

**LESSON PLAN IDEAS FOR TEACHERS**

**"MY CHOICES MAKE ME WHO I AM" -- a character-building theme book by David & Mutiya Vision -- opens with, "I am as unique as a fingerprint...No one is exactly like me!"**

**The basic premise of this book is about making choices, but the kind of quality choices that** create an individual worthy of respect, self-respect and someone who is respected by others. It is about building good character by the wise choices we make. It is also about how our choices and decisions can have a positive influence in the world, and make a difference. It is about knowing yourself, and being empowered, using your own unique talents, intelligence and natural innate gifts to be the best you can be. It is about being inspired, loving yourself, being productive, and choosing friends wisely. It is about the choice to BE empowered.

**CHOICES FOR TEACHERS**

**Here are some thought provoking lesson plan ideas to motivate your students.** Choose which would work for your age group and developmental level. Or create your own character building lesson plan. Each Motivator has an AIM, a Lead-In Exercise, and a more in-depth exercise with some lead-in discussion builders. Teachers can decide to assign homework or continue a project in class.

**Motivator I. We can be empowered by our thoughts, words and actions.** We are empowered by the choices we make. The decisions we make tell the world about who we are.

**AIM:** What does the word "empowered" mean to you?

**Lead-in Exercise:** Look at the root word. Break the word into different parts, prefix, root word, suffix. What clue helps you define the word? What are some possible synonyms?

**Discussion:** How do you see yourself being empowered in your life?

**Writing exercise:** Students can write about, and illustrate, some ways in which they are empowered.

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**Motivator II. Making choices helps us to become more responsible.** The kinds of things we choose can help make us feel more grown up. How much choice do you have, and want to have?

**AIM: What kinds of choices do you make for yourself? Do your parents make for you?**

**Lead-in Exercise:** Write a list of different choices you make for yourself, and a separate list of choices your parents/family make for you. What choices do you wish you could make?

**Teacher Lists Student Generated Choosing Scenarios on the board:**

**(Possibilities)**

**I choose:**

what we will have for dinner, or what flavor ice cream I will eat.

To study and read books or watch too much television

Which chores I help Mom with

I do the grocery shopping

If I should I walk home or take the bus

**My Mom/Dad/Family chooses:**

What neighborhood to live in

What school I will attend

What clothes I will wear

What we eat for dinner

**Additional or other questions could be:**

Who chooses what you will be/study when you grow up? You or your parents?

Who chooses how you will act in school, treat a new student in class, be a bully or not, study, do homework?

**Writing Exercise:** Students can write a “What I want to be when I grow up” essay.

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**Motivator III.** The book tells us that the way we see the world determines our behavior, how we treat others, and influences the decisions we make.

**AIM:** How does the way you see the world influence your behavior? How do you think the behavior of other people influences you?

**Lead-in Exercise:** Choose a specific issue that is important to you that involves other people. Describe it and tell how you handle it.

**ROLE PLAY Group Exercise:** Divide the class into several small groups. Each group will write a skit together based on an important choice somebody in the group has to make, and each person in the group must choose a role and participate. The process should take about 15-20 minutes for groups to discuss and create/write, and then 5 minutes to act out. Hopefully each group will have a turn.

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**IDEAS FOR GLOBAL DISCUSSION: Connecting text to Social Studies**

**Freedom of Choice A)** Citizens in some countries have more choices and more freedoms than other countries. Poor people around the world sometimes have tough choices. In a country with plenty, even in hard economic times, we have enough food to eat. Sometimes we have to make more difficult choices. Some people in the world do not have enough food to eat. Parents must choose between feeding themselves or their children for a day or more.

**B)** In the country we live in here in the United States, we have a Constitution that says all men are created equal and have the freedom to pursue happiness. What does this idea mean to you? Discuss the idea of having freedom in contrast to being a slave. How has slavery affected people in different places? Name some situations where people had to fight for freedom from slavery. **What changed?**

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**MAKING A DIFFERENCE.** What can students do? Find out on the internet if there is a project that students might get involved with that would make a difference. For instance, UNICEF has an interesting catalog detailing different ways to help rural families around the globe provide for their families for a certain amount of time. For instance, how much it would cost to purchase a sheep for a family that would provide wool to sell. Students could devise a project that would enable them to raise funds.

