

Saying No to Tobacco

Quarter 3 | Lesson 12 | Life Skills

1. **Connecting:** Tell silly stories and learn interesting facts about the lungs.
2. **Teaching:** Learn about the dangers of tobacco use and what the Bible says about wisdom (Romans 12:1–2; James 1:5).
3. **Responding:** Perform skits about wise choices and pray for wisdom.

SUPPLIES

- Bibles

Optional Supplies:

- Memory Verse poster
- Pencils
- Student Pages

Teacher Devotion

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

James 1:5

God is the only source of true wisdom. His understanding and knowledge are infinite. His choices are always perfect. Even when we do things to harm ourselves, God can give us the wisdom to honour ourselves as He does. As you prepare to teach your students how wisdom can help them to make wise choices about their bodies, consider the wisdom God has given you. Where does your life reflect the truths of His love and glory? Do you honour Him with your own wise choices? Do you need His help to make an important decision? Do you need Him to give you wisdom in a difficult relationship? Do you need His guidance as you minister to 1 of the students in your class?

When you ask God for wisdom, He will give it generously. Ask Him now, and continue to ask Him every day. You may begin to notice a change. Your thoughts will become more like God's. He will broaden your understanding of situations and relationships. He will give you eyes to see and ears to hear what is good and true and wise—so you will begin to see the world as He does.

Teacher Tip: As you teach this lesson, keep in mind that tobacco use includes more than just smoking cigarettes. It also includes smoking cigars, pipes, and shisha/hookah as well as chewing tobacco.

Lesson Time

1. Connecting: Tell silly stories and learn interesting facts about the lungs.

Greet your students warmly as they arrive. As they arrive, ask them to share silly stories or jokes with you and others in the group. Remember which students have particularly humorous stories and jokes so you can call on them in the next activity. Once all the students have arrived, gather the class together for the lesson.

Begin class by sharing your own silly story or joke with the students. Laugh and encourage the students to laugh with you! Then choose 1–2 students who shared particularly humorous stories or jokes and have them share their stories with the whole group.

Divide the students into 4 equal groups. Encourage them to share silly stories and jokes with each other. Give them 3–4 minutes for this activity.

Those were silly stories and jokes! We did a lot of laughing! Did you know that laughing is good for you? In fact, it improves your immune system, which helps you to fight off sickness.

When you laugh, you use your lungs. When you breathe in, your lungs transport oxygen to your bloodstream and collect carbon dioxide, which is then exhaled. Here are some other interesting facts about your lungs.

A sneeze can cause air to leave your body at speeds as fast as 16 kilometres per hour.

Your right lung is larger than your left lung—to make room for your heart.

You can increase your lung capacity by doing regular exercise.

The average person breathes 12–20 times per minute when resting.

Even when you try to exhale all of your breath, your lungs will still retain about 1 litre of oxygen. Try it now!

Allow students to try to exhale all of the oxygen in their lungs. They should try this a few times. No matter how hard they try, if they try again, they will be able to exhale a little bit more.

God made your lungs so useful and amazing! Your lungs allow you to breathe, hiccup, talk, and laugh.

- **Can you think of some things that might damage your lungs?**

Students may suggest diseases, exposure to damaging chemicals, or smoking.

People sometimes get infections, such as pneumonia and tuberculosis, which can damage their lungs. Jobs such as farming, mining, and manufacturing can also damage people's lungs. People with jobs like these may breathe in harmful chemicals or smoke, which eventually may cause their lungs to lose function. One of the most damaging things you can breathe in is tobacco smoke. Smoking narrows the air passages in your lungs and destroys your lung tissue. Let's talk more about how smoking can damage your body—especially your lungs.

2. Teaching: Learn about the dangers of tobacco use and what the Bible says about wisdom (Romans 12:1–2; James 1:5).

Ask students to gather on 1 side of your teaching space.

I will read some facts about how tobacco can damage your body. As I read each statement, you can stay where you are to show that you already knew this fact about tobacco. If you did not know the fact, take 1 large step forward.

Tobacco contains a powerful drug called nicotine. Nicotine dependency is so strong that tobacco users usually cannot stop thinking about when they will next be able to smoke or chew tobacco.

Smoking makes your hair, clothes, and breath smell bad. It makes your skin and nails yellow and can cause your teeth to fall out.

Smoking can make you cough and wheeze. It can block airflow, making it difficult for you to breathe.

Tobacco narrows your blood vessels and makes your heart work harder than it should.

Tobacco causes you to get sick more easily because it damages your immune system. It can even give you cancer in your lungs, mouth, or throat.

If you smoke, you are not only hurting yourself. Everyone around you who breathes the smoke can be harmed.

- Have any of these things changed the way you feel about using tobacco?

You probably know some people who use tobacco. Maybe you struggle with an addiction to it—or maybe you want to try it. Lots of people use tobacco. In some countries and cultures, using tobacco is normal behaviour. Many people do not even think about the negative effects. They use tobacco because everyone else does.

