

# ***Making Ethical Decisions & Wrapping Up the Year***

## **Lesson Objective:**

Students will understand the importance of ethical decision-making, apply the S.T.A.R. strategy to solve ethical dilemmas, and reflect on their personal growth over the school year."

## **Materials Needed:**



- Copy of Chapter 30: Making Ethical Decisions & Wrapping Up the Year
- Paper and pencils
- S.T.A.R. Strategy Poster
- Ethical Dilemma Cards
- Home Connection Letter

Introduction to the Topic (10 minutes)

## **Greeting Outline:**

- Welcome the children and have them sit in a circle (if applicable)
- Briefly discuss the concept of ethical decisions

## **Greeting and Circle Time Teacher Script**

### **Warm Welcome and Opening Discussion:**

- "Today, we're talking about ethical decision-making. Sometimes, making a choice isn't just about what's right or wrong—it's about thinking carefully about how your actions affect others. Ethical decisions help us become thoughtful and responsible individuals."

### **Discussion Starter**

- "Can you think of a time when you had to make a tough choice that affected someone else? How could using the S.T.A.R. strategy have helped you think through your decision?"
- "Why do you think it's important to 'Act with integrity'—even when no one is watching? How can that part of the S.T.A.R. strategy make a difference in school or with friends?"

Read the Chapter (15 minutes)

Story Time Outline:



- Read Chapter 30 aloud.
- Ask questions during key parts of the story.

### Story Time Teacher Script:

#### Prepare the Children for the Story:

- “Ethical decisions are about looking at the bigger picture. We’ll read how Ollie and his friends use what they’ve learned to make thoughtful choices.”

(Read the chapter aloud, pausing at key moments to ask questions and engage the children.)

#### Read the Chapter with Emphasis on Key Moments.

**While reading**, pause during key moments.

#### Ask Questions:

- What problem did Sammy encounter when he found the watch?
- Why was it difficult for the group to decide what to do with the watch?
- How did Buzz’s suggestion add to the conflict?
- What were some possible consequences if the friends had kept the watch?
- How did using the S.T.A.R. strategy help the group make a decision?
- What did Ollie mean by “thinking about the bigger picture”?
- What feelings did the group experience while making their decision?
- How did Maya’s perspective about their learning over the year reflect growth?
- Why did the group feel proud of their decision?
- How can everyday choices become ethical decisions?

## Chapter 30: Making Ethical Decisions & Wrapping Up the Year

The last day of fifth grade had finally arrived. The hallways buzzed with excitement as students packed their lockers, turned in their final assignments, and shared their plans for summer. Ollie, Harriet, Bennie, Sammy, Buzz, Betty, and Maya stood in the schoolyard, reflecting on how much they had learned and grown over the year.

This final day wasn't just about celebrating the end of fifth grade—it was also about thinking ahead to the kind of decisions they would make in the future. Mr. Jenkins had told them earlier in the week that the last lesson of the year would be about responsible decision-making, but not just any kind of decision. This lesson was about applying ethical considerations to the choices they made every day.

### Understanding Ethical Decision-Making

In their last class together, Mr. Jenkins talked to the students about what it meant to make ethical decisions. “Ethical decisions aren't always about right versus wrong,” he explained. “They're about considering how your actions affect others, your community, and the world around you. It's about thinking beyond just what's best for you.”

The friends discussed this concept during lunch. “I think making ethical decisions is kind of like how we used the S.T.A.R. strategy all year,” Ollie said. “We stop and think about the consequences before we act. But this time, we need to focus on the bigger picture.”

Harriet nodded. “Yeah, like how our decisions can impact others, not just our friends but everyone we come into contact with.”

### An Everyday Ethical Dilemma

Later that day, the friends faced a situation that tested their ability to apply ethical thinking. As they were cleaning out their desks, Sammy found a watch on the floor. It wasn't his, and no one knew who it belonged to. “It's a really nice watch,” he said, holding it up for everyone to see. “But there's no name on it.”

Bennie suggested they take it to the lost and found. “That's what we should do, right? Someone will come looking for it.”

