have you not been happy about a choice you've made? Maybe you said something unkind to someone or chose to do something you knew was wrong.**

**What is something you don't have a choice about?**

**We talked last time about the knock-on effect of sin. Since Adam and Eve chose to disobey God, every person who is born into the world also sins. And although we do have choices between right and wrong in individual situations, none of us can ever be perfect. We can't choose never to sin no matter how hard we try.**

**The good news is that because God knew in advance that people would sin, he also had a plan to do something about it.**

Read these verses from 1 Peter 1:19-20

*'Instead, you were bought with the priceless blood of Christ. He is a perfect lamb. He doesn't have any flaws at all. He was chosen before God created the world. But he came into the world for your sake in these last days.'*

**These verses are talking about Jesus. He is the only person who has never done anything wrong, and he came into the world to deal with the problem of sin. This was something God had planned since before the world was created! We'll think more next time about how Jesus dealt with the problem of sin.**

Give the children a moment to reflect on the idea that God knew people would sin but that he had a plan to do something about it.

They could use the back of their piece of paper to write or draw what they want to say to God.

Lead them in prayer to close.