

“MAKING CHOICES” CANDY GAME

MAKE a copy of the “game sheet” for everyone in the meeting.

PROVIDE each person 15 candies (Smarties work well because there are 15 in each roll). If you want, people can work in teams.

TELL each participant or team their candies will become symbolic of their “budget” and not to eat their candies until the end of the game!

EXPLAIN that for the purposes of the game, each person or team is to pretend they are married with two children. One adult in the household is working full-time and the other is working two part-time jobs. Both make minimum wage.

The family has a limited budget and only 15 candies to spend.

THEY HAVE SOME TOUGH DECISIONS TO MAKE.

Each participant must study their choices in each row and invest their candies with 1, 2 or 3 candies depending on what is most important to them.

THEY CANNOT SKIP A ROW.

Usually, the least desirable option requires an investment of 1 candy and the most desirable option requires 3 candies. After they are done making their choices, ask the group how it felt to invest their candies. (Usually the response is, “There were not enough candies!”)

NOW TELL THEM THERE’S BEEN A CHANGE.

One of their children has an infected tooth and has to see the dentist. The family does not have dental insurance. In order to get the child the dental care the family must give up 2 candies. Tell the group to take off 2 candies and adjust the rest as needed.

TELL THEM THERE’S BEEN ANOTHER CHANGE.

Their spouse just got laid off with no severance pay. They have to take off 4 candies to adjust. Let them go through the exercise of taking off the 4 candies and adjusting the rest.

Making Choices

How will you invest your resources?

If you had a “15-candy budget” to spend every month, how would you spend it? Place the required number of candies to indicate your spending choices.

You have to make a choice for each category (you cannot skip any categories). You are married; you both work and have a son, 14 and a daughter, 9.

CATEGORY	A (1 CANDY)	B (2 CANDIES)	C (3 CANDIES)
Housing	Studio apartment (1 bedroom), 1 bath, unfurnished, no patio/deck/yard, street parking only (no covered parking space), stove only <input type="radio"/>	3 bedroom, 1 bath apartment, unfurnished, covered patio, 1 covered parking space, stove and refrigerator <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	2 bedroom, 1 1/2 bath house, unfurnished, small fenced yard, 2-car garage, stove, refrigerator and dishwasher <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
Healthcare	No health insurance - you pay for all health-related costs <input type="radio"/>	Health insurance for you through your employer but no health insurance for your family members <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Health insurance for you and your family through your employer <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
Food (per person)	1 meal per day <input type="radio"/>	2 meals per day <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	3 meals per day + snacks <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
Transportation	Walk or bike everywhere, no public transit available <input type="radio"/>	Walk, bike or take public transit <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Own your own car <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
Technology access	No computer No cell phone Black & white TV - no cable <input type="radio"/>	No computer Cell phone TV - no cable <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Home computer TV with cable Cell phone <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
Laundry Facilities	Laundromat <input type="radio"/>	Shared laundry room in apartment complex <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Own washer/dryer, in your home <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
Shopping	1 grocery store within walking distance, no mall within 20 miles <input type="radio"/>	Grocery store across the street from your home and a mini-mall within a mile <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	2 grocery stores nearby and a large mall within walking distance <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>