Buzz shrugged. “But what if no one claims it? What if it's been sitting there for weeks and no one even knows it's missing? Then maybe it's just free for the taking.”

The group fell silent for a moment. This was an example of a decision that wasn't necessarily about right or wrong—it was about considering the ethical implications. Should they keep the watch if no one claimed it, or was it their responsibility to do something more?

### Applying Ethical Thinking

The friends decided to use the S.T.A.R. strategy to help them:

Stop: They took a moment to pause and think before making any decisions.

Think: They considered the possible consequences of their actions. If they kept the watch and the owner came back looking for it, that person would be upset. But if they took it to the lost and found, there was still a chance it could be reunited with its owner. Even if no one claimed it, they could feel good knowing they did the right thing.

Act: They agreed that taking the watch to the lost and found was the most ethical decision. Even if no one claimed it, they would have acted with integrity.

Reflect: Later, they reflected on how good it felt to make a responsible decision based on ethical considerations, not just on what was easiest or most convenient for them.

### Wrapping Up the Year

As the day came to a close, the friends gathered outside, feeling a mixture of excitement for summer and a sense of accomplishment for how far they had come. “We’ve learned a lot this year,” Maya said. “Not just about math and science, but about how to be better people.” Harriet smiled. “Yeah, I feel like we’ve grown up a lot. We’ve learned how to make better decisions, how to handle disagreements, and how to think about others in everything we do.” The group reflected on all the lessons they had learned about self-awareness, managing their emotions, showing empathy, and thinking about the bigger picture. They realized that these lessons would stay with them long after the school year ended.

As they looked toward the future, they knew that the skills they had developed—especially the ability to make ethical decisions—would help guide them as they moved on to new challenges and adventures in middle school and beyond.

### Moving Forward

On their walk home, Ollie summed it up. “Making decisions isn’t always easy, but I think we’ve learned that if we stop and think about how our choices affect others, we can make better decisions for ourselves and the people around us.”

Betty added, “And it’s not just about big decisions, either. We can use what we’ve learned in all the little choices we make every day.”

The friends smiled at each other, knowing that they were ready for whatever came next. They had learned to use the S.T.A.R. strategy, to reflect on their emotions, and to make decisions with integrity and care. With those tools, they felt confident that they could face any challenge together.

As the sun set on their final day of fifth grade, they knew that while this chapter of their lives was coming to a close, a new one was just beginning. And they were ready for it.

## Post-Chapter Teacher Script

- “This final chapter wraps up not only the school year but also the journey that Ollie, Harriet, Bennie, Sammy, Buzz, Betty, and Maya have taken together. With the lessons they’ve learned about responsibility, empathy, and ethical decision-making, they are well-prepared for the next steps in their lives.”

## Post-Chapter Questions

These questions encourage children to think deeply about what they listen to and to understand that they can use the S.T.A.R. Strategy in many different situations.

- Why did the friends feel it was important to take the watch to the lost and found instead of keeping it?
- How did the S.T.A.R. strategy help the friends slow down and think through their options?
- What might have happened if the friends had decided to keep the watch?
- How did the friends show that ethical decisions involve thinking about the bigger picture?
- In what ways did the friends' reflection on their actions help them grow?
- What did Ollie mean when he said, “We can make better decisions for ourselves and others”?
- How do you think making ethical decisions builds trust and respect among friends?
- What role did empathy play in how the friends handled the situation with the watch?
- How can using the S.T.A.R. strategy help in making small, everyday decisions?
- What did the friends learn about decision-making that will help them in the future?

Do an Activity (20 minutes)

- Students will apply the S.T.A.R. strategy to analyze and respond to real-life ethical dilemmas, collaborate in small groups to develop thoughtful solutions, and reflect on how ethical decision-making shapes personal character and classroom community.



## Activity: Ethical Dilemma Game

### Introduce Activity

“Today, we’re going to practice making thoughtful choices by playing the **Ethical Dilemma Game**. Ethical decisions are choices we make when there’s not just one clear ‘right’ answer. These decisions ask us to think about what’s kind, honest, and fair—not just for ourselves, but for others too.

I’m going to give each group a card with a scenario—something that could really happen in everyday life. It might involve a friend, a classroom situation, or something you see at school.

