YOUTH AND ETHICS

Program Target: To help youth learn to make ethical decisions.

What to do: Obtain and show a portion of the video "Making Ethical Decisions," from the Josephson Institute of Ethics (see "Resources," below). Challenge your young people to think about how these principles can apply to the decisions they make every day. After viewing a video segment of about 45 minutes, divide your youth into small groups and give them each one of the "Tough Situations" below. Have them discuss how the principles of ethical decision making they have just seen could apply to that situation.

Tough Situations:

1. You and your best friend have a summer job together. You become aware that your best friend is stealing small amounts of money from your employer. What do you do?

2. The college athletics scholarship you're counting on may very well hang on the outcome of your next competition. A friend tells you about a new performance-enhancing drug guaranteed to improve your results–and it can't yet be detected by the most drug tests. Do you use it?

3. You really want to be accepted by a particular group of friends at school–especially because the person you'd like to date is a key member of that group. One day you go out with several of them, including the person you'd like to date, and you hear them spreading malicious and untrue stories about another close friend of yours. What do you say?

Preparation Time:
You will need to order and obtain a copy of the "Making Ethical Decisions" video in advance. Also, take time to copy out the "Tough Situations" to share with your group.

Bible Text: Psalm 119:1,2

Song Service:
"Living for Jesus" (SDA Hymnal)

Vesper or Closing Thought:
Sometimes we don't stop to realize how many decisions we actually make in the run of an average day–when to speak up, when to be silent, when to agree, when to disagree–and how many of those choices have an ethical component. Challenge the youth to think about the ethical implications of *all* their choices, and ask God for help in applying the principles of ethical decision making.

Resources:
You can order "Making Ethical Decisions," and other materials from the Josephson Institute of Ethics, at www.charactercounts.org. "Making Ethical Decisions" is a general overview of the ethical decision-making process for adult viewers, and costs $29.95 US. It's a 90-minute video, so you may want to do this activity over two meetings. The website also has materials

specifically aimed at teaching teens about ethical decision making, though the videos for teens are more expensive. If teaching your group about ethics is a priority for you, you may want to explore the resources and ideas on this website.