Being a leader in your community. Students and teachers could get involved in an ecology project for Earth Day. Recycling. Gardening. Neighborhood cleanups. Check the internet.

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**DECISION-MAKING AND CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS** This book can be used to help students assess their own critical thinking skills, improve study habits, and learn about their own decision making process, for example: setting self-guidelines about homework and study habits; the choice to read a book vs. watch TV; the decision to be a bully or not; to walk away from a dangerous situation; to share a snack with a friend.

**TEACHERS, REMEMBER!** Every child is gifted with his and her own unique mind, thoughts and ideas, which are shaped by personal disposition, environment, family, school, friends, life situations, and so on. Every child is a person with abilities, talents, intelligence and, yes, even genius. Every child is born with his/her own unique genius. Children can learn to make wise choices and to be empowered by the choices they make, develop person integrity, and be a responsible citizen, if they learn how and have good role models.

**ADDITIONAL CHOICES FOR CHARACTER BUILDING EXERCISES: For discussion, to add to lesson plans above, or to use to create your own lesson plan with**

The book points out we are always making choices, and we can be empowered by the choices we do make. Our choices determine our character. What does it mean to have a good character? Do I help others? Do I think carefully before making a decision? Do I like to plan? How do I become successful? Use my creativity? Am I fair when playing games with others? Do I believe in myself? Do I allow others to put me down? How do I handle myself in difficult situations? How do I control my feelings, behaviors and actions? Are we successful? Are we strong-minded or weak-minded? Am I a peacemaker or a bully? Am I trustworthy and responsible? Do I respect myself?

**Have Students Ask Themselves: How does making wise choices build individual character?**

**NOTE: Making choices is a life skill. When using this book, a teacher must consider that various cultural influences that might affect each child's outlook, and also get your students to find the common thread.**

**Making choices involves a young person's ability to make decisions for themselves, and to think as an individual.** Making choices is also about becoming a responsible young person, developing a sense of self, while also becoming autonomous. And of course, depending upon the age of the child and their cultural norms will also determine how much choice they are allowed, or expected to, handle. The kinds of choices we see children make for themselves or about their immediate families and friends, school, tells us much about what they are learning and how they are developing.

**Being an individual in our society means that we are contributing in a positive way.** While we are contributing, we are also learning what it means to be a person who asserts him/herself by making choices. In particular, it is the quality of those choices that determines how we feel about ourselves, and **how we are seen by others**. It is also about knowing yourself, and about being empowered as a person, being aware of our thoughts, thinking a situation through, and considering the variables, persons involved, cause and effect of decision making, having integrity, being the best one can be, and how we are influenced by and influence others.

**You can choose various approaches to create connections to the text and create meaningful** life skill building lesson plans and lively dialogue using this book, depending upon your students' age group and developmental level. Basically, there are several ways of asking questions related to this particular life skill about making choices, the quality of those choices, and the concept of decision making.

**You can discuss the opening page: "I am unique as a fingerprint." What does that mean to be unique as a fingerprint? How is my fingerprint different than yours, hers or his? What is the definition of "unique"?**

**EXTRA CREDIT AND/OR RESEARCH:** You can discuss and/or have students research important influential people from history who had to deal with very challenging situations because they wanted to make a difference and made unpopular choices, but that eventually had good results. Examples, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, Joan of Arc, Princess Diana, John F. Kennedy.

**Special Bookmaking Project for Teachers or Workshop Facilitators and Students:**  
**Workshop Title – The Road Map to ME! To be used with MY CHOICES MAKE ME WHO I AM.**

**NOTE** – This is a lengthy project that could be done over a week or several weeks' time, but begun in class. Preparation and materials are needed. Please read thru to determine how you would like to handle this. It could also be an ongoing project. Teachers can request that the students bring in photographs of their lives, from babyhood on, special friends, relatives, family, special events, etc. to keep in separate large envelopes, or folders for each student with their names on it. Students can work on this project in class when they have independent work time, or also add the photographs at home as an ongoing project, and bring them in from time to time. This is a fun thing to do at home with family or independently, and with classmates and teachers. Teachers should participate in making their own book. Books can then be displayed around the class or in a special place.

