

## Decisions & Outcomes

It is easy to read – or teach – a Bible story and not take time to think about the decisions that people are making throughout the story. “Decisions & Outcomes” activities force us to stop and do this. They focus on single decisions that people make in the Bible and ask students to evaluate the decision and its outcome. Activities of this kind give lots of room to talk about what is meant by the terms “faithful” and “unfaithful” when it comes to making decisions, and what is meant by the terms “good” and “bad” when we think about the outcomes that follow.

This kind of activity can give students practice weighing decisions without immediately rushing to judgment on the people who make them. It can also equip the students to better evaluate their own decisions.

### Gamaliel

Acts 5:29-32 – Peter confronts the Jewish Council in Jerusalem.

*<sup>29</sup> But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men.*

*<sup>30</sup> The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree.*

*<sup>31</sup> God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. <sup>32</sup> And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."*

Acts 5:33-39 – The Council reacts.

*<sup>33</sup> When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them. <sup>34</sup> But a Pharisee in the council named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in honor by all the people, stood up and gave orders to put the men outside for a little while. <sup>35</sup> And he said to them, "Men of Israel, take care what you are about to do with these men.*

*<sup>36</sup> For before these days Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing. <sup>37</sup> After him Judas the Galilean rose up in the days of the census and drew away some of the people after him. He too perished, and all who followed him were scattered. <sup>38</sup> So in the present case I tell you, keep away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or this undertaking is of man, it will fail; <sup>39</sup> but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!" So they took his advice.*

- What decision does Gamaliel make?

- Rate his decision:

UNFAITHFUL	NEUTRAL	FAITHFUL		
0	1	2	3	4

- Why do you give his decision this rating?

- What is the outcome of Gamaliel's decision?
- Rate the outcome.

BAD	NEUTRAL		GOOD	
0	1	2	3	4

- Why do you give the outcome this rating?
- Does God owe Gamaliel anything for protecting the apostles of Jesus? Why or why not?