



## Stop, Think and PLAN: Decision Making

### Materials

- Butcher paper
- Markers
- Construction paper
- Scissors
- Tape

I'm going to tell you a story about a boy who had an important decision to make. His name is Joe, and he lives in an apartment with his grandmother.

One day Joe was hanging out in front of his grandmother's apartment. He was bouncing a ball and wishing there was something fun to do. Some neighborhood kids came walking up. They were all wearing red bandannas and had one pants leg rolled up.

"Hey kid," one of the boys said, "You want some action?"

Joe said, "What do you mean?"

The boy said, "We're like a family. Come with us, and you'll never be lonely or bored again. We'll let you join if you do one thing. Take this bag. Don't open it. Just carry it to the guy on the next corner."

Joe stopped and thought. He thought about what could happen if he did this. He remembered his grandmother warning him about gangs. He wasn't sure these boys belonged to a gang, but he thought they might. What do you think? 🤔 *The way they dressed made it seem like they probably belonged to a gang.*

Joe didn't know what was in the bag. What do you think was in the bag?

Joe thought the bag might have drugs in it. He remembered his grandmother warning him to stay away from drug dealers. He had heard about people getting into big trouble delivering drugs for other people.

What do you think could happen to Joe if he delivered the bag?

What do you think Joe decided to do?

The boy said, “Come on, man. We don’t have all day. Make up your mind!”

Joe decided not to join the group. He said, “Can’t do it. I’m going to the Boys and Girls Club to play soccer.”

The boy said, “Your loss,” and the group walked away.

When they had gone, Joe said to himself, “Okay, man. Good move.”

Do you agree that Joe made a good choice? Why or why not?

It is easier to make good decisions when you stop and think about them, but sometimes you must make quick decisions, and you don’t have time to stop and think. Joe had already thought about what he would do if he was asked to join a gang. He had already talked to his family about what he would do if he was offered a drug or asked to do something that he thought was wrong. That made it easier for him when he had to make a choice.

You need to stop, think and make important decisions ahead of time, especially when your health and safety are at stake. Guns are very dangerous, for example, so you need to stop and think about what you should do if you see a gun. What do you think you should do? 🧠 *Run.*

It is important to think ahead of time, like Joe did, about decisions you may need to make. It is important to talk to other people, too—people who can help you to make good choices.

Let’s name some places in our neighborhood or community that offer fun, safe and healthy activities for children and teenagers. These are places where you can hang out where it will be easier for you to make good choices. Joe went to the Boys and Girls Club, for example. Where else could you go?

♥ *Encourage the children to name places, such as the following:*

- *Boys and Girls Club*
- *Church or synagogue*
- *Recreation center*
- *Home of a relative or neighbor*
- *Library*

Now each of you will choose one safe, healthy place that offers fun activities for kids your age. On a piece of construction, paper draw a picture or write the name of your special place. ♥ *Allow time for the children to do that.*

Now we'll make a map that shows our neighborhood or community. We will put in some streets, and then we will add your special places to our neighborhood map.

♥ *Have the children create a community or neighborhood map on butcher or chart paper. With markers, draw a grid to show the streets in your area. Then invite each child to put his or her special place on the map and tell the group what makes that a special place. Display the map on a wall or bulletin board.*

Today we have talked about some places you can go that make it easier for kids to make good decisions. We stopped and thought about some decisions that you may have to make someday. When you go home today, talk with your family about your safe and healthy choices.