- Do you think you should make decisions based on what everyone else does?
Why or why not?

When you make decisions about caring for your body—or anything else—you should always make wise choices. You should let wisdom guide your decisions instead of doing what everyone else does. God made you wise—and you can use that wisdom to do what is best for you and for others.

- What is wisdom?

Ask the students to find partners and share their answers with their partners. Then allow each pair to share an answer with the group.

Wisdom is the ability to understand a situation well and to follow the best course of action. Wisdom is not the same as being smart or intelligent, though it is possible to be both wise and intelligent. Wisdom goes deeper than just the knowledge in our brains. It is the ability to use our understanding and knowledge to make good choices. A wise person thinks about the consequences of a choice before deciding how to act.

- Do you think it is wise to use tobacco? Share your ideas with your partner.

Give students time to share ideas with their partners. Then ask for 3 volunteers to share their partners' ideas with the class.

Teacher Tip: Giving students an opportunity to share their partners' thoughts lessens the pressure of always wanting to have the correct answer. Also, when a teen likes what his partner said and shares it with the group, the partner feels valued. Be sure the students understand they should only share their partners' ideas as a form of praise, not to tease them.

There is a difference between knowing something in your brain and using that knowledge to help you make a good choice. Every choice we make has a consequence. Choosing not to use tobacco takes more than just knowledge—it takes wisdom.

Ask a student to read Romans 12:1–2 aloud from the Bible.

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Romans 12:1–2

- What does this passage tell us about making wise choices?

This passage tells us that we need to test everything in life in order to decide what is right and what is wrong. If you have ever tried a new food for the first time, you probably tried a small taste before taking a bigger bite. The same is true of the words we hear from others. It is unwise to immediately believe everything we hear. For example, you may know a lot of people who smoke and think you should, too. But you should always use wisdom in making your own decisions about smoking—you should not just do what others do or say.

- What other wisdom can this verse give us about choosing not to use tobacco?

Guide the students to understand that this verse calls us to present our bodies as holy and living sacrifices to God. So when we take care of our health, we honour Him. The verse also teaches us that we should not make decisions based on worldly standards but instead seek God's wisdom and live in a way that is pleasing to Him.

Have a student read James 1:5 aloud from the Bible. Show the Memory Verse poster if possible.

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

James 1:5

- According to this verse, what should you do if you do not have enough wisdom?

Ask God for wisdom.

3. Responding: Perform skits about wise choices and pray for wisdom.

Divide students into groups of 3–5.

Each group will create and perform a skit in which someone is tempted to use tobacco, alcohol, or drugs. As you plan your skit, talk with your group about situations you have experienced or witnessed. Maybe a friend has pressured you to take drugs. Maybe you wanted to try drinking alcohol because you wanted to know what it felt like to be drunk. Maybe you have been tempted to smoke cigarettes because your father smokes. As a group, decide on a situation to act out. The ending of the skit can show a wise decision or an unwise decision.

Give students about 5 minutes to plan and practice their skits. Then have each group perform their skit. Affirm each group, pointing out something specific they did well. After each skit, ask the following questions.

- **Did this ending show a wise choice?**
- **What other wise choices could the character have made in this situation?**

Optional: If you are using the Student Pages, have the teens use them to write ideas to help them make wise choices.

It can be difficult to make wise choices. It can be difficult to make our own decisions when everyone around us is making a different decision. But doing things because everyone else does them is not wise.

Quietly think about a situation in your life where you need wisdom. It may be about using drugs, alcohol, or tobacco. It may be about a relationship with someone who uses drugs, alcohol, or tobacco. It could be about a family situation or a difficult decision you need to make.

Give students time to think quietly.

We read in James 1:5 that if we lack wisdom, we should ask God for it, and He will give it generously to us. Let's spend time in prayer asking God for wisdom. Even if you have never asked God for anything before, He will still hear you. First, tell God about your situation. You can pray silently or whisper your prayer to God.

Give students about 30 seconds to talk to God about their situations.

Now, ask God for wisdom. Your prayer can be as simple as, "God, please give me wisdom."

Give students a moment to pray.

Next, spend some time listening to God.

Give students about a minute to listen to God. Then gather the class together.

Sometimes God gives us wisdom right away as we pray for it. Sometimes He waits until later. Often the wisdom He gives us is straight from the Bible! We always need to make sure that what we believe we are hearing from God agrees with what the Bible says. God and His Word are the only sources of true wisdom.

Close your time with a blessing over your students based on James 1:5:

Blessing: May our gracious God give you the ability to know, understand, and choose what is right. May He generously pour out His wisdom on you, now and always.

Family Connection: Encourage the students to ask their family members who use tobacco, "Why did you decide to start using tobacco?" They can also ask their family members who do not use tobacco, "Why did you decide not to use tobacco?" They can use this information to help them make wise decisions about tobacco use.

Lead the students in singing this quarter's song if possible.

"Waymaker" by Sinach: <https://youtu.be/DFGDU3XZmms>