As a group, you’ll use the **S.T.A.R. strategy** to figure out the best way to respond:

- **S – Stop** to understand what’s happening.
- **T – Think** about the consequences of each choice.
- **A – Act** with honesty, kindness, and courage.
- **R – Reflect** on what you learned and how it helped.

After your group discusses your card, you’ll present your scenario and solution to the class. Let’s see what it means to be thoughtful decision-makers!”

### Instructions

- Divide the class into small groups. Give each group an Ethical Dilemma Card (e.g., finding lost money, sharing answers, including a new student, etc.).
- Each group will use the S.T.A.R. strategy to discuss how they would handle the dilemma on their card.
- Groups will present their scenario and solution to the class.

Closing Discussion (5 minutes):

### Sharing



“Now it’s time to hear what your groups decided. Each group will read their ethical dilemma card and walk us through how they used the **S.T.A.R. strategy** to come to a decision.

As you listen to each group, think about this:

- Would you have made the same choice?
- What else could have been done?

After each presentation, we’ll have time for a few questions or comments from the class.”

*Encourage respectful discussion and alternative viewpoints.*

### Wrapping It Up

- “Today, you all did the work of real problem-solvers and thoughtful leaders. You looked at tough situations, listened to different ideas, and made choices based on what’s fair, kind, and honest, not just what’s easy.
- Using the **S.T.A.R. strategy** helps us pause before we act. It reminds us that our decisions affect others, and that we can choose to be people who make things better, not worse. These are the kinds of choices that build strong friendships and a respectful classroom.”
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Wrap Up the Lesson (5 minutes)

Review and Reflection Overview:

- Have students reflect on their experiences and what they learned.

### Review and Reflection Teacher Script

**Gather in a Circle for Reflection:**



- “Let’s all sit in a circle and reflect together. When we’re in a circle, we remember that everyone’s voice matters.

- I'd like each of you to finish this sentence:
- **'One thing I learned about making ethical decisions today is...'**
- You might talk about how you felt during the activity, what your group discussed, or something another group said that made you think.
- If you'd like to pass, that's always okay."

## Closing

- "Ethical decision-making is something we practice every day. Whether you're deciding what to say to a friend, how to handle a mistake, or what to do when something doesn't feel fair, you have the tools to think it through.
- Keep using S.T.A.R. in your everyday life. The more you practice, the more confident and caring you'll become. I'm proud of the thoughtful work you did today."

## Home Connection Letter

### Sending Information Home:

- "Before you go, I have a letter for you to take home. It explains that our class participated in an "Ethical Dilemma Game," where students practiced applying the S.T.A.R. decision-making strategy to everyday scenarios. In small groups, they worked through real-life dilemmas—such as including others, telling the truth, and speaking up for what's right—and shared their thoughtful solutions with the class.
- Hand out the letters as the children prepare to leave.

## Parent Letter

### Sending Information Home:

- Provide each child with a letter to take home to their parents explaining the lesson.



Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

Today, your child participated in a lesson on ethical decision-making as part of our year-end reflections. We discussed how to use the S.T.A.R. strategy to evaluate everyday dilemmas and make thoughtful, responsible choices.

The students practiced:

- Using the S.T.A.R. strategy (Stop, Think, Act, Reflect) to approach ethical decisions.
- Working in groups to discuss real-life dilemmas and possible solutions.
- Reflecting on personal growth and how to apply these lessons moving forward.



Please take a moment to talk with your child about today's lesson. Ask them about the ethical dilemma they discussed and what they learned about making thoughtful decisions.

Thank you for your continued support throughout this school year!

With Gratitude,

# ***S.T.A.R. Strategy***



**Stop** -Take some deep breaths.

**Think** -What solutions are there?

**Act** -Pick the best solution.

**Reflect** -How did it go?



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Use this worksheet to reflect on your group's ethical dilemma and the decision you made.

Scenario:

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S – Stop: What was the situation? How did people feel?

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T – Think: What were the choices? What could have happened with each choice?

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A – Act: What decision did your group make? What action did you take?

