

Facilitator's Tool Box

Choice Bags – Smart Choices Module

Purpose: To demonstrate that we sometimes make choices without getting all the information available to us, and that some choices look good initially, but once into it, we realize it's not what we expected; to help youth participants to consider some factors that can contribute to making smarter choices.

Outcome: Participants will consider gathering more information before making their choices.

Instructions: You will need three gift bags of different sizes; perhaps two that are print and one of brown paper.

In one, put something slightly heavy, but of no value. (Small bottles of dried paint, lots of broken crayons, a bunch of jar lids, etc.)

In the second, put something else of no value but with a different feel and weight (a bunch of clean, rolled up socks works well).

It helps make your point if one of these two sacks really pretty, or really big.

In the third sack, put enough small pieces candy for everyone in the group.

Of course, you'll have tissue paper in stuffed in them to prevent anyone from seeing what's inside.

Divide the group into thirds. Have them draw to see who goes first and second to choose a bag for their group. Ask the group that drew #1 to select their bag. Then the group that drew #2, and then Group #3 takes the remaining sack.

Ask a spokesperson for each group to open the bag & show the contents to the rest of the group. Once they've all expressed their feelings about the contents of their bags, ask the following questions:

Process: *Group #1, are you happy with the contents of your bag?*

What was the basis for choosing your bag?

Group #2, how do you like the contents of your bag?

What made you decide on that particular bag?

And Group #3, how do you feel about your bag?

What was it like not to have any choice in the matter?

Be sure to capitalize on the pretty bag with the yucky contents: *Sometimes we make a decision based on how things appear on the surface and then find out it's not such a good decision after all, don't we?*

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Go back to whichever groups aren't happy with their bag and ask:

There were no rules about looking inside the bag. Would looking in the bag have changed your choice?

What else could you have done to have selected a more desirable bag?

Could additional information have helped you make a better choice?

How could you have gotten that information?

What can you learn from this to help you make better choices in the future?

NOTE: **IF** Group #3 ends up with the bag of candy, you can make the point that by waiting, they had a better outcome.