**Preliminary Materials needed:** Multicolored construction paper of 8.5 x 11 inch size, pencils, crayons, whole punchers and colorful choices of woolen thread, sequins, multicolored feathers, buttons, ribbons, small pieces of felt of material, scissors, sparkle glue, and glue sticks. Also students can get use old magazines for collage, cut out letters, positive and empowering words, and photos of themselves at different ages.

**Introduce Vision Works book cover**, read the title and credits to them, ask for volunteers to say what they think the book is about. Then let students know that they will each be participating in a special project, one that will grow as they do.

After you've shown the students the title, and read them the first page or two of the book, put the book down, and ask the students what they think this book is about. Take answers from a few. Then ask the class to take one sheet of construction paper, which will be the cover of a book they will start to create.

Instruct students to take a pencil and trace their hand(s) on the paper. On the top of the page they can write, THE ROAD MAP TO ME. Underneath that, on the bottom of the page, they should write their own NAME.

**Tell the children that as you read, they should listen carefully for key words that interest them and that make them feel empowered**, and write or draw them on their traced hands til they fill them up. Ask the teacher to help by listening and writing these positive words on the board so students can see how they are spelled. Everybody will hear words that interest them, but some words can be CHOICE, WORLD, SEE, HEART, SPIRIT, EYE, MIND, LIFE, SUCCESS, CREATIVE / CREATIVITY, POSSIBILITIES, RESPECT, BREATHE, HAPPINESS, JOY, PEACE, and so on.

The children can draw pictures on or around their hand outlines, too.

**Continue reading from the book.** Every so often, ask different students, What makes you special? What makes you who you are? What makes you YOU? What makes you unique? Have the teacher, or different students, write the word, or phrase on the board.

This would be a good time to have teachers and students punch 2 or 3 holes on the left side of their cover sheet, and select a few more sheets to punch holes in alignment with the first one and put them aside for now. Later have them choose some ribbon or wool to tie the pages together. They can always add more pages.

After the book is read to the end, ask the students what they learned, or what the book meant to them. How is the book like a road map for their lives? Why do they think about the first activity? And what do they think we are going to create ?

**OK. Tell the students :** They are each creating a personal book that will be like an *autobiographical road map of their lives*. They can start adding pages that they will decorate in class as well as write topics on, like a page by page timeline, and which they can add their photographs from home.

Instruct students to each take a second sheet of construction paper on which they will write a list of pages and a table of contents. Ask who knows what a Table of Contents is?

**GET THEM THINKING:** What are the contents of their lives? How did they begin?

So page 1 will be called MY ROAD BEGINS. That will be the page for their baby picture, and any words or thoughts they can write about their beginning on their road of life. They can do some art on that page.

What is the next stop on the road map of their lives?

You can create the table of contents based on what you come up with in class with the children. A second page could be EARLY MEMORIES.

Another page can be SPECIAL EVENTS.

Still another page could be IMPORTANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

Another page could be MY FAMILY.

And another page could be SPECIAL FRIENDS / or / MY FRIENDS.

And another page could be MY DREAMS and GOALS

And finally, the last page could be MY WORLD WISHES / or / MY WISHES FOR THE WORLD.

Each page topic you choose, the teacher, or a student, can write on the board under the heading TABLE OF CONTENTS which each can copy onto their paper.

Students can draw one or two photograph-sized boxes on each page, and draw or glue decorations around them, and add their photos at home, and bring the book in at a later date, maybe in a week or two to share with class and teacher.

On the back of the last page, have students write their name and today's date.

At the end of the lesson, ask the students what the phrase THE CHOICE IS IN YOUR HANDS means to them.

Teachers might wish to photograph the students at work, and they can be shared or posted in the classroom, and create a class poster or scrapbook.

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