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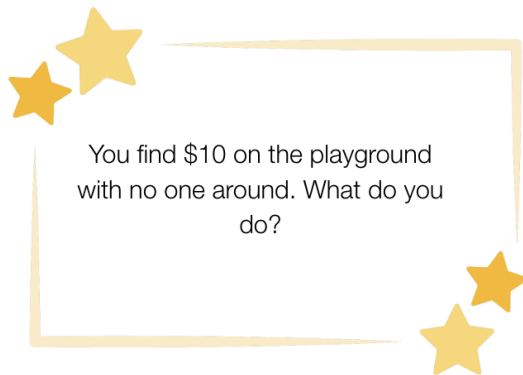
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R – Reflect: What did you learn from the experience? Would you make the same choice again?

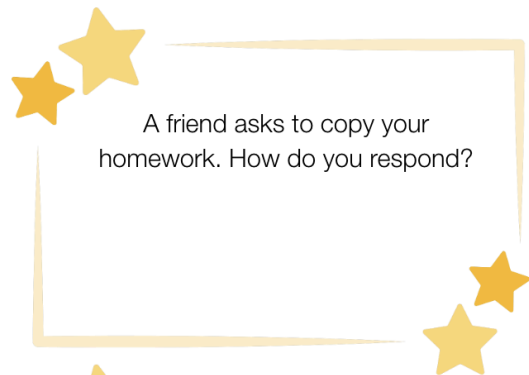
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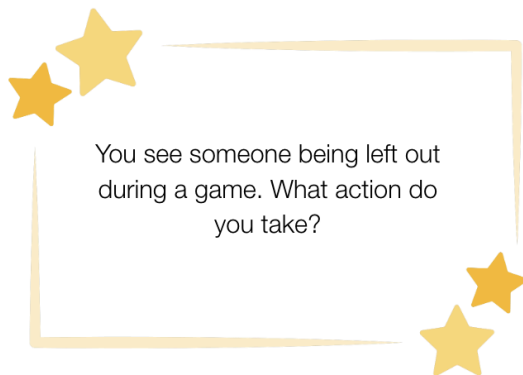
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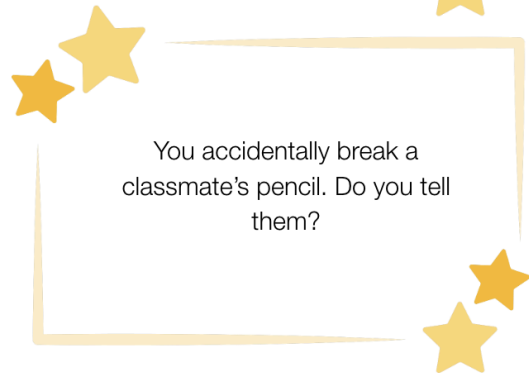
You find \$10 on the playground with no one around. What do you do?



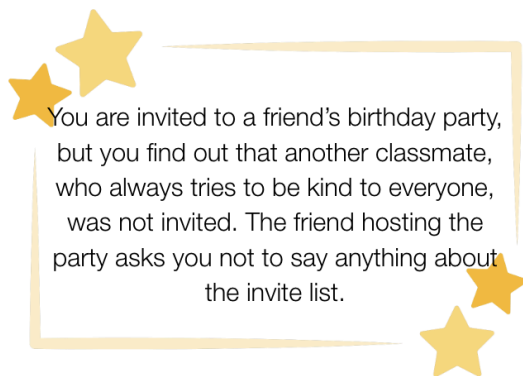
A friend asks to copy your homework. How do you respond?



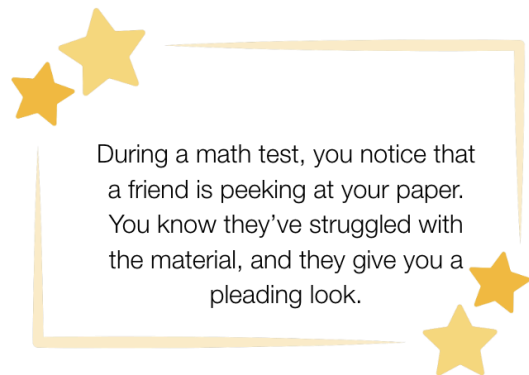
You see someone being left out during a game. What action do you take?



