

# Activity: Domino Effect of Choices

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**FAMILY TIME**  
TRAINING

Teaching Goal: One person's choices may affect many other people in good and bad ways.

Scripture: Genesis 15:1-5 God promises Abraham a son

Genesis 16:1-15 Sarah (Sarai) still has not had a child and gives her maid, Hagar, to Abraham. Hagar conceives and problems begin between Sarai and Hagar, which leads to Hagar running away. God tells her to return and comforts her. Ishmael is born.

Genesis 17:18, 20 Abraham asks God to bless Ishmael and God promises He will bless him.

Genesis 21:1-21 Isaac is born to Sarah when Ishmael is 13 years old. More problems arise, leading to Hagar and Ishmael being sent away. God hears their cries and provides for them.

Genesis 25:8-9, 12-17 Abraham dies, Isaac and Ishmael bury him together. Ishmael has 12 sons and lives to be 137 years old.

Materials: Set of 14 or more dominoes

- I. Play theme song
- II. Pray
- III. Review Last Lesson
- IV. Lesson and discussion

✓ Words written in **bold** are when the leader is speaking. Feel free to use your own words.

A. ACTIVITY #1: **We make choices that impact others and others make choices that impact us...sometimes it's a good impact and sometimes a bad impact.**

**By setting up these dominos, we are going to see how a series of choices can impact someone unexpectedly good and bad.** Set up a domino for each number in the examples below. When you finish reading the last number, knock over the first domino so that everyone can see how the series of choices impacts the unsuspecting person.

Scenario #1:

1. Your friend oversleeps and wakes up late for school.
2. His mom is in a hurry to leave for an appointment and gets upset that he is late.
3. Your friend talks back to his mom in a rough voice.
4. The mom says he is grounded when he gets home from school and must stay in his room.
5. You meet your friend in the hall at school, and he yells at you and says you're stupid.

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6. Knock over the first domino: You've just experienced the domino effect of someone else decisions impacting you and you didn't do anything to deserve it.

Scenario #2:

1. The message at church is God blesses us so we can bless others.
2. Your birthday is the following Tuesday.
3. Family and friends are coming over to help you celebrate.
4. As you open up your gifts and cards, you find a card from your grandmother.
5. Usually she gives you \$1 for every year since your birth.
6. You are shocked to find she has sent you 10 x \$10 bills for a total of \$100! Her note explains that she cashed in an investment and received more income than she expected.
7. The next day you are driving to the store to buy something special with the gift money.
8. You pass a homeless woman on the corner and give her \$10.
9. Knock over the first domino: You just received an unexpected blessing as the result of someone else's choices and you passed on the blessing which had a positive impact on a homeless woman.

Scenario #3:

1. You wake up from a fitful night of sleep and you don't feel well.
2. Your stomach is upset and your head hurts.
3. You don't tell your mom because you have a special field trip at school that you don't want to miss.
4. You are short with your mom and your voice has a rough tone.
5. At school, you have a mean tone with your friends and start arguments over every little topic.
6. You get to go on the field trip but you don't enjoy it...you just don't feel well.
7. Knock over the first domino: Your mom and friends have experienced the domino effect of being treated poorly by you, even though they didn't do anything wrong.

Scenario #4:

1. You work a part-time job.
2. You are saving up money to buy a new bicycle.
3. Your boss is very encouraging and compliments you for being a good worker.
4. You get a raise, which allows you to buy the bicycle earlier than expected.
5. What fun it is to go to the store and buy your new bike.
6. You call up your friend to see if he wants to go for a ride.
7. Your friend tells you that he doesn't have a bike.
8. You decide to give him your old bike as a gift.
9. Knock over the first domino: Your friend has just benefited and been blessed by a series of choices you made.

Scenario #5:

1. You go for a drive as a passenger with your friends.
2. Someone in another car cuts off your car almost causing a wreck.
3. The driver of your car cusses and gets mad.
4. The driver starts speeding up and chasing the other car.
5. You try to calm the driver down but he won't listen.
6. A police officer pulls your car over for speeding.

7. Your parents have to come, pick you up, and take you home.
8. Your parents are upset that you got in trouble with the police.
9. Knock over the first domino: You just experienced the domino negative impact of your friend's bad decisions.

**B. ACTIVITY #2: Using the dominos, I want to tell you a story about a boy and his family from the Bible.**

1. Abraham wants a child. (Genesis 15)
2. God tells Abraham he will have a child. (Genesis 15)
3. Abraham's wife Sarah who is around 80 years old, suggests that Abraham have a child with her servant Hagar. (Genesis 16)
4. Abraham does not trust that God will give him a child through his wife Sarah, so he agrees to have a child with Hagar. (Genesis 16)
5. Sarah is jealous that Hagar is having Abraham's baby, so treats Hagar badly. (Genesis 16)
6. Hagar runs away. (Genesis 16)
7. The Lord's angel finds Sarah in the desert and tells her to return. (Genesis 16)
8. Hagar goes back to Abraham and Sarah. (Genesis 16)
9. Hagar gives birth to a baby boy and Abraham calls the boy Ishmael. (Genesis 16)
10. Abraham has a second son with Sarah and they name him Isaac. (Genesis 21)
11. Sarah gets upset with Hagar and Ishmael. (Genesis 21)
12. Abraham sends Hagar and Ishmael away. (Genesis 21)
13. Hagar and Ishmael wander in the desert, run out of food, lay down to die. (Genesis 21)
14. Knock over the first domino: Ishmael has been negatively impacted by a series of choices made by Abraham and Sarah.

**What decisions did Abraham make that impacted Ishmael?** *Listen to answers.*

Abraham doesn't trust God to do what he promised – to give Abraham and Sarah a child. So, he had a child with Hagar. Abraham agrees with his wife Sarah and sends Hagar and his son away.

**What decisions did Sarah make that impacted Ishmael?** *Listen to answers.*

Sarah doesn't trust God when he promises that she will have a child. She encourages Abraham to have a child with Hagar. Sarah tells Abraham to send Hagar and Ishmael away.

**The story does not end with Ishmael dying in the dessert. God rescues Ishmael and his mom Hagar and blesses Ishmael by giving him lots of children and decedents. (Genesis 21)**

**C. We must be very careful to think about each choice we make and how it might affect others. At the same time, realize that when some things happen to us, it may be a result of someone else's decision and no fault of our own.**

V. Close in Prayer

VI. Pass It On: Make an extra copy of this activity and *pass it on* to another family.