

Activity 9: Difficult Choices

**GRADES K-2 (WORKSHEET 1);
3-12 (WORKSHEET 2)**

GPS

GSE Standard Alignment:
ELA and Social Studies



15 – 30 min.



Can be paired with Food and Life, Family Budgets

Student Learning

Students will use critical thinking skills to analyze and make informed decisions about real-world scenarios related to food insecurity. Through discussion and reflection, students build empathy, critical thinking, and understanding of hunger, food insecurity, and poverty.

Objectives

Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of how economic challenges affect families, identify challenges related to hunger and food insecurity, and justify their choices using reasoning and evidence.

Materials

- Copies of “Difficult Choices” worksheet
- Pens/pencils
- Optional:
 - Chart paper for discussion
 - Sentence starters for younger grades

Performance Tasks

Part One

Introduce age-appropriate vocabulary before beginning hunger, food insecurity, poverty.

- Hunger is when someone has a physical

feeling in their body from not having enough food to eat

- Food insecurity is a lack of consistent access to enough food for every person in a household to live an active, healthy life
- Poverty means not having enough money for basic needs

Explain that this activity represents real choices people facing food insecurity must make.

Begin with a class discussion:

- What are some things people need every day?
- What happens if families do not have enough food or money?
- What is the difference between a need and a want?

Part Two

Distribute “Difficult Choices” worksheets and have them work individually or in pairs.

Read the instructions aloud and clearly explain that students must choose one option or the other, with no compromise.

Read each scenario aloud. Have students discuss among themselves, if working in pairs, then write their choice and the reason for choosing.

Part Three

Discussion Questions

- What choice did you make?
- Why did you choose it?
- Was it hard to choose? What made it difficult?
- Did anyone else choose something different? Why?
- What information did you think about before making your choice?
- How might it feel to have to make these choices every day?

K-2 Discussion Questions

- How might someone feel if they were hungry?
- What happens if someone doesn't eat?
- What can we do to help others?

3-12 Discussion Questions

- What did you have to give up when you made your choice?
- What is the “cost” of your decision besides money (time, health, comfort)?
- Which choices focused on short-term needs? Long-term needs?
- How are hunger and poverty connected?
- Why might different families make different choices?
- What are some ways communities can help reduce food insecurity?

Extension Ideas

Family Budgets

Break students into groups and assign each group to a family from Activity 5: Family Budgets. Have students revisit their choices to see if their choices change.

Questions to explore:

- How did your choices change based on your family situation?
- What new information did you have to consider?
- Were the choices more difficult?

Research and Explore

Have students research hunger in their community, programs and policies that already exist to support families, and causes of food insecurity.

Information sources:

- National anti-hunger policy issues:
 - www.feedingamerica.org/advocate
 - www.frac.org
- Responses to hunger
 - www.211online.unitedwayatlanta.org
 - www.acfb.org/get-help/food-map/
 - www.feedingamerica.org/find-your-local-foodbank
- Hunger and food insecurity information
 - www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america

Worksheet 1

DIFFICULT CHOICES

Instructions: Below are “Difficult Choices” families facing food insecurity might encounter. For each, you’ll need to circle a choice and explain why you picked it. Think about how each option could affect your family, and choose carefully.

1. Would you rather...

Wake up early and eat free breakfast
at school , but you are sleepy.

OR

Sleep in late and wait until lunch to
eat, but you are hungry.

Why?

2. Would you rather...

Wait in line for free dinner but get
home late.

OR

Get home early but go
to bed hungry.

Why?

3. Would you rather...

Walk a long way to another
neighborhood to get free groceries

OR

Spend the last few dollars on fast
food in your neighborhood but have no
money left?

Why?

DIFFICULT CHOICES

Instructions: Below are “Difficult Choices” families facing food insecurity might encounter. For each, you’ll need to circle a choice and explain why you picked it. Think about how each option could affect your family, and choose carefully.

1. Would you rather...

Pay your rent on time, but not have enough money left to buy food for the week.

OR

Pay your rent late and use the money to buy food, knowing you’ll incur a late fee.

Why?

2. Would you rather...

Spend your money on food for the week, but not have enough left for gas to drive to work.

OR

Use your money for gas to drive to work, but have no breakfast and lunch through the work week.

Why?

3. Would you rather...

Cancel your internet service to save money, even though your children can’t do schoolwork or access learning tools online.

OR

Keep your internet so your children can learn, but not have enough money for nutritious dinners?

Why?

Final Thoughts: Imagine you’re in charge of helping solve food insecurity and financial hardship in your community. What are two ways you could support families facing these difficult decisions?

1. _____

2. _____