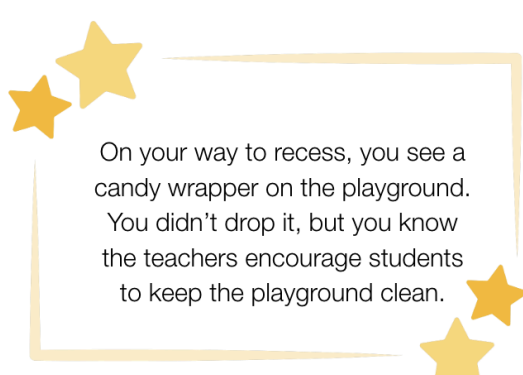
You accidentally break a classmate's pencil. Do you tell them?



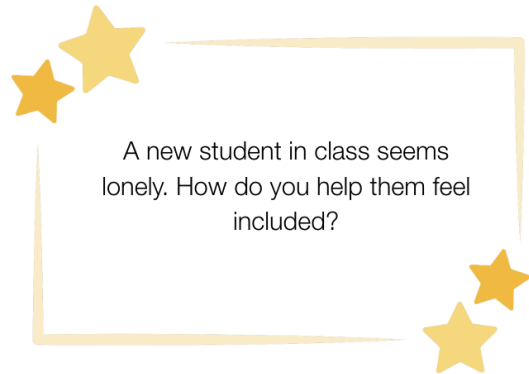
You are invited to a friend's birthday party, but you find out that another classmate, who always tries to be kind to everyone, was not invited. The friend hosting the party asks you not to say anything about the invite list.



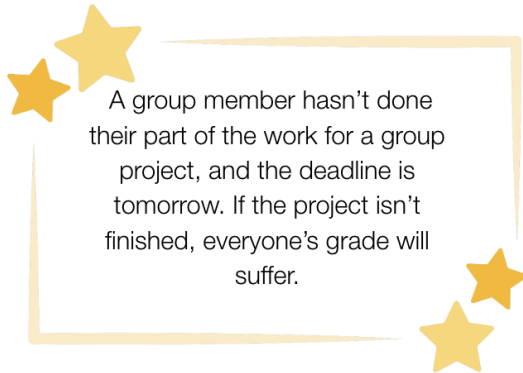
During a math test, you notice that a friend is peeking at your paper. You know they've struggled with the material, and they give you a pleading look.



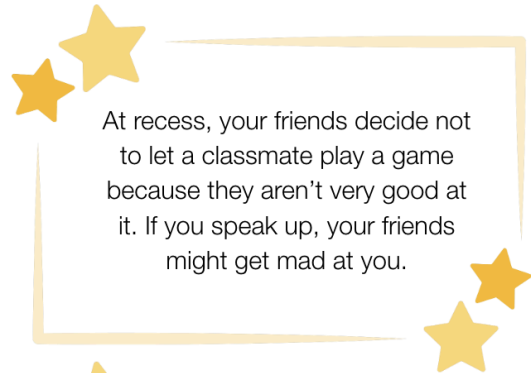
On your way to recess, you see a candy wrapper on the playground. You didn't drop it, but you know the teachers encourage students to keep the playground clean.



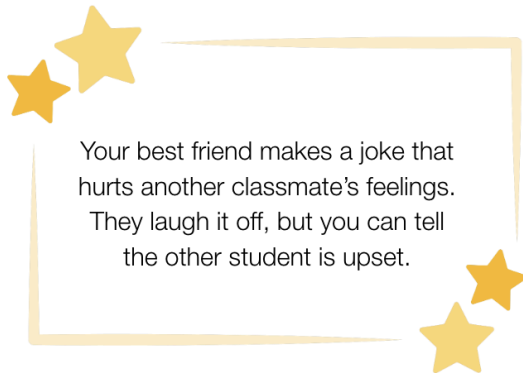
A new student in class seems lonely. How do you help them feel included?



