Take Action:
Head or Heart Role Play



At a Glance:
This activity takes a look at conflicts between the heart and head (or the will and the understanding). Esau rushes headlong into action, while Jacob carefully plots his path. Role play scenarios and a follow-up activity and discussion help students identify and think about these forces at work in their daily lives.

Supplies Needed for Each Student:
- *Head or Heart Scenarios* page
- *Head or Heart?* response page
- pen or pencil

Directions:

1. Organize the class into groups of two to four.
2. Distribute *Head or Heart Scenarios* pages.
3. Give each group one scenario to role play. *Note:* If your group is small consider having the entire class be a single group and role play several different scenarios.
4. The named character in each scenario indicates the central character.
5. Allow groups time to plan and practice their scenarios.
6. When everyone is ready to start, distribute *Head or Heart?* response page. Read the directions together.
7. Call one group at a time to act their scenario for the class.
8. Groups should announce the central character before they start.
9. Acting stops when the teacher calls "Freeze."
10. Students complete the *Head or Heart?* response page after each scenario. Students will check the box to show whether desire or reason has the greatest influence over the character's actions. Students should select one or the other, even though it will be challenging.
11. When all groups have finished, discuss *Head or Heart?* response page answers.



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Head or Heart Role Play
Continued

Discussion:

1. Look at the mindset word bank. Which of the words there reflect desires or feelings? (angry, manipulated, etc.)
2. Which of the mindset words reflect thoughts or reasoning? (calculating, ignorant)
3. Look at your response and mindset words for the Expert scenario, in the top line.
4. Compare the mindset words you have written with the power of the central character's desires or reasoning. Are they both words of the heart or head? (Perhaps not! Students may have chosen reasoning and embarrassed.)
5. What might this tell you about how our will and understanding work? (It may be hard to separate thoughts from actions.)
6. Which are easier to change: thoughts or desires? (For example, many people know that smoking damages their health. They smoke because they want to have a cigarette.)
7. In what ways can changing our thinking help us change our desires? (Thinking about what's best can help us change our habits by choosing better habits. In time our desire to do something that's not good becomes less and less.)
8. How can thinking about our heart and head change the way we act?

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Head or Heart Scenarios

Scenario 1—Expert

Characters:
John—wants to feel helpful
An older person, possible bystanders
Scenario:
An older person is having difficulty with a piece of equipment (e.g. computer, lawnmower, motor, etc.) John volunteers to help, saying that he has lots of experience with that particular problem. In reality, he does not really know what to do. This becomes apparent.

Scenario 2—Friends

Characters:
Shirley—has no friends
A group of friends who value worldly things e.g. thrilling experiences
Scenario:
A group of friends is making plans to do something together. Shirley asks if she can be included. They tell her she can come, but only if she will prove she is part of the group by shoplifting an item they want. Although torn, Shirley shoplifts to gain their friendship.

Scenario 3—Free Gift

Characters:
Paul—has no electronic device, e.g. phone, mp3 player, calculator
Group of friends who have electronic devices
Scenario:
A group is sitting around looking at a new electronic device. Paul enters the room with a snack. Seeing the device he considers how to get it for himself and eventually offers his snack in exchange for a turn using it. Once he has the device, he sneaks out.

Scenario 4—Not Me!

Characters:
Sue—a girl who is scared
A group of friends who borrow something
Scenario:
A group of friends borrow something valuable without asking, e.g. electronic equipment. Sue has an accident while using it and afterwards lies about what happened to avoid being found out.

Scenario 5—Distraction

Characters:
Henry—looking for attention
Substitute teacher, other students
Scenario:
A substitute teacher walks into a classroom. Henry is not prepared for class and decides to disrupt the lesson to avoid detection. Other students think it's fun to take advantage of the situation and join in.

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Head or Heart?

Immediately after each Head and Heart scenario complete the row in the chart that matches the scenario.

Actions are motivated by both desire and reasoning. After watching each skit:

1. Decide whether you think desire or reasoning has the greatest power over the central character's actions. Indicate your choice in the chart.
2. How might you describe what the central character is thinking or feeling? What is going on in his or her mind? Choose your own words, or use words from the "Mindset Word Bank" and write **at least two** words in the "Central Character's Mindset" column.

Mindset Word Bank

embarrassed	scared	calm	stupid	powerful
ignorant	angry	excited	smart	curious
alone	nervous	attractive	powerless	manipulated
funny	in control	accepted	calculating	superior

	Desire has the greatest power	**Reasoning has the greatest power**	**Central Character's Mindset**
Expert			
Friends			
Free Gift			
Not Me!			
Distraction			

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