

# thESource *Bible Study*

## It's a Jungle Out There

by Joani Shultz

### Introduction

Making one's own decisions is an exciting part of growing up. But making decisions can also be like going on a jungle safari. The whole idea of decision-making for junior highers sounds exotic, exciting. Yet there's an element of fear: What's really going to happen if I choose this? What will be best for me? What will harm me?

Use this Junior High Night to go on a decision-making journey—a jungle safari of sorts. Help your junior highers learn more about how they make decisions and how God's Word gives insight into their choices.

### Objectives

To help junior high youth...

- explore feelings that come from making decisions;
- evaluate how they usually make decisions;
- examine what God's Word says about decision-making;
- share in a worship experience.

### Out of Africa

Just for fun, have a few junior highers help decorate the meeting room like a jungle. Use plants, green streamers for vines, and a few stuffed animals placed here and there.

Before the "Safari": copy and separate a set of "jungle" cards for each participant (printed at the end of this document).

### Me, Tarzan; You, Jane

For openers, have group members form a circle (sitting on chairs). Select one guy to be Tarzan and one girl to be Jane. Blindfold both of them, spin them around, and place them in the center of the group. The object is for Tarzan to catch Jane while Jane tries to stay away. Tarzan can ask, "Jane?" and Jane must answer "Tarzan?" The people in the circle can't give clues; they just create a boundary. When Tarzan finds Jane, select two others to be in the center.

### Wild Animals

Have participants form a circle. Then whisper the name of one of four animals to each person. Use monkey, lion, boa constrictor, and crocodile. All should imitate the sound and action of the animal as they find the others who are the same animal. For a real challenge, have all close their eyes.

Introduce the theme. Say, "When people describe something tough or challenging, they might say, 'It's a jungle out there!' Making good decisions can be like struggling through a jungle. Sometimes you're not sure what's best, what direction to take, or what might result in danger. We're going to explore that 'jungle out there.' Then we'll find clues that the Bible gives us in making good decisions. Each day we face decisions, each day is like an adventure, a journey—a safari."

Have each person tell about a difficult decision he or she made and what feelings it brought about.

### Safari Situations

Give each person in the small groups four jungle cards (printed on the last page of this study). Talk about each action on the cards. Then read each safari situation. Each person must decide how he or she would respond in that situation. Have them each place the card the best describes how they'd respond in the center when you say "Jungle Safari!" Then each must tell why they responded that way.

Safari Situations:

- deciding what to wear
- making fun of someone
- gossiping
- choosing classes
- choosing what friends to hang out with
- going to youth group activities
- drinking or smoking with friends
- eating lunch at school with someone one who's not "in"
- going with the family on an outing
- deciding how to spend money
- helping around the house
- attending church

### What Does the Bible Say?

Have small groups look up the verses listed on the jungle cards and write key words from each. After each card's verses are completed, have each small group tell what decision-making advice they learned from the Bible.

Discuss: When is it easy to be a parrot? a giraffe? a rhino? a possum? What makes decision-making so hard? How does God want us to make choices? What have you learned about how you make decisions?

Write these questions on the board or read them as you discuss them in small groups or as a whole:

1. In spite of good advice—what makes it difficult for us to make God-pleasing decisions; why do we fail? (Romans 7:5-24)
2. What has God done for us to set us free from the mistakes of the past and to give us the strength to make better choices in the future? (Romans 8:26-27; Colossians 2:13-15)
3. What difference does God's action for us in Christ make in our decisions? (Philippians 4:8-9; Colossians 2:6-7; Colossians 3:12-17)

Have kids choose a different one of the "Safari Situations" and tell how they might respond differently because of what the Word says. Then have kids write on a 3" x 5" card a situation they find hardest to make a God-decision about. Save the cards for the worship.

### Safari Celebration

Gather the group. Use this prayer:

Lord, help us make good decisions in that "jungle out there":

- the jungle of school
- the jungle of home
- the jungle of friends
- the jungle of family
- the jungle of growing up

Help us also with these "jungles": (have kids read their cards from the earlier exercise.)

Read Philippians 2:1-4, 12-16.

Lord, You lived our life in the jungle and offer us forgiveness and life. Be our strength; help us to shine like stars as we offer the message of life. Amen.

Join in a group hug.

### Safari Snacks

Serve animal crackers and "Jungle Juice" (Hawaiian Punch).

## Jungle Cards

### Parrot

Does what everybody else says and does.

Proverbs 11:17; 13:20; 14:7; 23:19-20; 24:1-2; 26:27; 27:12, 17

### Giraffe

Sticks neck out and looks in all directions (options) before acting.

Proverbs 13:16; 14:15; 15:22; 21:5; 22:3

### Rhino

Barges ahead without thinking.

Proverbs 14:16; 15:28; 20:18

### Possum

Sits and does nothing.

Proverbs 22:13, 16; 29:25

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