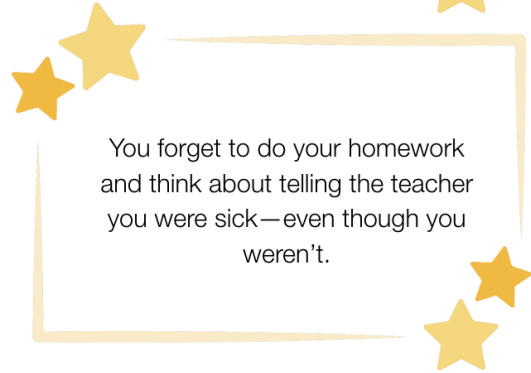
A group member hasn't done their part of the work for a group project, and the deadline is tomorrow. If the project isn't finished, everyone's grade will suffer.



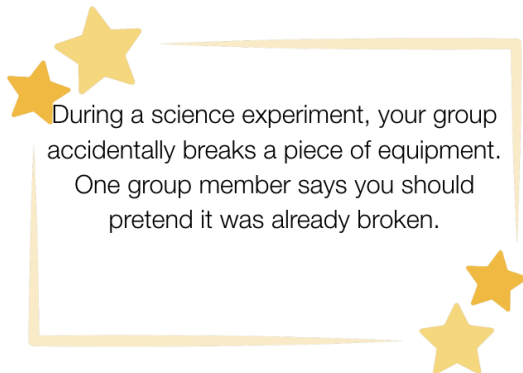
At recess, your friends decide not to let a classmate play a game because they aren't very good at it. If you speak up, your friends might get mad at you.



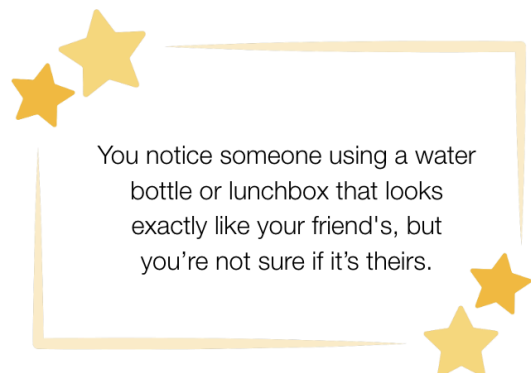
Your best friend makes a joke that hurts another classmate's feelings. They laugh it off, but you can tell the other student is upset.



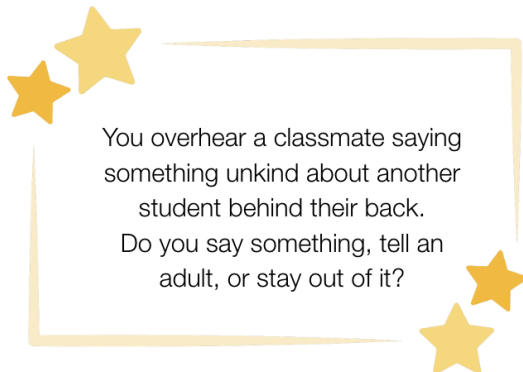
You forget to do your homework and think about telling the teacher you were sick—even though you weren't.



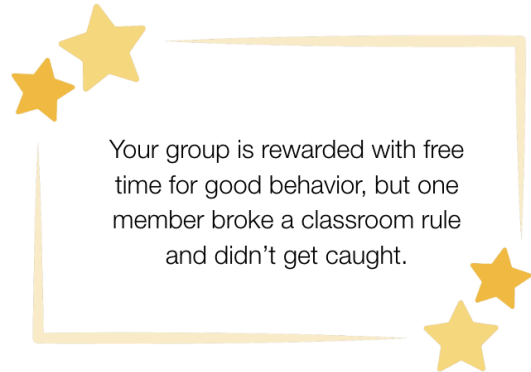
During a science experiment, your group accidentally breaks a piece of equipment. One group member says you should pretend it was already broken.



You notice someone using a water bottle or lunchbox that looks exactly like your friend's, but you're not sure if it's theirs.



You overhear a classmate saying something unkind about another student behind their back. Do you say something, tell an adult, or stay out of it?



Your group is rewarded with free time for good behavior, but one member broke a classroom rule and didn't get caught.