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## Options overload

### Aim:

- To encourage pupils to consider how to make the choices they will need to make in this new year

### Introduction

#### Hitting the sales

So how many bargains did you manage to pick up in the sales?



Were you one of those who queued early on Boxing Day in order to be first into the shop, to snap up the item you'd been longing for? Did you save up all your gift money and splurge it on those new clothes for the New Year, that game with unbelievable graphics or the music you didn't receive at Christmas?

*(Pause)*

Or did you, on the other hand, step into the shop and stand there bemused by the vast array of offers, undecided about how to spend your money. Was the choice so great that in the end you couldn't make a decision?

### Looking Deeper

#### Options overload



Recently a journalist on the radio spoke about the problem of options overload. She quoted a piece of research that implied that shoppers bought more jars of jam

when faced with a small choice of flavours than when faced with a large choice of flavours. It appeared that, the more options there were to choose from, the less likely a person was to actually come to a decision.

How are you at making decisions? Do you find it easy to choose between options or do you take an excessive amount of time and, when the decision is made, still wonder whether or not it was the right one? Decision making is a key skill for each one of us, and has always been so. Right back in the Genesis account of Creation God warned Adam and Eve about the dangers of eating the fruit of the tree that gave knowledge about right and wrong. He was warning them against opting for a life full of too many decisions. Jesus was constantly placing options before people he met, showing that life is governed by choices and that we must live with the consequences of the decisions we make. For Jesus this meant not merely in this life, but also eternally.

So how can we ensure that we make the best decisions? Here are three principles you may choose to start with:

**First**, don't let the decision make you.

Sometimes one option can appear so much easier than all the rest. It doesn't seem worth considering others. Yet a little research, a little adventure, a little risk can open up possibilities we never dreamed of.

**Second**, don't let others make your decisions for you. Friends and family are usually only too willing to give advice, maybe apply a bit of pressure. Also advertisers cleverly manipulate our response in favour of their product. Instead, take responsibility, be a little selfish at times. It will be your future that's affected.

**Third**, take your decision for a walk. Like a new pair of trainers, wear it for a little while and see



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how it goes. Maybe your decision will need a little tweaking before it fits just right. Don't reject it and go back into the decision making nightmare. You were probably right the first time.



Meanwhile, back at the sales - does anyone want to buy a spare pair of *(name an object surplus to your requirements)*?  
I may have made the wrong decision!

## Reflection

What decisions must I take today?  
Who is trying to influence me?  
What are the risks involved?  
What do I really want to do myself?  
Go for it!

## Prayer

God of our future  
Grant us wisdom to imagine the  
consequences of the different options  
we face,  
Confidence to take clear decisions  
And courage to walk the path we've  
chosen  
Amen

