



LESSON PLAN

Tough Choices

Topic: **Decision-making/Tradeoffs**

Grade Level: **Middle School**

Subject: **Language Arts/Character Education**

Time: **50 minutes**

OBJECTIVE(S):

Students will learn about life in a military family and explore responsible decision-making when faced with competing demands.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- "Where Were You?" video from the MilitaryKidsConnect.org website
- Student Worksheet
- Go to "Related Materials" in on-line version of this lesson plan to access all required links: www.militarykidsconnect.org/p/lp/mid

OTHER RESOURCES REQUIRED:

- Computer with classroom display and Internet access
- Flip charts and markers for small-group discussions

LESSON

Suggested Activity Set-up and Discussion (2 minutes)

- Teacher sets up activity by introducing the concept of military deployments and the fact that having a deployed parent often means other family members have to "step up" by taking on additional chores and/or responsibilities. That can lead to situations where military kids face competing demands and have to make difficult decisions.

"Where Were You?" video (10 minutes)

- Class views the video and the three possible endings.

Teacher-Led Discussion (10 minutes)

- Lead a discussion about the video
 - Did you learn anything about life in a military family?
 - How did life for Kayla and Marcus change when their father was deployed?
 - Marcus turned off the TV when he heard the news report about Afghanistan. How did Kayla deal with her worry and fear about her dad's safety?
 - What aspects of Kayla's story are unique to military kids? Can you think of situations where a kid in a non-military family might also have to juggle competing responsibilities?
 - In two of the three endings, Kayla reached out to a trusted adult – her coach and her mother. Who else could she have turned to?
 - How might you help out a friend who is going through a big change in his or her family, such as a military deployment?
- Ask students to vote for their favorite ending: #1, #2, or #3.

Small-Group Work (20 minutes)

- Teacher distributes the Worksheet to the class.
- Students break into small groups based on their preferred ending.
 - Each group collectively discusses the first set of Worksheet questions. One or two members of each group are assigned to record notes on a flip chart, for later presentation to the whole class.
 - Students then individually answer the remaining Worksheet questions.

Oral Presentations (*8 minutes*)

- Representatives from each small group present highlights from the small-group discussion.
- If time allows, the whole class can continue the discussion.

Student Worksheet

Questions for small-group discussion (answers recorded on a flip chart)

- Why did you prefer this ending?
- In what ways was Kayla's decision good for her? For her family members?
- Kayla's "Crossroads" was the point at which she had to make a tough choice. What strategy did she use to figure it out?
- Put yourself in Kayla's shoes. Is there another choice she might have made?

Individual questions (write answers in the space provided below)

- Think of a time you faced your own "Crossroads," and had to make a tough decision. What was the circumstance?

- What factors did you have to weigh when you were deciding what to do?

- Was there a conflict between your responsibility to yourself and your responsibility to someone else?

- How did you come to a decision? Did you talk to someone, as Kayla did?

- If you had to do it all over again, would you make the same choice?