

A Decision-Making Process

Leaders are responsible for decisions that require great thought and effort. Having a game plan for tackling those decisions is important because they affect the people with whom we interact. By developing and using good decision-making skills, we avoid unnecessary conflict. Decision making is the process of naming issues, identifying options, choosing solutions, and implementing decisions within the framework of our vision, values, and priorities.

1. Identify the decision to be made.

Describe the situation clearly so that you can recognize what the real issue is:

2. Determine the available options.

It is good to brainstorm several solutions without rejecting any. This is the opportunity for creative ideas to surface. Briefly name the options:

3. Choose the three most workable options from the list you have brainstormed.

Option 1:

Option 2:

Option 3:

4. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each option.

Through this discussion, a picture of *why* one option might be more suitable than another will emerge. Respect each person's opinion during this step. Encourage participants to name their tangible and moral- or value-driven concerns.

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Option 1:		
Option 2:		
Option 3:		

5. Decide which decision to implement.

When you have explored your options and looked at the advantages and the disadvantages of each one, some things should start to fall into place. It is time to make a decision:

6. Evaluate the decision.

Set aside time for a future follow-up discussion to evaluate progress. This is important because learning and growth often happen in hindsight or while "working out the bugs." Look to make sure that the idea chosen yields the advantages you were hoping for.

(The material on this handout is adapted from *Leadership for Life: Discovering Your Gifts for Christian Leadership*, by Michael Poulin, Lori Spanbauer, Joan Weber, and Jennifer Willems [Naugatuck, CT: Center for Ministry Development, 1997], pages 85–91. Copyright © 1997 by the Center for Ministry Development. Used with permission.)